

Workforce Development Programs: *A Review of the Evidence and Benefit-Cost Analysis*

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) Board of Directors authorized a collaborative project with the MacArthur Foundation and Pew Charitable Trusts Results First Initiative. This project extends WSIPP's benefit-cost analysis to a variety of new topics, including workforce development programs.

Workforce development programs in the United States have evolved over the past five decades into a diverse set of program components focused on a wide range of clients. These programs range from job search counseling to traditional classroom-based training aimed at skill development. The targeted program participants vary, including single parents on cash assistance, unemployed youth, and dislocated workers. A common objective of workforce development programs is to increase the employability and earnings capacity of participants. Some programs seek to improve other outcomes as well.

In this report, we review the effectiveness of workforce development programs in the US and present benefit-cost results for these programs. [Section I](#) of this report outlines our research approach, while [Section II](#) discusses our findings.

Summary

WSIPP's Board of Directors authorized a collaborative project with the MacArthur Foundation and Pew Charitable Trusts to extend WSIPP's benefit-cost analysis to workforce development programs. The goal is to determine whether workforce development programs in the United States improve labor market outcomes and which types of programs are most effective at doing so.

This report reviews the evidence on workforce programs in three broad program categories: 1) job training and work experience, 2) job search and placement assistance, and 3) case management. The populations targeted in these programs vary widely including all adults, disadvantaged out-of-school youth (ages 16-24), unemployment insurance claimants, and welfare recipients.

For each of these categories, we gathered all of the research we could locate from around the US. We screened the studies for methodological rigor and then computed an average effect of the programs on specific outcomes. We also independently calculated benefits and costs and conducted a risk analysis to determine which programs consistently have benefits that exceed costs.

We find evidence that some programmatic approaches achieve the desired outcomes for some target populations, but others do not. We explain these results in this report and display them in [Exhibit 1](#).

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I. Research Methods

To assess the effectiveness of workforce development programs, WSIPP reviewed existing studies of workforce programs implemented since 1960. We restricted our review to evaluations of programs in the US because of the differences in institutional context. The scope of review included only empirical evaluations of programs with strong research designs. Generally, this meant we included studies which measured program effectiveness by comparing outcomes for a treatment and comparison group.¹ We reviewed 203 studies for possible inclusion in our analysis. Of these, 86 met our eligibility standards for inclusion.

To be included in our analysis, a study must include one or more quantitative measures of program outcomes. Outcomes included in this analysis are employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance (cash assistance, food stamp benefits, unemployment insurance benefits and Medicaid benefits), and in some cases crime (self-reported crimes, arrests, or convictions). We converted these outcome measures from each individual study to an "effect size." An effect size measures the degree to which a program has been shown to change an outcome for program participants relative to a comparison group. To assess the overall weight of the evidence, we summarize the effect sizes of many studies using a meta-analytic framework. The result is a measure of program effectiveness and the degree of precision of this estimate.

¹ See WSIPP's Technical Documentation for more details on WSIPP's approach to meta-analysis. Washington State Institute for Public Policy. (December 2015). *Benefit-cost technical documentation*. Olympia, WA: Author. <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/TechnicalDocumentation/WsippBenefitCostTechnicalDocumentation.pdf>

Next, we describe WSIPP's methodology for assessing the costs and benefits. To assess the net benefits of workforce development programs, we estimate the impacts of the various programs and calculate the costs and benefits of their implementation in Washington State. Because these estimates include measures of the precision of the impacts, we also estimate the degree of uncertainty associated with the expected impacts from each topic.

Understanding the net value of a program, measured in dollars, requires separate estimates of the costs and benefits of program implementation. The cost of implementing a program is the loss of value to Washington residents associated with its implementation. For example, directors of a training program for unemployed workers must secure a location for classes, hire program administrators and educators, and purchase relevant training materials.² If the program is implemented by the government sector, there are additional costs associated with raising sufficient tax revenue to support the program.

