



Research and Evaluation Notes

October 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:

- A report and additional data on employment and training programs for the “New American population”—to bridge the gap for employment.
- Two evidence briefs that summarize research on 1) the effects of Long COVID on workforce participation, and 2) interventions that provide occupational and sectoral training to low-income adults.
- An exhibit from a brief that examines average earnings and Unemployment Insurance benefits during the two years before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in select metro areas.

SELECT READING

[Findings from the Bridging the Gap for New Americans Study](#)

In 2023, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)'s Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the [Employment and Training Administration](#) (ETA) and Westat Insight to conduct the *Bridging the Gap for New Americans Study*. This study, part of the [Administrative Data Research and Analysis](#) portfolio at DOL, aimed to better understand the employment patterns, opportunities, and factors that affect gaps in training and education for the New American population. The study defines “New Americans” as “lawfully present noncitizens who are eligible to be employed in the United States or naturalized U.S. citizens born outside the United States and outlying areas.”

Findings from the study, a [targeted literature review](#) released in summer 2024, primarily highlight the data that compare credential attainment rates for immigrants educated outside of the U.S. and immigrants with U.S. degrees. Most notably, fewer than 17 percent of foreign-educated immigrants holding science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or health degrees experienced “education-occupation mismatch” or were unemployed; while foreign-educated immigrants with degrees in law and public policy, education, and business experienced significantly higher levels of education-occupation mismatch (43 percent, 37 percent, and 35 percent, respectively). The study also highlights that a combination of state and local policy choices and community-specific workforce development programming can reduce the gaps and barriers New Americans face when seeking employment in the U.S. Each chapter of the review addresses a specific research question to explore further. The study includes two additional resources: a [catalog of data sources](#), and a [program catalog](#) of employment and training programs serving the New American population.

EVIDENCE IN ACTION

[Rapid Evidence Review: Long COVID and the Workforce](#)

A 2024 brief from the [DOL Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research \(CLEAR\)](#) summarizes research about the effects of Long COVID on workforce participation and offers information on strategies that help people with Long COVID remain at or return to work. Long COVID is a term used to describe the signs, symptoms, and conditions that persist or start after the initial COVID-19 infection lasting four or more weeks. Evidence is mixed on whether Long COVID reduced U.S. labor force participation rates, but there is evidence that people with Long COVID work fewer hours and are *less likely* to be employed than those without Long COVID. Research suggests that job accommodations that work best for employees

SPOTLIGHT

- New Learnings – [Building State Evaluation Capacity Through Peer Learning Cohort – Applying for Technical Assistance](#). This webinar shared states' experiences from the 2023 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort and introduced the 2024 application process.
- Upcoming Event – [OPRE's 2024 Methods Meeting](#) will take place online on October 22-23. The theme of this year's meeting is Economic Evaluation in Social Policy Research and it will explore how to produce, use, and interpret evidence from economic evaluations.

with Long COVID are individualized and adaptable and allow for flexibility to meet their needs as the impacts of Long COVID vary. Importantly, educating employers on Long COVID and its impacts may improve retention and return-to-work for employees with Long COVID, as manager education may lead to more supportive and flexible working environments.

Evidence Snapshot: Occupational and Sectoral Training Snapshot

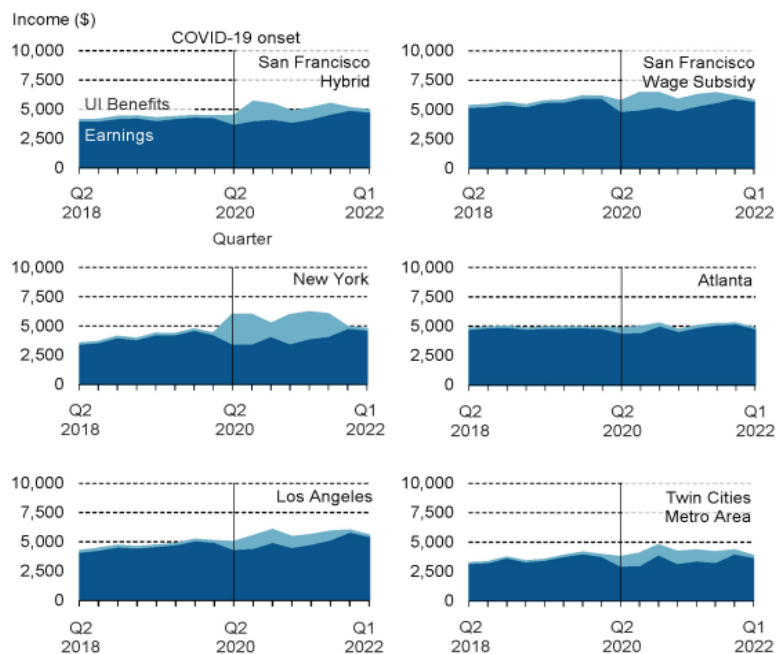
The [Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse](#) published an evidence snapshot in June 2024 that summarizes evidence about interventions that provide occupational and sector-specific training to help people with low incomes improve employment and earning outcomes. The Clearinghouse reviewed 23 interventions focused on occupational and sectoral training and considered outcomes related to earnings, employment, public benefit receipt, and education and training. Notably, across the 19 interventions for which earnings can be calculated, average short-term and long-term annual earnings increased among participants in the intervention group, compared to the participants in the comparison group. Additionally, across the 22 interventions for which employment outcomes can be calculated, short-term employment increased by 7 percentage points among participants in the intervention group, as compared to those in the comparison group.

RESEARCH IN LIVING COLOR

Employment, Earnings, and Unemployment Insurance During the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Analysis of Participants in the Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration

A 2023 brief explored how enhanced Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits offered during the pandemic kept wages stable among participants in subsidized and transitional employment programs within five metro areas. The graph shows the quarterly UI benefits (shaded in light blue) stacked on quarterly earnings (shaded in dark blue) over the period two years before and two years after the onset of COVID-19. UI benefits appear to have replaced lost wages after the onset of COVID-19, and the combination of formal earnings and UI benefits matched or exceeded pre-pandemic earning levels, suggesting that enhanced UI benefits served as an essential safety net during the pandemic.

FIGURE 3. Average Earnings and Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefits During the Two Years Before and the Two Years After the Onset of COVID-19 (Q2 2020)



SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on National Directory of New Hires data.

NOTE: COVID-19 onset is defined as Q2 2020.

Source: Cummings, Danielle. 2023. "Employment, Earnings, and Unemployment Insurance During the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Analysis of Participants in the Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration." OPRE Report 2023-203. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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.