

Improving Labor Market Prospects for Young Men

Evidence From Career Academies

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<http://www.mdrc.org/publications/482/full.pdf>

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Career Academies

Program Characteristics, Goals, and Track Record

➤ Key Features

- *Small Learning Communities* in high schools to promote interpersonal supports and program coherence
- *Career theme* to combine academic curriculum with career-related course sequence
- *Employer partnerships* to support career awareness and development activities and work-based learning

➤ Goals

- *Dropout prevention*
- *Career development and academic achievement*
- *Pathways to the labor market and post-secondary education*

● Track Record

- *34-year history of implementation, planned expansion, and efforts at continuous improvement*
- *Intervention with goals and core features aligned with important problems in high schools and youth employment*

Features of the Evaluation

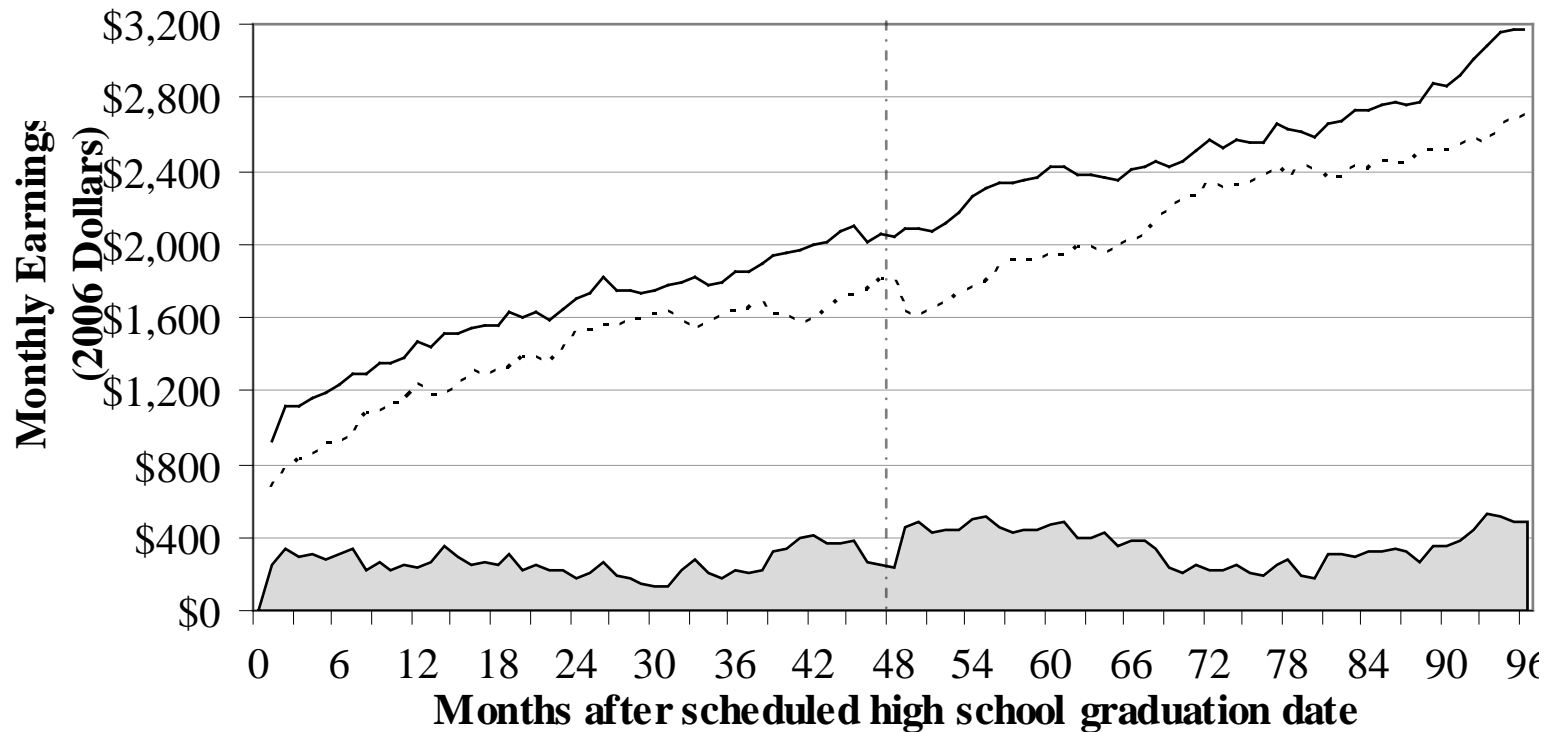
- 9 sites reflecting typical Career Academy implementation and urban contexts
- Random assignment field experiment involving over 1,700 students who applied to Career Academies in 1993, 1994, 1995
- Qualitative information on program implementation and context
- Baseline and outcome data:
 - Surveys administered during high school (4 waves)
 - School records data
 - 4-year post-high school follow-up survey
 - 8-year post-high school follow-up survey