² WSIPP also measures the loss of time associated with participation in workforce development programs. We measure the value of this time as foregone earnings for program participants.

An obvious benefit of workforce development programs is the potential to increase participants' future earnings. In addition, participants may be less likely to receive public assistance payments and to interact with the criminal justice system. WSIPP's benefit-cost model estimates the value of these benefits on a per program participant basis over time. WSIPP's model converts all future values into their present discounted value. The model generates estimates of benefits and costs, net benefits (benefits minus costs) and the benefit/cost ratio. In addition, the model accounts for the inherent uncertainty in our estimates and calculates the probability that net benefits will exceed zero.³

³ For additional details regarding WSIPP's benefit-cost model, see Washington State Institute for Public Policy. (2015). <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/TechnicalDocumentation/WsippBenefitCostTechnicalDocumentation.pdf>

II. Research Findings

This section presents benefit-cost findings for three broad classifications of workforce development programs in the US:

- 1) job training and work experience,
- 2) job search and placement assistance, and
- 3) case management.

The populations targeted for inclusion in these programs vary widely including all adults, disadvantaged out-of-school youth (ages 16-24), unemployment insurance claimants, and welfare recipients.⁴ Benefit-cost findings are computed for each topic, and in some cases results are computed separately for different target populations. Benefit-cost summary statistics are displayed in [Exhibit 1](#) (next page).

1) [Job training and work experience programs](#)

Workforce programs in this category include programs that provide skills-based training (in a classroom or on-the-job environment), temporary job placements for the purpose of gaining work experience, or both. Benefit-cost results are computed separately for different program configurations.

- In programs offering training only, we find that costs exceed benefits on average. These programs yield a positive net benefit less than half of the time.
- In programs offering work experience only, benefits exceed costs on average, and net benefits are expected to be positive three-quarters of the time.

- Programs that offer *both* training and work experience components are analyzed separately for three populations. The programs that serve welfare recipients are consistently successful. On average, benefits exceed costs for these programs about three-quarters of the time. Results are still somewhat positive for programs for adults that do not target welfare recipients, but positive net benefits occur only about half of the time. However, programs that target youth (ages 16-24) average a large negative net benefit and can be expected to yield a positive net benefit only one-third of the time.

2) [Job search and placement assistance programs](#)

These programs encompass a broad set of activities intended to overcome non-skill barriers to employment and achieve a job placement, often using low-cost and short-term approaches. Specific services can include career counseling; job search and interviewing workshops; job finding clubs; resume preparation assistance; development of job search plans; and provision of labor market information, job referrals, and job placements.

- We find that programs of this type implemented over a broad range of populations have benefits that exceed costs approximately two-thirds of the time.

⁴ More detailed descriptions of these topics and their configurations can be found in Section A. II. of the Technical Appendix.

3) Case management programs

Case management programs often take an individualized and comprehensive approach to the provision of services and work supports with the goal of moving clients into employment and towards long-run self-sufficiency. As such, actual services provided can vary widely, both within and between programs. Benefit-cost results for these programs are computed separately for different client populations.

- Case management programs for unemployment insurance claimants aim to reduce the period of time that program participants receive unemployment insurance benefits. We find, on average, these programs produce a large net benefit over two-thirds of the time.
- In programs for welfare recipients, low-income individuals, or former welfare recipients, costs exceed benefits on average. In these cases, positive net benefits can be expected less than one-fifth of the time.

