

The Impact of Equity of Access, Assessment, and Opportunity on Outcomes

Wyoming's Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Annual Evaluation Report (2023)

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Presented to



by

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Introduction

Under President Obama’s administration, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. The legislation consolidated job training programs under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Act of 1998, reauthorized adult-education programs, and reauthorized programs under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The program is “designed to strengthen and improve our nation’s public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers” (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov)). WIOA programs fall into four broad categories, called ‘Titles’ in the legislation. This evaluation is focused on the Title I program that authorizes job training and related services to unemployed or underemployed individuals and establishes the governance and performance accountability system for WIOA. It encompasses Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

As required by § 682.200(a), states must conduct evaluations of activities under the WIOA Title I core programs to promote continuous improvement, research and test innovative services and strategies, and achieve high levels of performance and outcomes. The State shall annually prepare, submit to the state and local boards in the state, and make available to the public reports containing the results of evaluations conducted, to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce development system. In the [Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#), President Joe Biden (2021) discussed how the “federal government should pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.” The Order has created a window of opportunity to simultaneously: 1) evaluate federal workforce program performance; 2) identify metrics for equity of access, assessment, opportunity, and outcomes; 3) identify promising practices for workforce equity; and 4) shift to a more participants-centered approach to minimize deficit narratives for WIOA participants.

Purpose of Evaluation

Northern Illinois University-Workforce Policy Lab (WPL) developed an evaluation framework to measure equity for participants at various stages in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs. The model was used to employ a sequential mixed methods model to examine disproportionate impacts and identify promising practices for equitable strategies for continuous program improvement. The process was guided by WIOA’s purpose, performance metrics, and guidance related to participants that identify with WIOA-defined barrier categories.

Wyoming’s Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) quarterly reporting files for program years 2018 through 2022 were used to generate the tables in this document. The PIRL files were compiled and submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor for the purpose of required performance reporting. As in a previous study- [Performance and Equity in Colorado’s WIOA Programs: A Sequential Mixed-Methods Evaluation](#)- the disproportionate impact method was executed to identify indicators of inequitable outcomes for WIOA participants (Clark & Richard,

2022). To minimize the implications that marginalized groups are solely responsible for the disparate outcomes, the model will show the relevance of equity throughout the participants' journey through the WIOA program. Quantitative data analyses may provide some indicators or challenges related to equity of access, assessment, and opportunity that subsequently influence outcomes for WIOA participants. A qualitative analysis (focus groups) will be conducted to provide context and deeper understanding of the quantitative analysis results. The focus groups are designed to explain gaps in equity for participants as they journey through the program. The focus group discussions will be facilitated using questions with themes associated with the following stages of the WIOA program: 1) outreach and recruitment; 2) application and intake; 3) assessment of barriers to program completion and employment; 3) assessment of training selection; 4) training placement; and 4) exit outcomes.

Review of Related Literature

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2015) defines equity as the state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair. The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired situation or lofty value. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept. Per President Biden's [Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#), strategies to redress inequities should include identifying and addressing barriers to economic prosperity for groups that have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. Per Section 1 of the Executive Order, entrenched disparities in our laws and public policies, and in our public and private institutions, have often denied equal opportunity to individuals and communities. To address these disparities workforce development agencies must shift from traditional service delivery models to more equity-focused and human-centered models that consists of the following components: equity-focused workforce development model consists of the following components: 1) equity of access and diversity; 2) equity of assessment for barriers and training selection; 3) equity of opportunity for inclusion in training related to career pathways to high-wage jobs; 4) equity of outcomes and economic self-sufficiency.

Diversity and Equity of Access

Much like equity of access is discussed in healthcare (World Health Organization, 2023), equitable access to job training is central to workforce development. When diversity is used synonymously with equity, program administrators may inadvertently report program representation as equitable. The WIOA program has identified fourteen target populations that are most likely to experience barriers to employment. To ensure diverse and equitable representation of participants that identify with these barrier categories, WIOA programs must demonstrate equity of access at and before program entry.

Diversity

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another - race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance (Kapila et al., 2016). Nationally, the WIOA

program has been successful in providing services to diverse groups of people. In some cases, marginalized groups have been overrepresented in proportion to representation in the overall labor force. Blacks/African Americans, for instance, represented 35% of workers who completed WIOA-funded services between April 2019 and March 2020 but only make up 12.6% of the country's labor force (Camardelle, 2021). As emphasized in the healthcare industry, equity of access should be evaluated against the fundamental goal of ensuring individuals in need of job training receive the needed services. From this perspective, Blacks/African Americans may not necessarily be overrepresented but equitably represented if in 2019, their poverty rate was 18.8% compared to 15.7% and 7.3% Hispanics and Whites respectively (Creamer, 2020). According to United Way's (2023) [ALICE in the Crosscurrents](#) report, more than half of Hispanic (51%) and Black (59%) households in the U.S. were below the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold in 2021, compared to 36% of White households. Households in predominantly rural counties accounted for only 15% of U.S. households in 2021 but experienced an increase in the percentage of households below the threshold, from 43% to 45%. Nearly 37% of Wyoming's population is rural. The United Way (2021) describes an ALICE individual as a person who earns just above the Federal Poverty Level but less than what it costs to make ends meet.

Equity of Access

To ensure diversity for participants in need of job training, WIOA programs must demonstrate equity of access at and before program entry. Therefore, outreach, recruitment, application, and intake strategies should minimize barriers to program entry and participation. Many studies have been conducted and recorded to show how various factors trap individuals and families in a cycle of poverty and impede economic mobility. Whether participants barriers are geographical, cultural, or economic, promising practices should bridge the gap between physical and digital access to job training. For example, WIOA administrators should examine the geographical location of workforce centers in proximity to marginalized and underserved communities. Broadband infrastructure is also important for equitable access. In February 2023, the US Treasury approved \$70.5 million to expand broadband infrastructure in Wyoming through the CPF (Capital Projects Fund) program. The program was designed to distribute CPF funding, focusing on deploying broadband infrastructure to bring high-quality internet service to unserved or underserved homes, businesses, and communities. Another relevant factor for equity of access and diversity is compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws that protect people with disabilities. The ADA contains specific requirements for state and local governments to ensure equal access for people with disabilities. Additionally, culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS) are necessary for equitable access to WIOA programs. As defined by the National Center for Farmworker Health (2020), CLAS are services that are respectful of and responsive to individual cultural beliefs, practices, preferred languages, literacy levels and communication needs. An example of CLAS related to outreach and recruitment is marketing material that's shared in languages other than English to recruit members from underrepresented groups who possess limited English proficiency.

Equity of Assessment

To level the playing field, culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS) are also important for equitable assessments. Incorporating equitable practices for the assessment of barriers to program completion and subsequent employment is equally important to employing equitable assessment practices for participants' selection of training programs. A comprehensive assessment is the first step in determining individualized service plans and connecting jobseekers to individualized career and training services. A successful assessment process identifies a customized plan of action and support that aligns with the interests, assets, and needs for WIOA participants. Assessment strategies must support the participants in identifying targeted Title I services that will support their employability and employment placement.

Assessment of Barriers

In 2017, WIOA established a priority of service requirement and identified priority populations. Per this guidance, American Job Centers are required to provide individualized career services, training services, or both, and must give priority to veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient when using WIOA Adult funds. In 2020, the Department of Labor emphasized the priority of service requirement and strongly encouraged states to ensure that at least 75 percent of the state's participants receiving individualized career and training services in the Title I- Adult program are from at least one of the priority groups mentioned above and expects this rate will be no lower than 50.1 percent in any state. Although WIOA encourages states to prioritize certain target populations, the program design places limitations on state and local workforce areas' ability to strategically and holistically eliminate and/or reduce barriers to economic prosperity. Individuals that identify with "priority of service" are faced with multiple challenges to program participation, completion, and employment after exit. In the context of workforce equity, it is important to understand theoretical frameworks that explain how participants' individual and intersecting characteristics may impact their economic mobility. "Without a good causal theory, it is unlikely that a policy design will be able to deliver the desired outcomes" (Birkland, 2015; p. 159). The theory of intersectionality examines how the interaction of multiple variables conceptualizes oppression because of discrimination based on gender, race, class, ability, and other axes of identity which in turn increases the likelihood of more challenges to obtaining and maintaining employment (McCall, 2005).

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients, for instance, have been identified as a hard to serve population because they have characteristics that impede their ability to find and keep jobs (Danziger & Seefeldt, 2003, p. 76). In a study conducted by the Institute for Public Affairs University of Illinois at Springfield in collaboration with the School of Social Work University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2000), researchers found that certain characteristics of TANF recipients were influential factors of whether program participants would return to the program six months after exit. Quantitative analyses were conducted using administrative data from various IDHS datasets. Researchers also developed a survey instrument that focused on the experiences of TANF leavers when leaving TANF and in the months immediately after TANF exit. Results showed that single parents were more likely than two-parent families to return to TANF. Consequently, they are labeled as hard-to-serve. Jacobson (2021) argues that hard-to-serve places a pejorative label on certain groups of people. The hard-to-serve label diverts attention from

systemic and institutional ism's that have perpetually excluded certain groups from access to quality healthcare, education, housing, and other basic needs. To minimize the deficit narrative approach, it is more appropriate to describe these populations as ill-served by society. Shifting from a deficit narrative of hard-to-serve to a more participants-focused approach, equitable assessments are designed to identify multiple and intersecting barriers.

Inclusion and Equity of Opportunity

Per [Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#), Section 1, the Federal Government's goal in advancing equity is to provide everyone with the opportunity to reach their full potential. Consistent with these aims, each agency must assess whether, and to what extent, its programs and policies perpetuate systemic barriers to opportunities. Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate (Kapila, et al., 2016). Inclusion efforts extend beyond making participants feel welcomed in American Job Centers (AJC). These strategies should ensure participants' have equal access to resources and opportunities for barrier reduction and training related to quality jobs. For the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system, the State should identify means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among the programs and activities carried out through the system (WIOA, Section 101). Participants should be included in the equitable distribution of resources to minimize challenges to program participation and completion.

