

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REENGAGING
NEW YORK CITY'S
DISCONNECTED YOUTH
THROUGH WORK

Implementation and Early
Impacts of the Young Adult
Internship Program

OPRE Report 2017-22

April 2017

Reengaging New York City's Disconnected Youth Through Work: Implementation and Early Impacts of the Young Adult Internship Program

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Overview

Introduction

This report presents implementation and early impact results from a random assignment evaluation of the Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP), a subsidized employment program for young people in New York City who have become disconnected from school and work. Operated by various provider agencies, YAIP offers disconnected youth between the ages of 16 and 24 a temporary paid internship, as well as various support services.

The YAIP evaluation is part of the larger Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration, sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. From July 2013 to March 2014, researchers assigned nearly 2,700 young people at random to either a program group, which was offered YAIP services, or to a control group, which was not offered those services. The YAIP evaluation will measure outcomes for both groups over time to assess whether YAIP services led to better outcomes for the program group compared with those of the control group.

This report is the first of two focused on the YAIP evaluation. It provides a detailed description of the YAIP model, assesses its implementation, and examines whether the program improved young people's outcomes during the first year after study enrollment. Overall, the implementation study concluded that the YAIP program was well implemented across provider agencies and that participation rates were high. An analysis of youth outcomes indicates that program group members were more likely than control group members to receive employment and other types of support. In part due to the offer of a paid internship, the program group was also more likely to work and had higher earnings in the year following random assignment. Additional follow-up will be necessary to assess YAIP's longer-term effects on employment and earnings, as well as other key outcomes.

Primary Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How was YAIP designed and operated?
- What impact did YAIP have on employment and earnings, education and training, and well-being relative to what would have happened in the absence of the program? Did YAIP appear to be more effective for certain subgroups of young people?
- To what extent do YAIP's costs differ from those expended on behalf of individuals randomly assigned to a control group that could not receive YAIP program services? How does this cost differential relate to the benefits associated with program impacts, if any?

Purpose

For many young people, the time between one's late teenage years and early twenties encompasses several important milestones, including graduating from high school, attending college, entering the workforce, and beginning to establish economic independence. However, 12.3 percent of young

people in the United States between the ages of 16 and 24 — 4.9 million people in total — are neither in school nor working. These “disconnected” or “opportunity” youth face serious challenges to achieving labor market success and self-sufficiency in adulthood.

YAIP is intended to help reengage youth who have fallen off track, thereby reducing their risk of long-term economic hardship. MDRC is conducting a random assignment evaluation of YAIP to determine whether the program makes a difference in the lives of the young people it serves.

Key Findings

Findings from the report include the following:

- Overall, YAIP was well implemented. The program was delivered very similarly across providers and with a high degree of fidelity to the program model as designed. Participation rates were high: Over three-fourths of young people assigned to the program group worked in a subsidized internship and 86 percent of those youth completed the internship.
- Program group members were more likely than control group members to report receiving employment support, as well as advice or support and mentorship from staff members at an agency or organization. However, substantial numbers of control group members also received help in these areas.
- The program group was more likely than the control group to have worked during the year following random assignment, but the employment rates of the two groups converged during the quarters after the YAIP internships ended. The program group also had higher earnings than the control group. While largest during the time when program group members were working in paid internships, these earnings impacts persisted throughout the follow-up period, suggesting that program group members may have obtained better jobs than control group members.

Methods

The evaluation includes an implementation study, an impact study, and a benefit-cost analysis. This report presents implementation and early impact findings (after one year). Benefit-cost findings and longer-term impact findings (after 30 months) will be presented in a future report.

The implementation study describes YAIP’s design and how the program ultimately operated. Key data sources for the implementation study include staff interviews, observations, and participation data. The implementation section of this report integrates qualitative and quantitative data from these sources to create a coherent picture of the implementation of the program.

The impact study uses a randomized controlled trial design in which individuals eligible for and interested in YAIP were randomly assigned to either a program group, which was offered YAIP services, or to a control group, which was not offered those services. The study will evaluate impacts on employment and earnings, education and training, and well-being, among other areas. Data sources for the impact study include administrative records on wages and postsecondary enrollment, subsidized employment payroll records, and surveys conducted approximately 4, 12, and 30 months after participants entered the study.

