



National Youth Administration United States

As part of the New Deal, this program employed millions of young people in public works and public service during the Great Depression

Summary

The National Youth Administration (NYA) was created by President Roosevelt in the summer of 1935 under the authority of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935. The program was directed by Aubrey Williams for a majority of its existence. Notably, Williams, and Elenore Roosevelt, reportedly sought to incorporate the values of racial equality into the program. The program offered work for out-of-school, unemployed youth and part-time work-study aid to help students in high school or attending college (1).

Rationale

The NYA was implemented to extend access to and the benefits of New Deal era employment programs (WPA, CCC) to youth in the United States, under concerns for a lost generation of trained and educated workers.

Defining Principles

The program sought to support and provide a path for youth to participate in remunerative employment, thereby alleviating poverty and providing a safety net for youth during the New Deal era.

Dates of Operation

1935 - 1943

Number of Program Participants

Out-of-school work program provided 2,677,000 jobs and the work-study program 2,134,000 jobs throughout the duration of the program (2).

Criteria for Participation

Age 16-25 (3).

Pay and Benefits

USD 15-22 monthly (4).

Financing

U.S. Federal Government New Deal. Total expenditure for the program was \$662 million, with \$468 million for out-of-school work programs and \$170 million for the work-study program (5).



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Implementation

For work-study aspects, funding was disbursed to school principals who provided work-study funding to students in return for work on the school campus. WPA infrastructure supported participants outside of the work-study program, with creation of state and regional Youth Administrations. Youth lacking access to medical care were provided care through the program. In the later years of the program, work-study and service work were phased out to focus on industrial labor in support of the war effort, national defense (6).

Types of Work

Work-study aid work occurred at schools and in the areas of research and community service (40%), grounds and building maintenance (16%), library services, clerical assistance, laboratory assistance, and home economics (7). Outside of work-study, youths no longer in school were provided employment in general labor and services including: building and servicing parks and playgrounds, aides to public authorities, providing childcare, support for state and local traffic departments, and repairing books (8). Defense industry work included machine-shop work, sheet-metal trades, welding, and electrical industries, providing on-the-job-training to participating workers who then transitioned to private sector employment.

Notable Features

Youth focus, large-scale program, race and gender inclusive (9).

Challenges

This program was the most racially inclusive New Deal employment program, but it still did not match the need (10). Like other New Deal programs, this program dwindled as the wartime economy ramped up and young people, both men and women, were in high demand for the military and other forms of production (11)(12)(13)(14)(15).



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Citations

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