Exhibit 1
Workforce Development Benefit-Cost Results

Program name	Total benefits	Taxpayer benefits	Non-taxpayer benefits	Costs	Benefits minus costs (net present value)	Benefit to cost ratio	Chance benefits will exceed costs
Case management for unemployed insurance claimants	\$3,723	\$1,140	\$2,583	(\$180)	\$3,543	\$20.70	69 %
Training with work experience for adult welfare recipients	\$6,393	\$3,716	\$2,677	(\$4,143)	\$2,250	\$1.54	74 %
Job search and placement	\$1,915	\$1,495	\$420	(\$513)	\$1,402	\$3.73	64 %
Training with work experience for adults, not targeting welfare recipients	\$5,247	\$2,266	\$2,981	(\$4,107)	\$1,140	\$1.28	54 %
Work experience	\$3,108	\$2,512	\$596	(\$2,057)	\$1,052	\$1.51	73 %
Case management for welfare recipients or low-income individuals	(\$977)	\$270	(\$1,247)	(\$2,908)	(\$3,885)	(\$0.34)	15 %
Case management for former welfare recipients	(\$977)	\$440	(\$1,416)	(\$2,923)	(\$3,900)	(\$0.33)	18 %
Training, no work experience	\$4,030	\$2,293	\$1,736	(\$8,292)	(\$4,263)	\$0.49	40 %
Training with work experience for youth	(\$2,584)	\$726	(\$3,310)	(\$7,364)	(\$9,948)	(\$0.35)	33 %

These results are current as of December 2015. More recent results may be available on WSIPP's website <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost?topicId=10>

III. Conclusion

Among the programs examined, training with work experience for adult welfare recipients and work experience alone are effective at improving post-program outcomes. Despite the higher costs of implementation, these interventions are most likely to produce benefits exceeding costs out all the workforce programs WSIPP examined.

Although case management for unemployment insurance claimants and job search and placement have small positive impacts, the low costs of these programs lead to benefits exceeding costs more than half of the time. Training with work experience for adults that does not target welfare recipients has higher implementation costs and a moderate impact on earnings. This type of training also produced benefits exceeding costs more than half of the time.

Case management for welfare recipients, low-income individuals, and former welfare recipients is somewhat expensive and has impacts close to zero. Case management for these populations has a low chance of benefits exceeding costs.

Training for youth with work experience and training without work experience are the most expensive programs. Training without work experience has moderate impacts on earnings and employment, but training with work experience for youth has no impact on almost all outcomes. Because of these factors, both of these programs have a very low chance of benefits exceeding costs.



Technical Appendix

Workforce Development Programs: A Review of the Evidence and Benefit-Cost Analysis

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A. I. A Brief History of Workforce Development Programs in the US

Since the passage of the federal Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) in 1962, US federal and state government agencies, nonprofits, and foundations (both independently and in jointly managed efforts) have deployed numerous active workforce development and job placement programs. Successive pieces of major federal legislation have set the stage for the evolution of these programs over time (see [Exhibit A1](#)). Distinct from passive approaches to workforce issues that focus on job creation, work supports, or financial incentives to work, active workforce programs directly engage individuals in activities designed to enhance their labor force entry, employment, earnings, skills, and ultimate career development. Such programs encompass a broad range of approaches and serve the never-employed, the unemployed, or the under-employed.

The approach and focus of such efforts have varied over the last half-century, ranging from low- to high-cost and from relatively long-term vocational skill training to short-term subsidized work experiences. Some programs are designed for all unemployed persons, while others target disadvantaged out-of-school youth, minority populations, recipients of public assistance, formerly incarcerated individuals and trade-dislocated workers, among others. In this study, we provide an overview of the effects of these programs, grouped by approach and various target populations.

