
THE RECONNECTING YOUTH CAMPAIGN

IT'S TIME TO INVEST IN AMERICA'S UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

The **Reconnecting Youth Campaign: Unleashing Limitless Potential** calls on Congress to invest in America's future by funding education, training, national service and employment opportunities for one million 16- to 24-year-olds who are not in school or work.

Across the United States, over 4.6 million 16- to 24-year-olds have been separated from pathways to productive adulthood.¹ They are known as "Opportunity Youth," both because they are seeking opportunities to provide for themselves and their families, and because they represent untapped potential for employers, communities and our economy.

RECONNECTING OPPORTUNITY YOUTH STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES

Decades of research show that investment in Opportunity Youth will improve the futures of young people, families and communities by reducing persistent poverty; increasing civic engagement; and improving health, education and career outcomes. It's the right thing to do.

RECONNECTING OPPORTUNITY YOUTH IS GOOD FISCAL POLICY

Investing \$30,000 in helping a young person reconnect to a pathway to a productive adulthood saves taxpayers more than \$65,000 and generates an estimated \$105,000 in new tax revenue over the course of his or her career.

RECONNECTING OPPORTUNITY YOUTH IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Businesses that invest in hiring and training Opportunity Youth report that they outperform other entry-level employees, including lower interview-to-hire ratios, higher retention rates, higher job performance scores and faster promotion rates.²



“[Our Opportunity Youth program] helps us attract talent, helps motivate teams, helps communities, and helps create a diverse workforce.

It's multi-dimensional, hitting a lot of different things we want to do. It's a win-win-win.”

- JOHN GALANTE, FORMER CIO, JPMORGAN CHASE



“I embrace the term ‘opportunity youth.’ The reason young people are ‘at risk’ is because they see few opportunities in their community. We feel a sense of pride and want to bring change to our communities.”

- HUMBERTO PALACIOS, SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA, NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH CHALLENGE PROGRAM ALUM

SOLUTIONS ARE WITHIN REACH

All young people deserve the opportunity to access a good education and pathways to productive adulthood, despite race, gender, where they live or where they start in life. Opportunity Youth hold tremendous potential if we make the choice to invest in them.

Federally funded programs that help Opportunity Youth to gain the skills, tools and networks to reach their full potential consistently demonstrate positive impact.⁴ Yet these highly effective programs lack the resources to meet the demand – every day, they are forced to turn young people away.

We call on Congress to increase appropriations from \$2.5 billion to \$6.5 billion to support existing federally funded programs.

Increasing annual investments will allow effective programs to immediately scale up and provide 1 million Opportunity Youth a viable pathway toward productive adulthood.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: A \$4 billion investment will save taxpayers \$65 billion in reduced long-term expenditures and will generate \$105 billion in additional tax revenue.



Source: *Bridge to Reconnection*, by John Bridgeland, domestic policy advisor to President George W. Bush.



“What people need to know about Opportunity Youth is that they’re strong, they’re brilliant, they persevere. Find a way to engage these young people in your spaces because they’re ready and willing [and] they know the difference it makes when they get support.”

**- KIMBERLY PHAM,
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
MEMBER, OPPORTUNITY YOUTH UNITED**

“Imagine the positive change that could come to our cities and rural areas if all young people see that there is a pathway for them into employment, post-secondary education ...and civic leadership.

We have the power, knowledge, and resources to make this the reality.”

- JOHN BRIDGELAND, DOMESTIC POLICY ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

PROGRAM SUCCESS AND IMPACT

These federally funded programs currently serving Opportunity Youth offer a diverse and comprehensive range of approaches, locations, skill-building and career pathways. They are rigorously evaluated to measure their viability and success in achieving programmatic goals regarding improved health, academic and career outcomes. Here are the highly effective programs that, with increased investment, can immediately expand to serve 1 million young people.

ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION

This U.S. Department of Education program supports adult learners (ages 16 and up) prepare for High School Equivalency exams, offering a critical second chance for many American high school dropouts.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL CIVILIAN COMMUNITY CORPS

Youth respond to various environmental crises and disasters, rebuilding communities while earning a living allowance and an education award for college.

AMERICORPS STATE/NATIONAL

AmeriCorps State/National funding provides support to a wide range of service programs that strengthen communities and build leaders through direct community and national service.

CHAFEE EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS

This program increases college attendance rates among foster youth by providing tuition support for former foster youth enrolling in post-secondary educational and training programs.

JOB CORPS

This a full-time, residential, education, and vocational training program administered by the U.S Department of Labor and implemented in over 100 locations by for-profit, public, and nonprofit entities. Youth earn a high school diploma or GED, learn career skills, and connect to job opportunities.

NATIONAL GUARD CHALLENGE

Funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, this program helps adolescents improve their education and employment success.

RE-ENTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Youth REO projects focus on pre- and post-release services, including case management, educational and occupational skills training, tutoring, credit retrieval, job placement and other supportive services.