Acknowledgments

This report would not have been possible without the support of many individuals and organizations. The Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) developed the Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration Project (STED) and has sponsored the project since its inception. Dedicated staff members in that agency have been instrumental to the success of the project, in particular Girley Wright and Erica Zielewski.

At the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), we would like to thank Carson Hicks and Jean-Marie Callan. At the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), we would like to thank former Deputy Commissioner of Community Development Suzanne Lynn and former Assistant Commissioner of Youth Employment Initiatives Alan Cheng. Also at DYCD, we greatly appreciate the efforts of the past and present Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) directors, Marlowe Paraiso and Jenny Synn-Carson, along with YAIP program managers Kristen Bush, Horace Harris, Veronica Woolford-Shavuo, and Blake Strother. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the individuals who oversaw the delivery of the YAIP program at each of the provider organizations that participated in the evaluation: Justina Astacio, Eniola Bakare, Emma Dealy, Suzanna Foran, Caroline Hudak, Robert Johnsen, Robert Molina, M'Shell Patterson, Reshard Riggins, Keisha Roberts, Kim Robinson-Murrell, Jason Rodriguez, Len Shayer, Beth Spektor, Andrea Weldon, and Teresa Yuan. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the many other staff members across provider organizations who implemented YAIP. All of these individuals gave generously of their time to help us learn about the program.

We give many thanks to Robert Graham of Community Software Solutions, Inc., who extracted YAIP's participation data for us and helped us to understand them. We also thank staff members from HHS who worked to provide us with employment and earnings data from the National Directory of New Hires.

At MDRC, Dan Bloom directs the STED project. Christine Johnston, Elisa Nicoletti, Mifta Chowdhury, Julianna Alson, Joseph Broadus, Gary Reynolds, and Michelle Manno all helped to conduct the implementation research. Dan Bloom, Christopher Boland, Gayle Hamilton, Richard Hendra, John Martinez, Chuck Michalopoulos, and Johanna Walter provided thoughtful comments on several drafts of this report. Bret Barden and Johanna Walter contributed their data management expertise, overseeing much of the data acquisition and data processing effort. Chloe Anderson processed the program participation data and Sally Dai processed the National Directory of New Hires data. Gary Reynolds created the useful map of YAIP provider organizations. In partnership with MDRC, Franchel Mendoza conducted in-

depth interviews with YAIP participants and Camila Gripp collected participant questionnaire data. Beata Luczywek and Hannah Wagner coordinated the production of the report. Christopher Boland edited the report, and Ann Kottner prepared it for publication.

We are especially grateful to the many young people who agreed to be part of the study. They enthusiastically participated in surveys and interviews and allowed us to learn from their experiences. We hope that the knowledge they helped to provide will benefit other young people in similar circumstances.

The Authors

Executive Summary

For many young people, the time between one’s late teenage years and early twenties encompasses several important milestones, including graduating from high school, attending college, entering the workforce, and beginning to establish economic independence. For some, however, staying engaged in education or employment during the transition to adulthood can be difficult: 12.3 percent of young people in the United States between the ages of 16 and 24 — 4.9 million young people in total — are neither in school nor working. This group is commonly referred to as “disconnected youth” or “opportunity youth.” As a result of low levels of educational attainment and limited work experience, disconnected youth face serious challenges to achieving labor market success and self-sufficiency in adulthood.¹

The Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) is intended to help reengage youth who have fallen off track, thereby reducing their risk of long-term economic hardship. The New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) oversee the program and community-based provider organizations throughout the city deliver it. YAIP offers youth various services, including job-readiness workshops and activities; individual support, counseling, and assessments; case management; and follow-up services. However, the central program component is a 10- to 12-week paid internship.

This report presents interim findings from a random assignment evaluation of YAIP, which is studying the program’s implementation and “impacts,” or the difference the program makes in the lives of the youth it serves. The evaluation also includes a benefit-cost study. Young adults who enrolled in the evaluation include low-income New York City residents between 16 and 24 years of age who were neither working nor in school. The YAIP evaluation is part of a larger evaluation funded by the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) called the Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (STED), which is testing various subsidized employment strategies in several cities across the country. MDRC is conducting the STED Evaluation, along with its research partners MEF Associates, Decision Information Resources, and Branch Associates.