Exhibit A1

Overview of Federal Workforce Development Legislation, 1962-Present

Year	Legislation	Description
1962	Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA)	Created first federal framework for labor market policy and centralized federal role in training; provided retraining for workers dislocated due to automation, as well as services for high school dropouts, older or disabled workers, and incarcerated individuals.
1963	Vocational Education Act	Provided federal funds for part-time youth employment and federal matching funds for various vocational training programs (including agricultural and home economics).
1964	Economic Opportunity Act (EOA)	Created the Neighborhood Youth Corps, Job Corps and Community Work and Training programs. The latter allowed Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients to work while receiving benefits, at state option.
1968	Work Incentive Program (WIN)	Provided federal funding for work and training programs for AFDC recipients.
1971	Emergency Employment Act (EEA)	Provided federal funding for public service employment (PSE) job creation in state and local governments.
1973	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) (supersedes MDTA)	Consolidated MDTA and EOA programs; provided classroom, on-the-job training and PSE programs; shifted greater control to local level.
1974	Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Provided benefits and reemployment services (training, job search, income and relocation support) for trade-dislocated workers.
1977	Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA)	Increased funding for Job Corps and Summer Youth Employment Program; authorized four new youth programs under CETA, including the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects.
1978	CETA Amendments	Increased services to migrant workers, Native Americans, veterans, displaced workers, and displaced homemakers; expanded apprenticeship programs.
1981	Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act	Gave states option to establish "workfare" under the Community Work Experience Program.
1982	Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) (supersedes CETA)	Replaced CETA and extended services to economically disadvantaged adults, youth, and dislocated workers; shifted responsibility of primary program administration to states.
1988	Family Support Act	Replaced WIN with the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program.
1996	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act	Replaced AFDC and JOBS with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).
1998	Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (supersedes JTPA)	Replaced and streamlined JTPA and required improved access via one-stop career centers; established sequencing of services from "core" to "intensive" to "training;" authorized Youth Opportunity Grants in high-poverty areas to provide services to increase employment and school completion for disadvantaged youth.
2009	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)	Doubled federal funding for WIA programs for 2009-10; established TANF Emergency Fund to assist states with expanded services, including subsidized employment; reauthorized the TAA.
2014	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (supersedes WIA, effective 7/1/2015)	Replaces WIA and eliminates sequencing of services, allowing more local flexibility; retains separate stream of funding for youth and places priority on out-of-school youth; eliminates 15 separate programs through program consolidation, including: Youth Opportunity Grants, Community-Based Job Training Grants, Green Jobs Act, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program.

Source: "Federal Workforce Legislation 1962-present," CLASP 40th Anniversary Policy Series.

A. II. Discussion of Meta-Analysis Methodology and Results

We developed a list of studies for review using the following techniques. First, numerous authors have conducted nearly two dozen literature reviews of the existing academic and practitioner literature related to workforce development programs. We obtained all studies included in these prior reviews. Second, we used forward citation links to obtain all evaluation studies that cited one of the literature review papers. Third, we reviewed the list of cited papers in every evaluation study to obtain additional studies for consideration. Fourth, we conducted keyword searches in Google Scholar and academic databases. This literature review approach is necessarily iterative in nature and continues until additional iterations yield no new studies.

The gold standard research design is a random assignment study in which program participants are randomly assigned to receive services (the treatment group) or not (the control group). To be included in our analysis, non-randomized studies must have a comparison group which has similar characteristics to the treatment group. In some cases we identified multiple studies based on the same underlying data. In these cases, we selected one study for inclusion based on the completeness of the data set at the time of analysis, the quality of the research design, and the sophistication and appropriateness of the statistical analysis. Because institutional and market context are likely to affect the final outcomes for workforce program participants, this study is limited to programs in the US. There are no time limits placed on the studies included here, however, and the earliest date to the 1960s. We include programs designed for out-of-school youth (ages 16-24) or able-bodied adults, and those with rigorous evaluations that at a minimum measure either post-program employment or earnings. Regular high school or community college degree-granting programs are excluded, including those with vocational and technical education components. The goals of these more academic programs are often multi-faceted and course load content is variable. Thus, isolating the effect of a particular vocational skills course or track from the broader educational exercise is difficult. Furthermore, evaluations of such programs rarely report on the labor market outcomes of interest here. We focused on workforce development programs and excluded programs with components treating mental illness or targeting incarcerated individuals.

