



Ready to Work Partnership Grant Evaluation

SUMMARY

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded 24 Ready to Work (RTW) Partnership grants to establish and operate programs that would prepare long-term unemployed and underemployed U.S. workers for employment in middle- and higher-level occupations. The RTW programs provided customized services that could include staff guidance on career and service planning, occupational training, work-based training, employment readiness, and job search assistance.

To understand the impact of RTW grant programs on participants' outcomes, DOL launched an evaluation that included an experimental impact study as well as an implementation study. The experimental study examined the impacts on the outcomes for RTW participants relative to outcomes for individuals who did not participate in these programs. The following four purposively selected grantees participated in the evaluation:

- Maryland Tech Connection, operated by Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation.
- Skills to Work in Technology and Job Search Accelerator, operated by Jewish Vocational Service.
- Finger Lakes Hired, operated by RochesterWorks!
- Reboot Northwest, operated by Worksystems, Inc.

This report describes interim program impacts on service and credential receipt, earnings and employment, public benefits receipt, and a range of other employment-related outcomes through approximately 18 months after random assignment of participants into the study. The evaluation also estimates impacts for subgroups based on age, education level, employment status and gender.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The RTW programs provided a range of services (occupational training, work-based training, employment readiness courses, and job search assistance), produced moderate impacts on service receipt, and increased the number of hours of employment readiness courses the participants attended.

The study did not find positive impacts on earnings, employment, or receipt of public benefits at 18 months. The evaluators explored four factors that may explain the pattern of interim impact findings:

- The 18-month follow-up period may have been too early to detect positive impacts; however, impacts may appear with the longer follow-up period included in the final report (36 months after random assignment).
- The impacts were too small to be detected by the study's small sample sizes.



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- The grantee programs did not increase service receipt enough to generate detectable impacts on earnings.
- RTW's customized approach did not provide the appropriate content or intensity of services to improve employment outcomes for RTW participants, who were substantially older and better educated than the unemployed workers typically served by the workforce system. The evaluators also noted findings from earlier studies that revealed how older displaced workers face unique challenges to employment, including age discrimination, emotional distress due to unemployment, and outdated skills.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

TIMEFRAME: 2016-2022

SUBMITTED BY: Abt Associates

DATE PREPARED: May 2022

PARTNER AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

SPONSOR: Chief Evaluation Office

CEO CONTACT: ChiefEvaluationOffice@dol.gov

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