Background

In early adulthood, it is important to gain skills and experience through education, training, and employment in order to establish a solid foundation for future success. However, many young

¹Sarah Burd-Sharps and Kristen Lewis, *Promising Gains, Persistent Gaps: Youth Disconnection in America* (New York: Measure of America of the Social Science Research Council, 2017).

people in the United States are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the labor market. The detachment of these young people from society's larger structures of school and work poses serious costs to their future well-being, their communities, and to the country as a whole.²

There are a variety of reasons why young people may become disconnected, including a lack of support and guidance from adults; family obligations; issues with school safety, school policies, and peer influences; and the challenges of young parenthood.³ Disconnected youth may also simply have trouble finding work. In recent years, concern about at-risk, out-of-school, and out-of-work young people has grown among policymakers, service providers, and other key stakeholders. This concern has generated new policies and initiatives to better serve and reconnect this population to education, training, and employment. One example of these efforts is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which President Obama signed into law in 2014. WIOA places increased emphasis on providing employment and training services to disconnected young people who are out of school.

Disconnected youth are a heterogeneous group in terms of the causes of their disconnection, their level of disadvantage, their educational backgrounds, and the length of their disconnection. Because of this heterogeneity, appropriate service models vary considerably in terms of the subpopulations they target, the services they provide, their level of intensity, and their underlying theories for how best to reconnect young people to school, training, or work. Programs targeting disconnected young people tend to offer different combinations of educational support, job skills training, paid or subsidized employment, case management, and other services. A number of these programs have been rigorously evaluated, with some showing positive, statistically significant effects, primarily on employment and earnings.⁴ YAIP is unique among disconnected youth programs in a few respects: it is a relatively simple model focused on work experience; it targets a more job-ready subset of disconnected youth (this point will be discussed in greater detail below); and it operates at large scale.⁵ Thus, learning about the effectiveness of YAIP will contribute to the existing research evidence regarding what works to reengage low-income disconnected young people in education and work.

²Burd-Sharps and Lewis (2017).

³Michelle Hynes, *Don't Call Them Dropouts: Understanding the Experiences of Young People Who Leave High School Before Graduation* (Washington, DC: America's Promise Alliance, 2014).

⁴Louisa Treskon, *What Works for Disconnected Young People: A Scan of the Evidence* (New York: MDRC, 2016); Farhana Hossain and Dan Bloom, *Towards a Better Future: Evidence on Improving Employment Outcomes for Disadvantaged Youth in the United States* (New York: MDRC, 2015).

⁵In fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015), 18 YAIP providers across New York City served 1,821 young people.

The Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP)

Introduced in 2007, YAIP is a workforce development program designed for young New Yorkers living in poverty who are neither in school nor working, but who are believed to have the potential to benefit from a relatively brief, non-intensive intervention. In theory, the YAIP target population is not so disadvantaged that they need extensive wraparound services, but disadvantaged enough to require the support of a program to acquire the skills and experience needed to improve their labor market prospects and give them a “jump start” back into productive activity.

YAIP is a multiphase program that enrolls youth in cohorts, with a new cohort starting every four months; participants in a particular cohort move through the program together. Each community-based YAIP provider is responsible for enrolling and serving a portion of the full cohort, usually about 30 young adults each. The program’s three phases are as follows:

- **Phase 1:** The first 2 to 4 weeks of the program (duration varies by provider) are referred to as the orientation phase, wherein youth are expected to attend daily workshops facilitated by program staff at provider offices. Youth are paid minimum wage for 25 hours per week,⁶ and workshops are typically five hours per day. The goals of orientation are to prepare participants for the workplace by providing various job-readiness and personal development activities, to lay a foundation for cohort cohesion using icebreakers and group activities, and to match participants’ interests and skills with an available and appropriate internship.
- **Phase 2:** During the 10 to 12 weeks of this phase, youth are expected to work 20 hours a week in their internship placement and continue to earn minimum wage. Their earnings are fully subsidized. The goals of internship placements vary based on the particular needs of young people, but generally include work experience, development of soft or hard skills, career exploration, and potential transition from a subsidized internship to a permanent, unsubsidized position. Once a week, youth are required to return to the provider offices to attend five-hour educational workshops, for which they are also paid minimum wage. These workshops cover topics including job readiness, healthy living, money and time management, and conflict resolution.

