

Research and Evaluation Notes

September 2022



To support the public workforce system's research and evaluation efforts, these notes share:

- Select research and evaluation initiatives, reports, and resources relevant to the nation's workforce development system, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs, and select populations; and
- Technical assistance (TA) efforts to support positive customer and program outcomes through research, evaluation, and evidence-based program design.

Highlights from this issue:

- **Select Reading** features findings from implementation evaluation reports and related briefs on Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) strategies.
- **Evidence in Action** highlights quality reviews of rigorous employment-related intervention studies on Low-income Adults and Equitable Recovery.
- **Research in Living Color** presents an infographic from the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center of a resource-allocation and service-matching tool to assess and support reentering adults.

SELECT READING

Program Strategies: State and Local Implementation

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office released a final implementation evaluation report and several briefs on advancing Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) in state and local programs. The final report, [RESEA Program Strategies: State and Local Implementation](#), details the status of the states' RESEA programs, evaluation plans, and programmatic changes made in response to new RESEA statutory requirements. The report describes the types of services and common program components provided, participant characteristics, and differences between the states' programs. The report also highlights unique or innovative strategies, anticipated changes in states' RESEA programs, and issues and challenges as states continue to implement programs. Findings demonstrate variation across states in the adoption of RESEA program components, staffing approaches, attendance promotion strategies, and consequences for UI claimants' failure to attend meetings.

SPOTLIGHT

- Held on July 28, 2022, the [Evaluation Communities of Practice and Peer Learning Cohorts for State Workforce Agencies](#) webinar describes building an evaluation community of practice and highlights outcomes from prior Evaluation Peer Learning Cohorts.
- The Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM) conference, [Advancing Policy Research with Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives](#), will be held in Washington, DC, November 17-19, 2022.

Serving Unemployment Insurance Claimants During a Public Health Crisis

Following up on RESEA programming changes during the COVID-19 pandemic, [Serving Unemployment Insurance Claimants During a Public Health Crisis: The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments \(RESEA\) Program and the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) identified two pandemic-related challenges for RESEA operations: fewer staff to administer RESEA as staff helped process a surge of UI claims; and closed facilities and temporary suspension of RESEA in-person meetings and services. In responding to these challenges, state and local programs altered service delivery, made changes to RESEA staffing, and adjusted criteria for UI eligibility and work search reviews. The report recommends studying the longer-term effects of shifts in remote and virtual service delivery on UI claimants' program participation and employment outcomes.

On the [main study page](#) several related briefs on available evidence for RESEA programs and strategies are introduced in the [Reemployment Services Evidence: A Collection of Briefs on RESEA Components](#). The briefs examine the evidence and knowledge gaps in three areas: 1) program activities that precede the in-person RESEA meeting—such as claimant selection, scheduling, and attendance policies; 2) impacts of basic career services; and 3) impacts of individualized career services.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION

Low-Income Adults

The DOL Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) offers state and local practitioners a resource on serving low-income adults in workforce development. The [Low-Income Adults research](#), found under the topic areas tab, includes studies examining the effectiveness of interventions that serve low-income adults and have goals of improving their employment and earnings outcomes. CLEAR, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Employment Strategies for Low-Income Adults Review (now the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse) assesses the rigor of a study's design to determine the strength of causal evidence in each study. For example, a recently assessed 2021 study, [Evaluation of Bridges to Career Opportunities: Final Report](#) evaluated an intervention to determine whether low-income adults with low skills, who participated in financial and foundational skills intervention services, were more likely than a similar group to see positive impacts on their employment and financial stability. This impact study demonstrated moderate causal evidence of increases in credential attainment, foundational skills, and employment advances for the participants; it also found increases in good credit score outcomes for both the comparison clients and the participants.

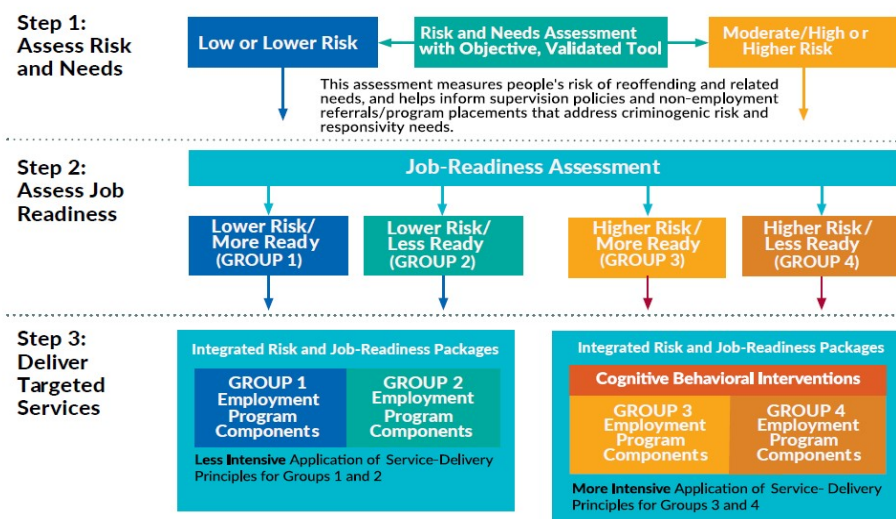
Equitable Recovery

CLEAR also offers a [New and Trending Research](#) tab with studies that summarize and synthesize evaluation reports on workforce topics. A Rapid Evidence Review on [Equitable Recovery](#) summarizes 23 causal studies on four strategies - training interventions, employment supports, small business supports, and place-based strategies - and a fifth section on ways to measure recovery. The objective of this rapid review addresses the question: "what strategies effectively and equitably support labor market outcomes and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic among those facing the greatest barriers?" The strength of evidence is assessed for rigor in design and each study's design, methods, and findings for the intervention are summarized. The final section of the equitable recovery synthesis summarizes methods that can be used to assess recovery among women, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and other marginalized groups.

RESEARCH IN LIVING COLOR

The Council of State Governments Justice Center, which administers the National Reentry Resource Center, provided technical assistance, and led a mixed methods process evaluation of a pilot project for people returning to the community after incarceration. The [Integrated Re-entry and Employment Strategies: Pilot Project Process Evaluation Report](#) describes a resource-allocation and service-matching tool, (see Figure 1) based on risks, needs, and responsivity principles (RNR) and assesses individuals' risk of recidivism and level of job readiness. When used, RNR categorizes individuals into four groups: 1) lower risk/less ready, 2) lower risk/more ready, 3) higher risk/less ready, and 4) higher risk/more ready and assigns them a combination of services tailored to their risks.

Figure 1: The Resource-allocation and Service-matching tool



Source: IRES: Pilot Project Process Evaluation Report, p. 10. <https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FINAL-IRES-Pilot-Project-Proc-Eval-Report.pdf>

Share research and evaluation questions, suggestions, and resource needs with the Employment and Training Administration's Office of Policy Development and Research at workforcepractices@dol.gov. Archived [Research and Evaluation Notes](#) are available at the [Evaluation and Research Hub](#) in WorkforceGPS.