



E C O N O M I C
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I N I T I A T I V E

Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) United States

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program provided training and public employment opportunities to the long term unemployed and people with low incomes

Summary

CETA aggregated numerous post-New Deal federal workforce training, education, private and public sector job payments to support hiring, support services, and public service employment programs which existed prior to 1973 under one program. The programs included various forms of public service employment: youth summer jobs programs, on-the-job training, emergency employment programs. Types of work varied substantially by jurisdiction, from local government service occupations (lawyers to custodians) to professions in the arts.

Rationale

Mid-1970s legislation to coordinate a decentralized system of Federal, State, and local employment, training, and social service programs. Recession of 1973–1975. “It is the purpose of this Act to provide job training and employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged (unemployed, and underemployed persons, and to assure that training- and other services lead to maximum employment opportunities and enhance self-sufficiency by establishing a flexible and decentralized system of Federal, State, and local programs,” (1).

Defining Principles

Expanding the social safety net and providing job-ready skills.

Dates of Operation

1973 - March 1984 (repealed by President Ronald Reagan)

Criteria for Participation

Varied by program.

Pay and Benefits

Varied wages depending on jurisdiction and type of work. Some programs offered transportation and other support services to support employment programs.



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Financing

U.S. Federal Government.

Implementation

Jobs created at existing government agencies (federal, state, local county and municipality), for-profit, and not-for-profit organizations (2).

Types of Work

Types of work varied substantially by jurisdiction, from local government service occupations (lawyers to custodians) to arts professions.

Notable Features

Comprehensive legislation to aggregate existing emergency and permanent public service employment, training and education, and social services to support employment. The precursor to present-day federally-funded employment and training program infrastructure in the United States (WIOA). Phil Harvey points out the “fiscal substitution problem,” whereby when funding by one part of the government is administered by another level of government, funds are used to support existing public employment roles that would have otherwise been funded, replacing existing public employment rather than augmenting (3).

Challenges

Decentralized job creation and training led to mistrust in the program. Little or no net job creation was found, and job training was not effective in creating permanent employment for participants (4).



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Citations

- (1) U.S. Congress. (Dec 28, 1973) Public Law 93-203, Statue 87. S.1559. <https://www.congress.gov/93/statute/STATUTE-87/STATUTE-87-Pg839.pdf>
- (2) Mirengoff, William; Rindler, Lester. (1976). The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. Impact on People, Places, Programs. An Interim Report. National Academy of Sciences. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED131269>
- (3) Mirengoff, William; Rindler, Lester. (1976). The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. Impact on People, Places, Programs. An Interim Report. National Academy of Sciences.
- (4) Goss, Robert P. (2006). Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. Center for the Study of Federalism Encyclopedia. http://encyclopedia.federalism.org/index.php/Comprehensive_Employment_and_Training_Act



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