⁶The minimum wage increased from \$7.25 to \$8 per hour in New York during the study period. As of this report’s publication, the minimum wage in New York City was \$11 per hour for employers of 11 or more employees and \$10.50 for employers of 10 or fewer employees.

- **Phase 3:** The nine months following youths' completion of their internship is the follow-up phase of YAIP. During this time, providers are expected to help participants secure and maintain an "outcome placement." Outcome placements include participation in unsubsidized employment, education, training, or the military. Providers also offer support services during this phase, including housing assistance, counseling, and transportation assistance, among other types of support.

The YAIP Evaluation

Earlier evaluations of subsidized employment programs targeting groups who struggle most in the labor market, including disconnected youth, the formerly incarcerated, welfare recipients, noncustodial parents, and others, yielded mixed results. Designed to advance the field's understanding of subsidized employment, STED is studying eight different subsidized employment program models in six cities across the country. Each model, including YAIP, is being evaluated independently in a randomized controlled trial.

The random assignment design of the YAIP evaluation is generally considered to be the most rigorous method of evaluating large-scale social service programs. This research design involves a lottery-like process that places individuals into either a program group, which is offered the services being tested, or into a control group, which is not offered those services. As a result of the random assignment process, these two groups will be comparable on both measured and unmeasured characteristics at the time of study enrollment. The evaluation includes 12 independent YAIP providers that delivered the program at 13 different locations across Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens. YAIP providers targeted individuals between 16 and 24 years of age who were neither in school nor working, among other eligibility criteria.

The YAIP evaluation enrolled a total of 2,678 young people in three consecutive cohorts, beginning with the July 2013 cohort, followed by the November 2013 cohort, and concluding with the March 2014 cohort. The research team randomly assigned 60 percent of the sample to the program group and 40 percent to the control group:

- **The program group.** The 1,638 individuals who were randomly assigned to this group were offered YAIP program services, including a paid internship, job-readiness training, case management, and follow-up services.
- **The control group.** The 1,040 individuals who were randomly assigned to this group were not offered YAIP program services, but were able to access other services that were available in the community, including other non-YAIP services offered at YAIP provider agencies.

By measuring outcomes for both groups over time, it is possible to assess whether YAIP services led to better outcomes for the program group than what would have happened in the absence of the program, as represented by the control group. Indeed, any statistically significant differences that emerge between the two randomly assigned groups provide a reliable estimate of the program’s effects, or “impacts.”

The YAIP evaluation has three components: an implementation study, an impact study, and a benefit-cost study. The primary goal of the implementation study is to describe the design of the YAIP program and how it operates. As noted above, the impact study addresses the question of whether YAIP improves key outcomes of interest for disconnected youth, including employment and earnings, education and training, psychosocial outcomes, economic and personal well-being, and involvement with the criminal justice system. Finally, the benefit-cost study will compare YAIP’s costs with its benefits. This report focuses on the results of the implementation study and early findings from the impact study (based on one year of follow-up data). Final results from the impact study (based on 30 months of follow-up data) and benefit-cost analysis will be included in a future report, expected in 2018.

Implementation of YAIP

The research team assessed YAIP’s implementation using several different data sources, including (but not limited to) interviews with key provider staff as well as YAIP management staff from DYCD and CEO, internship worksite observations, analysis of data collected from all young people when they enrolled in the study, and program participation data from the YAIP management information system.

To be eligible for YAIP, applicants must be New York City residents, between the ages of 16 and 24, and eligible to work in the United States; must neither be in school nor working; and cannot have been enrolled in school during the prior semester. In addition, all YAIP applicants are required to complete a multistage intake process designed to screen for appropriate participants — that is, the most job-ready disconnected youth, YAIP’s target population.⁷ The intake process includes a reading level assessment, a self-assessment form, and an interview. The research team randomly assigned applicants who were determined eligible at the conclusion of the assessment and intake process to one of the two research groups that comprise the YAIP study sample.

⁷Provider staff assessed job-readiness based on several criteria, including motivation level, stability of housing and child care arrangements, mental health, reading level, and availability of social support, among other factors.