Frontline workers are also expected to be diligent about including workers in training related to in-demand jobs that pay family-sustaining wages. According to the Departments of Commerce and Labor, "good jobs are the foundation of an equitable economy that lifts up workers and families and makes businesses more competitive globally" In a study conducted by Harvard's Project on Workforce team, it was reported that over 40 percent of WIOA training participants earn under \$25,000 annually (Deming, et al. 2023). Women and participants of color are especially likely to be enrolled in training programs for low-wage occupations. Occupational segregation has been an ongoing issue in public employment and training programs. People of color have disproportionately received training related to jobs with lower wages (Weeden et al., 2018). Transportation jobs often pay above-average wages for workers without college degrees, they have limited potential for upward mobility" (Deming et al., 2023). "Ground transportation programs (e.g. Commercial Driver's License programs for heavy truck driving) represented the largest share of eligible programs nationwide with at least 50 WIOA-funded participants. According to Clark and Richard (2022), Black/African American males were more likely than any other group to enter training for truck driver (CDL). However, two quarters after exit, Black/African American males made significantly less on average than other exiters who trained for truck driving.

Assessment for Training Selection

According to 20 CFR 680.400, the workforce development system established under WIOA emphasizes informed consumer choice. However, Deming et al., (2023) identified "a number of design and implementation challenges with consumer choice in public workforce training and suggest it is unlikely that the system is delivering optimal matches between training program and trainee". When assessing for occupational skills and interests, it is important to

provide real-time employment and labor market data to assist participants in making informed choices about training programs. The [Navigating Public Job Training](#) report discussed how the lack of information on public-facing lists and unavailable WIOA performance and outcome data may inhibit participants' from making informed training selection choices. Academic assessments may also pose a challenge for training selection for participants that have been ill-served. "If somebody has been ill-served, they may in fact need more support than a student who hasn't been, but time and resource-intensive services should not be seen as some kind of excessive demand or largess. Rather, targeted and tailored services are part of a necessary restitution" (Jacobson, 2021, p. 58). Some WIOA participants', for instance, may have been ill-served and are not as prepared for academic assessments as participants who attended schools with adequate funding to support rigorous, high-quality education experiences. For equitable assessment practices, states and local areas must make determinations about whether prior assessments and/or educational status of participants provides sufficient information about an individual's academic skill levels.

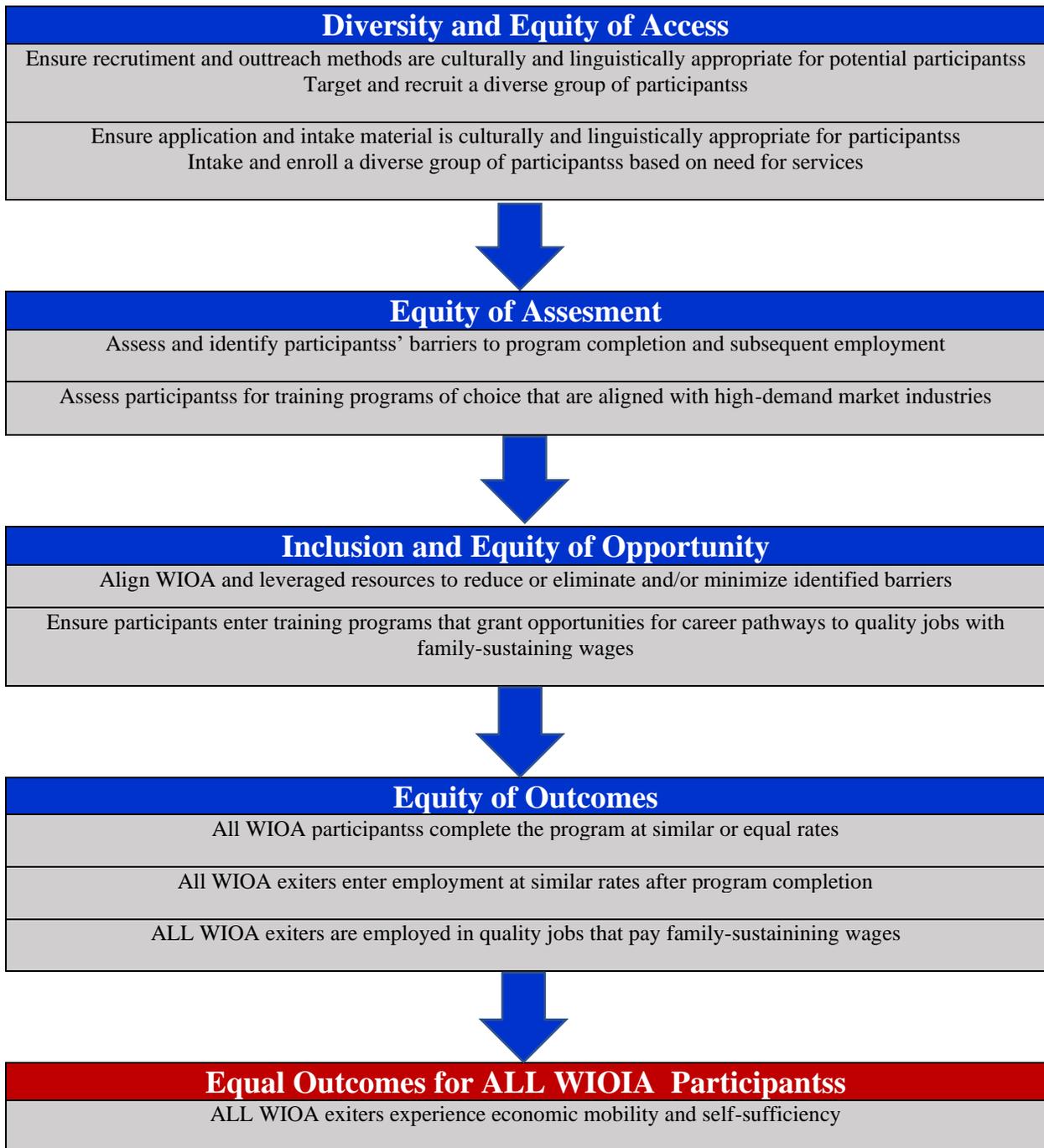
Equity of Outcomes

Equity of access, assessment, and opportunity collectively impact the equity of outcomes for WIOA participants (See Figure 1). To reduce disparities related to program completion, employment rates, and wages, it is important to incorporate equitable practices throughout the participant's journey through the WIOA program. Outcome data analyses that indicate disproportionate impact for certain groups and/or subgroups creates an opportunity to analyze program polices for service delivery. An overall equity measure emphasizes performance assessment. Like RAND Health Care's measure for health equity, the overall equity measure for workforce equity emphasizes performance assessment. An equity-focused workforce development model illustrates and summarizes the extent to which the quality of services provided by an organization contributes to reducing disparities in job training outcomes. Sosa (2017) describes how differences in performance outcomes "between subgroups may suggest that one group has less access to support services, is need of relatively greater support, and/or must address certain obstacles in order to attain those outcomes at rates comparable to their peers" (p.3).

Conceptual Framework for Equity-Focused WIOA Program

Figure 1 below illustrates the relationship between and among equity of access, assessment, opportunity, and how the metrics collectively impact equity of outcomes for WIOA participants.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Equity-Focused WIOA Program



Note: The equity-focused framework was developed by NIU's Workforce Policy Lab based on findings from WIOA Title I- program evaluations conducted between January 2021 and December 2023

Quantitative Analysis

The dataset used in this analysis was prepared from Wyoming Department of Workforce Services records generated for the purpose of Federal reporting. WIOA Title, I funding to states requires quarterly and annual reporting on exiter outcomes to the U.S. Department of Labor¹. Wyoming’s Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) quarterly reporting files for program years 2018 through 2022 were used to generate the tables in this document.

Diversity and Equity of Access

Title I Adult Exiter Characteristics

Table 1 displays the race/ethnicity of Title I Adult exiters, which were approximately 52% female. The majority (73%) of exiters were non-Hispanic white. Hispanics made up about 13% of exiters.

Since Title I Adult programs are focused on low-income jobseekers, unemployed persons in poverty were selected as a comparison group to assess the diversity of program participants. Adult program exiters were more likely to be female (52%) compared with the comparison group (45%).

White males appear to access Adult programs at a rate significantly lower than their representation in the comparison group. All other sex/race/ethnicity group exiters are represented in Adult exiters at a greater rate than the comparison group.

Table 1. Race/Ethnicity of Title I Adult PY19 Exiters

		Participants	Pct of Total	Comparison Group ²	
Female	Hispanic, any race	62	6.5%	3.7%	
	Non-Hispanic	White	378	39.4%	34.8%
		Other Race	62	6.5%	6.1%
Male	Hispanic, any race	65	6.8%	6.2%	
	Non-Hispanic	White	323	33.7%	43.7%
		Other Race	69	7.2%	5.5%
Female		502	52.3%	44.6%	
Male		457	47.7%	55.4%	
Total		959			

¹ Details about WIOA Performance Reporting requirements can be found here:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/reporting>.

² Percentage of Unemployed Persons with Income Below Poverty Level. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey & University of Minnesota, IPUMS USA.

Title I Dislocated Worker Exiter Characteristics

The overall Wyoming unemployed population was used as a comparison group for the Dislocated Worker program. Title I Dislocated Worker exiters were approximately 66% male (Table 2). This is somewhat higher than their representation in the comparison group, which is about 61% male.

Contrary to the Adult program, White males are represented at a higher level in the DW exiter group compared to the comparison group. Among females, Hispanic exiters have lower representation in DW program exiters relative the comparison group, while Hispanic males have higher representation. Both male and female other race DW exiters have a slightly lower representation relative to the comparison group.