One common effect size metric is the standardized mean difference, which measures outcomes relative to the typical amount of variation in the outcome among individuals in the study. In this analysis, when considering earnings from employment as the outcome metric, we use the percent change as the effect size measure. The effect size metric for all other outcomes is the standardized mean difference.

In the meta-analytic framework, the overall measure of program effectiveness is a weighted average of the effect sizes derived from individual studies included in the analysis. Weights are assigned to individual studies based on the number of program participants in the study and the precision of the effect size estimates. In addition, WSIPP makes further adjustments to each study's effect size based on the study's research design quality and other factors that might systematically bias the estimated effect size derived from each study. See the WSIPP Technical Documentation for more details on these adjustments.⁵

While many would characterize workforce programs as first and foremost involving "vocational training," fewer than half of the programs studied here include a classroom vocational training component. Others may consider "job search assistance" to be of central importance to workforce programs, but less than two-thirds of programs focus on this element. Instead, workforce programs consist of varied configurations of approaches and services, and many times these relatively unique programs are only

⁵ See Washington State Institute for Public Policy. (2015)
<http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/TechnicalDocumentation/WsippBenefitCostTechnicalDocumentation.pdf>

evaluated once. It is common that federal, state, or foundation funding is designated for new programming in order to explore the efficacy of a new approach or service configuration. Often these programs are designated as “demonstrations,” and funding includes resources for a rigorous program evaluation. However, these programs may or may not continue much longer than the evaluation period and are not frequently evaluated again. Even in cases where major programs have continued for an extended period of time (a decade or more), as with major federal programs such as MDTA, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs, only one major evaluation may have been undertaken, or if multiple evaluations have been conducted, they are often based on a single data source.⁶

As a result of these factors, the evaluations included in this benefit-cost analysis are grouped according to configurations of service components rather than by individual program. In this environment, the coding of program components is central to the interpretation of the meta-analysis.

In addition to the services included, program approaches vary along a number of other dimensions. First, the service mix, intensity, and sequencing of services can be considerably different from one program to the next in ways that are important but difficult to document. Many programs offer a variety of services, but only in a specific sequence. In other programs, the mix, intensity, and sequencing of services are customized to each individual client following initial individual assessment, and in still others, all program features may be highly localized to the culture, expectations, and norms of the area’s social service workers.

A second distinction exists between programs in which participation is voluntary (e.g. employment-related services available to the general public) and those in which participation is mandatory. Along similar lines, programs vary according to whether they offer an explicit financial incentive for participation (e.g. the addition of an incremental public assistance benefit or increased earnings disregard), or disincentives to non-participation (as with some public assistance or unemployment insurance programs). In any case, the analysis here cannot account for the extent to which program outcomes are affected by the sequencing of services, voluntary or involuntary participation, or incentives or disincentives offered participants.

In addition to the program activities, workforce programs are often also distinguished by their eligible or target populations. While some programs serve the general public (e.g. some JTPA or WIA services), others target specific groups. In the analysis here, in addition to programs serving the general adult population, some results are presented separately for programs that targeted youth and young adults (ages 16-24), welfare recipients (sometimes grouped with other low-income individuals), former welfare recipients, and unemployment insurance claimants.

⁶ Results from any given data source may only be included once in a meta-analysis. In the case of multiple evaluations based on one data source, the highest quality, most up-to-date, and comprehensive evaluation is selected for inclusion in the meta-analysis. There are a few exceptions to this. For example, the Job Corps program, a long-lived residential program for disadvantaged youth, has been the subject of several separate evaluations over multiple decades, using separate data sets in each evaluation.

