

Summer Youth Employment Program

During the summer of 2009, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds allowed 1,305 low-income youth the opportunity to have summer employment. The Summer Youth Employment Program provided youth exposure to many different types of jobs primarily in the non-profit and governmental sectors while developing work readiness skills. In addition, for the first time, youth were allowed to be placed in the private sector through an internship-type work experience.

The percentage of individuals who were either non-white (36.1%) or disabled (27.2%) was significantly higher than Iowa's population at-large (unfortunately, in terms of ethnicity, 91 individuals checked more than one box, which increases the error in our sample):

White	925	70.9%
African American	351	26.9%
Hispanic / Latino	73	5.6%
American Indian / Alaska Native	34	2.6%
Asian	8	0.6%
Hawaiian Native / Pacific Islander	5	0.4%
Total non-white	471	36.1%
Youth with Disabilities	355	27.2%
Veterans	3	0.2%

Following the summer, many of the participants were able to secure ongoing employment at their worksite which provided their first job in their career field. The Summer Youth Employment Program allowed for the continuation of the work experience for youth ages 22-24 until March 31, 2010. Of the participants in the program 86 were either retained by their worksite at the completion of the program or found full-time employment. In addition, a large percentage of the participants either returned to secondary schooling or entered post-secondary training. For participants that had dropped out of school, there was a strong emphasis on acquiring their GED.

In order to understand the Summer Youth Employment Program, a specific example of the summer youth employment program, could be helpful. Six young men (ages 17 through 23) participated in the Summer Youth Employment Program at Nahant Marsh (Conservation) in a marsh beautification effort. All of them had very limited work history and were having difficulty finding employment. Five resided at the Residential Correctional Facility and needed employment or else they faced incarceration; in addition, work attachment is critical as one of the leading indicators of recidivism is unemployment. Their attendance was excellent and four of them completed the summer program because of their hard work and the ability to get along with the other staff.