The YAIP sample was 21 years of age, on average, at the time of study enrollment and is divided about evenly between men and women. The vast majority of sample members are Black, non-Hispanic (58 percent) or Hispanic (36 percent). Sixty-one percent of the sample had earned a high school diploma or equivalency certificate and nearly three-fourths of the sample had previous work experience (though the vast majority of this latter group had not worked in any job for three months or longer). The median length of time since study youth were last in school, enrolled in a high school equivalency program, or working was nine months. Only about 4 percent of the sample reported experiencing unstable housing. Finally, over one-fourth of the sample received some form of public assistance and, in addition to their limited schooling and employment histories, 42 percent of sample members faced at least one other significant barrier to employment, including limited literacy or math skills, housing instability, parenting responsibilities, a disability, or a criminal record.

- **Young people in the study sample compare favorably with the broader population of disconnected youth in New York City on various socioeconomic indicators, suggesting that YAIP providers successfully targeted a more job-ready subset of disconnected youth.**

Compared with local and national populations of disconnected youth, YAIP sample members were more likely to have a high school credential and previous work experience and less likely to receive public benefits or to live in unstable housing situations at the time of study enrollment. Thus, while the YAIP sample still faced serious challenges, providers successfully identified and enrolled the subset of disconnected youth thought best able to benefit from the program.

- **Overall, the implementation of YAIP aligns with the program model and is consistent across providers.**

DYCD allows providers some flexibility in how they operate the program, including in staffing decisions and the duration of program phases. Despite this flexibility and the range of different organizations that offered the program — each with its own focus and varying set of resources — the research team found that, overall, providers delivered the YAIP model very similarly and with a high degree of fidelity to the intended program model, as described above.

Nevertheless, program implementation faced a number of challenges. Provider staff reported difficulties with navigating the complex and lengthy recruitment and assessment process; contending with YAIP's overlapping program cycles, which required them to juggle varying responsibilities for cohorts in different phases of the program simultaneously; the challenges inherent in working with a disadvantaged group of young people, some of whom require a great deal of support even outside of regular working hours; and meeting DYCD's oversight and

performance expectations. Program managers reported that these difficulties left some staff members vulnerable to burnout, contributing to frequent staff turnover.

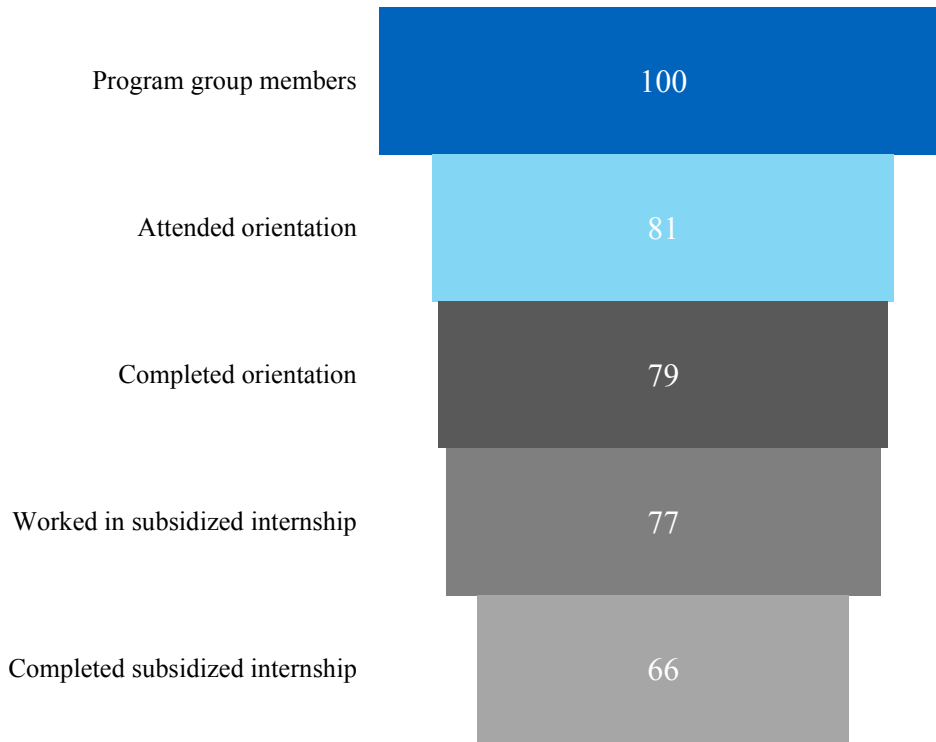
Based on data from YAIP's management information system, participation in YAIP was high. As shown in Figure ES.1, which depicts participation among 100 typical program group members, over 80 percent of the program group attended the paid orientation phase, nearly all of whom completed it. During this phase, provider staff facilitate daily group sessions at program offices to help meet the first two goals of orientation, which are preparing participants to succeed in the workplace and laying a foundation for cohort cohesion. Staff achieve the third goal of orientation, matching youth to internship sites, through a collaborative process in which staff and participants meet one-on-one to discuss participants' strengths, interests, and goals. Provider staff consider all of these dimensions, as well as the participants' personalities and the internship site's work environment and culture, in matching participants to internship placements.

