

Research and Evaluation Notes



June 2023

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:

- Three reports focused on implementation of Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grants (YARG) to develop or expand registered apprenticeships for youth.
- An evidence review report of sector-based programs with findings that demonstrate increased employment and earnings, with the effects largely driven by access to higher-wage and higher-quality jobs.
- A depiction of a methodology employed to examine the availability of family-sustaining jobs by occupation and industry.

SELECT READING

Evidence in Youth Apprenticeship

In June 2020, ETA awarded 14 youth readiness grants to develop or expand registered apprenticeships for youth. Grant funds were to be spent on activities to support apprentices ages 16 to 24 participating in Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) in high-demand industries, including manufacturing, health care, information technology, and cybersecurity.

The [Youth Apprenticeship in the United States: Apprenticeship Evidence Building Portfolio](#) report profiles the YARG grantees and their partners and identifies specific issues and areas of interest that the YARG evaluation should focus on, including: strategies for recruiting and supporting youth apprentices; development and expansion of programs exclusively serving youth apprentices; registration of previously unregistered youth apprenticeship programs; and potentially promising or innovative partnership models that support youth RAPs.

The [Models of Youth Registered Apprenticeship Expansion: Evidence from the Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grants](#) brief describes YARG grantee program features and expansion models. The five models utilized by YARG grantees and described in detail are: secondary school-based registered apprenticeship model; postsecondary school-based registered apprenticeship model; intermediary model; regionally coordinated registered apprenticeship model; and youth-supporting mixed-age registered apprenticeship model. The youth-supporting mixed-age registered apprenticeship model may be particularly appropriate for state workforce agencies since it takes advantage of the existing registered apprenticeship system that primarily serves adults by introducing partnerships, services, and resources to make these programs more accessible to youth.

The [Understanding the Capacity of State Apprenticeship Systems: Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio](#) report provides an initial understanding of how states may be approaching various aspects of state system implementation, including engaging employers across nontraditional industries and rural areas, recruitment of diverse apprentices, costs of state support for apprentices and the role of federal grants, and data infrastructure and performance.

SPOTLIGHT

New Events:

- [ETA Vision 2030 Workforce Convening](#), held May 16–18, 2023, focused on:
 - 1) Opportunities for vulnerable workers and communities
 - 2) New industry partnerships that lead to real, good jobs
 - 3) Building a better care economy
 - 4) Actions for the future of work
- [Preparing for Equity-Focused Evaluation in Workforce Development](#), held May 22, 2023, an Evaluation and Research Hub webinar, describes evaluation methods and equitable approaches to improve outcomes.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION

Sector-based Programs as Path to Quality Jobs

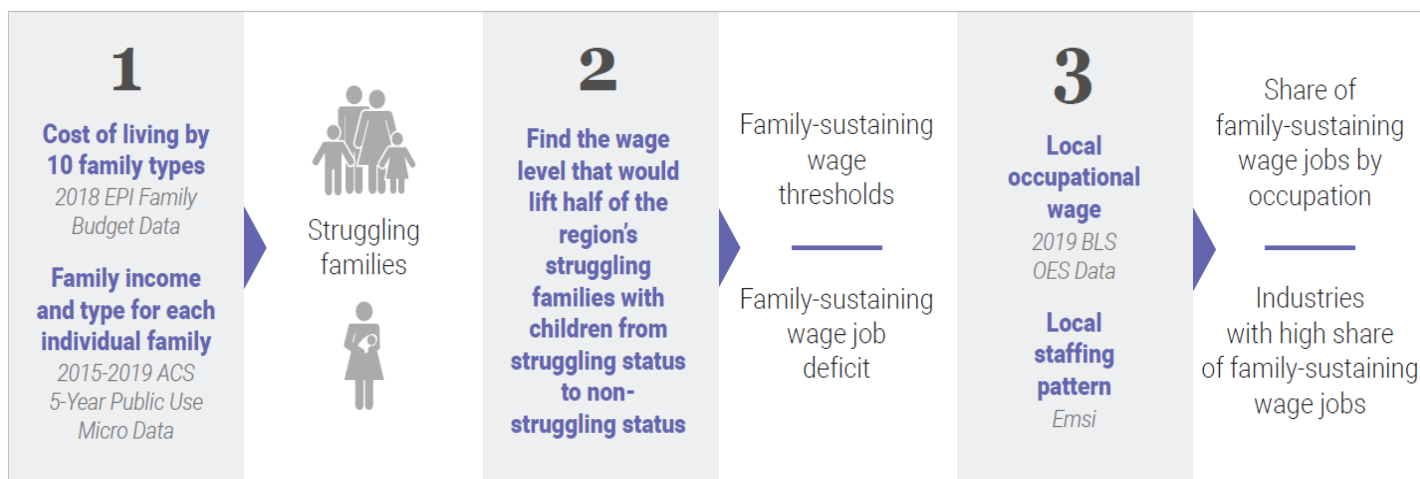
The [Sectoral Employment Programs as a Path to Quality Jobs: Lessons from Randomized Evaluations](#) by J-PAL summarizes a paper that examines four randomized evaluations, describes the mechanisms behind their success, and suggests sectoral employment programs as potential approaches to addressing wage inequality. The analysis defines sectoral employment programs as those that train jobseekers for high-quality employment or employment in specific industries considered to have strong labor demand and opportunities for career growth. The analysis finds that sectoral employment programs generate increases in employment and earnings, with the effects largely driven by workers gaining access to higher-wage and higher-quality jobs. The magnitude and consistency of the findings point to sectoral employment programs as promising for workforce development. This evidence review can serve as a resource for policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and philanthropy.

RESEARCH IN LIVING COLOR

Defining Family-Sustaining Wages

The Brookings Institution's [How Family Sustaining Jobs Can Power an Inclusive Recovery in America's Regional Economies](#) report provides family-sustaining wage thresholds that can guide public-private partnerships that want to rebuild a more socially stable and prosperous economy in the wake of COVID-19. The report defines a family-sustaining wage threshold as the wage level that would transition half of the region's low-income families with children out of low-income status, given the families' current earnings structures and number of wage earners. The graphic below depicts the methodology employed to calculate those wage thresholds based on pre-pandemic data and corresponding availability of jobs that meet the thresholds.

Estimating Family-Sustaining Wage Thresholds and Family-Sustaining Job Availability



Liu, S. & Parilla, J. [How Family Sustaining Jobs Can Power an Inclusive Recovery in America's Regional Economies](#). The Brookings Institution, 2023.

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