The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Investments in Youth Work Experiences

Case Study Summary on Using Evidence for Improvement

Research demonstrated that youth work experiences increase wages and employment.

A broad range of studies starting in the 1970s show that youth work experiences lead to increases in wages and employment.

The federal government was already funding youth employment programs through Job Corps and expanded funding for employment experiences in the 1980s with the Job Training Partnership Act.

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) decreased youth work experiences.

Starting in 1998, WIA inadvertently led to reduced investments in youth work experiences by increasing other requirements on local workforce boards.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 re-invested in youth work experiences with positive results.

ARRA funded youth summer work experiences, which successfully increased participants’ work readiness skills and demonstrated that youth gained more responsibility and autonomy through longer work experiences.

Supported by these findings, current law specifically funds youth work experiences.

Therefore, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 included a youth work experience minimum expenditure requirement for local workforce boards that led to increases in funding for youth work experiences.

Read the full case study here: https://forumfyi.org/knowledge-center/wioa-case-study/