Table 2. Race/Ethnicity of Title I Dislocated Worker PY19 Exiters

		Participants	Pct of Total	Comparison Group ³	
Female	Hispanic, any race	7	1.9%	4.8%	
	Non-Hispanic	White	99	27.4%	29.8%
		Other Race	16	4.4%	4.4%
Male	Hispanic, any race	30	8.3%	6.7%	
	Non-Hispanic	White	182	50.4%	45.1%
		Other Race	27	7.5%	9.2%
Female		122	33.8%	38.9%	
Male		239	66.2%	61.1%	
Total		361			

Title I Youth Exiter Characteristics

Title I Youth exiters are compared with Opportunity Youth – persons aged 16 to 24 who are not employed and not in school. Opportunity Youth are much more likely to be male (70%), but Title I Youth participants were approximately 49% female (Table 3). Like the Adult program, male Youth exiters were less likely to be white than the comparison group.

³ Percentage of Unemployed Persons. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American community Survey & University of Minnesota, IPUMS USA

Table 3. Race/Ethnicity of Title I Youth PY19 Exiters

		Participants	Pct of Total	Comparison Group ⁴	
Female	Hispanic, any race	68	6.9%	0.7%	
	Non-Hispanic	White	340	34.4%	26.1%
		Other Race	77	7.8%	3.4%
Male	Hispanic, any race	89	9.0%	10.0%	
	Non-Hispanic	White	327	33.1%	44.6%
		Other Race	87	8.8%	15.2%
	Female		485	49.1%	30.2%
	Male		503	50.9%	69.8%
	Total		988		

The current dataset does not include information to analyze and determine if and how equity of access impacts diversity at and before the point program entry. The evaluation will examine this equity metrics using qualitative data obtained during focus groups with frontline staff.

Equity of Assessment

Leary (2021) argues that equity goes far beyond diversity and racial quotas. With the current administration’s paradigm shift and highlighted focus on equity, workforce development programs should be designed to create and provide services that are focused on minimizing and/or removing barriers. Barrier-reduction services will allow participants a fair chance to complete training and gain employment in jobs with family-sustaining wages. Equitable service delivery must first identify groups that may face multiple and/or intersecting barriers.

Target Populations

DOL guidance on the priority of service states that participants included in one or more of the WIOA priority groups should comprise at least 75% of Adult participants and expects this rate will be no lower than 50.1 percent in any state. These priority groups include “recipients of public assistance, individuals who are basic skills deficient, or those identified as being low-income (in addition to veterans and eligible spouses).” (TEGL 7-20) The data analysis reveals that Wyoming meets the 50.1% expectation but falls short of the 75% goal. About 60% of all Title I Adult Exiters identified themselves as belonging to one or more of the priority groups when they entered the program. As displayed in Table 4, *Low Income* was by far the most identified. *Basic Skills Deficient* was the second most identified population (33%). While not named as one of DOL’s priority groups, about one-quarter of exiters identified as having a disability.

⁴ Percentage of Opportunity Youth (Ages 16-24, Unemployed and Not In School). Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey & University of Minnesota, IPUMS USA

Women were much more likely than men to identify as single parents. For most other target populations, men were represented more than women.

Table 4. Title I Adult Exiters, WIOA Target Populations

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
<i>Low Income</i>	45.2%	46.8%	41.9%	52.3%	51.1%	52.2%	46.0%	51.4%	48.6%
<i>SNAP</i>	17.7%	20.9%	30.6%	18.5%	19.5%	17.4%	21.7%	19.0%	20.4%
<i>TANF</i>	4.8%	7.1%	8.1%	0.0%	0.6%	1.4%	7.0%	0.7%	4.0%
<i>Basic Skills Deficient</i>	1.6%	1.3%	0.0%	3.1%	3.7%	4.3%	1.2%	3.7%	2.4%
<i>Veteran Status</i>	1.6%	1.6%	3.2%	7.7%	17.0%	17.4%	1.8%	15.8%	8.4%
<i>Priority Population</i>	45.2%	48.1%	43.5%	56.9%	58.2%	59.4%	47.2%	58.2%	52.5%
Disability	0.0%	6.9%	8.1%	6.2%	13.0%	10.1%	6.2%	11.6%	8.8%
Homeless	1.6%	4.8%	4.8%	4.6%	14.9%	11.6%	4.4%	12.9%	8.4%
Ex-Offender	8.1%	9.5%	14.5%	32.3%	26.9%	30.4%	10.0%	28.2%	18.7%
Single Parent	21.0%	21.4%	24.2%	9.2%	6.2%	11.6%	21.7%	7.4%	14.9%
No Target Pop	48.4%	47.4%	48.4%	40.0%	37.2%	33.3%	47.6%	37.0%	42.5%

Dislocated Workers (DW) had lower levels of participants identifying as being in one or more of the target populations (Table 5). Unlike Adult exiters, DW exiters that were female were more likely to be in most of the target populations.

Table 5. Title I Dislocated Worker Exiters, WIOA Target Populations

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
Low Income	42.9%	24.2%	25.0%	23.3%	16.5%	25.9%	25.4%	18.4%	20.8%
SNAP	0.0%	7.1%	18.8%	10.0%	2.2%	7.4%	8.2%	3.8%	5.3%
TANF	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.6%
Basic Skills Deficient	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	2.5%	0.8%	1.4%
Veteran Status	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	16.7%	15.4%	7.4%	1.6%	14.6%	10.2%
Disability	0.0%	9.1%	6.3%	3.3%	4.9%	3.7%	8.2%	4.6%	5.8%
Homeless	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Ex-Offender	0.0%	10.1%	18.8%	13.3%	11.5%	14.8%	10.7%	12.1%	11.6%
Single Parent	42.9%	22.2%	25.0%	10.0%	4.9%	0.0%	23.8%	5.0%	11.4%
No Target Pop	28.6%	59.6%	50.0%	53.3%	61.0%	55.6%	56.6%	59.4%	58.4%

Youth exiters have higher probabilities of being in one of the target populations than do Adult or Dislocated Worker exiters. About 70% of all Youth exiters identified as being in at least one of the target populations (Table 6). Female exiters were more likely to be receiving SNAP and/or TANF and be single parents. Higher percentages of males identified as disabled or ex-offenders.

Table 6. Title I Youth Exiters, WIOA Target Populations

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
Low Income	47.1%	50.9%	54.5%	51.7%	45.3%	49.4%	50.9%	47.1%	49.0%
SNAP	14.7%	10.9%	13.0%	4.5%	7.3%	12.6%	11.8%	7.8%	9.7%
TANF	1.5%	2.4%	1.3%	0.0%	0.3%	1.1%	2.1%	0.4%	1.2%
Basic Skills Deficient	39.7%	33.5%	29.9%	38.2%	34.9%	20.7%	33.8%	33.0%	33.4%
Veteran Status	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Disability	19.1%	22.9%	20.8%	18.0%	29.7%	28.7%	22.1%	27.4%	24.8%
Homeless	0.0%	2.9%	6.5%	0.0%	2.4%	3.4%	3.1%	2.2%	2.6%
Ex-Offender	5.9%	8.8%	10.4%	16.9%	17.7%	11.5%	8.7%	16.5%	12.7%
Single Parent	16.2%	14.4%	10.4%	3.4%	3.4%	3.4%	14.0%	3.4%	8.6%
No Target Pop	35.3%	30.6%	28.6%	32.6%	26.0%	28.7%	30.9%	27.6%	29.3%

The current dataset does not include information to analyze and determine if practices for assessing barriers and training selection are equitable for the participants that identify with WIOA barrier categories. The evaluation will examine these equity metrics using qualitative data obtained during focus groups with frontline staff.

Inclusion and Equity of Opportunity

Improving the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts is one purpose of WIOA programs. Practices related this purpose will provide America’s workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages and to provide America’s employers with the skilled workers the employers need to succeed in a global economy. The current evaluation will identify which groups of participants are more likely to enter training related to certain occupations.

Training Occupation Groups for Adult Exiters

The percentages of Adult exiters that trained for each occupation group are displayed in Table 7. There are significant differences between males and females, as well as between race/ethnicity groups within each gender. Nearly 70% of females trained for a healthcare support or healthcare practitioner occupation. Males were more likely to train for transportation, installation, maintenance, & repair, and production occupations.

Other race females were more likely to train for lower paying healthcare support occupations. More than half of males that entered training did so in a transportation occupation, with no significant differences between race/ethnicity groups. These occupational choices are examined in more detail below.

Table 7. Title I Adult Exiters Entered Training Occupation Group

	Female			Male			Median Earnings 4Q	Empl Rate 4Q
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic			
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race		
Entered Training	50	300	44	37	182	43	8,722	80.9%
Transportation	4.0%	4.0%	6.8%	48.6%	51.1%	51.2%	10,771	75.3%
Healthcare Practitioners	40.0%	38.3%	15.9%	13.5%	4.4%	2.3%	14,655	92.3%
Healthcare Support	38.0%	30.7%	40.9%	0.0%	7.1%	4.7%	6,283	78.5%
Personal Care and Service	8.0%	7.3%	6.8%	2.7%	0.5%	7.0%	4,697	73.5%
Inst, Maint, and Repair	2.0%	1.3%	2.3%	16.2%	6.0%	4.7%	8,950	72.0%
Production	2.0%	1.7%	6.8%	0.0%	4.9%	7.0%	8,318	71.4%
Management	2.0%	4.0%	2.3%	0.0%	2.2%	2.3%	8,657	73.7%

Training Occupation Groups for Dislocated Exiters

The percentage of Dislocated exiters that trained for each occupation group are displayed in Table 8. As with Adult exiters, there are significant differences between males and females, as well as between race/ethnicity groups within each gender. About 30% of females trained for a healthcare support or healthcare practitioner occupation. Males were more likely to train for transportation, production, and installation, maintenance, & repair occupations.

Females DW exiters were more likely to train for lower paying healthcare support occupations. About 60% of males that entered training did so in a transportation occupation, the vast majority of which was truck driving. These occupational choices are examined in more detail below.