Standard elements of workforce programs have long been categorized into various typologies and can be grouped into three major categories:

- [Job training and work experience](#) programs include skills-based training or experience specific to an occupation or industry. Training may take place in a classroom or an on-the-job workplace setting. In the latter case, a program participant would typically expect to continue in a permanent job once training ended. Work experience program elements usually entail the temporary placement of program participants in a work setting, often with a non-profit or public sector agency. Participants may do this in return for continued receipt of their public assistance benefits and may or may not receive actual wages.⁷
- [Job search and placement assistance](#) programs encompass a broad set of activities that often form the centerpiece of workforce development. Their primary goal is to overcome non-skill barriers to employment and to achieve a job placement, often with an emphasis on low-cost and short time frames. Specific services can include career counseling, job search and interviewing workshops, job finding clubs, resume preparation assistance, development of job search plans, and provision of labor market information, job referrals and job placements. Skill assessments and testing are often used to determine if the program participants are job ready, to identify their job skills, and to recommend skill-appropriate job search strategies.
- [Case management](#) programs usually take an individualized and comprehensive approach to social service provision. A case manager often meets frequently and intensively with a client to determine the kinds of workforce and support services needed to move the client towards long-run self-sufficiency. The case manager will then arrange for the client to receive these services directly from the home agency or other agencies in a referral network.

The results of the meta-analyses are presented in [Exhibit A2](#) by program type and a variety of target populations. First, among job training and work experience programs, we examine programs comprising job training only and those with work experience components only, both targeted to the general adult population. In addition, we examine programs with both job training and work experience elements targeted separately to adult welfare recipients and youth, as well as those that do not specifically target either of these populations. Second, job search and placement assistance programs are analyzed as a single group. Finally, case management programs are analyzed for three separate target populations (unemployment insurance claimants, welfare recipients or low-income individuals, and former welfare recipients).

As noted above, studies included consistently measure post-program outcomes of interest. Outcomes included in this analysis are employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance (cash assistance, food stamp benefits, unemployment insurance benefits and Medicaid benefits), and in some cases crime (self-reported crimes, arrests, or convictions).⁸ Across studies, treatment/control differences in outcomes are measured over a varying range of post-enrollment time frames, from six to 60 months. When presented with multiple follow-up periods, we chose those reported at or close to 24 months, since this was the most commonly reported follow-up period. Using a longer follow-up period also allows us to report the

⁷ Wage subsidies are not typically paid, but the program may incur costs related to the supervision of program participants in the temporary work assignment. Examples of work experience assignments include supervised practicum experiences in nursing homes for program participants in the health aide field or unpaid work activity assignments for welfare recipients who fail to find work.

⁸ The Food Stamp program is now known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We retain the historical program name in this report, because many of the evaluation studies we reviewed were conducted when the program was still referred to as food stamps.

earnings and employment rates of participants after they have completed the subsidized jobs or training included in their program.

Finally, because program effects often decay over time, we infer a decay rate for program effects based on our estimates of the effect size for different follow-up periods. If we found evidence of decay in the form of declining effect sizes as the follow-up period increased, then we modeled decay as a linear function, declining from the effect size at 24 months to an effect size of zero at the appropriate follow-up period. We used this method of decay for the following topics: case management for all target populations, job search and placement, and work experience.

If we found no evidence of decay (as described above), then we assumed that program effect sizes would equal zero in year six or seven, depending on the longest follow-up period examined for the relevant topic. This situation applied to the following topics: training without work experience and training with work experience for all target populations.

[Job Training and Work Experience Programs](#)

[Training Only](#). We identified 16 different studies in this category that met our methodological criteria for rigor and completeness. In aggregate, these studies examined seven different outcomes—earnings, employment, receipt of public assistance, food stamps benefits, Medicaid benefits, unemployment insurance benefits, and post-program arrests or self-reported crimes committed. Outcomes are measured at varying intervals ranging from nine to 48 months following program entry. On average, we find that participation in training programs (without work experience components) increases post-program earnings and employment for program participants, and decreases their receipt of unemployment insurance benefits. There is no evidence that these training programs on average had an effect on post-program public assistance, food stamps, or Medicaid receipt.