Key Findings

(8 Years Post-High School)

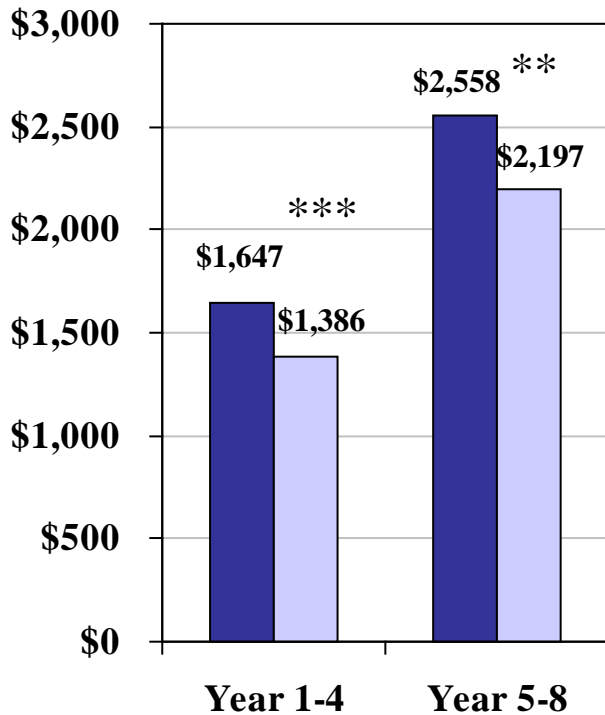
- **Positive and sustained impact on employment and earnings through 8 years following scheduled high school graduation.**
 - Impact for full sample: \$2,088 per year (11 percent increase)
 - Impact for young men: \$3,724 per year (17 percent increase)
 - Impact for young women: \$1,026 per year (not statistically significant)
- **High levels of educational attainment, but no impact (positive or negative) from Career Academies.**
- **Positive impact on family formation and independent living.**

Impacts on Monthly Earnings Young Men 8 Years Post-High School

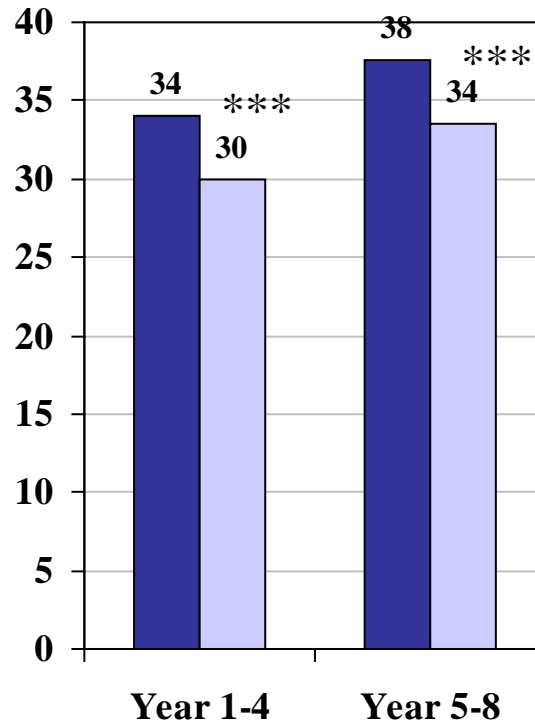


Impacts on Employment and Earnings Young Men 8 Years Post-High School

Average Monthly Earnings



Average Weekly Hours



Average Hourly Wage



Academy
 Non-Academy

Impacts on Adult Transition Indicators

Young Men

8 Years Post-High School

Outcome (%)	Academy Group	Non-Academy Group	Impact	P-Value	Percentage Change
<u>Young men</u> (N = 586)					
Marital status					
Married and living together	36.0	27.0	9.0 **	0.020	33.4
Single	59.3	65.6	-6.3	0.114	-9.6
Divorced, separated, or widowed	4.7	7.4	-2.7	0.157	-36.8
Parental status					
Custodial parent	36.6	25.2	11.5 ***	0.003	45.6
Noncustodial parent	11.5	17.9	-6.4 **	0.023	-35.9
Not a parent	51.9	56.6	-4.7	0.242	-8.3
Living situation					
Lives independently with child/children and partner	30.2	23.2	7.0 *	0.058	30.4
Lives independently with no children	35.8	45.7	-9.9 **	0.015	-21.6
Lives independently with child/children but not partner	2.8	1.9	0.9	0.476	44.6
Lives with parent(s) or guardian(s), with or without children	31.2	29.2	2.0	0.609	6.7

Implications

- Increased investments in career-related experiences during high school can have substantial payoff in the labor market, at least for young men.
- Feasibility of accomplishing goals of school-to-career and career technical education without compromising on academic goals.
- Empirical support for potential link between *impacts* on labor market prospects and *impacts* other adult transition behaviors for young men.