



Considerations Regarding Future Research on Use of Fees in Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Programs: Discussion Paper

SUMMARY

In 2021, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the [Employment and Training Administration \(ETA\)](#) and commissioned contractor Summit Consulting, LLC (Summit) to explore issues related to future research on application or user fees in programs administered by ETA based on a review of regulations, guidance, and selected research concerning such fees. This discussion paper briefly covers the purposes, general principles, and practices related to application or user fees; summarizes possible factors related to such research on them; and suggests possible research projects relating to the use of fees with employers under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I for certain customized services, such as for recruitment events and human resource consultation services.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the learning agenda process. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [data, methods, and tools](#) and [employment and training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The federal government charges fees for applications and services across a wide range of programs. The goals for imposing such fees can include traditional revenue generation and restraining demand or stimulating it due to improved perceptions of program quality.
- Application or user fees are seldom used in ETA programs because they lack legal authority to charge fees to participants and for labor exchange activities. However, fees can be charged to employers under Foreign Labor Certification programs and under WIOA Title I for certain customized services delivered to employers at the local level. Additionally, a study of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs under prior law (the Workforce Investment Act) found that 10 of the 28 local workforce areas in the study charged nominal fees for certain employer services, and some staff in these local areas said the fees both raised needed revenue and improved businesses' perceptions of service quality.
- Possible factors related to the effect of such fees fall into three categories: (1) participation factors related to how fees may affect the use of program services or engagement in related activities; (2) program operation factors related to the administration of fees and alignment of fees with program goals; and (3) external factors outside the jurisdiction of program administrators and participants that can influence how fees may affect program operations or outcomes.
- Future research regarding the use of fees for customized services for employers in local one-stop systems under WIOA Title I could explore all three factors



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described above and questions such as whether the use of fees is associated with perceptions of increased service quality by employers, whether introducing fees affects employer participation, and whether fee collection methods and administrative burden affect employers' willingness to pay and participate.

- Future potential research projects include a descriptive study on the landscape of fee usage, a pilot or demonstration study to determine the challenges in implementing fees and what types of fee-for-service activities would garner employer interest; and a feasibility study on use of more rigorous methods (such as a randomized control trial or a quasi-experimental design) to test use of fees.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

TIMEFRAME: 2021-2024

SUBMITTED BY: Summit Consulting

DATE PREPARED: April 2024

PARTNER AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration

SPONSOR: Chief Evaluation Office

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