[Work Experience Only](#). We identified 11 studies of work experience programs that met our methodological criteria for rigor and completeness. In aggregate, these studies examined five outcomes—earnings, employment, receipt of cash assistance, food stamp benefits, and convictions for criminal activity. Outcomes are measured at varying intervals ranging from nine to 36 months following program entry. On average, we find that participation in a job search program increases employment and earnings while decreasing receipt of public assistance. We find no effect of these programs on food stamp benefits and the number of convictions.

[Training with Work Experience for Adults \(welfare recipients\)](#). We identified 17 different studies in this category that met our methodological criteria for rigor and completeness. In aggregate, these studies examined four outcomes—earnings, employment, receipt of cash assistance, and food stamp benefits. Outcomes are measured at varying intervals ranging from 12 to 48 months following program entry. On average, we find that participation in training programs with work experience increases earnings and employment and decreases public assistance and food stamp receipt for adult welfare recipients who participated in these programs.

[Training with Work Experience for Adults \(not targeting welfare recipients\)](#). We identified 12 studies in this category that met our methodological criteria for rigor and completeness. In aggregate, these studies examined seven outcomes—earnings, employment, criminal activity (convictions), receipt of cash assistance, food stamp benefits, unemployment insurance benefits and Medicaid benefits. Outcomes are measured at varying intervals ranging from nine to 30 months following program entry. On average, we

find that participation in training programs with work experience that do not target welfare recipients increases earnings. We find no effect of these programs on any other outcomes.

[Training with Work Experience for Youth](#). We identified six studies of training programs with work experience targeted for youth that met our methodological criteria for rigor and completeness. In aggregate, these studies examined seven outcomes—earnings, employment, criminal activity (self-reported crime or arrests), receipt of cash assistance, food stamp benefits, unemployment insurance benefits and Medicaid benefits. Outcomes are measured at varying intervals ranging from nine to 36 months following program entry. On average, we find that participation in a training program with work experience targeted for youth decreases receipt of public assistance. We find no effect of these programs on any other outcomes.

[Job Search and Placement Assistance Programs](#)

We identified 11 studies of job search and placement assistance programs that met our methodological criteria for rigor and completeness. In aggregate, these studies examined five outcomes—earnings, employment, receipt of cash assistance, unemployment insurance benefits, and arrests for criminal activity. Outcomes are measured at varying intervals ranging from six to 32 months following program entry. On average, we find that participation in a job search program increases employment and decreases receipt of public assistance and unemployment insurance benefits. The overall effect on earnings is also positive, but given the degree of uncertainty in the underlying studies, we cannot be confident in the magnitude or direction of this estimate. We find no effect of these programs on the number of arrests.

[Case Management Programs](#)

[Case Management for Unemployment Insurance Claimants](#). We identified eight studies of case management programs for unemployment insurance claimants that met our methodological criteria for rigor and completeness. In aggregate, these studies examined three outcomes—earnings, employment, and unemployment insurance benefits. Outcomes are measured at varying intervals ranging from six to 27 months following program entry. On average, we find that participation in a case management program increases earnings and decreases receipt of unemployment insurance benefits. However, we find no effect on post-program employment.

[Case Management for Welfare Recipients or Other Low-Income Individuals](#). We identified 11 studies of case management programs for welfare recipients or other low-income individuals that met our methodological criteria for rigor and completeness. In aggregate, these studies examined five outcomes—earnings, employment, receipt of public assistance, food stamp benefits, and Medicaid benefits. Outcomes are measured at varying intervals ranging from 18 to 60 months following program entry. On average, we find that participation in a case management program increases earnings and employment and decreases Medicaid receipt for these individuals. However, we find no effect on post-program receipt of public assistance or food stamp benefits.

[Case Management for Former Welfare Recipients](#). We identified three studies of case management programs for former welfare recipients that met our methodological criteria for rigor and completeness. In aggregate, these studies examined four outcomes—earnings, employment, and receipt of public assistance or food stamp benefits. Outcomes are measured at varying intervals ranging from 21 to 48 months following program entry. We find no effect on post-program outcomes for former welfare recipients participating in these programs.