- **More than three-fourths of the program group worked in a DYCD-subsidized internship. Among this group, 86 percent completed their internship.**

Internship placements are at a wide variety of worksites, running the gamut from the offices of local politicians to commercial drugstores, social service nonprofit agencies, clothing retail chains, and a local radio station. Regardless of worksite, most young people are assigned tasks that involve clerical work, customer service, or maintenance. Internships promoted the program goals in various ways, such as providing participants with employment and income, exposing them to new workplace experiences, and bolstering their résumés. Participants who worked in a subsidized internship averaged 9.2 weeks in their placement, close to the full internship length of 10 to 12 weeks. Additionally, during the internship phase, this group spent an average of about 22 hours per week in their internships and in the mandatory educational workshops, close to the expected 25 hours per week. The educational workshops, held once a week at provider offices, offered an opportunity for youth to stay in touch with members of their cohort, check in with case managers, and receive ongoing job-readiness skills development while they worked in their internships. Despite participants receiving pay for time spent in educational workshops, providers reported that attendance was often an issue.

Case managers begin "outcome planning" with their participants about halfway through the program, aiming to engage participants in one of the four DYCD-endorsed post-program placements by the end of the internship period. These preferred placements are unsubsidized employment, education, advanced training, and military service. Based on participation data, a little more than half of program group members who worked in an internship were engaged in

Figure ES.1
YAIP Participation Among 100 Typical Program Group Members



SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from the YAIP management information system.

NOTES: The data presented in this figure are based on the 1,638 program group members in the YAIP study.

one of these outcome placements at the conclusion of their internship, the vast majority of them in unsubsidized employment, with education a distant second. Participants pursuing advanced training were far rarer, and those enlisting in military service were negligible.

Whether or not participants were engaged in a placement at the conclusion of their internship, provider staff continued to offer them follow-up support services over the next nine months. These nine months make up Phase 3 of YAIP, or the follow-up phase, when providers focus on helping participants secure or sustain a placement. This follow-up period is the longest yet least intensive phase of the program cycle, when staff work with participants mainly on an individual basis. During this phase, provider staff try to maintain contact with the young people to assist them with job leads, verify their outcome placements, help connect them to needed

services, and provide other case management and counseling support. Eighty-six percent of participants who worked in an internship received case management during this phase, and had an average of five contacts with YAIP staff.⁸ The proportion of participants engaged in a DYCD-approved placement at the nine-month mark is very similar to the proportion engaged in a placement at the end of the internship period, as is the distribution of participants across the four preferred placements. The proportion of youth in verified placements fell short of DYCD's performance benchmarks at both junctures.

YAIP was developed as a "light-touch" intervention to help reengage a subset of the most job-ready disconnected youth based on the premise that this group would not require intensive services to get back on track. However, many involved with the YAIP program, including provider staff, supervisors at internship sites, and participants themselves, disagreed with this premise and believed that participants require both a higher level of support and a longer intervention to improve their educational and labor market outcomes.

Early Impacts of YAIP

The impact study relies on data from three key sources: employment and earnings data from the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH), 4- and 12-month follow-up survey data, and postsecondary school enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse.⁹ For this report, follow-up data for just over one year after random assignment was available to assess differences between program and control group members.

While control group members could not enroll in YAIP, they were able to access other services that were available in the community. In New York City, services for disadvantaged young people are plentiful. Using survey data, the research team assessed the extent to which the offer of the YAIP program increased the services received by the program group over and above what the control group received. Without a meaningful service differential, statistically significant impacts on youth outcomes are unlikely.