Table 8. Title I Dislocated Worker Exiters Entered Training Occupation Group

	Female			Male			Median Earnings 4Q	Empl Rate 4Q
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic			
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race		
Entered Training	3	60	12	22	140	22	12,531	83.8%
Transportation	0.0%	15.0%	8.3%	59.1%	58.6%	63.6%	13,458	88.2%
Production	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	18.2%	12.9%	18.2%	13,239	85.7%
Inst., Maint., and Repair	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	9.3%	4.5%	11,731	75.0%
Healthcare Support	33.3%	20.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.7%	4.5%	8,403	83.3%
Healthcare Practitioners	0.0%	10.0%	8.3%	0.0%	2.1%	4.5%	19,278	72.7%
Personal Care and Service	33.3%	8.3%	16.7%	4.5%	0.7%	0.0%	6,429	80.0%
Management	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	12,218	90.0%

Training Occupation Groups for Youth Exiters

The percentage of exiters that trained for each occupation group are displayed in Table 9. About 58% of female Youth exiters entered training for a healthcare support occupation. Male exiters were most likely to train for transportation occupations, which had the highest median earnings two quarters after exit.

Table 9. Title I Youth Exiters Entered Training Occupation Group

	Female			Male			Median Earnings 2Q	Empl Rate 2Q
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic			
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race		
Entered Training	9	75	8	8	43	4	5,691	82.3%
Transportation	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	37.5%	37.2%	0.0%	11,603	95.2%
Healthcare Support	66.7%	57.3%	50.0%	0.0%	4.7%	0.0%	5,228	87.3%
Career Exploration	22.2%	16.0%	37.5%	37.5%	14.0%	50.0%	2,178	60.7%
Production	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	18.6%	0.0%	9,660	77.8%
Personal Care & Service	11.1%	9.3%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5,406	100.0%
Inst., Maint., and Repair	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	12.5%	14.0%	0.0%	9,482	75.0%
Management	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	7,119	50.0%

Equity of Outcomes

The analysis in this section will evaluate whether there are inequitable outcomes for participants in Title I programs. It will examine the services, particularly training services, participants received. Employment outcomes (employment rates and average earnings) will be analyzed based on training services received.

The approach will employ the disproportionate impact analysis described above. In the tables that follow, the reference group for each outcome (the group with the highest outcome) is highlighted in green. Outcomes for groups indicated as disproportionately impacted (groups with outcomes less than 80% of the reference group) are highlighted in red. The analyses only include data for participants that have exited the programs and have outcome data available for 2 quarters and 4 quarters after exit.

Title I Adult Exiter Outcomes

Nearly 64% of Title I Adult exiters entered a training program (Table 10). Females were over 30 percentage points more likely to receive training, with males of all race/ethnicity being indicated as disproportionately impacted. About 79% of those that entered training successfully completed their program. No race/ethnicity group was indicated as being disproportionately impacted in terms of completion of training.

Table 10. Title I Adult Exiters Training Access and Completions

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
Participants	62	378	62	65	323	69	502	457	959
Received Training	80.6%	79.4%	71.0%	56.9%	56.3%	62.3%	78.5%	57.3%	68.4%
Training Completed	80.0%	79.0%	72.7%	81.1%	83.0%	72.1%	78.4%	80.9%	79.4%

Employment Rates

Employment rates for Title I Adult exiters are displayed in Table 11. Nearly 80% of all exiters were employed two quarters after exit, with females being somewhat more likely to be employed. Receiving training increased the likelihood of employment significantly versus not receiving training for male and white female exiters. However, non-white female exiters that entered training had employment rates that were a lower than those that did not enter training. Not surprisingly, most groups of exiters that successfully completed a training program had the highest rates of employment two quarters after exit. This was not the case for non-white females, though.

For most race/ethnicity groups entering, but not completing, a training program resulted in lower employment rates relative to no training. White females were the exception to the trend.

Table 11. Title I Adult Exiters Employment Rate 2 Quarters After Exit

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exiters	80.6%	84.7%	79.0%	78.5%	74.6%	73.9%	83.5%	75.1%	79.5%
Received Training	78.0%	87.3%	75.0%	86.5%	80.8%	76.7%	84.8%	80.9%	83.2%
Training Completed	75.0%	89.0%	78.1%	93.3%	84.1%	80.6%	86.1%	84.9%	85.6%
Training Not Compl	90.0%	81.0%	66.7%	57.1%	64.5%	66.7%	80.0%	64.0%	74.1%
No Training	91.7%	74.4%	88.9%	67.9%	66.7%	69.2%	78.7%	67.2%	71.3%
TRE	7.7%	7.6%	24.2%	12.5%	6.8%	12.1%	9.3%	8.5%	9.0%

Employment rates four quarters after exit (Table 12) fell slightly from two quarters after exit for all sex/race/ethnicity groups. The overall employment rate fell from 79% two quarters after exit to about 76% four quarters after exit. Male exiter employment rates generally fell more than did females.

Table 12. Title I Adult Exiters Employment Rate 4 Quarters After Exit

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exiters	74.2%	84.9%	74.2%	75.4%	68.1%	71.0%	82.3%	69.6%	76.2%
Received Training	76.0%	86.3%	70.5%	78.4%	78.0%	74.4%	83.2%	77.5%	80.9%
Training Completed	75.0%	89.9%	78.1%	80.0%	82.1%	74.2%	86.7%	80.7%	84.3%
Training Not Compl	80.0%	73.0%	50.0%	71.4%	58.1%	75.0%	70.6%	64.0%	68.1%
No Training	66.7%	79.5%	83.3%	71.4%	55.3%	65.4%	78.7%	59.0%	66.0%
TRE	7.9%	6.9%	22.6%	13.8%	6.3%	9.4%	8.5%	7.9%	8.3%

About 67% of exiters that were employed in two quarters after exit continued to be employed by the same employer four quarters after exit (Table 13). Completing a training program raises the likelihood of remaining with the same employer for all exiters. Males had rates of retention with the same employer about 17 percentage points lower than females and were indicated as disproportionately impacted relative to white females.

Table 13. Title I Adult Exiters Retention with Same Employer 2nd Quarter to 4th Quarter After Exit

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exiters	66.0%	76.9%	69.4%	56.9%	57.3%	56.9%	74.7%	57.1%	66.8%
Received Training	66.7%	78.2%	72.7%	59.4%	63.9%	51.5%	76.3%	61.3%	70.5%
Training Completed	73.3%	82.0%	80.0%	64.3%	66.9%	52.0%	80.8%	64.4%	74.2%
Training Not Compl	44.4%	62.7%	50.0%	25.0%	45.0%	50.0%	58.8%	43.8%	54.0%
No Training	63.6%	70.7%	62.5%	52.6%	46.8%	66.7%	68.2%	50.4%	57.4%

Quarterly Earnings

Quarterly earnings were available for exiters in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit. In the following tables, earnings values are the median for exiters in each group *who are employed*. Exiters that have no earnings are not included in the median calculations. This is consistent with the approach that U.S. Dept. of Labor uses for median earnings calculations for annual reporting purposes.

Table 14 displays median earnings 2 quarters after exit. Entering and completing training was associated with higher earnings, especially for females. For all females, average earnings for those that completed a training program were more than 75% higher than those that did not receive training. Male training completers earned about 30% more on average than those that did not enter training.

Other race males that entered and completed training had the highest levels of median earnings two quarters after exit. For those that completed their training program, all female race/ethnicity groups and white males were indicated as disproportionately impacted.

Median earnings for white males that successfully completed their training programs were essentially equal to those that enter but did not complete training. Hispanic and other race males that completed training had median earnings more than 2 ½ times higher than those that did not complete. White males that did not complete training had median earnings that were twice as high as most other sex/race/ethnicity groups. All other groups were indicated as disproportionately impacted by this measure.

Among those that did not enter a training program, white males had the highest median earnings. Other race males and females and white females that did not access training were indicated as disproportionately impacted.

Table 14. Title I Adult Exiters Median Quarterly Wage 2 Quarters After Exit (\$)

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exiters	5,734	7,232	5,714	8,446	8,187	7,321	6,921	8,144	7,363
Received Training	5,689	7,939	6,921	8,777	8,933	7,869	7,734	8,842	8,157
Training Completed	6,003	8,291	7,016	9,580	8,933	11,279	8,172	9,172	8,520
Training Related Empl	4,376	8,548	8,205	9,660	10,402	10,053	8,426	9,660	8,933
Training Not Compl	5,689	5,363	3,707	3,818	8,892	4,164	5,182	5,743	5,598
No Training	5,780	4,145	4,763	7,061	7,145	5,314	4,646	7,055	5,977

For all exiters combined, median earnings increased slightly from the 2nd to 4th quarter after exit. However, changes in median earnings varied significantly between sex/race/ethnicity groups (Table 15). Hispanic males continued to have the highest levels of median earnings four quarters after exit. Hispanic and other race females were indicated as disproportionately impacted using this measure.

Hispanic males also had the highest median earnings among those exiters that entered and completed training. For exiters that completed training, all other groups except other race males were indicated as disproportionately impacted.

Other race females saw the largest increase in average earnings, followed by Hispanic and other race males. The increase in earnings for other race females and Hispanic males was largely driven by increases in earnings for exiters that had received/completed training. The increase in median earnings for other race males resulted from a large increase for those that did not receive training. Median earnings for white males that entered but did not complete training grew by more than 60%.

It should be noted that these increases in median earnings occurred while there was a decline in employment rates (Tables 11 and 12). The median earnings calculations do not include exiters without earnings. Thus, the increases may be due to job losses for lower earning exiters rather than earnings increases for consistently employed exiters.

Table 15. Title I Adult Exiters Average Quarterly Wage 4 Quarters After Exit

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exiters	6,674	7,694	6,816	9,324	8,534	8,122	7,411	8,533	8,013
Received Training	6,267	8,543	8,734	9,792	9,459	7,730	8,356	9,324	8,722
Training Completed	6,267	9,197	8,778	11,714	8,756	10,629	9,119	9,396	9,197

Training Related Empl	2,995	11,258	9,965	7,563	8,790	3,985	10,380	8,536	8,694
Training Not Compl	6,659	6,161	6,101	5,511	14,564	4,903	6,161	8,474	6,745
No Training	6,933	4,486	4,773	8,349	7,723	8,173	4,563	7,918	6,502

As was seen in Table 15, among exiters that entered training, Hispanic males had the highest average earnings four quarters after exit. Hispanic and other race females were indicated as disproportionately impacted by this metric. Information included in Tables 16 provides additional information about gender/race/ethnicity average earnings differences.

