

Research and Evaluation Notes

Spring 2025

To support the public workforce system's research and evaluation (R&E) efforts, these notes share:

- Select R&E initiatives, reports, and resources relevant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs, services, and customers.
- Technical assistance (TA) information to support positive customer and service delivery outcomes through research, evaluation, and evidence-based program design.

Highlights in this issue:

- A discussion paper exploring the possibilities for future research about application and user fees for programs administered by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Wisconsin's future vision for an integrated workforce data system including useful video resources.
- Several resources about the importance of longitudinal data systems for understanding economic outcomes.
- A paper exploring the successful practices that reduce unemployment rates during economic recessions.

SELECT READING

Considerations Regarding Future Research on Use of Fees in Employment and Training Administration Programs

To generate revenue or shape demand for programming, the federal government may charge users fees for services and applications. The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) seldom charges application or user fees, but little has been studied about whether and how charging user fees might influence the demand for ETA programs. In 2021, the U.S. Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with a research firm to explore opportunities for future research and possible issues of research related to application or user fees across programs administered by ETA. The literature review suggests that future studies could examine the uses of fees in programs under Title I WIOA, charging fees to employers for customized services.

Research on these fees could be useful for developing guidance about WIOA implementation and in understanding how fees may shape workforce administrators' relationships with employers. This brief summarizes the findings from these explorations. Future studies could assess whether employer fees increase the perceptions of service quality among employers, and if there are differences across regions. Studies could also examine whether the introduction of fees, administrative burden, or data collection associated with implemented fees affect employer's willingness to pay and participate. Examining these research questions may help program administrators better understand the activities that influence employer participation, which can influence program design.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION

Wisconsin Workforce Data Integration System (WDIS)

Wisconsin has been a leading state in implementing evidence-building activities, plans and resources, especially with workforce data. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Employment and Training team developed a four-pronged future vision statement for building a Workforce Data Integration System (WDIS). The vision statement explains four clear goals, including (1) basing all programs and policies on evidence, (2) understanding the people impact of systems and programs, (3) improving family and person-centered outcomes, and (4) making data

SPOTLIGHT

New Learnings – Catch the WorkforceGPS webinar recordings from the [Elevate Your Outreach Roundtable](#) focused on innovative strategies for workforce development outreach, held on Jan 13; and [Digital Literacy and Resilience: Resources to Support Digital Skill-Building](#) throughout the workforce system, held on January 16, 2025.

available for use by all to improve service delivery across communities. Each goal includes specific examples, and the WDIS page also links to two video resources reflecting on [WDQI project work](#) and describing the process for developing a [DWD learning agenda](#).

Longitudinal Studies: Sharing Quality Data to Measure Long-Term Success

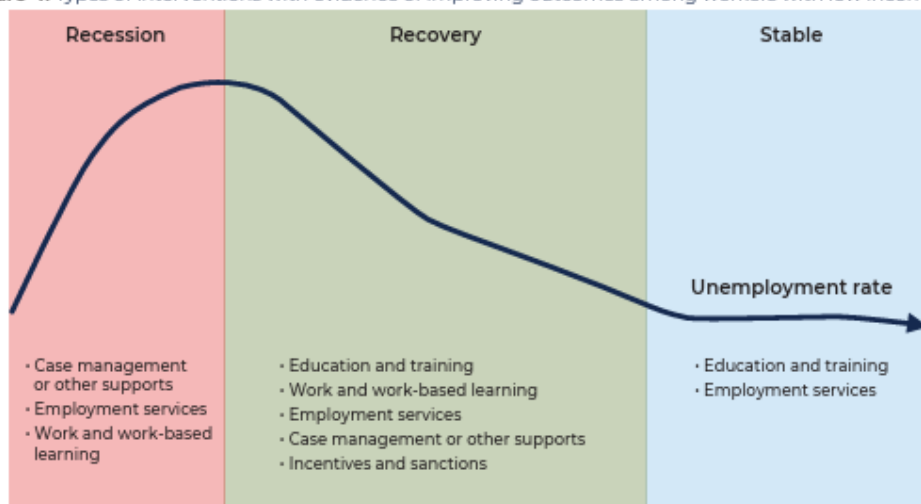
Workforce GPS presents several resources and guides about longitudinal data systems, which can provide essential insights into how the labor market functions. Because longitudinal systems track trends over time, they can offer a different perspective from traditional surveys and clearly measure long-term education outcomes and labor market impact. The [Workforce Data Quality Campaign](#) offers guiding principles and guidance about data-sharing agreements to support collaboration towards longitudinal systems. Databases from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), [Census Bureau](#), and the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) include longitudinal data that states can use to track trends nationally and in their regions. As states make plans to advance their data systems and infrastructure, these resources can help leaders consider what they need to build capacity for performing longitudinal studies and tracking the long-term outcomes of education and training program completers.

RESEARCH IN LIVING COLOR

What Works During Economic Recessions and Recoveries?

A 2021 paper (updated in 2024) synthesized evidence from the [Pathways Clearinghouse](#) about programs administered during previous economic recessions and/or recoveries that effectively improved employment and earnings for people with low incomes. The evidence review analyzed 30 interventions during multiple recessions, and the meta-analysis explored variability, revealing that different types of interventions work best during different economic conditions. However, there are characteristics of interventions that improve outcomes across different economic periods. Figure 4 below lists the intervention types and the types of economic conditions in which those interventions have shown promise. The interventions with the largest effects are listed first in each column, demonstrating that personalized case management and education and training are likely to lead to the most improved outcomes even in times of recessions or recoveries.

Figure 4. Types of interventions with evidence of improving outcomes among workers with low income



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database (2021). Note: The types of interventions with the biggest effects within recessions, recoveries, and stable economic periods are listed first in each column. The trend in the unemployment rate is a stylized representation of economic conditions from 2007 to 2019.

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.