Exhibit A2

Summary of Meta-Analytic Findings for Workforce Development Programs

Intervention	Outcome	# of effect sizes	Average adjusted effect size ⁹	Standard error	P-value	# in treatment groups
Case management for former welfare recipients	Earnings*	7	0.025	0.024	0.309	3,393
	Employment	7	0.019	0.030	0.517	3,377
	Food stamps	7	-0.012	0.021	0.578	4,396
	Public assistance	7	-0.015	0.021	0.482	4,396
Case management for Unemployment Insurance claimants	Earnings*	11	0.036	0.015	0.019	102,201
	Employment	13	-0.002	0.007	0.820	209,702
	Unemployment insurance benefits	19	-0.053	0.011	0.000	274,835
Case management for welfare recipients or low-income individuals	Earnings*	16	0.015	0.009	0.096	30,680
	Employment	15	0.032	0.018	0.085	26,520
	Food assistance	10	0.007	0.016	0.688	22,854
	Medicaid	2	-0.050	0.031	0.099	3,061
	Public assistance	11	-0.015	0.020	0.469	25,001
Job search and placement	Crime	2	-0.007	0.1252	0.9554	212
	Earnings*	8	0.038	0.024	0.103	13,539
	Employment	9	0.081	0.037	0.030	14,174
	Public assistance	5	-0.070	0.017	0.001	6,841
	Unemployment insurance benefits	3	-0.045	0.017	0.010	7,653
Training with work experience for adult welfare recipients	Earnings*	36	0.146	0.026	0.000	95,653
	Employment	32	0.091	0.014	0.000	95,650
	Food assistance	19	-0.055	0.010	0.000	42,878
	Public assistance	38	-0.064	0.015	0.000	91,383
Training with work experience for adults, not targeting welfare recipients	Crime	1	0.036	0.087	0.679	2,447
	Earnings*	17	0.045	0.021	0.033	59,470
	Employment	15	0.079	0.066	0.228	48,173
	Food assistance	6	0.007	0.030	0.827	14,460
	Medicaid	4	0.012	0.096	0.901	12,637
	Public assistance	6	-0.012	0.026	0.631	14,984
Training with work experience for youth	Unemployment insurance benefits	10	-0.005	0.027	0.866	23,987
	Crime	5	-0.030	0.030	0.318	5,479
	Earnings*	9	0.001	0.025	0.973	11,129
	Employment	6	0.006	0.053	0.911	7,923
	Food assistance	7	0.018	0.022	0.419	6,474
	Medicaid	3	0.150	0.184	0.415	2,425
	Public assistance	8	-0.048	0.022	0.027	7,887
Training, no work experience	Unemployment insurance benefits	3	0.000	0.035	0.998	5,263
	Crime	4	-0.054	0.080	0.500	1,579
	Earnings*	41	0.062	0.013	0.001	289,201
	Employment	41	0.085	0.024	0.001	289,201
	Food assistance	25	0.011	0.008	0.163	171,188
	Medicaid	15	0.065	0.045	0.154	160,280
	Public assistance	25	0.006	0.008	0.446	169,101
Work experience	Unemployment insurance benefits	29	-0.018	0.005	0.000	278,882
	Crime	2	-0.068	0.064	0.288	1,478
	Earnings*	15	0.091	0.026	0.001	15,792
	Employment	14	0.092	0.025	0.001	14,699
	Food assistance	3	-0.046	0.061	0.446	2,222
	Public assistance	13	-0.074	0.018	0.001	14,332

⁹ Effect sizes for all outcomes are typically measured at or close to 24 months. See pp. 11-12 for a discussion of selecting effect sizes from multiple follow-up periods.

A. III. Studies Used in the Meta-Analyses

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