



The Ready to Work Partnership Grant Evaluation

SUMMARY

In 2016, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the [Employment and Training Administration](#) and funded contractor Abt Associates to conduct the Ready to Work (RTW) Partnership Grant Evaluation. This impact and implementation evaluation aims to understand the implementation and effectiveness of select training and related services provided by the RTW Partnership grant program, and to measure the effectiveness of these programs in improving participants' short and long-term outcomes. The RTW grants are intended to assist long-term unemployed workers in gaining the skills and competencies needed to obtain employment in high-growth industries or economic sectors, and to better meet employer needs for jobs currently being filled through the H-1B visa program.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the annual process to determine the Department's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform employment and training programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Final Impact Report

- The Ready to Work (RTW) program was designed to assist those experiencing long-term unemployment or underemployment after the Great Recession of 2007-2009. Participants were provided with employment related services—primarily occupational training, work-based training, employment readiness activities, and job search assistance services— which were expected to produce an increase in program participants' educational attainment and ultimately to lead to increased employment and earnings.
- The RTW evaluation detected positive impacts on educational attainment and credential receipt (i.e. receiving certificates, credentials, licenses, or degrees) for three of the four grant programs included in the impact study.
- The RTW evaluation detected no sustained positive impact on earnings or employment for any of the four RTW grantee programs through approximately four years of follow-up. Even considering the four programs together, no impact is detected.
- Several potential factors could have contributed to these findings, including the improving economy over the four-year grant period (from 2014 to 2019). As more job-ready unemployed workers found jobs, grantees reported serving participants who faced greater barriers to employment than originally anticipated.
- The study also found that RTW control group members (individuals who were not offered RTW services) were able to access many employment-related services



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provided in the community. In designing future programs, DOL may wish to consider how the new program will lead to the receipt of considerably more employment related services than participants would receive otherwise.

Topic Brief: Long-Term Unemployed during the COVID Recession

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, a sample of previously long-term unemployed workers who were relatively older and educated experienced a dramatic fall in employment in 2020 similar to national trends.
- Though the national unemployment rate had almost returned to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021, employment levels for this sample of workers did not recover during this time period.
- Changes in employment and earnings levels from 2019 to 2021 did not vary with race/ethnicity or gender. However, individuals with less than a bachelor's degree had a substantially larger decrease in earnings during 2020 and substantially smaller increase in earnings during 2021 than did those with a bachelor's degree or more.

Topic Brief: Survey Non-Response Bias

- The study found no clear evidence that non-response to the follow-up survey generated survey non-response bias in estimated impacts on earnings and employment, as measured for the full study sample in administrative data.

Topic Brief: Achieving Strong Survey Response Rates

- Factors that may have contributed to strong survey responses rates included collecting quality contact information during study enrollment, sending periodic study communications to study participants, and designing and implementing a robust data collection protocol led by an experienced survey team.
- Among the survey respondents, age correlated with a higher response rate with adults 18-24 having a 64% response rate compared to adults 55 and over having a rate of 82%. Highly educated respondents were similarly observed to have higher response rates than respondents with lower educational attainment.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

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SUBMITTED BY: Abt Associates
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PARTNER AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration
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