Hispanic males that trained for healthcare practitioner occupations appear to be driving their relatively higher levels of median earnings. They were significantly more likely than other males to train for healthcare practitioner roles (Table 7) and those Hispanic males that trained for these occupations had the highest median earnings of any sex/race/ethnicity group (Table 16).

The average earnings for exiters that trained in healthcare support occupations was about 43% of that earned by healthcare practitioners. Among female exiters, Hispanic and white exiters had higher median earnings for healthcare practitioner occupations while other race females had higher earnings in healthcare support occupations.

There are greater disparities in average earnings levels among male exiters. Other race males were most likely to enter training in transportation occupations and had significantly lower median earnings than exiters from other race/ethnicity groups 4 quarters after exit.

Table 16. Title I Adult Exiters Average Quarterly Earnings 4 Quarters After Exit by Entered Training Occupation Group

	Female			Male		
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic	
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race
Entered Training	6,267	8,543	8,734	9,792	9,459	7,730
Transportation	3,884	12,478	12,967	10,584	11,339	7,338
Healthcare Practitioners	15,042	14,771	13,348	16,419	11,644	
Healthcare Support	5,138	6,130	8,226		6,283	15,409
Personal Care and Service	4,297	6,401				
Inst., Maint., and Repair				9,792	9,906	
Production		2,983			10,439	9,698
Management		8,005			8,657	

Title I Dislocated Worker Exiter Outcomes

This section describes the services Title I Dislocated Worker exiters accessed and the outcomes they achieved after exiting. As with the Title I Adult section above, access to services and exiter outcomes are evaluated using a disproportionate impact analysis. Because there were

fewer exiters from the DW program, a smaller number of analyses are presented. With only seven exiters, metrics are not presented for Hispanic females.

More than 71% of Title I Dislocated Worker exiters entered a training program (Table 17). Males were more likely to receive training. About 82% of those that entered training successfully completed their program. White females were indicated as being disproportionately impacted in terms of access to training relative to other race males. Other race females were less likely to complete their training programs.

Table 17. Title I Dislocated Worker Exiters Training Access and Completions

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
Participants	7	99	16	30	182	27	122	239	361
Received Training		60.6%	75.0%	73.3%	76.9%	81.5%	61.5%	77.0%	71.7%
Training Completed		80.0%	50.0%	77.3%	85.0%	81.8%	76.0%	83.7%	81.5%

Employment Rates

Employment rates for Title I Dislocated Worker exiters are displayed in Table 18. About 83% of all DW exiters were employed two quarters after exit, with males having slightly higher rates than females. Receiving training increased the likelihood of employment slightly for most groups. However, other race that received training actually had slightly lower employment rates than the average of all exiters.

Hispanic males had the highest employment rates. Other race males had the lowest rates. Other race males that received training were indicated as disproportionately impacted.

Table 18. Title I Dislocated Worker Exiters Employment Rate 2 Quarters After Exit

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exiters		81.8%	81.3%	86.7%	85.7%	77.8%	80.3%	84.9%	83.4%
Received Training		83.3%	91.7%	95.5%	87.9%	72.7%	82.7%	87.0%	85.7%
Training Completed		83.3%	83.3%	94.1%	89.1%	77.8%	80.7%	88.3%	86.3%

Employment rates four quarters after exit (Table 19) fell slightly from two quarters after exit for most sex/race/ethnicity groups. The overall employment rate fell from 83% two quarters after exit to about 81% four quarters after exit. Employment rates for white males increased slightly

while white females, Hispanic males, and other race males all declined. Other race male exiters experienced the largest decline after having the lowest employment rates two quarters after exit.

Other race females that entered and completed training experienced higher employment rates four quarters after exit. Among exiters that completed training programs, white females and other race males were indicated as disproportionately impacted.

Table 19. Title I Dislocated Worker Exiters Employment Rate 4 Quarters After Exit

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exiters		75.8%	81.3%	83.3%	86.3%	70.4%	75.4%	84.1%	81.2%
Received Training		78.3%	91.7%	81.8%	89.3%	68.2%	78.7%	85.9%	83.8%
Training Completed		79.2%	100.0%	82.4%	90.8%	72.2%	78.9%	87.7%	85.3%

Quarterly Earnings

Quarterly earnings were available for exiters in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit. In the following tables, earnings are averaged for all exiters in each group, whether they were employed or not.

Table 20 displays median earnings 2 quarters after exit. Entering and completing training was associated with slightly higher earnings for most sex/race/ethnicity groups. For all exiters, median earnings for males were more than 50% higher than females. This gap narrowed for exiters that completed training but was still greater than 35% for those exiters.

For Hispanic males, exiters that completed training had lower median earnings than the median for all the entered training. This indicates that exiters that entered but did not complete training had higher earnings than did those that completed.

Table 20. Title I Dislocated Worker Exiters Median Quarterly Wage 2 Quarters After Exit (\$)

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exiters		8,150	8,439	12,244	12,950	12,655	8,115	12,797	11,234
Received Training		8,335	9,531	13,285	12,787	13,227	8,549	13,110	11,599
Training Completed		8,549	11,234	10,517	12,973	13,630	9,703	13,222	12,238

For all exiters combined, median earnings increased slightly from the 2nd to 4th quarter after exit. However, changes in median earnings varied significantly between sex/race/ethnicity groups (Table 21).

Female median earnings increased at a greater rate than did males, although remained significantly lower. White males had the highest levels of median earnings four quarters after exit. Hispanic males experienced the largest decline and joined female groups in being disproportionately impacted.

Table 21. Title I Dislocated Worker Exiters Median Quarterly Wage4 Quarters After Exit

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exiters		9,332	8,734	8,759	13,198	10,794	8,900	12,949	11,622
Received Training		9,796	10,227	13,082	13,122	10,794	9,796	13,095	12,531
Training Completed		9,796	9,103	11,682	13,160	13,476	9,795	13,198	12,672

As was seen in Tables 20 and 21, among exiters that entered training, males had higher earnings than females. This outcome was driven by the fact that they were more likely to enter occupational training that led to higher earnings levels. Almost three-quarters of males entered training in either transportation or production occupations, which had median earnings above the median for all exiters. Women were more likely to enter training for healthcare support or personal care occupations, which had the lowest median earnings (Table 8).

Title I Youth Exiter Outcomes

A previous section described the characteristics of exiters when they entered the Title I Youth program. This section describes the services they accessed in the program and the outcomes they achieved after exiting. As with the other Title I programs, access to services and exiter outcomes are evaluated using a disproportionate impact analysis.

About 15% of Title I Youth exiters entered a training program (Table 22). Females were almost twice as likely to receive training. White females were significantly more likely to enter training, with all other groups being disproportionately impacted by this metric.

Males were somewhat more likely to complete the training programs that they entered. About 80% of males that entered training successfully completed their program, compared with about 74% of females. Other race females and Hispanic males had the highest training completion rate.

Table 22. Title I Youth Exiters Training Access and Completions

Female		Male	
	Non-Hispanic		Non-Hispanic

	Hispanic, any race	White	Other Race	Hispanic, any race	White	Other Race	Female	Male	Total
Participants	68	340	77	89	327	87	485	503	988
Received Training	13.2%	22.1%	10.4%	9.0%	13.1%	4.6%	19.0%	10.9%	14.9%
Training Completed	77.8%	72.0%	87.5%	87.5%	79.1%	75.0%	73.9%	80.0%	76.2%

Employment Rates

Employment rates for Title I Youth exiters are displayed in Table 23. About 69% of all Youth exiters were employed two quarters after exit, with females having a slightly higher overall employment rate. Receiving training increased the likelihood of employment for most groups. However, other race females that received training actually had lower employment rates than those that did not receive or complete training. Not surprisingly, for most groups exiters that successfully completed a training program had the highest rates of employment two quarters after exit.

In addition to entering training at lower rates than White or Hispanic females (Table 23), other race female exiters that entered and completed training had the lowest employment rates. White females had the highest employment rate among those that did not receive training.

Table 23. Title I Youth Exiters Employment Rate 2 Quarters After Exit

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exiters	69.1%	71.2%	63.6%	68.5%	66.7%	69.0%	69.7%	67.4%	68.5%
Received Training	88.9%	81.3%	50.0%	100.0%	83.7%		79.3%	87.3%	82.3%
Training Completed	100.0%	81.5%	57.1%	100.0%	82.4%		80.9%	86.4%	83.0%
No Training	66.1%	68.3%	65.2%	65.4%	64.1%	67.5%	67.4%	65.0%	66.1%

The overall employment rate for all Youth exiters four quarters after exit (Table 24) increased over the rate two quarters after exit. Overall employment rates increased for all sex/race/ethnicity groups.

Other race females that entered and completed training had the lowest employment rates two quarters after exit, and their employment rate grew significantly by the 4th quarter. Conversely, employment rates for male and female Hispanic exiters that received training fell from 2nd to 4th quarter after exit.

Table 24. Title I Youth Exiters Employment Rate 4 Quarters After Exit

Hispanic, any race	Female		Hispanic, any race	Male		Female	Male	Total
	Non-Hispanic			Non-Hispanic				
	White	Other Race		White	Other Race			

All Exitors	61.8%	75.0%	74.0%	70.8%	73.4%	70.1%	73.0%	72.4%	72.7%
Received Training	66.7%	85.3%	75.0%	87.5%	90.7%		82.6%	90.9%	85.7%
Training Completed	55.6%	83.3%	71.4%	100.0%	94.1%		80.9%	95.5%	86.6%
No Training	61.0%	72.1%	73.9%	69.1%	70.8%	68.7%	70.7%	70.1%	70.4%

Quarterly Earnings

Table 25 displays median earnings 2 quarters after exit. White males had the highest median earnings. Entering training was associated with significantly higher earnings for most sex/race/ethnicity groups. Training completion further increased earnings.