- **Program group members were more likely than control group members to report receiving employment support as well as advice or support and mentorship from staff members at an agency or organization.**

⁸A contact was counted as any time a case manager was able to successfully reach a participant, including phone, social media, and in-person contact.

⁹Maintained by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, the National Directory of New Hires contains quarterly earnings data collected by state workforce agencies on jobs covered by unemployment insurance.

Results show that the program group was significantly more likely than the control group to have been employed in a paid internship (60 percent versus 8 percent).¹⁰ They were also more likely to have received help finding or keeping a job (85 percent versus 53 percent), which includes participation in activities such as job search, job readiness, and career planning, as well as financial support for job-related costs. Additionally, program group members were significantly more likely than control group members to have received advice or support (70 percent versus 46 percent) and mentoring (62 percent versus 35 percent) from staff at an agency or organization. In sum, while many control group members received services, program group members received substantially more services in the key areas on which YAIP focuses.

- **YAIP increased employment in the year following random assignment, but this program effect dissipated by the end of the follow-up period. Program group members had higher earnings than control group members throughout the follow-up period.**

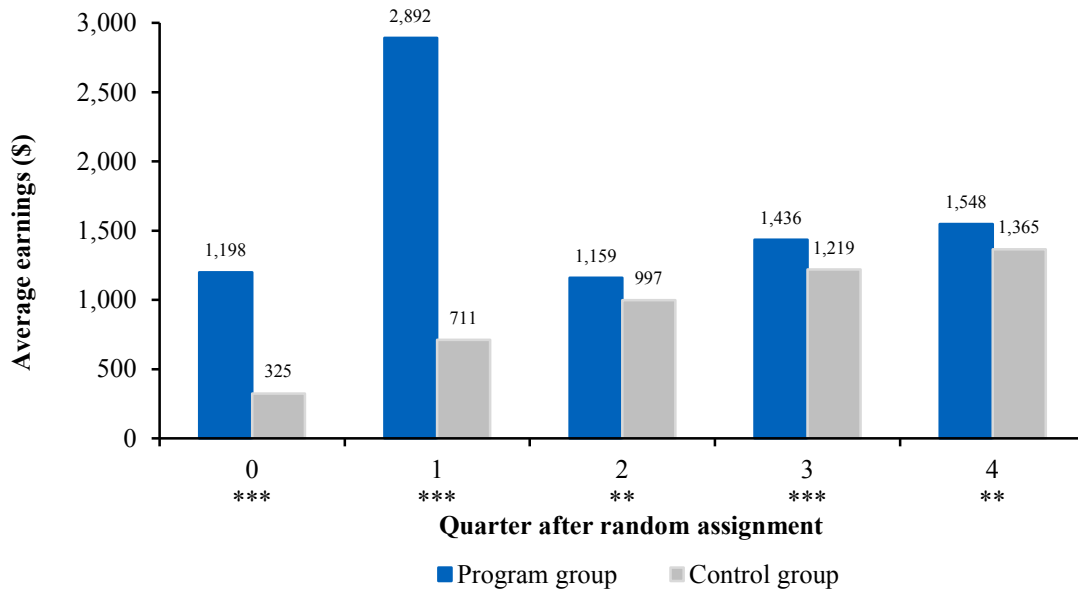
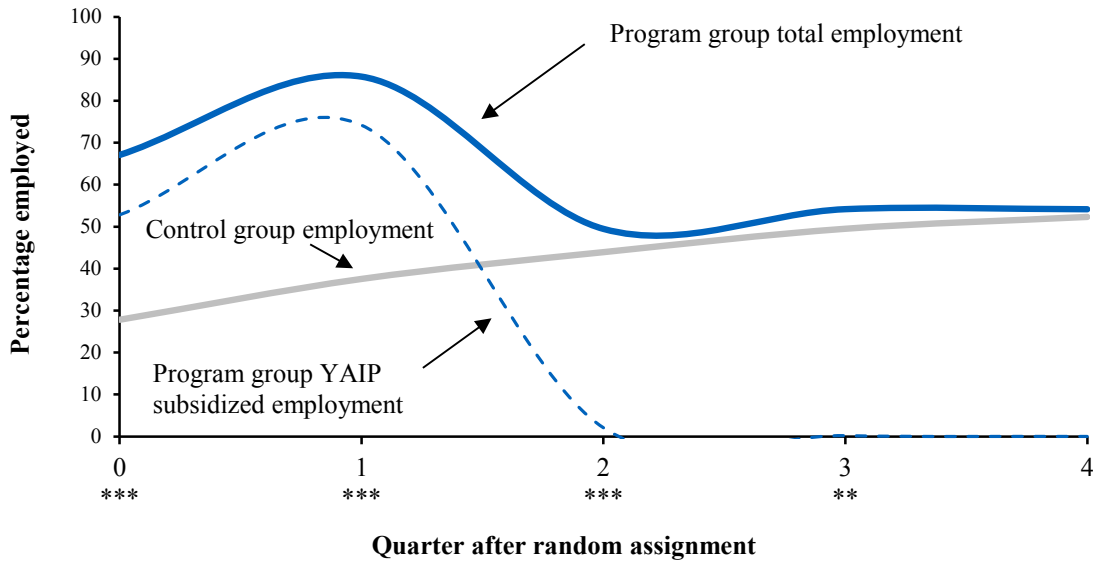
As shown in the top panel of Figure ES.2, which is based on NDNH data, program group members were more likely than control group members to work in the year following random assignment, but the quarterly employment rates of the two research groups converged shortly after the YAIP subsidized internships ended.¹¹ Turning to the bottom panel of the figure, program group members also had higher earnings than control group members, earning over \$3,433 more than control group members over the course of the year (quarter 0 through quarter 3). Statistically significant earnings impacts were observed in every quarter of the year following random assignment, although the size of the impact peaked during the first quarter after random assignment (when participation in YAIP internships was highest) and dropped steeply thereafter, remaining relatively consistent in the later quarters. The differences in earnings that persisted in the later quarters, along with data from the 12-month survey concerning participants' current employment, suggest that program group members may have been able to secure better jobs (that is, more permanent positions with full-time hours) than control group members. This possible program impact will be more fully examined later, when additional follow-up data past 12 months is available.

