



Home Builders Institute

The Workforce Development Arm of the National Association of Home Builders



Project CRAFT (Community, Restitution, and Apprenticeship-Focused Training) **An Industry Partnership Working for America's Youth**

In 1994, the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration awarded a Youth Offender Demonstration Grant to Home Builders Institute (HBI), the workforce development arm of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). Project CRAFT combined seven components from proven vocational training programs targeted to adult offenders, homeless men and women and economically disadvantaged youth. These program components remain to this day:

- Partnership-building and Linkages
- Community Involvement
- Leadership Development
- Follow-up Support Services
- Comprehensive Service Delivery
- Industry-Driven Training
- Job Placement

Implementation

Project CRAFT was designed to improve educational levels, teach vocational skills and reduce recidivism among adjudicated youth, while addressing the home building industry's need for entry level workers. The 1994 grant funded Project CRAFT on three facilities in Maryland, North Dakota and Tennessee. The program incorporates the apprenticeship concept of hands-on training and academic instruction, utilizing industry validated Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate Training (PACT), numeracy, literacy and employability skills curricula. Under the supervision of journey-level instructors, students learn residential construction skills while completing community service construction projects.

Results

Replication of the CRAFT model began soon after the three pilot sites evidenced their first 12-month outcomes. State and local agencies partnered with HBI to offer adjudicated youth in their care, the vocational and holistic training piloted by Project CRAFT. The program has been implemented as a prevention, intervention, aftercare and residential initiative. Since 1994, Project CRAFT has helped more than 2,000 high-risk youth on 15 sites in ten states (Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas).

During Program Year 2004 (July 2004 - June 2005), Project CRAFT trained and placed youth in:

- Florida, on five sites through the state Department of Juvenile Justice
- Monroe Township, funded by the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission
- Nashville, Tenn., through a Youth Offender Demonstration grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, with the Davidson County Drug Court, the Tennessee Department of Correction and the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole
- Jackson, Miss., funded by the state Department of Human Services, established in May 2004

Cumulative outcomes for these Project CRAFT programs in PY 2004 were:

- Average wage upon placement \$8.15/hour
- Placement upon graduation 88 percent
- Community service 55,216 hours

The latest recidivism figures for Project CRAFT are subjective and average between ten and 15 percent. This is indeed impressive when compared against a national average of 50 percent.

	Jackson (community - based)	Monroe Township	Nashville (community - based)	Avon Park Youth Academy	Pembroke Pines*	Orlando (community - based)	Tampa (community - based)	Totals (weighted averages)
Program Start	June 2004	2002	2003	1997	2002	1995	2001	N/A
Students Trained Annually	31	20	64	160	43	40	40	398
Placement Rate	100%	33%	84.38%	91%	91%	95%	91%	88%
Average Starting Hourly Wage	\$8.00	\$9.58	\$8.39	\$8.21	\$8.00	\$8.19	\$7.28	\$8.15
Community Volunteer Hours	1,822	10,381	10,640	3,408	20,798	3,111	5,056	55,216

* Project CRAFT operates at the South Pines Academy and Thompson Academy in Pembroke Pines, Fla.

Students evidence one grade level improvement in math and language skills attributable largely to contextual learning both in the classroom and through hands on training components. Math and communication are continually reinforced as students are challenged to apply these skills to everyday situations in the field and in the classroom.

Recognition

Project CRAFT received a 2002 PEPNet Award from the National Youth Employment Coalition and the U.S. Department of Labor, recognizing the program as a best practice in youth development. Others recognizing the program as a promising intervention for juvenile offenders include:

- U.S. Congress in FY 2004 and FY 2005 Appropriations Report Language.
- Mental Health Treatment for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System: A Compendium of Promising Practices, National Mental Health Association, 2004
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in its Sept. 2003 publication, Juvenile Justice Bulletin and its Employment and Training for Court-Involved Youth report, Nov. 2000.
- Florida Juvenile Justice Accountability Board, in A Study of Vocational Programming in Juvenile Justice Commitment Facilities, (JJAB Doc. 00-002-JJAB).

Conclusion

By any measure, the dividends and support for Project CRAFT are exemplary. This is one of those rare programs that bring together industry and government in a partnership with tangible positive outcomes. Since 1994, the program has earned a reputation as a worthwhile investment of taxpayer dollars; a significant resource to the nation's building industry and a major contributor to the future success of hundreds of young people.