White males had the highest median earnings among those that entered and completed training. All other groups are indicated as disproportionately impacted by this measure.

Table 25. Title I Youth Exitors Median Quarterly Wage 2 Quarters After Exit (\$)

	Female			Male			Female	Male	Total
	Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic, any race	Non-Hispanic				
		White	Other Race		White	Other Race			
All Exitors	3,344	3,080	3,092	3,354	3,804	3,617	3,170	3,691	3,348
Received Training	6,320	4,697	7,232	4,003	9,276		4,937	8,370	5,691
Training Completed	6,316	4,633	7,232	4,653	9,276		4,937	8,833	5,790
No Training	3,259	2,633	2,990	3,345	3,147	3,573	2,861	3,230	2,999

For all exitors combined, median earnings increased slightly from the 2nd to 4th quarter after exit (Table 26). However, these increases were mostly a result of increases among exitors that did not receive training. Median earnings for most sex/race/ethnicity groups that entered training declined. Changes in earnings varied significantly between sex/race/ethnicity groups.

Among exitors that entered training, white males continued to have the highest levels of earnings four quarters after exit. Other race males were the only group that experienced an increase in median earnings among exitors that completed training. Due to a large increase in median earnings for exitors that did not receive training, other race males experienced the highest median earnings four quarters after exit.

Table 26. Title I Youth Exitors Median Quarterly Wage 4 Quarters After Exit

Female		Male	
	Non-Hispanic		Non-Hispanic

	Hispanic, any race	White	Other Race	Hispanic, any race	White	Other Race	Female	Male	Total
All Exiters	4,003	3,267	2,763	2,883	4,370	5,115	3,210	4,144	3,616
Received Training	5,964	4,307	5,617	5,885	8,160		4,525	8,109	5,477
Training Completed	5,261	4,570	4,943	5,885	8,274		4,879	8,274	5,885
No Training	3,346	3,115	2,585	2,754	3,747	4,742	3,081	3,728	3,312

Qualitative Data Analysis

A qualitative approach was used to gather information from the practitioners that collect, enter, and process the participants’ data. “Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and what they say and do” (Myers, 2009). This approach provided a better understanding of the context in which decisions and actions take place within the workforce centers. Exploring front line workers’ experience and interaction with participants is based on an interpretive (or constructivist) perspective embedded in a qualitative approach (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Wyoming has one state-level workforce development board which advises Wyoming’s Department of Workforce Services (WDWS). Referred to as the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC), the local board advises WDWS’ Employment and Training Division that administers the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Title I program. Services are provided throughout eighteen workforce centers across the state. Some center directors provide leadership for multiple centers, so for the current study, WPL facilitated ten structured interviews with directors and frontline staff representing the following centers: 1) Casper; 2) Cheyenne; 3) Cody/ Worland; 4) Evanston/Jackson/Kemmer; 5) Gillette; 6) Lander/Riverton; 7) Laramie/Rawlins; 8) Rock Springs; 9) Sheridan; and 10) Torrington/Wheatland. Over a period of two weeks, the Zoom video conferencing platform was used to conduct the one-hour sessions. On average, each interview group consisted of three frontline workers from the workforce centers.

The structured interviews groups were designed to explain gaps in diversity, equity [at each stage of the program], inclusion, and accessibility that may have been identified during the quantitative analyses. The group discussions were facilitated using questions with the equity-focused framework themes: 1) diversity and equity of access; 2) equity of assessment; 3) equity of opportunity and inclusion; and 4) equity of outcomes. The themes were associated with the following program stages: 1) outreach & recruitment; 2) application and intake; 3) barrier assessment; 4) assessment for training selection; 5) training placement; and 6) aligning resources to minimize barriers.

Operating under the same “local” board, frontline staff across the centers discussed similar strategies for program implementation and service delivery. In an effort to support priority populations, [TEGL 7-20.pdf](#) encourages States to identify and share promising practices. Therefore, the WPL evaluation team identified practices that may be effective for equitable service delivery. The practices represent potential best practices. The constraints of the

one-hour discussions did not allow for proper investigation of them. Before the following strategies are shared as best practices, they should be evaluated for effectiveness:

Diversity and Equity of Access

Outreach and Recruitment

[Literally]Meet Potential Participants “Where They Are” (Street Outreach)- As explained by frontline staff, ‘Due to the rural nature of Wyoming, many people come to the centers seeking assistance directly’. Nonetheless, street outreach strategies have been implemented to serve individuals that may benefit from WIOA programs and services but may have barriers that impede their ability to visit program centers. WIOA emphasizes a focus on these “priority of service” populations; to ensure adherence to this guidance, WDWS staff literally “meet potential participants where they are”. For example, while one center collaborates with a local homeless shelter to provide outreach every Friday, another center visits the local library every Tuesday to target out-of-school youth. Foodbanks, churches, local colleges, K-12 school districts, the local housing authority, and local jails are other places staff visit to provide outreach and recruit participants that may benefit from WIOA services. With a focus on justice-involved participants, the Pathway Home Grant has been used to provide pre-release job training services to incarcerated individuals. DWDS’ Career Compass Program (CCP) creates an opportunity to meet incarcerated individuals where they are; it’s the first step with helping this population transition back into the community. The success of the program can be attributed to program staff that have experience in law enforcement. During the COVID pandemic, staff transitioned to virtual outreach methods and are currently implementing those practices to “meet people where they are,” even 40 to 50 miles away from workforce centers. Virtual and in-person street-strategies have been effective in reaching potential participants that may have transportation and childcare challenges.

“Business representatives work in the community to provide ongoing outreach; they coordinate resource fairs as a unique opportunity to simultaneously provide community members information about the WIOA program and other available resources in the community.”

Referrals- Staff discussed how the collaboration with nonprofit organizations and other state agencies presents opportunities for referrals from other programs in which “priority” populations are participating. Climb Wyoming, for instance, is a statewide nonprofit empowering low income, single mothers by providing free job training, mental health counseling, and job placement. The Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Department of Family Services (DFS), and Wyoming’s Child Support Program are among state partners. With a shared goal of promoting self-sufficiency, DFS sometimes refers its Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER) and Work Initiative Network (WIN) participants to WDWS for job training. POWER is Wyoming’s cash assistance program designed to help families with children become self-sufficient through intensive case management services. WIN, a partnership between the Department of Family Services, the Wyoming Child Support Program,

and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) offers a holistic, team-based approach to addressing barriers to employment and providing skills to participants to help them obtain long-term employment.

Word-of-mouth referrals sometimes lead to multigenerational service delivery. When we visit local high schools and colleges, students tell their families about WIOIA services.”

Application and Intake

Electronic Submissions- To minimize barriers that could negatively impact the ability to visit workforce centers, WIOA applicants have the option to submit required application-processing documents via Google Drive and/or HireWyo, a platform for employers and job seekers to post and find jobs, access programs and resources, and get support for workforce development. Based on findings from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2016) related to online services for key low-income benefits programs (e.g., SNAP, TANF, Medicaid) online applications “are a promising option” that allows potential program recipients to apply for services and benefits at a convenient time and place.

“Wyoming’s small population generally allows for easy admission for eligible individuals.”

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) – To offer culturally and linguistically appropriate services, DWS partners with organizations that provide culturally specific services and have a track record of success in serving target populations. Additionally, DWS’ utilizes the application process as a tool to examine participants’ cultural and/or language barriers. For example, if English is not a participant’s native language, some centers have bilingual staff that are able to effectively communicate with the participants. Center staff have also been successful using translator apps to communicate with English as Second Language (ESL) participants.

“We have staff that are fluent in Spanish”

Trust and Relationship Building - Center staff understand the importance of developing trusting relationships with participants before and at program entry. Building rapport is essential to creating a program culture that fosters equity, belonging, inclusion, and collaboration. Staff reiterated how Wyoming’s small program population size positions them in a unique situation to

implement person-centered models that cultivate trusting relationships with participants. When professional relationships are developed at application and intake stages, staff can better engage participants during other stages of the program.

We use open-ended questions and make participants feel comfortable enough to talk about their challenges.”

Equity of Assessment

Addressing equity and minimizing barriers is often approached with deficit narratives for program participants. “How problems are identified and named is just as important to the research process as efforts to actually address them” (Davis & Museus, p. 1). Therefore, WDWS are challenging deficit narratives with strengths-based, person-centered approaches to assessments. Widely used in the social work field, a strengths-based approach focuses on a participants’ personal, relational, and community assets, rather than their deficits (Pulla, 2017).

Assessment of Barriers

Supportive and Empathetic Case Management- Similar to what Millner & Rollnick (2013) refer to as motivational interviewing, WDWS staff execute supportive and empathetic case management when assessing barriers. This proactive method involves interacting with participants to understand barriers in the context of the “whole” person. Through this process, staff exhibit an understanding of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) presuppositions. “NLP is a powerful personal and professional growth tool. It can help individuals overcome limiting beliefs, improve communication skills, and achieve their goals” (Eid, 2023), According to one NLP presupposition, “the map is not the territory”. In other words, people make sense of the world from their own personal experience.

“We all have a story. Sometimes, we may view a participant’s circumstance as a barrier, but from the participant’s perspective, the action or behavior has been a strategy for survival.”

High-Touch Engagement Model -According to Whissemore (2021), “high touch practices keep students engaged” (p.1). WDWS staff use a high-touch, person-centered approach to engage participants while assessing for barriers. With this model holistic model, staff overcommunicate with participants to understand their service needs. Overcommunication may involve figuratively and literally meeting participants where they are to provide individualized case management. Figuratively meeting clients where they are requires case managers to understand that participants may have unique and sometimes, intersecting and multiple challenges. As suggested

by Clark (2003), cultural and structural barriers are interrelated factors that collectively impact ability to experience upward mobility. To alleviate spatial mismatch challenges and participants' distance from work centers, staff *literally* meet them where they are, whether it's at the local library or other agencies from which participants receive services.