- **Program and control group members had similar outcomes during the first year of follow-up in other key domains.**

¹⁰These figures are based on data from the four-month follow-up survey. It is likely that the survey question regarding paid internships was subject to some reporting error, which may explain the discrepancy between these program group internship participation rates and those based on management information system data.

¹¹NDNH data are reported quarterly; thus, employment and earnings in this report cover the quarter during which random assignment occurred (quarter 0), as well as the four quarters following the quarter of random assignment, for a total of five quarters. These data include participation in paid YAIP activities.

Figure ES.2
Employment and Earnings Over Time



(continued)

Figure ES.2 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on quarterly wage data from the National Directory of New Hires and YAIP management information system subsidized earnings records.

NOTES: Results in this table are regression-adjusted, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

Aside from the differences observed in the employment and earnings domain, program and control group members had similar outcomes over the first year of follow-up in the other domains where impacts were assessed. These domains include education and training, psychosocial outcomes, economic and personal well-being, and criminal involvement.

However, results of the four-month survey, which the research team administered at a point in time when many program group members were working in their paid internships, showed some positive effects on young people's happiness and perception of obstacles to achieving their goals. This result suggests that YAIP led to some level of improved well-being for young people while they were working in subsidized internships, even if these improvements do not appear to have persisted after the internships ended.

Next Steps

The YAIP evaluation is part of a larger effort to understand how best to help young people who have become untethered from the worlds of school and work to reengage in productive activity. Findings from the implementation study indicate that YAIP is a well-implemented program, operates similarly across providers with a high degree of fidelity to the program model, and serves a large swath of New York City's more job-ready disconnected youth. Rates of participation are high, a notable finding considering that many youth programs struggle to keep young people engaged in their services. Whether YAIP is having its ultimate intended effects of improving participants' labor market prospects and reducing their risk of long-term economic hardship remains an open question. The current report presents only 12-month impacts of the program. It is too early to draw any firm conclusions about whether YAIP will improve employment outcomes or outcomes in other domains in the longer term. Final impact results, with a longer-term follow-up of 30 months, will be presented in a later report, as will the results of a benefit-cost study.