

Evidence-Building Capacity In State Workforce Agencies

Planning and Operationalizing Evaluation and Research

**Case Studies of Partnerships, and Independent
Research in Washington State and Utah**

Washington State Research and Evaluation

Cynthia Forland, Director, Labor Market and
Performance Analysis

Program Impacts or Effectiveness

Assessment of the effect of WorkSource job-search services

- Research question: Net impact of one-stop services for individual participants and society as a whole
- Partners: N/A
- Research Organization: LMI shop
- Data Agreements and sources: SWA's UI and one-stop admin records
- Findings: ROI was positive for individual participants and society
- Purpose: Inform SWA, state and local workforce boards, and one-stop partners, as well as state legislature and Governor's Office

Measuring Program Performance

Training Benefits (TB) Program Report

- Research questions: Characteristics of TB participants, time in program, training pursued, employment/wages, and admin costs
- Partners: Washington State University (survey data collection)
- Lead: LMI shop
- Data Agreements and sources: SWA admin records, community and technical college admin records, and survey of participants
- Findings: After taking a dip upon unemployment, participants' wages were approaching pre-training levels
- Purpose: Inform state legislature, as well as SWA and Governor's Office

Utilizing Labor Market Information

2015 Agricultural Workforce Report

- Research question(s): Identifying agricultural workforce and labor market information, including agricultural prevailing wages and practices
- Partners: University of Washington (survey data collection)
- Research Organization: LMI Shop
- Data Agreements and sources: Survey of agricultural employers, SWA's UI admin records and QCEW
- Findings: Prevailing wages and practices for specific crops
- Purpose: Inform federal DOL and SWA in administration of H-2A federal guest worker program

Addressing Customer Barriers

Assessment of the General Educational Development Certificate on Earnings for Washington High School Dropouts

- Research question: Whether high school dropouts who received their GED earn more than dropouts who did not
- Partners: N/A
- Research Organization: Education Research and Data Center
- Data Agreements and sources: Public K-12 and post-secondary admin records and SWA's UI wage records
- Findings: Little earnings benefit with GED
- Purpose: Inform education/training and workforce development systems, as well as state legislature and Governor's Office

Improving Program Administration or Operations

Self-Employment Assistance Program (SEAP) Net Impact Study

- Research question(s): Effects of SEAP training on self-employment, wage and unemployment benefits
- Partners: N/A
- Research Organization: LMI shop
- Data Agreements and sources: SWA admin records and state Department of Revenue admin records
- Findings: Program participation reduces UI benefits received and increases business survival, but has variable effect on business income
- Purpose: Inform State legislature, as well as SWA and Governor's Office

Utah Research and Evaluation

Carrie Mayne, Director and Chief Economist
Workforce Research and Analysis

Evaluating Program Effectiveness

Net Impact of Job Training Programs

- Research question(s): Do education and training programs offered to WIA/TANF/WP customers make a difference in their labor force outcomes?
- Partners: Program and Training Division
- Research Organization: LMI shop
- Data Agreements and sources: SWA administrative records (program data, UI wage records)
- Findings: Four years after program completion, most programs showed marginal wage benefits above counterfactual; GED program underperformed due to implementation
- Purpose: Resource allocation guidance

WPRS Program Profiling Model

Profiling Model Redesign

- Research question(s): Can non-parametric or machine learning models better predict unemployment benefit exhaustion?
- Partners: Unemployment Insurance Division
- Research Organization: LMI shop
- Data Agreements and sources: UI claimant and wage record data
- Findings: Multivariate Adaptive Regression Splines (MARS) and Random Forests models outperform the traditional Logistic Regression approach in predicting duration/exhaustion of unemployment insurance benefits
- Purpose: To improve the targeted delivery of reemployment services

Intergenerational Poverty

Utah's Annual Report on Intergenerational Poverty

- Research question(s): Are the educational and labor market outcomes different between those experiencing situational vs. intergenerational poverty?
- Partners: Higher Education, Adult Education
- Research Organization: LMI shop, SLDS partners
- Data Agreements and sources: SLDS data sharing agreement
- Findings: IGP individuals show lower educational attainment, lower post-secondary enrollment, similar workforce attachment, lower wages than those experiencing situational poverty
- Purpose: Understanding whether a program/policy distinction is justified for situational vs intergenerational poverty in social assistance programs

Effectiveness of the Career & Technical Education System

Report to Utah legislature on the state's Career and Technical Education System

- Research question(s): Are CTE students prepared for careers in high-demand, high-wage jobs? Are CTE programs aligned geographically and with employer demand?
- Partners: CTE programs in secondary and postsecondary education
- Research Organization: LMI shop
- Data Agreements and sources: SLDS data sharing agreement
- Findings: General exhibition of alignment with some opportunities for improvement in rural areas; recommendation of expanding some healthcare and IT programs, phase out dated programs
- Purpose: Legislative inquiry to ensure ROI

Contact Information

For questions regarding the case studies, send an email to:

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*Please use "WIOA Session: Evidence-Building Capacity for Research and Evaluation" the subject line.