SERVICE AND CONSERVATION CORPS

Youth are engaged in service projects coupled with job training, mentoring and academic programming.

WIOA YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Youth programs are designed to help youth with education, and/or occupational skills and training.

YOUTHBUILD

Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), this community-based alternative education program provides hands-on job training, educational and community service opportunities.



“YouthBuild changed my life forever. I built housing for homeless people and earned my GED.

Now I’m chairman of the homeowners’ association in my inner city neighborhood”

**- ANTOINE BENNETT,
YOUTHBUILD SANDTOWN
(BALTIMORE)**

RECONNECTING YOUTH CAMPAIGN: PLAN FOR RECONNECTING 1 MILLION OPPORTUNITY YOUTH EACH YEAR THROUGH FEDERAL FUNDING STREAMS

| Program | Agency | Number of OY Served | Target for Growth | Projected Federal Cost per OY | Cost at Estimate for Growth | Estimated Lifetime Fiscal Savings, by Savings Type | | | | | TOTAL |
|--|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------|
| | | | | | | Taxes | Crime | Health | Welfare | | |
| Comprehensive Education and Employment Programs | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Job Corps | Labor | 52,415 | 65,000 | \$30,106 | \$1,956,890,000 | \$6,857,500,000 | \$890,500,000 | \$2,721,550,000 | \$627,900,000 | \$11,097,450,000 | |
| YouthBuild | Labor | 7,560 | 50,000 | \$15,000 | \$750,000,000 | \$5,275,000,000 | \$685,000,000 | \$2,093,500,000 | \$483,000,000 | \$8,536,500,000 | |
| Service and Conservation Corps | Various | 14,780 | 65,000 | \$10,000 | \$650,000,000 | \$6,857,500,000 | \$890,500,000 | \$2,721,550,000 | \$627,900,000 | \$11,097,450,000 | |
| National Guard Youth Challenge | Defense | 9,000 | 20,000 | \$13,890 | \$277,800,000 | \$2,110,000,000 | \$274,000,000 | \$837,400,000 | \$193,200,000 | \$3,414,600,000 | |
| Reentry Employment Opportunities | Labor | 6,130 | 18,000 | \$7,300 | \$131,400,000 | \$1,899,000,000 | \$246,600,000 | \$753,660,000 | \$173,880,000 | \$3,073,140,000 | |
| AmeriCorps National and Civilian Community Corps | CNCS | 138 | 1,400 | \$29,674 | \$41,543,600 | \$147,700,000 | \$19,180,000 | \$58,618,000 | \$13,524,000 | \$239,022,000 | |
| AmeriCorps State/National | CNCS | 6,260 | 50,000 | \$11,063 | \$553,150,000 | \$5,275,000,000 | \$685,000,000 | \$2,093,500,000 | \$483,000,000 | \$8,536,500,000 | |
| Subtotals: | | 96,283 | 269,400 | \$4,360,783,600 | \$28,421,700,000 | \$28,421,700,000 | \$3,690,780,000 | \$11,279,778,000 | \$2,602,404,000 | \$45,994,662,000 | |
| Short-Term Education Programs | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Adult Secondary Education | Education | 132,500 | 248,700 | \$300 | \$74,610,000 | \$26,237,850,000 | \$3,407,190,000 | \$10,413,069,000 | \$2,402,442,000 | \$42,460,551,000 | |
| Chafee Education and Training Vouchers | HHS | 16,548 | 26,000 | \$2,555 | \$66,430,000 | \$2,743,000,000 | \$356,200,000 | \$1,088,620,000 | \$251,160,000 | \$4,438,980,000 | |
| Subtotals: | | 149,048 | 274,700 | \$141,040,000 | \$28,980,850,000 | \$28,980,850,000 | \$3,763,390,000 | \$11,501,689,000 | \$2,653,602,000 | \$46,899,531,000 | |
| Short-Term Employment Programs | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WIOA Youth Activities | Labor | 94,390 | 456,801 | \$4,424 | \$2,020,887,624 | \$48,192,505,500 | \$6,258,173,700 | \$19,126,257,870 | \$4,412,697,660 | \$77,989,634,730 | |
| Subtotals: | | 94,390 | 456,801 | \$2,020,887,624 | \$48,192,505,500 | \$48,192,505,500 | \$6,258,173,700 | \$19,126,257,870 | \$4,412,697,660 | \$77,989,634,730 | |
| TOTALS: | | 339,721 | 1,000,901 | \$6,522,711,224 | \$105,595,055,500 | \$105,595,055,500 | \$13,712,343,700 | \$41,907,724,870 | \$9,668,703,660 | \$170,883,827,730 | |

¹ See <http://forumfvi.org/content/OpportunityYouthROI> for the number of Opportunity Youth and related costs in each specific district

² See <https://gradsoflife.org/business-case>, <http://www.fsg.org/impact-hiring-initiative>, <https://gradsoflife.org/>, <https://www.100kopportunities.org/>