“For example, if we find out a participant has an appointment at the WIC office, we make arrangements to meet them there.”

Assessment for Training Selection

“Sometimes they are so in survival mode they haven't thought about what they want or like to do.”

Career Research Worksheet- The process of training selection includes extensive work with the participant to identify appropriate training that leads to a realistic employment outcome. The Career Research Worksheet (CRW) is the training selection tool used across the centers. The process begins with obtaining information and assessing the participant's work history, skills, and individual situation. The collection of information is similar to a job interview and is used not only for career planning, but also focuses on success planning. Staff build collaborative and trusting relationships that promote long-term success during enrollment and after program completion. Suitability assessments determine if participants have realistic expectations of jobs related to training choices. After participants are trained on using ONET and /or BOOTS and labor market information (LMI), they are given “homework” that involves using the resource to find jobs related to training choices and understand market saturation and job feasibility post-training. BOOTS (Business occupational outlook tool sets) is an initiative and selection of tool sets developed to assist business, educational institutions, and citizens address the challenges that Wyoming faces related to education and workforce.

“BOOTS is the governor's initiative to develop a state-level version of ONET; it's popular with youth participants because they can explore college options.”

Job Shadowing- job-shadowing is offered as a suitability assessment and can be a quick, low-effort way to understand a role. Other benefits include: 1) learning the day-to-day responsibilities of a job; 2) identifying skills and training needed; 3) networking with people in the company; and 4) gaining experience to discuss in interviews or put on your resume (Kaplan, 2024). According to staff, some youth participants have been provided with stipends as an incentive to participate in job shadowing activities.

“Sometimes, we pay youth participants a stipend to shadow to see if they like a job related to a training choice.”

Cultural Sensitivity- Bazemore-James et al. (2017) argue that “cultural bias in standardized testing is an important consideration for access and equity in higher education” (p. 7). WDWS staff acknowledged how academic assessments (ex. TABE) for WIOA job training can also be culturally insensitive for certain groups/subgroups of participants. Therefore, the staff use varying and combined approaches to ensure equitable practices during the training assessment stage.

“We understand that standardized tests can sometimes be culturally insensitive.”

Inclusion and Equity of Opportunity

Aligning Resources to Minimize Barriers

Building and Maintaining Partnerships - Partnership development is one of WIOA’s central elements. With partnerships, frontline staff are able to leverage resources to minimize participants’ barriers. WDWS maximizes the use of resources and minimizes the duplication of efforts through system alignment, leveraging alternate funding, network building, and information sharing. Collaboration with 1 Wyo Hope, for instance, provides resources for glasses and cell phones. Braided services with Dads Making a Difference Program have been a strategy to provide job training to low income custodial and non-custodial fathers who are experiencing multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. In addition to job training in high growth, high demand occupations, participants are provided with placement assistance in high paying jobs. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is also a part of the Dads program curriculum. Licensed Professional Counselors provide individual counseling, family therapy, groups sessions, recovery, and relapse prevention. Staff emphasized the importance of the program’s focus on mental health and discussed how other partnerships acknowledge and addresses mental health concerns, especially post-COVID. “Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their

community” (World Health Organization). According to the American Psychological Association (2021), psychologists reported a large increase in treatment for anxiety and depression due to the impact of the pandemic on mental health.

Training Placement

Consumer Choice - According to 20 CFR 680.400, the workforce development system established under WIOA emphasizes informed consumer choice. However, Deming et al., (2023) identified “a number of design and implementation challenges with consumer choice in public workforce training and suggest it is unlikely that the system is delivering optimal matches between training program and trainee” (p.24). Case managers and other frontline workers speculate that life’s challenges influence participants’ training choices. Public assistance recipients, for example, face the challenge of balancing TANF time limits with and the program’s work requirements. Shorter time limits for TANF eligibility means less opportunity to educate and train parents for better-paying jobs (Johnson, 2016). While some participants’ training choices are influenced by challenges, other training choices are based on knowledge shared by family and friends. Regardless of factors that influence training choices, local areas have varying approaches to working with participants to support them with training options.

“When participants make training choices, we have ongoing conversations with them about suitability, marketability, and self-sufficiency.”

Conclusion

The WPL evaluation team identified several promising practices that indicate equitable service delivery. Yet, as discussed in the quantitative section of the current report, some groups/subgroups had disproportionate outcomes as it relates to program completion, wages, employment rates, training related employment, and retention with the same employer after program exit. Frontline staff explained various factors that may have contributed to unfavorable outcomes for program completers. The benefits cliff, childcare expenses, suitability, and discriminatory practices were the recurring themes among center staff.

“Life happens and you can’t plan for that.”

Per Section 2(3) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the purpose is to improve the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts to provide America’s workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages. Despite WIOA’s

emphasis on family-sustaining wages, it is not clear how the term is defined and measured. While some states use 200% of the federal poverty guideline as a self-sufficiency standard, Wyoming is among the states that use a more nuanced approach taking into account factors like location, family size and age of kids. Regardless of the self-sufficiency measure, recent evaluations have found that wages for WIOA exiters were less than the average livable wages in the U.S. Even more dismal, records show that women of color and African American males are disproportionately impacted and tend to have wages lower than the average post-exit wages for all exiters. As explained by frontline staff even when exiters look “self-sufficient on paper,” the benefits cliff may affect their decision to remain employed or return to welfare. The benefits cliff is sometimes a barrier to career advancement (Altig et al., 2021). Acting to balance costs against benefits to arrive at an action that will maximize a personal advantage, a program exiter may avoid work to maximize the gains of welfare assistance and other benefits. This behavior is an example of the rational action theory and an indication that more research is needed to understand livable wages measures in the context of in-demand jobs vs quality jobs.

“There is very little wiggle room between self-sufficient income and benefits”

Because childcare is oftentimes not available and/or very expensive in Wyoming, parents of small children are unable to find jobs with wages that offset the childcare expense. Even though childcare resources are provided during enrollment, if not continued after exit, program completers are faced with the compounding challenges of the benefits cliff and childcare. Equally concerning are exiters that obtain training-related employment but realize they are not suitable for the industry, or the job is not feasible. Frontline staff discussed how exiters who trained in cosmetology find it difficult to advance in the career due to the financial and physical demands of a new employee in the field. Discriminatory employment practices were also discussed as a factor that may influence inequitable outcomes. Explained best by the theory of intersectionality, the interaction of structural and cultural factors makes it difficult for exiters to experience upward economic mobility. Based on the current study finding, the WPL’ evaluation team provided the following recommendations for future research, evaluations, and continuous program improvement in Wyoming’s WIOA Title I program.

Recommendations

Development of Data Infrastructure for Transaction Data Collection and Analysis

Equity-focused programs place attention on leveling the playing field and providing barrier-reduction services for job seekers. To minimize the perception of deficit narratives for participants with inequitable outcomes, a data infrastructure should be employed to synergize master and transaction data. “They work together to provide a comprehensive understanding of the entire data landscape, enabling optimal decision-making and operational efficiency” (Robinson, 2024: p. 1). As suggested by Goodman (2024), reauthorization of WIOA should

encourage states to collect and report more data on program performance and outcomes to improve efforts around equity, diversity, and job quality. Wyoming and other States have done a good job with collecting and recording master data in an organized way for quantitative data analyses. Examples of master data are participant records, including demographic information, barrier categories, training industry and outcomes related to training completion, wages and employment rates after exit. On the other hand, data that contextualizes equity and capture services that directly impact participant outcomes is not as explicit and quantifiable in the current data systems. Examples of WIOA transaction data are barrier services, funds/resources used to provide the service, and the source of funding. The data should be captured and recorded on an individual level for each WIOA participant. Analysis of transaction data can identify trends, detect anomalies, and provide insight for policy makers during decision-making processes. Table 27 provides an example of how transaction data can be recorded.

Table 27. Example of Transaction Data Records

Barrier-Reduction Service (Check all that apply)	Funding Amount	Source of Funding (WIOA, Partner Services/Non-WIOA Funds)	Name of Partner (if applicable)
Childcare	\$_____	WIOA and Partner	
Transportation	\$_____	Partner	
Housing/Rental Assistance	\$_____	WIOA	N/A
High Speed Internet	\$_____	WIOA	N/A
Utility Bill Assistance	\$_____	WIOA and Partner	
Language Translation	\$_____	WIOA	N/A
Mental Health	\$_____	Partner	
Other – Glasses	\$_____	Partner	

Analysis of Participants Feedback

As required by 20 CFR 682.220(b) 2, evaluations conducted under [Paragraph \(a\)](#) of this section must, when appropriate, include an analysis of participants feedback and outcome and process measures in the statewide workforce development system. Therefore, to obtain input from WIOA Title I training participants, WPL team recommends developing a survey instrument based on quantitative and qualitative findings from the current report. Questions should capture

data related to an equity-focused conceptual framework and gather information for each stage of the participants’ journey through the training program. The survey map below is a sample aligned with the conceptual framework discussed on page 8 above (Table 7).

