



Research and Evaluation Notes

December 2024

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 from this issue:

- Several briefs about the potential of unemployment insurance Navigators to improve outcomes and equity in workforce programs.
- A policy guide for developing equitable evaluation projects that encourage the use of evidence to shape government spending approaches.
- Strategies to help employment staff providing support services combat bias in TANF programming.
- A graphic demonstrating the program model from the Pathway Home grantee services.

SELECT READING

[Navigator Evidence-Navigator Evidence-Building Portfolio](#)

In 2022, the U.S. Department of Labor funded a portfolio of research studies that build an evidence base to demonstrate the potential effect of Navigators to improve outcomes, and center equity in workforce programs for women, and trade-affected and unemployed participants. Navigators are trusted messengers who provide support, guidance, and coaching to individuals engaging with unemployment insurance (UI) and other claims systems. The study team presented [their initial study design](#) in September 2023 and released the first set of findings in 2024.

Findings from several brief reports in the portfolio focus on the receipt of UI and the program navigators in the [UI Navigator Grants](#). The briefs primarily discuss the challenges and barriers individuals face within UI systems and how program navigators can support them. For example, in [New Mexico and Wisconsin](#), UI Navigators help seasonal and migrant farmworkers with language translation, intensive individual supports, and outreach activities to reduce barriers related to language, complexity of filing claims, and education about other support available. A separate initiative, [Community-Based UI Navigators in Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania](#), supports historically underserved populations by providing in-person services in community settings such as grocery stores, public parks, and libraries to fill the gaps in face-to-face services. [UI Navigators in Pennsylvania and New Mexico](#) address technology barriers like the lack of internet access or equipment by offering equipment and individual coaching on how to use technology to smooth the process of entering and managing claims.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION

[Evaluation Policy Guide](#)

A 2024 publication from Results for America provides state and local government leaders with a guide that summarizes best practices and lessons learned from evaluations of federal, state, and local policy. The guide explores different definitions of evidence across federal agencies and states, shares evidence about the importance of equity in evaluation, recommends strategies for engaging community members in evaluation, provides guidance for establishing an evaluation policy and building buy-in for the policy, and details the need for evidence-based funding decisions. Each section

SPOTLIGHT

- New Learnings – [Understanding BLS Skills and Employment Projections Data](#). This webinar presented information about the newly released national employment projections and, a new product from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), skills data released alongside the 2023–33.
- Upcoming Event – [National Association of State Workforce Agencies Winter Policy Forum](#) will be held February 11 - 14, 2025, in Washington D.C.

summarizes key lessons learned, describes evidence related to the topic, and recommends strategies for moving forward. Then, they feature a reflection exercise for users to understand how to adapt these concepts to their context and move forward in building more equitable evaluation.

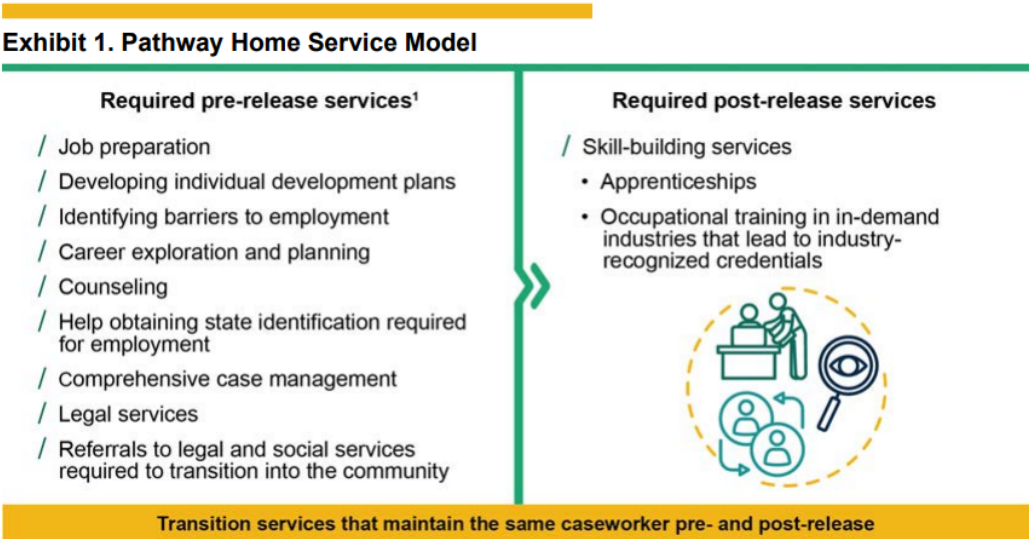
Identifying and Combating Bias in TANF-Funded Employment Services

The published a brief in 2023 describes how individual and structural bias occur in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-funded employment services. TANF is federal program that provides direct cash assistance to families with low income along with other support services like training and employment programs. Report authors examined the individual and structural biases that can influence the ways TANF services are implemented and offer strategies for individual staff members to combat bias as they implement TANF programs. Notably, the brief indicates that inequities in the labor market broadly can influence the way employment staffs’ mindsets and their attitudes towards families with low income. Then, individual biases can negatively affect participants in TANF programming if employment staffers display discriminatory thoughts or actions. Employment staffers can identify their own biases, begin to use a strengths- and asset-based approach to focus on the strengths of participants, and design programming that draws on participants’ strengths. TANF leaders can also conduct anti-bias training and use data and assessments that are valid and do not reinforce biases. The brief is part of the [Promising Occupations Project](#), a project designed to provide state, national, and local labor market information that can help employment service providers identity occupations with family-sustaining wages.

RESEARCH IN LIVING COLOR

Pathway Home Evaluation Brief: Establishing Grant Programs Inside Correctional Facilities

A 2023 brief describes the implementation of [Pathway Home grants](#), a 2021 program funded by the U.S. DOL Employment and Training Administration to provide states, local agencies, and non-government organizations resources to support incarcerated adults improve their employability outcomes following release. This graphic displays the service model that Pathway Home grantees used to establish and implement services. Grantees design comprehensive pre-release services that support incarcerated adults like job preparation, legal services, and referrals to post-release agencies. Once individuals exit incarceration, grantees provide occupational skill-building services that are intended to help participants achieve family-sustaining wages.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor Pathway Home 2 FOA-ETA-21-02.
¹ Pre-release services such as job preparation, career exploration and planning, and other supportive services begin pre-release but may continue through post-release services.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor Pathway Home 2 FOA-ETA-21-02.

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.