Table 28. Sample Survey Map for WIOA Title I Participants Experience Instrument

Sampel Survey Question (s)	Possible Answers
Diversity and Equity of Access	
Outreach and Recruitment	
1. With which race/ethnicity do you identify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Indian or Alaska Native (Non-Hispanic or Latino) • Asian (Non-Hispanic or Latino) • Black or African (Non-Hispanic or Latino) • Hispanic or Latino • Multi-racial • Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Non-Hispanic or Latino) • White (Non-Hispanic or Latino) • Prefer not to answer.
2. Do you identify as a person with a disability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Prefer not to answer.
3. How did you hear about the job training program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friend or family Member • Employer • Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) • Community-Based Organization (church, homeless shelter, etc.) • Other Agency (Department of Family Services (DFS), Department of Vocational Rehab (DVR), etc.)
4. Did you need any of the following services to participate in the program? (Check all that apply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable accommodation (s) for a disability • Language translation services • Affordable, high-speed internet • Transportation • Language translation assistance. • Other (please specify) • I didn’t need any of the above services. • I needed the support, but I did not receive any services.
Equity of Assessment	
Assessment of Barriers	
5. Did you have any of the following challenges while enrolled in the training program? (Check all that apply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare – I needed someone to watch my child(ren) while I attended training) • Transportation – I needed a way to get to and from training; I couldn’t afford gas for my car • Housing- I needed assistance with my rent; I was homeless

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable and high-speed internet- I couldn't afford internet services; my internet connection was not good. • Utility bill- I needed assistance with utility bills • I needed assistance understanding the training material • I needed assistance with translations the English language • Other (Please specify) • I didn't have any challenges while enrolled in the training program. •
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Assessment for Training Programs

<p>6. What method (s) did the case manager use to help you choose your training program? (Check all that apply)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The case worker interviewed me to learn about my work background and skills. • I took a test (ex. TABE). • The case worker asked about my job interests. • My employer decided what training program I needed. • The case manager provided information about certain jobs (wages, work expectations/ requirements, in-demand jobs, turnover rates, etc.) • None of the above • All of the above
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Inclusion and Equity of Opportunity

Aligning Resources with Identified Barriers

<p>7. Did you receive support for any of the following services. (Check all that apply)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare assistance (someone to watch my child(ren) while I attend training) • Transportation assistance (gas card, bus pass etc.) to get to and from training • Housing/Rental assistance to avoid eviction and/or homelessness • Access to affordable and high-speed internet • Utility bill assistance for electricity, gas, etc. bills • Tutoring to understand training materials • Technology assistance (internet, laptop /computer, hot spot, cell phone, one etc.). • Lanaguage translation services • I didn't need any of the above services. • I needed the support, but I did not receive any services.
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Training Placement

<p>8. In which training industry were you enrolled? (listed by industry)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare-Physical and/or Mental/Behavioral (CNA, LPN, Counselor, etc.) • Education (Early Childhood, K-12, etc.) • Transportation (Truck Driving, Supply Chain & Logistics, etc.) • Construction (HVAC, General Construction) • Information Technology/ IT • Manufacturing (Welding, Forklift) • Other
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
9. Which best describes your reason for enrolling in the job training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training program was recommended by my employer. • The training program was recommended by my case worker • I chose the program because the training was short • I chose the program because I was always interested in jobs in the industry • Other
Equity of Outcomes	
Training Completion Rates	
10. Did you complete the training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Employment Rates	
11. Are you currently employed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Training -Related Employment	
12. Is your job related to your training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
13. Which of the following best describes your current job?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Truck Driving • Supply Chain Logistics Manager • Early Childhood Teacher (ex. Head Start) • Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) • Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) • Forklift Operator • HVAC Technician • Electrician • Other
Family-Sustaining Wages	
14. Are your job earnings enough to financially support your family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No •
15. How concerned are you about losing the following benefits when you start working? (Note: A Likert scale was used to rate the level of concern about losing benefits) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not at all concerned • Slightly concerned • Moderately concerned • Extremely concerned • I do not receive this benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) • Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) • Medicaid for you and your child(ren) • Housing Assistance/Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher • Childcare Voucher • Supplemental Security Income (SSI) / Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

(Note: A Likert scale will be used to rate the level of concern about losing benefits)	
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Longitudinal Evaluation Studies

Wyoming’s Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) quarterly reporting files for program years 2018 through 2022 were analyzed for the current study. WDWS frontline staff discussed how the COVID pandemic may have impacted program outcomes. Other factors that were discussed as relevant factors were the benefits cliff and how in-demand jobs are not necessarily good jobs. The limitations of the cross-sectional design of the current study places limitations on causal inferences. Therefore, the WPL team recommends conducting longitudinal studies to gain more insight about the benefits cliff and emphasis on in-demand jobs impacts outcomes for WIOA participants.

Benefits Cliffs

“Benefits cliffs (the “cliff effect”) refer to the sudden and often unexpected decrease in public benefits that can occur with a small increase in earnings” (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2023). Frontline staff presented the idea that even though some WIOA exiters are “self-sufficient on paper” the reality of the benefits cliff forces them to make a rational choice between maintaining low-wage employment with limited benefits or returning to welfare dependency and receive cash (TANF), food (SNAP), housing (Section 8), and medical assistance (Medicaid). For instance, a single mother who exits a CNA training program and enters into employment, may find it necessary to return to TANF or SNAP because the low-wage job places her in the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) category. The United for ALICE (2023) describes an ALICE individual as a person who earns just above the Federal Poverty Level but less than what it costs to make ends meet.

As suggested by the National Conference of State Legislatures (2023), addressing the benefits cliff should begin with defining a self-sufficiency standard to understand what families need to earn to transition away from benefits. While some states use 200% of the federal poverty guideline as a self-sufficiency standard, some states use a more nuanced approach. Wyoming, for instance, has an “[updated self-sufficiency standard](#) and [interactive calculator](#) from the [Wyoming Women’s Foundation](#) (WYWF) .The standard takes into account factors like location, family size and age of kids” (Habermann, 2024). A longitudinal study will follow a small subset of WIOA participants to understand their financial journey from before program entry to several quarters after program exit to understand if and why the exiters return to welfare dependency. The current partnership between DWS and DFS increases the feasibility of developing an ecosystem for sharing public assistance benefits (e.g., TANF, SNAP, Medicaid) and WIOA data.

Quality Jobs vs In-Demand Jobs

Per [eCFR :: 20 CFR Part 679](#) , local boards, with representatives of secondary and postsecondary education programs, should lead efforts to develop and implement career

pathways within the local area by aligning the employment, training, education, and supportive services that are needed by adults and youth. Defined as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training and other services, career pathways seek to help individuals enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster. Results from Department of Labor’s comprehensive study- [A Meta-Analysis of 46 Career Pathways Impact Evaluations](#) revealed that the career pathways approach leads to large gains in educational progress gains and industry-specific employment. Even though jobseekers obtained “in-demand” jobs, the report indicated that there were small gains in general employment and short-term earnings and the career pathways approach had no meaningful gains in medium/longer-term earnings (2022). Section 3(23) of WIOA defines “in-demand industry sector or occupation” as an industry sector that has a substantial current or potential impact (including through jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate, and that contributes to the growth or stability of other supporting businesses, or the growth of other industry sectors. Carey (2024) argues that “in-demand” jobs may be the opposite of “good jobs”. “From an employer’s perspective, “in-demand” is another way of saying “lots of vacancies,” and sometimes employers can’t fill jobs because they expect grinding, potentially dangerous work in exchange for bad pay, meager benefits, and little room for advancement” (p. 2).

According to the Departments of Commerce and Labor, “good jobs are the foundation of an equitable economy that lifts up workers and families and makes businesses more competitive globally. Collaboratively the Departments have created a model that consists of eight principles that creates a framework for a shared vision and understanding of job quality- 1) recruitment and hiring; 2) benefits; 3) diversity, equity, inclusion & accessibility; 4) empowerment and representation; 5) job security and working conditions; 6) organizational culture; 7) pay; and 8) skills and career advancement. The Good Jobs Initiative is committed to providing critical information to workers, employers, and governments as they work to improve quality and create access to good paying jobs.

Therefore, the WPL team recommends WDWS conduct a longitudinal study to evaluate and determine whether promising practices for training selection (e.g., career research worksheets and job-shadowing) yield quality jobs and better long-term outcomes for WIOA exiters. The study should collect and analyze data from stakeholders involved in Wyoming’s Workforce Innovation 1 & Opportunity Act system- grantees, employees/WIOA exiters, and employers.

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NIIU-CGS Workforce Development Research & Evaluation Team

With expertise in workforce development, poverty & economic self-sufficiency research, diversity, equity & inclusion, and data management, WPL assembles a unique workforce evaluation team. The team has a multidisciplinary background in evaluating workforce development program outcomes and has done extensive research and evaluation related to public workforce systems and workforce equity. They use various data analysis tools to track program access and outcomes to determine if disparities exist among marginalized groups.



Yolanda Clark, Ph.D., Director of Research and Evaluation -Dr. Clark leads the research and evaluation work for the Workforce Policy Lab. Her most recent work concentrates on workforce equity and the evaluation of state and federal workforce development and job training programs. Prior to joining NIU-WPL, Dr. Clark was an Assistant Professor in the department of Sociology and Community development at Delta State University. She focused on sociology of housing, social organization and change, research methods, and community development. In this role, she provided leadership and

technical assistance for workforce, community, and economic development projects in the Mississippi Delta region. Yolanda has over twenty years of experience in affordable housing. Prior to joining Delta State, Yolanda worked as a consultant and compliance manager responsible for conducting project management, policy analysis, and programmatic assessments for affordable housing owners/agents and a HUD performance-based contractor. Her research includes examining cultural and structural factors to explain poverty and the inability to become economically self-sufficient. Yolanda holds a PhD in Human Capital Development from the University of Southern Mississippi and a Master of Science in Community Development from Delta State University. Yolanda has also completed the inaugural cohort of the Leaderful Communities Academy sponsored by the University of Mississippi's Community Engagement Center and the Kettering Foundation. Yolanda is a member of the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP).



Brian Richard, Ph.D., Director of the Workforce Policy Lab. At WPL, Dr. Richard's most recent work concentrates on the evaluation of state and local workforce development and training programs as well as serving as the principal research staff for the Illinois Workforce Investment Board Continuous Improvement Committee. He also has extensive experience estimating the impacts of economic development projects, local retail and industrial analysis, and research into the health of regional economies. Recent projects include the legislatively mandated report Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning in Illinois, an evaluation of local workforce boards training expenditures and

economic impacts of Illinois' community college system and the Illinois defense industry. Previously, Brian was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economic and Workforce Development at the University of Southern Mississippi where he taught courses focused on quantitative research methods, economic development finance, and business recruiting and retention. Brian is a member of the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP).