



Expanding Opportunities & Reducing Barriers to Work: Kansas Final Report

Evaluation of Pilot Projects to Promote Work and Increase State Accountability in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program



(Evaluation of USDA, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training Pilots)

May 2022

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May 2022

Keith Olejniczak, James Mabli, Cynthia Miller, Brandon Hawkins, Stephen Freedman, Kelsey Schaberg, Gretchen Rowe, and Julie Hartnack

Submitted to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Nutrition Service
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314
Project Officer: Anita Singh
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Submitted by:

Mathematica
955 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 801
Cambridge, MA 02139
Telephone: 617.301.8997
Project Director: James Mabli
Reference Number: 50142

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Ed Bolen (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities)	David Greenberg (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)	Jeffrey Smith (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
Stacy Dean (fmr. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities)	Alma Salazar (fmr. Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce)	Whitney Smith (JP Morgan Chase Foundation)
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Jeremy Berman	Julie Hartnack	Kelley Monzella
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Glossary

ABAWD	Able-bodied adult without dependents. 18- to 49-year-old adult who is not disabled and does not have dependents
ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences. All types of abuse, neglect, and other potentially traumatic experiences of people under the age of 18
BCC	Butler Community College
Bridges	A six-week job-readiness program that focuses on resume preparation, interview skills, soft skills (such as punctuality and proper dress), and job search skills
CARES Act	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. An economic stimulus bill signed into law on March 27, 2020 that implemented a variety of programs to address issues related to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic
Control group	A group of individuals enrolled in a SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) pilot that was eligible for services available through existing SNAP E&T programs if such programs were available to the control group in the pilot location
CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
C-Tec	Southeast Kansas Career and Technical Education Center
DCF	The Kansas Department of Children and Families
ESS	Episcopal Social Services
Food security	Having access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Individuals who experienced food access limitations due to lack of money or other resources are said to be food insecure
GCCC	Garden City Community College
GED	General Education Development. A group of subject tests which, when passed, certify that the test taker has high school-level academic skills
GO	Generating Opportunities
GOALS	Generating Opportunities to Attain Lifelong Success. The SNAP Employment and Training pilot implemented in Kansas
HMO	Health maintenance organization
ICP	Individual career plan
ITT	Intention-to-treat analysis. An analytical method where individuals are evaluated based on their initial random assignment group regardless of whether they received the treatment
KDOL	The Kansas Department of Labor
KU	The University of Kansas, Center for Public Partnerships in Research
LWIA	Local workforce investment area. A group of one or more counties that provide workforce development services
MIS	Management information system

NCCC	Neosha County Community College
OMB	The Federal Office of Management and Budget
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
P4S	Partners 4 Success program. Program that consists of job readiness and life skills instruction (including goal setting, coping with crises, and money management) and the potential for two weeks of work experience
PPO	Preferred provider organization
Random assignment	An experimental technique for assigning individuals enrolled in a SNAP Employment and Training pilot into research groups (a treatment or control group)
Research group	A group of individuals enrolled in a SNAP Employment and Training pilot that was either eligible for enhanced services (a treatment group) or eligible for services available through existing SNAP E&T programs where available (a control group)
SACK	Substance Abuse Center for Kansas
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. A Federal nutrition assistance program
SNAP E&T	A program that assists SNAP participants in obtaining employment by providing services, such as job search assistance, job skills training, education, work experience, or workfare, and supports, such as assistance with transportation and child care costs
SSI	Supplemental Security Income. A Federal income supplement program
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. A Federal grant program designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency
Treatment group	A group of individuals enrolled in a SNAP Employment and Training pilot that was eligible for the enhanced set of services developed under the pilot
UI	Unemployment insurance. A Federal program to provide unemployment benefits to eligible workers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Very low food security	A severe form of food insecurity characterized by disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake
WIA	Workforce Investment Act Gold Standard Evaluation. The most recent national study of the Adult and Dislocated Worker program services conducted in 2012
WIC	Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. A Federal assistance program that provides food, health care referrals, and nutrition education to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children
Work registrant	SNAP participant who has not met any Federal exemptions from SNAP work requirements and is therefore required to register for work
WorkKeys	A workplace skills assessment that measures a range of hard and soft skills

Overview

This report presents findings from the evaluation of a SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) pilot—Generating Opportunities to Attain Lifelong Success (GOALS)—that was implemented in Kansas from January 2016 to March 2019. This was one of 10 pilots Congress authorized and funded as part of the Agricultural Act of 2014 to offer enhanced SNAP E&T services to assist SNAP participants in obtaining employment. The Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF) enrolled 4,170 individuals into the pilot, with roughly half randomly assigned to the GOALS group (eligible for enhanced services and any other employment and training services available in their communities) and the other half assigned to the control group (eligible for existing SNAP E&T services and any other employment and training services available in their communities). DCF mostly targeted new and current work registrants. GOALS services were voluntary and available in 35 of the State’s 105 counties. DCF offered individuals in GOALS access to case management, job readiness and job search assistance, job development, basic education, occupational skills training, mental health and substance use disorder counseling, support services, and employment retention services.

DCF successfully coordinated with partners and providers in the community to provide individualized employment and training services for their SNAP participants. Although GOALS had some staffing challenges and took longer than expected to establish occupational skills training and mental health and substance use counseling providers, those who engaged in GOALS services found them valuable, particularly the basic education and soft skills classes. GOALS group members were more likely than control group members to start an activity, complete an activity, and receive support services. However, their increased engagement did not lead to an increase in earnings over time and generally did not affect rates of SNAP participation. GOALS did increase the percentage of individuals who were employed, relative to the control group, in Years 2 and 3. Because GOALS group members did not earn significantly more than control group members, the overall cost of implementing the pilot outweighed its benefits.

The potential for GOALS to have impacts on employment-related outcomes, such as earnings, was potentially diminished by many GOALS group members not starting or completing employment or training-related activities and a small difference in rates of completion between the GOALS and control groups—the rates of starting these activities were higher for the GOALS group relative to the control group, but differences between groups in rates of completion were smaller than those for participation. The lack of earnings impacts could also be a result of delays establishing occupational skills training providers, limited training offerings, and that trainings were short-term. Even though GOALS group members obtained life skills and job-readiness skills and had access to job developers, they might not have obtained the necessary certifications that could lead to high-paying jobs. Also, information provided through interviews with program staff, employers, and individuals enrolled in GOALS provides additional context for the impact findings. Staff noted, for example, that many GOALS group members lacked education, yet GOALS did not include secondary educational credential attainment. GOALS group members also had several barriers to participation and employment, including lack of access to transportation (including long distances to services and employment for individuals in rural areas), substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and past involvement with the criminal justice system. Staff in one rural region also indicated that as unemployment numbers dropped, it was hard to find high-paying jobs for GOALS group members, given that they had exhausted many of their employer resources, and there were fewer job openings. Although GOALS likely did positively affect the lives of those who engaged with it, the economic conditions in a community have a large influence on how much SNAP E&T programs can do for those who participate.

Executive Summary

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the primary source of nutrition assistance for many individuals and families with low incomes. SNAP provides monthly benefits to help participants obtain adequate access to food; for some program participants, it also provides work supports through SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) programs to help them become economically self-sufficient. Although States are required to administer a SNAP E&T program, they have flexibility in determining and designing its services and activities. States typically offer SNAP participants some case management and support services, and a range of activities that include job search assistance or training, occupational skills training, and basic education.

Because SNAP E&T programs are so varied and are administered at the State or local level, information about the most effective approaches for helping SNAP participants gain skills and find work is limited. For this reason, as part of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Congress authorized and funded the SNAP E&T pilots to test innovative strategies for connecting SNAP participants with jobs that would increase their incomes and reduce their need for public assistance. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) awarded grants to 10 States—California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kansas, Mississippi, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington—which represented diverse service areas and populations. The pilots varied in whether they operated statewide or only in selected areas, and whether they focused on urban communities, rural communities, or both. The majority of individuals the pilots targeted were unemployed or underemployed and faced significant barriers to employment, such as being homeless or having prior criminal justice background or substance use disorder. Pilots generally expanded the types and amounts of services provided through States' existing SNAP E&T programs. Services typically included (1) a comprehensive skills or clinical assessment to determine an individual's work readiness, skills, and barriers to employment; (2) case management services that developed and supported a detailed individualized work and barrier-reduction plan; and (3) support services,¹ such as transportation assistance, child care, housing assistance, and training or work supplies that helped reduce barriers to both engagement in the pilot and employment. The pilots also offered a range of employment and training-related activities, such as independent job search, job readiness training, job search assistance, basic education, occupational skills training, and work-based learning opportunities (such as subsidized employment, work experience, internships, and work study). Each pilot enrolled 3,000 to 7,000 individuals, for a total of 44,359 individuals across the 10 pilots.

Services are resources provided or administered to individuals, such as assessments, case management, and support services.

Activities are employment or training-related events in which individuals participate, such as job search assistance training, basic education, occupational skills training, or work-based learning.

The authorizing legislation also required a rigorous, longitudinal evaluation of the pilots to assess whether the innovative strategies they used were successful in connecting SNAP participants with jobs that increased their incomes and reduced their need for public assistance benefits. This report summarizes

¹ Referred to as participant reimbursements in the SNAP E&T program; however, for this report, we describe the package of services as support services.

evaluation findings for one State—Kansas.² It provides a detailed description of the pilot’s design and implementation and, using data for up to three years following random assignment, examines the services individuals received and assesses the effectiveness of those services in improving individuals’ outcomes. The report also includes findings from the cost-benefit analysis, which itemizes specific monetary costs and benefits of pilot services, and assesses whether the benefits of the services and activities offered through the pilot were large enough to offset their costs.

Kansas pilot background

In January 2016, the Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF), which administers SNAP, began enrollment in its pilot, Generating Opportunities to Attain Lifelong Success (GOALS), in 35 counties across four geographic regions in the State. The regions encompass both rural and urban areas and include the cities of Topeka and Wichita. From January 2016 to January 2018, DCF enrolled 4,170 SNAP participants into the pilot, targeting work registrants.

The State’s existing SNAP E&T program was voluntary and included case management, limited training opportunities, and potential referrals to other services. In contrast, GOALS offered a more comprehensive and intensive set of services. The GOALS model—Stabilize, Train, Place, and Sustain—included key services such as intensive case management, job readiness training, job search training and assistance, job development, occupational skills training, life skills training and basic education, job retention assistance, and support services. GOALS, which was also voluntary, tailored services to each individual, and services could be accessed in any order or simultaneously.

Evaluation overview

The evaluation included the following four components:

1. An *implementation analysis* that documented the context and operations of each pilot
2. A *participation analysis* that examined the characteristics, participation levels, and service paths of individuals in the pilots
3. An *impact analysis* that identified what works, and for whom, by examining impacts on employment and earnings; public assistance receipt; and other outcomes, such as food security, health, well-being, and housing
4. A *cost-benefit analysis* that estimated the return on each dollar invested in the pilots

The evaluation used an experimental research design in which individuals eligible for SNAP E&T who were enrolled into the pilot were randomly assigned into the GOALS group or a control group in roughly equivalent numbers. Individuals assigned to the GOALS group were eligible for the enhanced set of services developed under the pilot, whereas control groups were eligible for services available through the existing SNAP E&T program in the State. Individuals in both the GOALS and control groups continued to be eligible for any other employment and training services available in their communities. Through random assignment, the two groups were, on average, similar across a range of characteristics at the time they enrolled in the pilot. They differed only in the services they subsequently were eligible to receive.

² Similar reports for each pilot and a summary report are available at www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis.

This research design allows us to confidently attribute differences in outcomes between the groups to the GOALS services rather than other potential causes.

For the evaluation, we collected and analyzed several types of data, including the following:

- **Implementation data** from interviews with GOALS staff and GOALS group members to understand the planning and implementation of the pilot and provide context for other analyses
- **Administrative service use data** to describe participation in services and activities
- **Unemployment insurance (UI) wage records** to measure employment and earnings
- **SNAP administrative data** to measure participation in SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Medicaid, and the amount of SNAP and TANF benefits
- **12- and 36-month follow-up survey data** to provide additional information about individuals' service receipt, employment, and earnings, as well as food security, health, well-being, and housing status
- **Cost data** from grantees and providers, and time-use data to estimate the cost of services and net costs and benefits to individuals, the government, and society

GOALS overview

DCF developed GOALS to offer services to any SNAP participant but particularly targeted work registrants. The aim of GOALS was to rapidly respond to local employer labor supply needs, by preparing and training SNAP participants for employment. DCF selected the four pilot regions because they represented a mix of urban and rural areas that had higher rates of poverty yet had employers that needed skilled workers and training programs that could meet the needs of those employers. DCF managed the overall pilot and provided most of the case management services, but it engaged the University of Kansas, Center for Public Partnerships in Research (KU), as a key partner. KU helped build staff capacity skills through professional development, periodically brought community stakeholders together to review GOALS' progress and managed the GOALS data. Although DCF was the primary service provider, an array of community colleges and technical education centers also provided services, including job readiness programs and occupational skills training. Before enrollment into the pilot began, both DCF and KU worked with a professional marketing firm to develop a campaign to encourage SNAP participants to enroll, with a message that focused on making individuals feel hopeful about their futures and what they could gain from participation in GOALS.

The pilot began enrollment in January 2016. Individuals interested in the pilot first attended an orientation. Those who were enrolled in the pilot and were randomly assigned to the GOALS group next began an intake and assessment process with a career navigator. After the assessment was completed, services typically followed the Stabilize, Train, Place, and Sustain model, with services intended to last for approximately six months. Individuals randomly assigned to the control group were offered existing SNAP E&T services in the regions where they were available. The existing SNAP E&T program had fewer resources to offer compared with GOALS. In particular, the existing SNAP E&T program, unlike GOALS, did not have dedicated employer liaisons who made connections with employers and matched individuals to jobs.

Services and activities offered to GOALS group members included the following:

Stabilize phase. The intensive case management phase, projected to take about eight weeks, began with a multi-appointment assessment, which included barrier identification. At the completion of the assessment, an individualized action plan was developed. The plan could include mental health or substance use disorder counseling, provided by community-based organizations, and/or basic education and life skills training, commonly provided through the Bridges or Partners 4 Success programs. These latter programs, which lasted from five to eight weeks and required almost full-day attendance for at least four days a week, provided basic education instruction and training in life skills, conflict resolution, and job search skills, among other career readiness skills. GOALS employer liaisons also recruited local employers to participate in the programs – to lead Q&A sessions with GOALS group members, offer tours of their workplaces, and conduct mock interviews. The Partners 4 Success program could also include two weeks of work experience.

Train, place, and sustain phases. The remaining phases could include occupational skills training, job placement assistance, and postemployment services. If deemed by a career navigator as essential to increasing an individual's employability, GOALS group members could be referred to occupational skills training, limited to four to six weeks. Such training could occur after completion of the Bridges or Partners 4 Success programs but also could occur instead of these programs. In preparation for job placement assistance, employer liaisons would meet with individuals shortly after GOALS entry but would not start to look for jobs for individuals until their career navigator indicated that their resumes were complete and they were work ready – as indicated, for example, by having completed assigned trainings, being prepared to answer questions about criminal justice backgrounds, and having proper interview clothing. When individuals were ready for job placement, employer liaisons would identify available jobs that matched individuals' skills and interests and, in some cases, personally deliver resumes to potential employers and advocate for specific GOALS group members. Once individuals were employed, employer liaisons would help them address job retention challenges, such as transportation problems, and could also help individuals find quick reemployment if they lost a job.

Case management and support services. GOALS group members received case management from DCF career navigators, who generally met frequently with individuals immediately after enrollment and then at least monthly. They continued to work with individuals actively engaged in GOALS until they got a job. Career navigators also could provide support services, such as transportation assistance (bus passes or gas cards), and help to cover the cost of interview clothing, appropriate work clothes, uniforms, or license or testing fees.

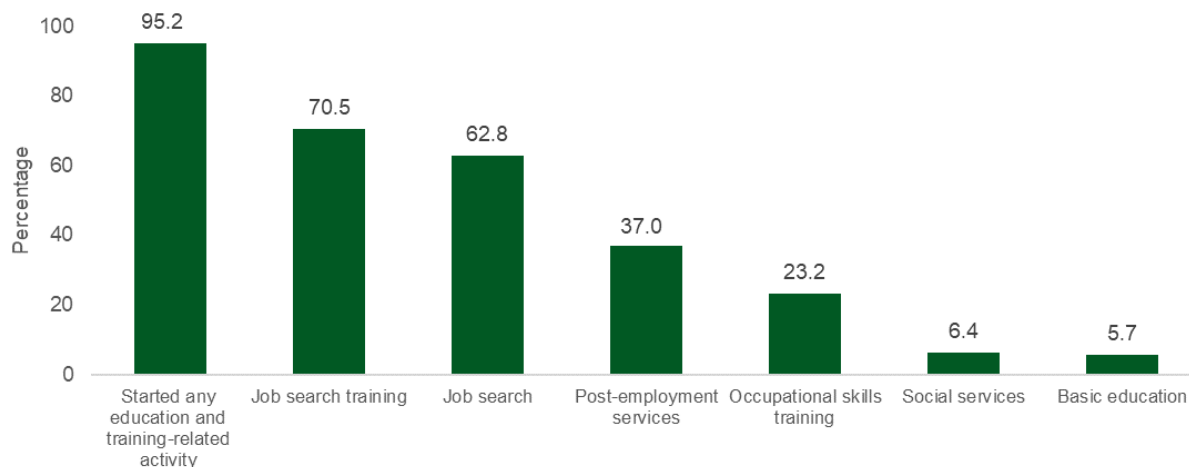
Participation in GOALS services and activities

Nearly all of the individuals randomly assigned to the GOALS group engaged in some type of service, meaning they started an assessment or an employment or training-related activity, or received a support service offered through GOALS.³ Additionally, almost all of GOALS group members (95 percent) started an employment or training-related activity. Individuals most commonly started job search (71 percent), job search training (63 percent), and post-employment services (37 percent); fewer participated in occupational skills training (23 percent) or basic education (6 percent; Exhibit ES.1). Among individuals

³ The measure does not include orientations, case management, or the creation of an IAP because individuals often engaged in these activities during their initial meeting for the GOALS program but then did not return for more meaningful activities and services.

who started an activity, completion rates were highest for job search (100 percent) and lowest for work-based learning (50 percent).

Exhibit ES.1. Nearly all GOALS group members started an employment or training-related activity, with most starting job search or job search training



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,088 GOALS group members.

Just under 80 percent of GOALS group members received a support service. Individuals spent an average of seven months engaging with GOALS activities. More than three-quarters exited GOALS within their first year (79 percent), with most exiting during the first and second quarters. Most individuals who exited were terminated for failing to engage in services (43 percent) or because they found employment (24 percent).

Differences in service receipt for the GOALS and control groups

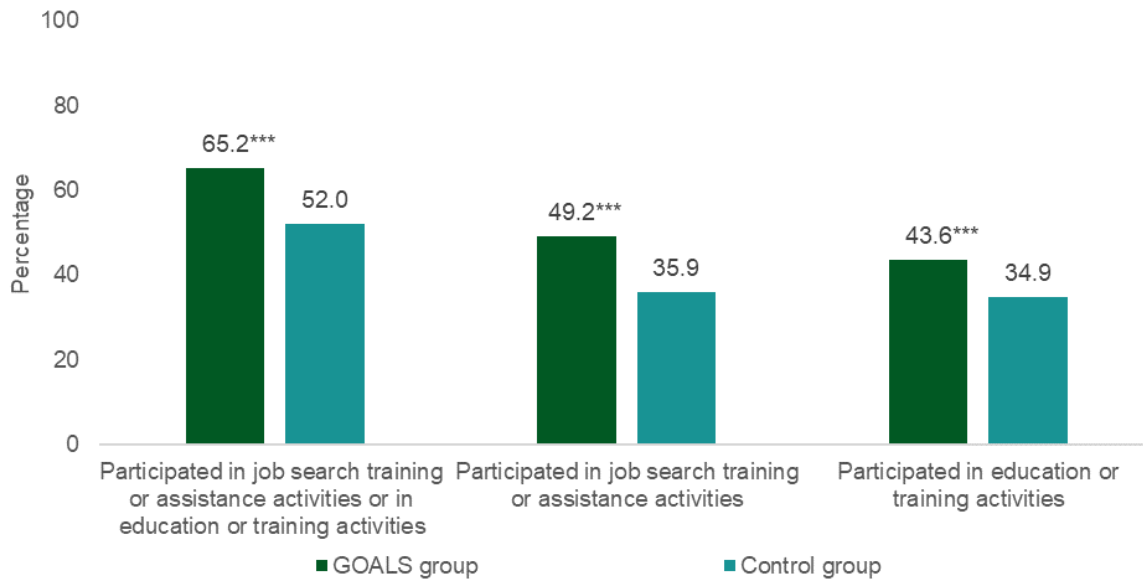
Whether GOALS impacted individuals' employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance depends, in part, on whether there were differences between the GOALS and control groups in their receipt of services and their participation in and completion of activities. To provide context for the impacts of GOALS, we examined differences in service receipt between the two research groups.⁴ Data were collected in the 12- and 36-month follow-up surveys and captured all types of services and activities, regardless of whether they were provided through GOALS, through existing SNAP E&T, or were generally available in the community through programs such as WIOA or through community colleges, nonprofits, or other organizations.

During the three years following random assignment, the GOALS group was more likely than the control group to participate in job search training activities and in education and training activities. Sixty-five percent of the GOALS group participated in a job search training or assistance activity or in an education or training activity compared to 52 percent of the control group (Exhibit ES.2). In addition, the GOALS group was more likely than the control group to participate in job search training or assistance activities (13 percentage point difference) and education or training activities (9 percentage point difference). This

⁴ In this analysis, "service receipt" includes both services (assessments, case management, and support services) and employment and training-related activities.

significant difference between the GOALS and control groups in rates of participation was observed for Year 1 but not in Years 2 and 3.

Exhibit ES.2. Over a three-year period, the GOALS group participated in activities offered by GOALS or the community at higher rates than the control group



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

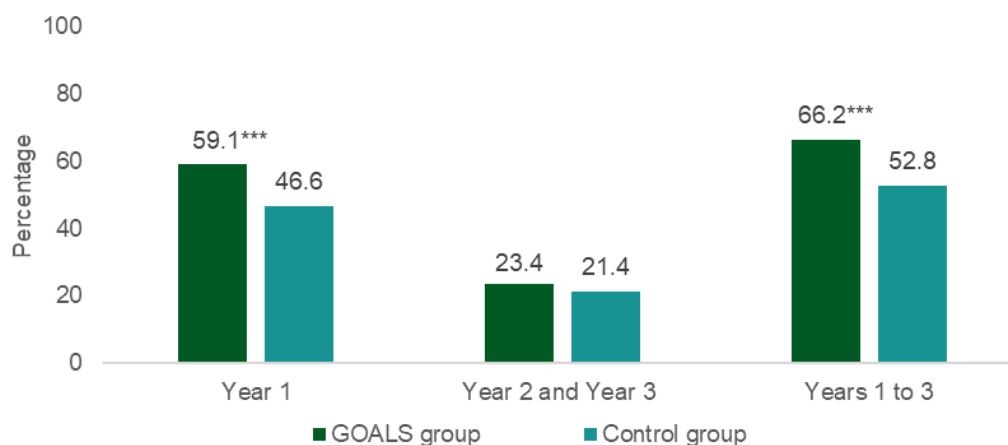
Notes: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

The GOALS group also participated at higher rates than the control group in two types of activities—occupational skills training (10 percentage point difference) and general job skills training (6 percentage point difference). Similarly, GOALS group members were more likely than the control group to complete these activities and receive an occupational certificate or license. Compared with individuals in the control group, individuals in the GOALS group were 9 percentage points more likely to complete an activity and 6 percentage points more likely to receive an occupational certificate or license.

GOALS group members were also more likely than the control group to receive case management (66 versus 53 percent; Exhibit ES.3). The difference between the two groups was largest and statistically significant in the first year following random assignment (12 percentage point difference); it was positive but not statistically significant in the second and third years. On average, GOALS group members had about three more contacts with an employment professional or case manager than control group members (nine versus seven contacts, with rounding).

Exhibit ES.3. GOALS group members were more likely than control group members to receive case management



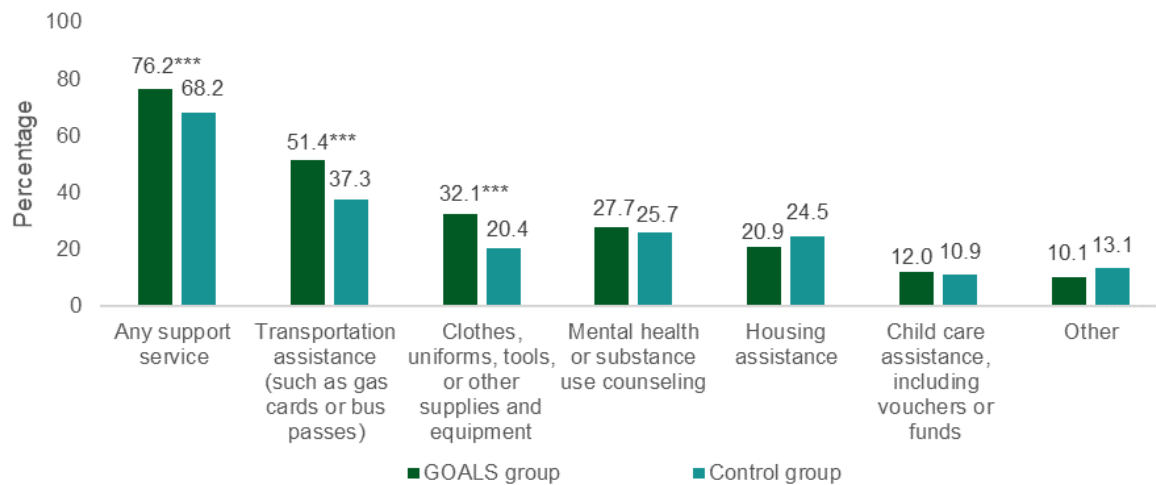
Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Notes: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members. The 12-month survey requested information about receipt of case management services between the date of random assignment and the date of the 12-month interview. The 36-month survey requested information about receipt of case management services between the dates of the 12- and 36-month interviews. As a result, it is not possible to estimate receipt of assistance separately in Years 2 and 3.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

GOALS group members also were more likely than control group members to receive support services. About 76 percent of individuals in the GOALS group received a support service compared to 68 percent in the control group (Exhibit ES.4). The largest differences were for the receipt of transportation assistance and for the receipt of clothes, uniforms, tools, or other supplies and equipment.

Exhibit ES.4. GOALS group members were more likely than control group members to receive support services



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

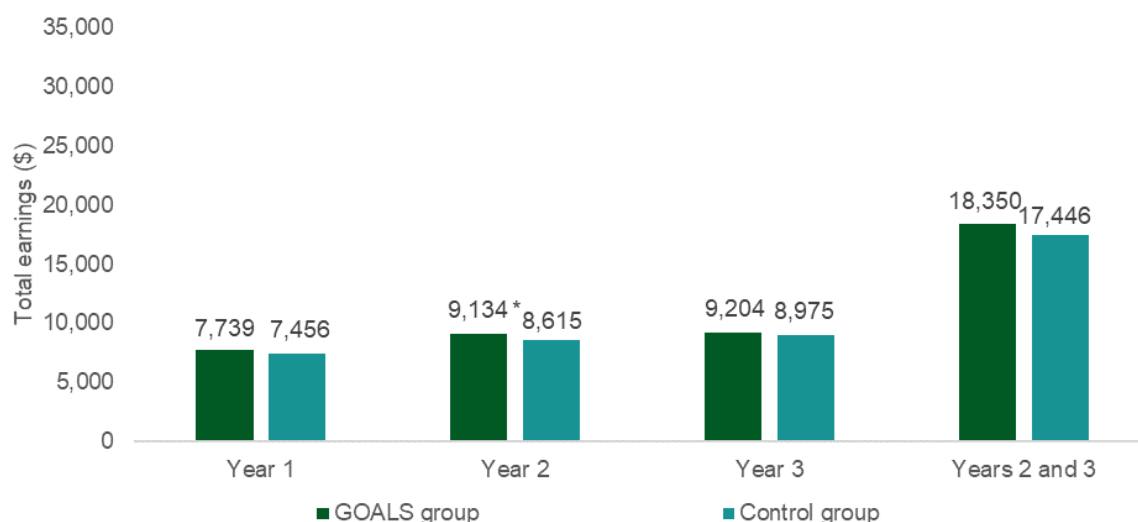
Note: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Impacts of GOALS on employment and SNAP participation outcomes

We estimated the impacts of GOALS on individual outcomes over the three years following random assignment. Before analyzing the data, we selected two primary (confirmatory) outcomes: earnings (based on both the UI and survey data) and SNAP participation. Instead of focusing on outcomes in Year 3, we focused on those over a two-year period, consisting of Years 2 and 3 after random assignment. This approach balanced potential concerns about how the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected outcomes in Year 3 with measuring impacts on outcomes after individuals had sufficient time to participate in GOALS activities in Year 1. The estimated impacts on other outcomes are considered exploratory and are used to support findings for the earnings and SNAP participation outcomes by examining whether they had similar impacts.

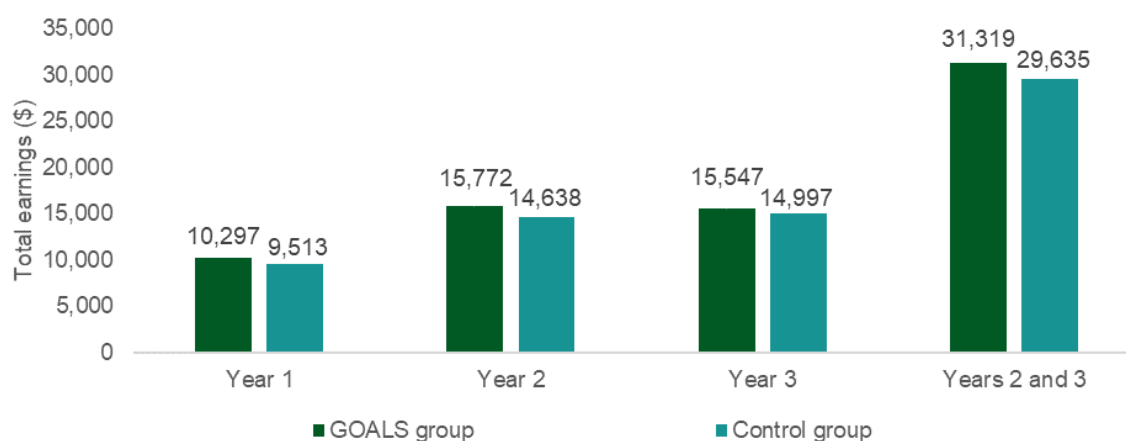
Earnings. Based on both UI and survey data, GOALS had no impact on earnings. This lack of impact was true for Years 2 and 3 combined, and separately for Years 1, 2, and 3 for the survey data and for Years 1 and 3 for the UI data (Exhibits ES.5 and ES.6). Based on each data source, both research groups experienced increases in average earnings over time. The GOALS group had greater average earnings over the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) relative to the control group, but this difference was not statistically significant.

Exhibit ES.5. GOALS did not affect earnings, except for an increase in Year 2 (UI data)

Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,987 GOALS group members and 1,974 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Exhibit ES.6. GOALS did not affect earnings (survey data)

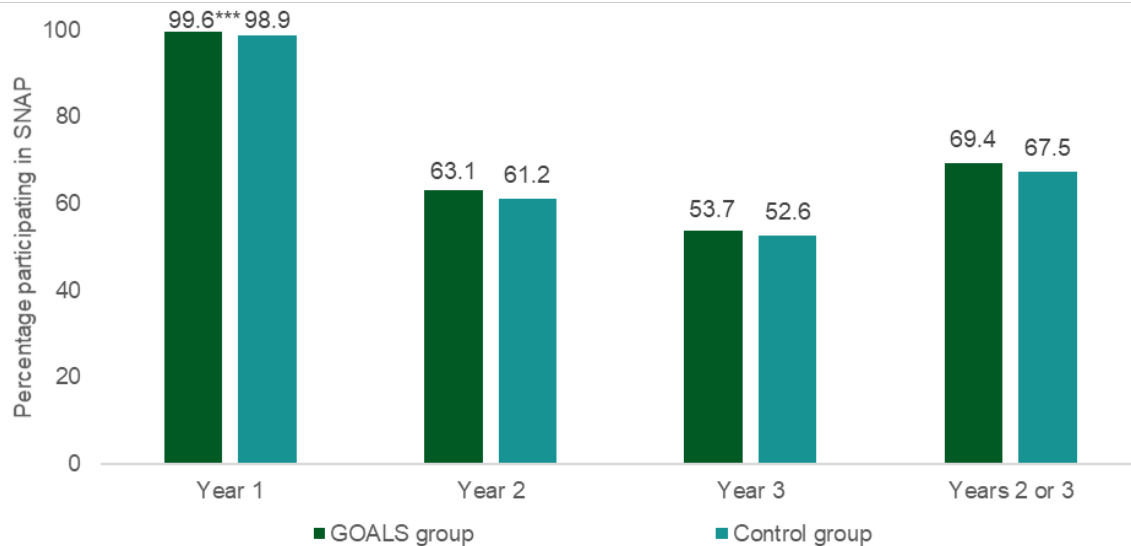
Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

SNAP participation. GOALS generally did not affect SNAP participation. About 69 percent of GOALS group members and 68 percent of control group members participated in SNAP at some point during the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) after random assignment (Exhibit ES.7). The lack of impacts of GOALS on SNAP participation reflects similar decreases each year in the rate of SNAP participation for the GOALS and control groups. Despite a small significant difference in Year 1, SNAP participation rates for both groups decreased from about 98 percent in Year 1 to about 53 percent in Year 3.

Exhibit ES.7. SNAP participation rates were higher for the GOALS group than the control group in Year 1, but not Years 2 and 3



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation SNAP administrative data, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,987 GOALS group members and 1,974 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Employment, hours worked, and other job characteristics.

Based on the UI data, GOALS led to a 5 percentage point increase in employment in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) (76 for the GOALS group versus 71 percent for the control group; Exhibit VII.5). The largest impacts were in Years 1 and 2 (2 percentage points and 4 percentage points, respectively); the difference in Year 3 (about 2 percentage points) was not statistically significant. There was a comparable impact found based on survey data over the two-year period (Years 2 and 3).

Employment rates provide information about the percentage of individuals employed during a given time period but do not describe the extent or duration of employment. To assess these employment characteristics, we examined the average amount of time individuals were employed each year. Findings were generally similar to those for rates of employment. Both data sources showed that, relative to the control group, the GOALS group was employed for more time over the period, although the differences were not always statistically significant. Also, there was no impact of GOALS on hours worked over the full period, although a positive impact on full-time work at the 36-month interview. In addition, there were a few effects on job characteristics, with the GOALS group more likely to have certain benefits and less likely to report working temporarily or on-call. The majority of employed individuals in both research groups received an employer-offered benefit, but the GOALS group was more likely to receive paid vacation.

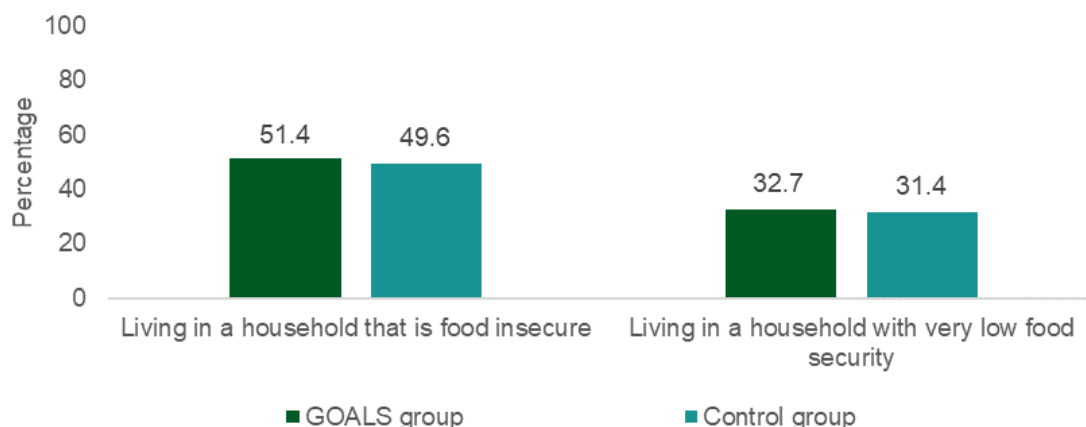
SNAP benefits and exit. There were few impacts of GOALS on the average SNAP benefits received, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the maximum benefit amount. Average SNAP benefit amounts for the GOALS group were \$96 greater than those for the control group in Year 1, but the differences were smaller and not statistically significant in Years 2 and 3.

The GOALS and control groups had similar likelihoods of exiting SNAP across the three years following random assignment—85 percent of each group exited SNAP at some point during this period. Individuals who exited SNAP included those who left and did not re-enter SNAP in the three-year period, as well as those who left and re-entered before the end of the period. Thus, even though 15 percent of the GOALS group participated in SNAP for the full three years, SNAP participation at the end of this period was higher (43 percent), reflecting that individuals left and re-entered SNAP during the three-year period. These patterns of exiting and re-entering SNAP resulted in both research groups having a similar number of SNAP spells. About 55 percent of the GOALS group had a single SNAP spell (meaning they either remained on SNAP for the full three-year period or exited and did not re-enter), 32 percent had two spells, and 13 percent had three or more spells. For the control group, these percentages were 58, 29, and 13, respectively.

Impacts of GOALS on other outcomes

Rates of food insecurity were similar in the GOALS and control groups. About 51 percent of GOALS group members were food insecure, compared to 50 percent of control group members (Exhibit ES.8). Rates of very low food security (a severe form of food insecurity) were also similar between groups (33 versus 31 percent).

Exhibit ES.8. GOALS did not affect food insecurity



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 36-month survey, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

There also were no statistically significant differences between the GOALS and control groups for other outcome measures related to health, well-being, and housing status. Thirty percent of each research group screened positively for depression. Both groups had similar levels of health and self-esteem and self-efficacy scores. The majority of each research group owned or rented a home or apartment (about 78 percent), and similar percentages of each group were homeless (2 percent).

GOALS costs relative to benefits

GOALS costs. DCF and its partners and providers reported spending \$10,631,954 from April 2015 to March 2019 on the planning and implementation of GOALS (\$493,113 during the planning period, \$987,891 for recruitment, and \$9,150,949 for GOALS services and activities). The FNS grant funded 92

percent of these costs, and partners and providers leveraged other funding sources for the remaining 8 percent. Administration costs accounted for 57 percent of total costs, including time for staff meetings, supervision, and other activities (\$6,069,072). Direct services accounted for 29 percent of total costs (\$3,801,877), with education and case management being the largest share of those costs.

Costs relative to benefits. In the cost-benefit analysis, we measured the difference in the average costs of all services received by GOALS and control group members—that is, the differential costs of GOALS services—and compared the differential costs of GOALS to the value of benefits received by GOALS group members. As in the analysis of services received, we considered costs associated with all services and activities, including those delivered by GOALS as well as community programs and organizations. This approach reflects the fact that impacts of GOALS on individuals’ outcomes, such as earnings, were influenced by *all* services sample members received during the 36-month follow-up period, not just those received through GOALS.

Based on data from the survey, the estimated total costs of all services GOALS group received through the pilot, existing SNAP E&T, or the community were \$10,261,586, including costs for both direct services and ongoing administration (Exhibit VIII.4). This estimate is about 12 percent higher than the costs of GOALS services alone (\$9,150,949), which indicates that some GOALS group members received services from community programs and organizations while they were enrolled in GOALS. The services received by the control group measure what services would have been available to the GOALS group members if GOALS were not in place. The estimated costs of all services received by control group members were \$4,750,408, including costs for direct services and ongoing administration. On average, the total cost of all direct services and activities received by GOALS group members was \$6,074 per individual. The total cost of all services control group members received through existing SNAP E&T and the community was \$2,206, on average.

Estimates of the benefits received by GOALS group members reflect earnings and fringe benefits they accrued during the 36-month follow-up period. These data were obtained from the two sources used in the impact analysis: (1) UI wage records and (2) 36-month survey data. For the cost-benefit analysis, we used a framework to comprehensively list GOALS group benefits and costs relative to the control group from multiple perspectives, including those of (1) individuals enrolled in GOALS, (2) government and taxpayers, and (3) society as a whole—the sum of the other two perspectives. For each perspective, we estimated the net benefit (the difference between total benefits and total costs). A positive net benefit means the benefits outweighed the costs, whereas a negative net benefit means the costs outweighed the benefits. The net benefits of all services GOALS group members received were positive for GOALS group members but negative for government and taxpayers and for society during the 36-month follow-up period based on both data sources. The net benefit to society was negative by \$2,248 per GOALS group member according to UI wage records and by \$964 per GOALS group member according to 36-month survey data. These results were robust to changes in almost all of our key assumptions about benefits and costs from all perspectives. There was one exception – assuming that GOALS group members received services only through GOALS and not through existing SNAP E&T or the community resulted in a positive net benefit of \$677 per GOALS group member, according to 36-month survey data on earnings.

Main conclusions and discussion

The goal of the 10 SNAP E&T pilots was to test innovative strategies for increasing SNAP participants’ employment and earnings and reducing their need for public assistance benefits. Through its comprehensive data collection and rigorous experimental design, this evaluation assessed whether

GOALS—the innovative SNAP E&T program Kansas designed and implemented to target new and current SNAP work registrants—was effective in achieving these goals.

DCF successfully coordinated with partners and providers in the community to provide individualized employment and training services for their SNAP participants. Although GOALS had some staffing challenges and took longer than expected to establish occupational skills training and mental health and substance use counseling providers, those who engaged in GOALS services found the Partners for Success (P4S) and Bridges classes to be an especially strong and effective component. GOALS group members were more likely than control group members to start an activity, complete an activity, and receive support services. However, increased engagement among GOALS group members did not lead to an increase in earnings over time. Because GOALS group members did not earn significantly more than control group members, the overall cost of implementing the pilot outweighed the benefits.

GOALS impacts in context of employment and training literature. The GOALS study findings are consistent with the previous literature that has often found small or no labor market effects of employment and training programs for low-income populations offering similar services as GOALS. The literature suggests that programs serving low-income populations can typically engage individuals and increase their receipt of services relative to those received by the study control groups in their local areas. The differences for service receipt can be large, especially for receipt of occupational skills training and subsidized employment, translating into positive effects on the percentages of individuals who participate in training activities and the attainment of associated certificates and credentials. However, few of the studies have found that the programs lead to long-term increases in earnings or independence from public assistance (at least over the time period covered by many studies, which is typically less than four years).

There are notable exceptions, however, that show that the types of activities and services (such as occupational skills training and support services) offered by GOALS could be effective. As a result, it is important to understand how take-up and completion of GOALS activities and receipt of services, as well as challenges experienced in implementation may have contributed to the evaluation findings.

Discussion of GOALS impacts. Although GOALS did not lead to increased earnings and reduced participation in SNAP, it successfully increased the percentages of individuals who received case management and support services, relative to the control group, as well as the percentage of individuals who participated in employment or training-related activities. This is a notable accomplishment given the prevalence and extent of barriers faced by individuals who enrolled in the pilot—only 16 percent were employed at the time of random assignment and 23 percent did not have a high school diploma. The higher rates of receipt of case management and support services among GOALS group members, particularly transportation assistance, may have allowed individuals to overcome barriers associated not only with starting employment or training-related activities but with sustaining participation over time and ultimately completing the activity.

In addition, GOALS led to increased employment (based on UI wage data and survey data) in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3). This suggests that the greater service receipt and activity participation during that time increased the chances of finding a job. However, these jobs did not pay appreciably more than those obtained by the control group, resulting in no impact on earnings.

Despite GOALS robust job development services likely leading to a higher rate of employment, unresolved barriers may have affected job retention or hindered opportunities to increase earnings. Information collected from pilot and provider staff underscores the degree to which GOALS group members faced significant barriers to GOALS participation and employment. Individuals often lacked

adequate transportation, and many had substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and criminal justice backgrounds. Although GOALS had substantive case management and support services, some GOALS group member's barriers remained. For example, given the rural nature of some of the pilot locations, transportation challenges not only included lack of funds but also meant long distances between GOALS group members residence and GOALS services or employment. Staff also said some rural areas lacked the necessary resources to help with all barriers. Staff noted that despite an increase in the availability of skilled jobs in the South Central region, GOALS group members struggled to overcome their barriers.

Although P4S and Bridges classes were readily available, delays in setting up occupational skills training providers may have contributed to the low participation rates in the type of skill building activities that might have led to higher paying jobs. Although P4S and Bridges were valued by individuals who participated in them, and GOALS group members obtained life skills and job-readiness skills, they might not have obtained the necessary certifications through occupational skills training that could lead to high-paying jobs. The occupational skills training component was also short-term, typically from four to six weeks in length, suggesting that a longer-term training may be necessary to produce significant increases in earnings. Finally, staff noted many GOALS group members had low education levels, yet GOALS did not include secondary educational credential attainment.

It is possible that the impacts on outcomes such as earnings were diluted by the fact that, while the GOALS group was more likely than the control group to start and complete employment or training-related activities, the differences in participation and completion rates between research groups were less than 10 percentage points. To assess this possibility, we compared impacts for individuals who did and did not start an employment or training-related activity. This exploratory analysis showed an impact on employment, but not earnings, for individuals who started an activity, and no impact on employment and earnings for those who did not start an activity. However, these differences in impacts across groups were not statistically significant. In a similar analysis based on completion status, we found an impact on employment for individuals who completed education or training activities, but no impact for those who started but did not complete activities or those who completed job search or job search training activities. These differences across completion groups were not statistically significant. There were no impacts on earnings for any of the completion groups.

The evidence suggests that the take-up and completion of GOALS employment or training-related activities was not the main factor behind the lack of impacts on earnings. It is possible that some GOALS group members who participated in employment- or training-related activities may have continued to face substantial barriers to employment and may have benefited from additional or more intensive case management and support services. Learning more about the barriers to starting and completing these activities would help identify which case management and support services were able to promote greater participation in employment or training-related activities. This would also help to understand challenges faced by GOALS group members who participated in these activities, allowing program staff to adapt the content or delivery of these activities to be more impactful. Also, understanding how receiving certifications, diplomas, degrees, or occupational licenses can differentially affect the prospect of employment for GOALS group members should also be explored.

Finally, staff also indicated that as unemployment numbers generally dropped across Kansas (falling from about 4.5 percent at the beginning of pilot operations to about 3.5 percent towards the end), it was hard to find high-paying jobs for GOALS group members. Many of the more common occupations in the areas, such as food preparation services and office and administrative support, did not require technical skills

but also did not pay high wages. Additionally, staff in the rural Southeast region said GOALS had exhausted many of their employer resources, and there were fewer job openings.

When considering the overall findings from the GOALS pilot, there are a few additional factors that may have contributed to the results, including the following:

- **Earnings impacts may depend on the type of activities in which individuals participate.**

Individuals in the GOALS group were offered a wide range of services and activities. Earnings impacts may not be apparent for all GOALS group members, but this does not mean that specific activities such as occupational skills training or education services are ineffective.

Assessing the effectiveness of services and activities separately and in combination would help to identify promising program components for improving outcomes. Because many GOALS group members participated in multiple activities, isolating the effect of a single type of activity can be challenging. It would be helpful to classify individuals who received different sets of services into mutually exclusive and distinct groups. For each group, describing participation in activities and estimating impacts on outcomes would help to identify specific services and activities, or combinations of them, that most effectively increase earnings and improve outcomes.

- **The COVID-19 pandemic which began during the 36-month follow-up survey period may have affected the magnitude of the impacts found in Year 3.** Outcomes measured in Year 3 for individuals who were randomly assigned in the pilot between April 2017 and December 2017 could have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which began to dramatically affect life in the United States in March 2020. We found evidence of positive impacts on earnings in Year 2, based on UI data, and positive effects on employment based on both data sources, driven by impacts in Years 1 and 2. It is possible that the pandemic contributed to the fading of impacts by Year 3. However, we cannot identify what the impacts would have been in the absence of the pandemic. Learning more about the effects of the pandemic on outcomes for each research group would deepen our understanding about the potential effects of GOALS. For example, the pandemic likely affected individuals' outcomes differently based on their occupation if they were employed or the occupation they were training to enter. It would be useful to assess whether impacts on earnings and employment in Year 3 differed based on these factors.

- **The absence of an impact on earnings is one of several reasons why the net benefit of GOALS was negative.** However, this negative net benefit primarily reflects the differential costs of GOALS group services, which were not offset by the benefits accrued through earnings and fringe benefits during the 36-month follow up period. When interpreting this finding, it is important to consider that GOALS services were new and experimental. The purpose of the SNAP E&T pilot was to test new approaches to services. GOALS targeted individuals with high barriers to engaging in services and obtaining employment, and DCF led the development of new partnerships in their communities that did not exist previously. Even though the costs of planning and recruitment were excluded in considering the cost differential between GOALS and control group services, the costs of GOALS group services were likely higher for the three years of the pilot than they would have been if administered over a longer period of time.

Although outcomes for GOALS were mixed, SNAP E&T program administrators can learn from the implementation of the GOALS model. For example, GOALS staff attribute their enrollment success to having engaged a marketing firm in developing their recruitment materials. They also said the collective impact meetings helped inform the community about the pilot, kept everyone connected and in the loop,

and prevented the duplication of services. The meetings also enabled GOALS and its partners and providers to agree on performance benchmarks and use data to drive the management of GOALS. Moreover, these community relationships are likely to be maintained, indicating a level of system change as a result of GOALS.

I. Introduction

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the primary source of nutrition assistance for many individuals and families with low incomes. SNAP provides monthly benefits to help participants obtain adequate access to food; for some program participants, it provides work supports through SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) programs to help them become economically self-sufficient. Although States are required to administer a SNAP E&T program, they have flexibility in designing and determining its services and activities. States typically offer participants assessments and support services, and a range of activities including job search assistance or training, occupational skills training, and basic education.

Despite the importance of SNAP E&T programs, information about the most effective approaches that help SNAP participants gain skills and find work is limited. For this reason, as part of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Congress authorized and funded SNAP E&T pilots to test innovative strategies for connecting SNAP participants with jobs that would increase their incomes and reduce their need for public assistance benefits. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) awarded grants to 10 States—California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.⁵ This legislation also funded a rigorous, longitudinal evaluation of these pilots.

The pilots varied in their target populations, geographic reach, and the number of individuals enrolled. The majority of individuals the pilots targeted were unemployed or underemployed and faced significant barriers to employment, such as being homeless or having a criminal justice background or substance use disorder. Some pilots operated statewide, whereas others operated in select areas of the State, such as counties, community college districts, or local workforce investment areas. Most pilots offered services in both rural and urban areas, but a few focused only on rural or urban communities. Each pilot enrolled 3,000 to 7,000 individuals for a total of 44,359 individuals across the 10 pilots.

The SNAP E&T pilots generally expanded the types and amounts of services provided through States’ existing SNAP E&T programs. Services typically included (1) a comprehensive skills or clinical assessment to determine an individual’s work readiness, skills, and barriers to employment; (2) case-management services that developed and supported a detailed individualized work and barrier-reduction plan; and (3) support services⁶, such as transportation assistance, housing assistance, and training or work supplies (for example, uniforms, books, clothes, or tools) that helped reduce barriers to both engagement in the pilot and employment. The pilots also offered a range of employment and training-related activities, such as

Services are resources provided or administered to individuals, such as assessments, case management, and support services.

Activities are employment or training-related events in which individuals participate, such as job search assistance training, basic education, occupational skills training, or work-based learning.

⁵ SNAP in California is administered by the counties. The FNS grant was awarded to the State SNAP agency and the State oversaw the pilot, but only Fresno County conducted and primarily administered it. We refer to the Fresno pilot as “California”.

⁶ Referred to as participant reimbursements in the SNAP E&T program; however, for this report, we describe the package of services as support services.

independent job search, job readiness training, job search assistance, basic education, occupational skills training, and work-based learning opportunities (such as subsidized employment, work experience, internships, and work-study).

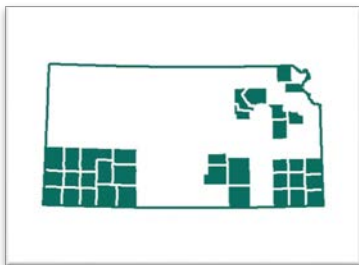
The activities the pilots offered generally were more expansive than those offered under existing SNAP E&T programs, which in most States tended to focus on less intensive independent job search and job search assistance. Moreover, while the pilots were operating, existing SNAP E&T programs could not fund some of the activities and services the pilots provided, such as subsidized employment,⁷ substance use disorder counseling, and mental health counseling. Appendix A provides a summary of each pilot's characteristics including the target population, pilot location, and pilot start and end dates, and Appendix B provides more detail about the SNAP E&T program and work requirement policies.

This report summarizes evaluation findings for one State—Kansas.⁸ It provides a detailed description of the pilot's design and implementation, the services individuals received, and the effectiveness of those services in improving individuals' outcomes. The report also includes findings from the cost-benefit analysis, which itemizes specific monetary costs and benefits of pilot services and assesses whether the benefits of the services and activities offered through the pilot were large enough to justify their costs.

A. Overview of Kansas's pilot

Kansas began enrollment in its pilot, Generating Opportunities to Attain Lifelong Success (GOALS), in January 2016 in 35 counties across four geographical areas in the State: Northeast (NE), South Central (SC), Southeast (SE), and Southwest (SW) (Exhibit I.1). The pilot served both rural and urban areas, with the majority of individuals residing in the NE and SC regions, which include the cities of Topeka and Wichita, respectively. The SE and SW regions are more rural. In the year before Kansas began GOALS enrollment, the unemployment rate in the 35 pilot counties averaged 4.5 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019).

Exhibit I.1. GOALS locations



The Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF) administers SNAP and the existing SNAP E&T program, which is voluntary. Before the pilot started, the State operated the existing SNAP E&T program in only eight counties. It included case management, limited occupational skills training, primarily in Certified Nursing Assistantships, potential referrals to GED services and local workforce development centers for training, and limited support services.

DCF, in partnership with the University of Kansas, Center for Public Partnerships in Research (KU), offered GOALS as a voluntary SNAP E&T program in 35 of the State's 105 counties. GOALS offered a more comprehensive and intensive set of services in comparison to the existing SNAP E&T program. (During the pilot operation period, 26 of the 35 pilot counties operated both GOALS and the existing SNAP E&T program, given that Kansas had expanded existing SNAP E&T to more counties immediately before the start of the pilot.) GOALS

⁷ The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-334) made subsidized employment an allowable SNAP E&T component; the final rule published in January 2021 (FNS 2021) permitted States to begin offering it as an E&T component in March 2021.

⁸ Similar reports for each pilot and a summary report are available at www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis.

targeted work registrants⁹ and provided case management, job readiness and job search assistance, job development, basic education, occupational skills training, mental health and substance use disorder counseling, support services, and employment retention services (Exhibit I.2).

From January 2016 to January 2018, GOALS enrolled 4,170 individuals into the pilot. Individuals enrolled were randomly assigned in roughly equivalent numbers to a treatment group (eligible for enhanced services or any other services available in the community; referred to as “the GOALS group”) and a control group (eligible for existing SNAP E&T services or any other services available in the community). DCF continued providing services until March 2019.

Exhibit I.2. Pilot characteristics

Characteristics	
Pilot operation period	January 2016 to March 2019
Location	35 (out of 105) counties Southeast: Allen, Bourbon, Cherokee, Crawford, Labette, Montgomery, Neosho, Woodson, Wilson Southwest: Clark, Finney, Ford, Grant, Gray, Hamilton, Haskell, Hodgeman, Kearny, Meade, Morton, Seward, Stanton, Stevens Northeast: Atchison, Brown, Douglas, Geary, Osage, Pottawatomie, Riley, Shawnee South Central: Butler, Cowley, Harvey, Sedgwick
Grantee agency	Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)
Key partners	University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships in Research (KU)
Target population	Work registrants
Number enrolled	4,170
Program type	Voluntary
Existing SNAP E&T program	Kansas offered limited services through its existing voluntary SNAP E&T program (except in the Southeast region where SNAP E&T was not available), including limited occupational skills training, primarily in Certified Nursing Assistantships, potential referrals to GED services and local workforce development centers for training, and limited support services
Key GOALS services	Intensive case management Job readiness preparation Job search assistance and job development and matching Occupational skills training Soft skills, life skills, and basic education through the Bridges and Partners 4 Success (P4S) programs Mental health and substance use disorder counseling Job retention services Support services

⁹ Work registrants are SNAP participants who have not met any Federal exemptions from SNAP work requirements and are therefore required to register for work. Federal exemptions apply to individuals who are younger than 16 or older than 59; physically or mentally unfit for employment; subject to and complying with work requirements for another program; a caretaker of a dependent child younger than 6 or an incapacitated individual; participating in a drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program; employed at least 30 hours a week; or enrolled at least half time in a recognized school or training program.

B. Evaluation of SNAP E&T pilots

The evaluation included the following four components:

1. An **implementation analysis** that documented the context and operations of each pilot
2. A **participation analysis** that examined the characteristics, participation levels, and service paths of individuals in the pilots
3. An **impact analysis** that identified what works and for whom by examining impacts on employment and earnings, public assistance receipt, and other outcomes such as food security, health, well-being, and housing
4. A **cost-benefit analysis** that estimated the return on each dollar invested in the pilots

The evaluation of each pilot used an experimental research design in which individuals eligible for SNAP E&T who were enrolled into the pilot were randomly assigned into treatment and control groups that were offered differing arrays of services. Random assignment ensures that any differences in outcomes between the two groups are a result of the enhanced services and are not driven by the differences in the characteristics of the individuals who did and did not receive those services. Treatment group members were eligible for the enhanced set of services developed under the pilot, and control group members were eligible for services available through existing SNAP E&T programs in the State; both the treatment and control groups continued to be eligible for any other services available in their communities. Through random assignment, the treatment and control groups within a pilot were, on average, similar across a range of characteristics at the time they enrolled. They differed only in the services they subsequently were eligible to receive.

FNS published an evaluation report that presented interim findings in Kansas for each component of the evaluation (Hamilton et al. 2021). The implementation and cost analyses described the planning and early implementation periods of the pilot, and the participation and impact analyses focused on the 12-month period following random assignment for those enrolled through 2017. We reported these findings for most of the individuals (3,961, or 95.0 percent) who eventually enrolled in the pilots.

The interim report described several notable findings:

- **Implementation.** Overall, key features of the GOALS model were put into place, with some variation in the availability and strength of different features. Most notably, occupational skills training played a smaller role in the model than originally expected. Individualized attention, provided through close relationships between GOALS group members and career navigators and employer liaisons, was viewed by staff as key.
- **Participation.** Almost all individuals in the GOALS group initially engaged in the pilot and started an employment or training-related activity. Over half of GOALS group members participated in job search training or job readiness activities and about one-sixth started occupational skills training. Over three-fourths of GOALS group members exited the program within their first year.
- **Impact.** The GOALS group was more likely than the control group to participate in job search assistance or training activities, occupational skills training programs, and general job skills training. GOALS increased the rate of employment and average earnings, relative to the control group, in the fourth quarter after random assignment (based on one of two data sources). At the same time,

GOALS led to higher participation in SNAP in the first half of the follow-up period, but SNAP participation rates for the two research groups were similar in the second half of the follow-up period.

This final evaluation report builds on the interim report to provide more conclusive evidence about the effectiveness of the pilot's services. The full effects of the enhanced services may not have materialized during the short-term, 12-month follow-up period examined in the interim report, especially for some individuals still receiving services at the 12-month point. Therefore, this report focuses on individuals' outcomes over a period of up to 36 months after random assignment, allowing an assessment of relatively longer-term impacts including, for some individuals, those measured after DCF stopped providing services in March 2019. In addition, the final evaluation report includes participation and impact analyses for all individuals who enrolled in the pilot, including those who enrolled in 2018. Finally, the implementation and cost analyses in the interim report described the planning and early implementation periods of the pilots but did not cover the full period during which the State offered services and incurred costs. This report expands the implementation analysis to include the full period during which the pilot was implemented and discusses the potential for its sustainability and replicability. It also builds on the interim cost analysis to determine the net benefit (relative to costs) of providing GOALS services.

C. Organization of this report

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- Chapter II presents the data and methodology used to conduct the analyses in the evaluation.
- Chapter III describes how enrollment changed over time and the characteristics of the individuals who enrolled.
- Chapter IV describes the pilot's planning and implementation, the ways in which its implementation differed from the original design, challenges experienced, and responses to these challenges. It also describes the sustainability and replicability of GOALS.
- Chapter V presents findings from the participation analysis, which describe the services that individuals in the GOALS group received.
- Chapter VI describes differences in the services received by the GOALS group and the control group.
- Chapter VII presents findings from the impact analysis, which describes the impact of GOALS on employment, earnings, benefit receipt, and other outcomes.
- Chapter VIII describes the costs of services the GOALS group received and compares the costs and benefits of those services.
- Chapter IX offers conclusions.
- Appendix A describes the primary characteristics of the 10 pilots; Appendix B provides background on SNAP E&T and work requirements; and Appendices C to H present detailed findings from the analyses described in Chapters V through VIII as well as additional subgroup analyses.

II. Data and methodology

This chapter describes the sources of the data we collected for the evaluation and how we used them in the analyses. We discuss how we obtained the data and the types of information each source contained. We also explain which individuals we included in each analysis and the methods we used to address the evaluation's research objectives. A technical supplement in a separate volume describes the data and methodology in detail (Dotter et al. 2022).¹⁰

A. Data sources

We collected data to support the evaluation from a variety of sources:

1. **Baseline registration form.** After obtaining study consent, pilot intake staff collected baseline information about individuals in the pilot, including their demographic characteristics, employment histories, and receipt of public assistance. We collected baseline data for all GOALS and control group members.
2. **Implementation data.** We collected most of the implementation data during three rounds of site visits to the State, during which we collected information about implementation, challenges, and lessons learned during different periods of pilot operation:
 - Round 1 (June 2016): The planning and early implementation periods
 - Round 2 (June 2017): The first full year of pilot operations
 - Round 3 (October 2018): The last year of pilot operations as well as planning for the end of the pilot and sustainability of pilot services

We also collected information during technical assistance and monitoring site visits and telephone calls throughout the planning and service delivery periods.

The site visits included interviews with staff from DCF, KU, and GOALS service providers; structured observations of service provider operations; in-depth interviews with two GOALS group members who participated in activities and received services; and one focus group with 13 GOALS group members who engaged in services.

3. **Administrative service use data.** DCF and their partners and providers collected and shared administrative data that documented the types of training, education, and services they provided to GOALS group members and, where applicable, to control group members. The administrative data analyzed for this report included information on service receipt from the date of random assignment for each individual through either the last known date of service or the end of GOAL's service period (March 2019).
4. **Unemployment insurance wage records.** We obtained data on employment status and earnings from State unemployment insurance (UI) wage records. We obtained data for each individual in the pilot with earnings for eight quarters (two years) before the date of random assignment, for at least 12 quarters after random assignment for individuals randomly assigned through September 2017, and for at least 8 quarters after random assignment for individuals randomly assigned after September 2017.

¹⁰ The supplement provides additional information about the analysis approach, including details on the study design, analytic weights, approach to addressing missing data, and the impact estimation approach.

The data contain earnings amounts for each quarter, which we also used to construct indicators of quarterly employment status.

5. **SNAP administrative data.** DCF provided SNAP administrative caseload data. These were used to construct measures of receipt of public assistance (SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], and Medicaid), SNAP and TANF benefit amounts, and income. We also used these data to characterize individuals' recent history of SNAP participation. Monthly data were provided for all individuals in the pilot from one year before random assignment through December 2020.
6. **12- and 36-month follow-up surveys.** The 12- and 36-month follow-up surveys are important sources of service receipt and outcomes data examined in this report. We conducted telephone surveys about 12 months after random assignment with individuals enrolled in the pilot through December 2017 (1,781 GOALS and control group members). We also conducted telephone surveys about 36 months after random assignment among individuals who responded to the 12-month survey. The 12-month survey asked for information about individuals' service receipt, employment, and earnings in the 12 months after random assignment. The 36-month survey asked for similar information for the period of time between the 12- and 36-month surveys. These surveys provided data for measures of household food security status, health, well-being, and housing status around the time of the interview. The survey data complemented the UI wage records and provided more detail on individuals' employment and earnings, including the number of jobs they held over time, the job start date and end date (if applicable), and characteristics of the job such as hours worked per week, weekly earnings, job type, fringe benefits, and occupation.
7. **Cost data.** To estimate GOALS costs, we collected data from cost workbooks completed by DCF and partners and providers through the end of the GOALS service period. The workbooks were the basis for calculating total costs and describing the categories of costs for the GOALS group, including those for staff, direct services, supplies and equipment, and overhead and operations. In addition, to estimate the total cost of each type of service, we administered a time-use survey to collect data on the percentage of time direct service providers spent on each type of service for GOALS group members. As described in the technical supplement, we used data from other sources to estimate the costs of control group services and the dollar values of benefits included in the cost-benefit analysis.

B. Analysis approach

The findings presented in this report are based on a comprehensive set of analyses.

1. Implementation analysis

The implementation analysis summarized and synthesized the data collected through the site visits and during technical assistance and monitoring. The analysis focused mainly on the data collected from formal interviews, but the information from technical assistance and monitoring was incorporated into findings where appropriate. Information from the focus group and case studies is included to provide context; however, these data were collected from small numbers of GOALS participants and the experiences and opinions of these individuals are not necessarily representative of the entire GOALS group.

We organized the data by topic, interviewee, and pilot office, to facilitate analysis by type of respondent (for example, DCF or provider) and pilot location within the State. We developed tables and synthesized information across respondents to describe the flow of services and how they changed over time, the challenges staff faced, and the lessons learned.

2. Participation analysis

The participation analysis used administrative service use data recorded by service providers to summarize engagement and participation in services following random assignment for GOALS group members (control group members were not included in this analysis). The data measured individuals' receipt of services and participation in pilot activities during the entire period in which individuals could have been engaged in services (January 2016 through March 2019). All individuals enrolled in the pilots (through January 2018) are included in the main analysis presented in the report. However, to understand service receipt patterns in the group of individuals on which the impact analysis is based, we re-estimated several participation analyses in the appendix using individuals who were randomly assigned through December 2017 (Appendix Table D.1).¹¹

We created timelines for each GOALS group member to describe when they started to receive services and, if services were completed, end dates. These timelines allowed us to estimate the order in which individuals typically proceeded through activities and the length of time they spent in each activity and in GOALS overall.

3. Analysis of differences in service use between GOALS and control groups

This analysis statistically compared receipt of services among GOALS and control group members over the 36 months following random assignment. Comparing the differences in service use between GOALS and control groups provided context for understanding impacts on employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance.

The analysis was primarily based on 12- and 36-month survey data, which were available for both GOALS and control group members who were randomly assigned through December 2017.¹² The 12-month survey data provided information on service receipt and participation in activities from the date of random assignment through approximately 12 months later, while the 36-month survey provided similar information from the date of the 12-month interview through approximately 36 months after random assignment. These 12- and 36-month survey data were combined to form a single longitudinal data file that described, for each member of the GOALS and control groups, the employment-related services and education and training activities they participated in during the 36-month period following random assignment, including type and duration.¹³ The survey data captured any type of service received, regardless of whether it was provided through GOALS, existing SNAP E&T, or through providers in the

¹¹ Due to the limitation of available data, the main impact analyses restricted the individuals included to those who were randomly assigned through December 2017, so we could have a long enough period to analyze 36-month outcomes.

¹² The analysis also used administrative data analyzed in the participation analysis, when information on the use of specific services was available for both GOALS and control group members, to present several statistics in Appendix E.

¹³ The activities measured in the survey included (1) job search assistance or job search training and (2) education and occupational skills training. Job search assistance or job search training activities included those that helped individuals with resume writing, interviewing, and networking. Education and occupational skills training activities included education in the form of adult basic education or General Education Development (GED) courses, ESL classes, or college courses; occupational skills training programs that prepared individuals for specific occupations; general job skills training programs that help individuals learn widely-applicable job skills and ready them for work; and work-based learning activities, such as paid or unpaid internships and apprenticeships.

community such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), community colleges, nonprofits, or other organizations.

We compared regression-adjusted averages of measures of service receipt for the GOALS and control groups. To improve the precision of the estimates, the regressions controlled for the characteristics of individuals as measured at the time of random assignment, including demographic characteristics (such as age, educational attainment, and number of children in the household, and economic characteristics such as employment status and earnings). We weighted the observations to ensure that the differences were representative of all individuals enrolled in the pilot before the end of 2017. We constructed the weights to reflect the random assignment process, survey design, and survey nonresponse, and used t-tests to determine whether service receipt differences between the GOALS and control groups were statistically significant.

4. Analysis of impacts on employment and well-being outcomes

To estimate how GOALS affected individuals' outcomes, we compared the average outcomes of the GOALS group and control group over the 36 months following random assignment. Because, on average, GOALS and control group members' baseline characteristics were the same at the time of random assignment (see Chapter III and Appendix C), differences in their outcomes after random assignment can be attributed to differences in the services offered to individuals in each group.

We used three data sources to measure outcomes: (1) UI wage records, (2) SNAP administrative data, and (3) 12- and 36-month follow-up survey data. The outcomes examined include employment status, earnings, and job characteristics such as hours worked and occupation. Employment and earnings were measured by quarter and year using the start and end dates of jobs reported in the surveys. Household food security status was measured over the 30 days before each survey period, whereas health, well-being, and housing status were generally measured at the time of each survey interview.

Impacts for most outcomes were estimated for individuals randomly assigned through December 2017. However, because UI wage records were available only through September of 2020, estimates of impacts on employment and earnings measured using UI wage data include only individuals randomly assigned through September 2017.

We analyzed outcomes related to earnings and employment using both UI wage records and survey data. Findings for these parallel analyses may differ because of differences in data coverage or quality, or in the analysis samples and time periods covered in the follow-up data. For example, UI wage records are not subject to the recall error that presents a potential problem in surveys. However, UI wage records do not cover all types of jobs, exclude jobs in certain industries, do not contain information on job characteristics, and are subject to other reporting errors.¹⁴ The omissions are nontrivial, and workers in sectors with no or partial coverage in UI wage records comprise about 10 percent of U.S. employment (Hotz and Scholz 2002; Kornfeld and Bloom 1999). Additionally, UI wage records do not cover workers who are casually employed, such as day laborers or part-time helpers, and exclude most cash-only work and work that is part of the "gig economy" (Abraham et al. 2018; Katz and Krueger 2016, 2019). Survey data also have limitations. In addition to the potential for recall error, these data were not available for

¹⁴ In particular, UI wage records do not cover self-employed workers, railroad employees, workers in service for relatives, most agricultural labor, some domestic service workers, and part-time employees of nonprofit organizations (U.S. Department of Labor 2014).

everyone enrolled in the pilot because some individuals did not respond to the survey. Also, the characteristics and experiences of individuals who responded to the survey may differ from those who did not respond.¹⁵

Further, the time periods for which data were available differed for the UI and survey data, which means that analysis samples for 36 months of follow-up were different for the two data sources. Survey data included individuals who were randomly assigned from January 2016 through December 2017, whereas UI wage records for GOALS included individuals who were randomly assigned from January 2016 through September 2017. The shorter time frame for the UI wage records reflects a typical lag in the availability of these administrative data that is associated with employer reporting schedules and the need for State agencies to process data after they have been reported by employers. Finally, we note that even though there are differences between the data sources, each should provide unbiased estimates of the impacts of GOALS on the outcomes they measure because the GOALS and control groups were balanced along individual characteristics at the time of random assignment.

With an experimental design, unbiased impact estimates are attainable from the differences between average outcomes of the GOALS and control groups. We estimated impacts on outcomes by comparing regression-adjusted averages for each research group to improve the precision of estimates and adjust for small baseline differences between groups that may have arisen by chance, for survey nonresponse, or for missing administrative records data. Regressions controlled for the characteristics of individuals as measured at the time of random assignment.¹⁶ We used t-tests to determine whether there were significant differences between the GOALS and control groups that were unlikely to have occurred purely by chance.¹⁷

We calculated average outcomes for research groups by applying weights to each observation to help ensure that estimated differences between research groups were representative of all individuals enrolled in the pilot in Kansas. These weights were constructed to reflect the random assignment process and, for analyses based on the survey data, to adjust for survey nonresponse bias based on observable characteristics recorded prior to random assignment.

We estimated the impact of GOALS on many outcomes and across several subgroups, performing statistical tests for each. However, the likelihood that some estimates are found statistically significant simply by chance increases with the number of estimates tested, potentially leading to the false discovery of impacts not really caused by GOALS. To help guard against this problem, known as multiple

¹⁵ An analysis of differences between survey responders and non-responders, as well as differences between research groups, in terms of individual characteristics is presented in the technical supplement.

¹⁶ The full set of characteristics and additional information on the selection of these characteristics can be found in the technical supplement.

¹⁷ Analyses in this report test for statistical significance at the 0.01, 0.05, and 0.10 levels. The 0.10 level was used because the evaluation is assessing the effectiveness of new interventions for which there is no prior evidence of effectiveness for SNAP participants. A more stringent statistical significance threshold is often used when evaluating ongoing programs for which there is an established literature on program effects based on prior studies. Using a more stringent statistical significance threshold in the current evaluation would have reduced statistical power and limited our ability to identify and highlight promising sets of services offered through the pilots. By using a 0.10 statistical significance level, the evaluation aims to build knowledge in the field of workforce development for SNAP participants, on which future SNAP E&T evaluations can expand and eventually apply more stringent tests of effectiveness once programs and service models have been established for a longer period of time.

comparisons bias, we selected two primary (confirmatory) outcomes before analyzing the data: (1) earnings (based on both the UI wage records and survey data) and (2) SNAP participation in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) after random assignment. We defined the primary outcomes over this period of available data because many GOALS group members were expected to be engaged in education and training in the first year, which could have reduced their opportunity for employment during that time. Although it is typical to examine longer-term effects of employment and training programs on outcomes by using a time period farthest from when individuals participated in activities, we did not consider Year 3 outcomes among our primary outcomes due to concerns about the adverse effects of COVID-19 on individuals' outcomes in that year. (For about 41 percent of individuals who were randomly assigned before December 2017, the COVID-19 pandemic took place during their third year after random assignment [with the start of the pandemic defined by the nationwide enactment of the CARES Act on March 27, 2020].) Although GOALS's effect on employment was important to assess in the evaluation, we excluded employment from the set of primary outcomes due to our focus on the two-year period (Years 2 and 3); the rate of employment is a more suitable outcome when measuring impacts over a narrower period of time such as a month or quarter. For example, employment was included as a primary outcome for the interim evaluation of this study, which focused on the fourth quarter from random assignment only. In the final evaluation, we used the estimated impacts on employment and other outcomes, as well as for subgroups, to support findings for the primary outcomes by examining whether they fit within a pattern of similar impacts. We view these analyses as exploratory, providing policy-relevant but less rigorous evidence about the effects of GOALS. This information could be valuable for continuous program improvement and identifying potential hypotheses for more rigorous examination in the future.

5. Cost analysis

The cost-benefit analysis compares the benefits individuals enrolled in GOALS received in dollar terms through changes in earnings and public assistance with the costs of the services provided during the GOALS service period. The analysis estimates the extent to which the benefits exceeded the costs of providing services to the GOALS group compared with the benefits and costs of providing services to the control group. In this section, we present the methods used for the cost-benefit analysis.

Description of costs. For the cost-benefit analysis, we estimated three groups of costs: (1) the costs of GOALS; (2) the costs of all services provided to GOALS group members through GOALS and the community; and (3) the costs of all services provided to control group members through existing SNAP E&T (where available) and the community. For each group of costs, we estimated the total costs, costs by service type (such as case management or education), and costs per individual. The difference between the costs of all services GOALS and control group members received is the basis for the cost-benefit analysis.

Costs of GOALS. The costs of the GOALS included those for planning, recruiting, and delivering services. We based the estimates of GOALS costs on cost data provided by DCF and partners and providers with direct subcontracts through the FNS grant. These data were reported through standardized cost workbooks submitted for the planning period and on a quarterly schedule during service delivery. DCF, KU, KDOL, and three groups of service providers each submitted workbooks with their own cost information. They submitted workbooks for the planning period (April 2015–January 2016) and for 12 quarterly service delivery periods (April 2016 - March 2019) through the end of services and closeout activities, which occurred in June 2019.

- **Total costs.** The workbooks captured data on a set of four core cost categories, or cost ingredients, including staff, direct services, supplies and equipment, and overhead and operating costs. These costs included those paid for with FNS grant funds and those paid for with funds leveraged from other sources. We used the cost ingredients to build an estimate of the total costs of GOALS by summing them across the four cost categories.¹⁸
- **Costs by service type.** In addition to the cost workbooks, a web survey collected data on the percentage of time provider staff spent on key services for GOALS group members—for example, management, assessments, and job readiness or life skills workshops (such as a job club or job readiness training). We allocated the costs of (1) staff, (2) supplies and equipment, and (3) overhead and operating costs to direct service costs using the percentage of time staff reported spending on these key direct services.
- **Costs per individual.** To estimate the costs of serving the average individual and the range of costs for serving all GOALS group members through GOALS, we used individual-level data on participation in services to attribute a cost to each service in which the individual engaged. We used administrative service use data collected by DCF and partners and providers on participation in GOALS services only. We used data on the unit (or per-service) cost of GOALS services to estimate the total cost of services for each individual in the administrative service use data. We then estimated the mean cost of services for an individual.

Costs of all services received by GOALS group members. In addition to estimating the costs of GOALS, we estimated the cost of *all* services that GOALS group members received from the GOALS and the community. We used the costs of all GOALS group services in the cost-benefit analysis because the benefits GOALS group members could have accrued through changes in employment and earnings were a product of all services in which they participated during the follow-up period, not just the GOALS services.

- **Total costs, costs by service type, and costs per individual.** We estimated the costs of all services GOALS group members received per individual using the same method we used to estimate the per individual costs of GOALS. We used individual-level data on participation in services to attribute a unit cost to each service in which each individual engaged and estimated the mean and range of costs per individual. We summed the individual-level estimates to get an estimated total cost of all services GOALS group members received.

We used the unit costs of GOALS services and individual-level participation data from the 12- and 36-month follow-up surveys to estimate the costs of all services GOALS group members received. We chose to use the survey data to estimate the cost differentials between the GOALS and control groups because, unlike the administrative service use data, the survey data were collected for both the GOALS and control groups. In addition, these data reflect all services both groups received, thus maximizing the comparability of the two sets of service costs.

Costs of all services received by control group members. Most grantees were unable to report detailed information on costs for the services received by control group members. As a result, we estimated the

¹⁸ The ingredient, or build-up, methodology used for the cost data collection and analysis has been used in similar evaluations of public workforce programs and is detailed in Levin, Henry M., and Patrick J. McEwan. *Cost-Effectiveness Analysis: Methods and Applications*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2001.

costs of all services control group members received using recently published data on the costs of similar services offered through the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Services for the control group were generally similar to or a subset of WIOA services, including case management, assessments, job clubs, job readiness training, independent job search (called resource room visits), education, occupational skills training, work-based learning, and support services. For case management and all employment and training-related activities, we used cost data from the WIA (Workforce Investment Act) Gold Standard Evaluation, which were collected using the same methodology as this evaluation and the same workbook and cost ingredients (staff, direct service, supply and equipment, and overhead and operating costs).¹⁹ For cost estimates of support services, we used 2018 FNS-583 form data on reported costs of support services in existing SNAP E&T programs. We adjusted the WIA cost estimates to 2016 dollars to facilitate a direct comparison with GOALS group cost workbook estimates, which we also adjusted to 2016 dollars.

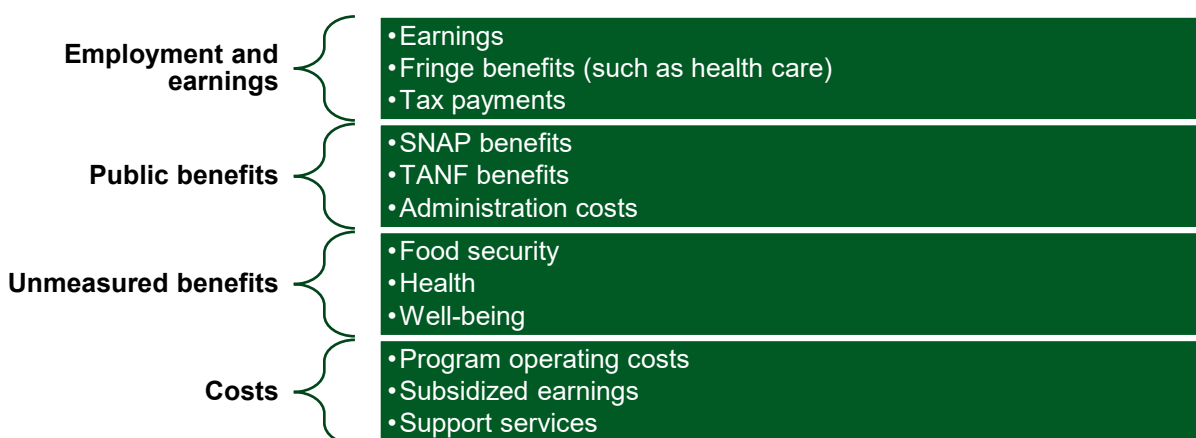
- **Total costs, costs by service type, and costs per individual.** We used the same method to estimate the costs of all control group services that we used to estimate the costs of all GOALS group services. We attributed the WIOA unit cost of each service to individual-level data on participation in the services control group members reported receiving through existing SNAP E&T (where available) and the community in the 12- and 36-month follow-up survey data. We estimated the mean and range of costs per individual and summed the individual-level estimates overall and by service type to estimate the costs of all services control group members received.

Approach to cost-benefit analysis. The cost-benefit analysis used a framework to present a comprehensive listing of GOALS group benefits and costs, relative to the control group, from three perspectives: (1) individuals enrolled in GOALS, (2) government and taxpayers, and (3) society as a whole, which represents the sum of the other two perspectives. The framework is similar to an accounting ledger, listing benefits and costs as dollar values that could be positive from one perspective or negative (a cost) from another. All costs and benefits are expressed as the difference between the GOALS group and the control group and reflect all services those individuals received during the 36-month follow-up period.

Measures of costs and benefits. Given FNS' and Congress's goals for the SNAP E&T pilots, the primary benefits of interest were (1) increased earnings (through increased employment), which reflect individuals' increased productivity from participating in services; and (2) reduced need for public assistance benefits, such as SNAP or TANF (Exhibit II.2). Additional benefits to government and taxpayers, as well as society, include taxes that individuals pay as part of their post-service employment and reductions in public assistance benefits. The primary costs of interest include costs for operating program services and providing subsidized earnings and support services to individuals while they are engaged in services. While operating costs and resources provided to individuals are a cost to government and taxpayers, the latter are a benefit to individuals.

¹⁹ The WIA Gold Standard Evaluation is the most recent national study of the Adult and Dislocated Worker program services, conducted in 2012 and with findings published in 2016. WIA was reauthorized in 2014 under the WIOA. Although WIOA made important changes to the workforce system, it did not significantly change the basic set of services offered, nor who was eligible to receive them. We refer to the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation as WIA because that was the name of the authorization at the time the data were collected.

Exhibit II.1. Measures of costs and benefits



Although we can attribute a dollar value to benefits such as earnings, fringe benefits like health care, or SNAP benefits, there are other benefits and costs associated with changes in employment and earnings that are more difficult to value. Changes in the rates of food insecurity and well-being (such as improved housing or health status or lower rates of depression) are important outcomes that could be associated with a change in employment and earnings. It is challenging to quantify the dollar value of these benefits reliably—for example, it is difficult to attribute a dollar value to a one-point change on the depression or food security scales used to assess the presence and extent of these issues. Outcomes such as a change in depression or food security might have more value than can be represented by a change in earnings or expenditures, given the relationship of those outcomes to overall and long-term health and well-being. In addition, there are other potential costs to individuals related to employment, such as changes in child care or transportation needs. We did not make assumptions about the values of these benefits or costs because they could influence estimates with a high degree of uncertainty. However, it is important to recognize the potential value of these costs and benefits to individuals, government and taxpayers, and society.

Costs and benefits by perspective. The findings of the cost-benefit analysis depend on the perspective from which the costs and benefits are considered. For example, an increase in tax payments because of an increase in employment and earnings is a cost to individuals but a benefit to government and taxpayers. We considered variation in the costs and benefits by perspective:



Individuals enrolled in the GOALS group could have realized benefits from increased post-program earnings and incurred costs from decreased benefit receipt. Individuals did not incur costs for services but benefitted from receiving subsidized wages and support services while receiving services.



Government and taxpayers (meaning everyone other than individuals) paid costs to fund the services and could have realized benefits from increased taxes from individuals and decreased benefit receipt and program administration costs.



Society as a whole experienced the overall effect of the costs and benefits to individuals and government and taxpayers. Costs or benefits to society were the sum of the costs and benefits to individuals and government and taxpayers. For example, if taxes were a cost to individuals and a benefit to government and taxpayers, there would be a net neutral (zero) benefit to society.

Summary measures. To estimate the net benefit, we took the difference between total benefits and costs for each perspective. A negative net benefit is a net cost from that perspective. We also estimated the return to society on each dollar invested by estimating the ratio of benefits to costs. A benefit-cost ratio greater than 1 suggests that overall benefits of all GOALS group services exceeded their costs. A benefit-cost ratio less than 1 suggests that the benefits of all GOALS group services, relative to the services GOALS group members would have received otherwise, did not outweigh their costs within the 36-month follow-up period.

Accounting for benefits accruing later than costs. The costs of services were incurred during the time when individuals were enrolled in services, but the benefits of those services likely did not accrue fully until a later date. We adjusted the costs and benefits in two ways to make their dollar values comparable during the baseline year of 2016, when GOALS started incurring service costs and individuals started accruing benefits. In other words, the costs exceeded the benefits realized.

- **Price deflator.** To account for inflation, we used the implicit gross national product price deflator from the Bureau of Economic Analysis to convert costs and benefits occurring in later years into constant 2016 dollars.
- **Discount rate:** A dollar in the baseline year was worth more than a dollar in later years because it could have been invested and earned interest. To account for this effect, we used a discount rate to convert all costs and benefits incurred in later years into constant 2016 dollars based on the 30-year Treasury bond rate on January 1, 2016 (approximately when GOALS started), which was 2.98 percent.

Sensitivity analyses. Like most cost-benefit analyses, our estimates required many assumptions. We examined the sensitivity of our findings to changes in these assumptions to assess whether our results were robust to these changes. We assessed whether our results differed for each of the following changes:

- **Alternative discount rates.** We used an alternative Treasury bond rate to assess the sensitivity of estimates to different rates of return through the discount rate. We tested the sensitivity of our findings to using alternative discount rates of 2 percent and 4 percent.
- **Alternative fringe benefit rates.** We used an alternative fringe benefit rate to assess the sensitivity of estimates to the assumption that the average fringe benefits were worth 20.9 percent of earnings (according to the Department of Labor's National Compensation Survey). We tested the sensitivity of our findings to using fringe rates that were decreased and increased by 5 percent of earnings.
- **Alternative tax rates.** We used a single marginal tax rate based on the mean earnings impact and characteristics of individuals in GOALS at enrollment. Because individuals' effective tax rates could vary based on their earnings and other deductions, we tested the sensitivity of our findings to using tax rates that were decreased and increased by 5 percent.
- **Alternative assumption that subsidized earnings are not included in UI wage record estimates of earnings.** We assumed that subsidized earnings provided to individuals engaged in work-based learning activities were reported to State UI agencies and were included in UI wage record estimates of earnings. It is possible that not all providers reported subsidized earnings to State UI agencies. We tested the sensitivity of our findings to the alternative assumption that subsidized earnings were *not* included in UI wage record estimates of earnings, but instead were a direct transfer benefitting individuals. We assumed subsidized earnings were included in 36-month survey estimates of self-reported earnings.

- **Alternative assumption that treatment group members only received services through GOALS.** The main analysis assumes that GOALS group members received additional services outside of GOALS through existing SNAP E&T and the community during the pilot period. We use data from the 12- and 36-month follow-up surveys to estimate service receipt for GOALS group members and assume any difference in estimated costs of GOALS and all services GOALS group members received based on the survey is attributed to services received outside of GOALS. Survey data are self-reported and could over or underestimate the services that GOALS group members received. This sensitivity analysis uses the alternative assumption that GOALS group members only received services through GOALS and estimates the net benefits using these alternate estimates of costs.

6. Subgroup analysis

For many of these analyses, we examined subgroups that may have been affected differently by the services offered to the GOALS group.

Subgroups defined by baseline characteristics. We analyzed a subset of service use and impacts among groups of individuals defined by their status at the time of enrollment, such as the presence of children in the household, work experience, income, age, and presence of severe barriers to employment. For all subgroup analyses, we conducted F-tests to assess research group differences in service receipt or impacts across subgroups. These findings are included in the appendices.

Subgroups defined by the timing of pilot enrollment. We analyzed a subset of service use and impacts by enrollment time period. We divided individuals into two groups based on when they were enrolled in the pilot; those enrolled before and after the midway point of the pilot's full enrollment period (January 2016 to December 2016 versus January 2017 to January 2018). The mid-enrollment distinction is meant to capture differences between earlier and later cohorts independent of how specific pilot operations changed over time. There could have been changes both within and outside of the pilot that contributed to differences in outcomes before and after the mid-enrollment point, including shifts in local labor market demand, changes in implementation policies or practices, or characteristics of participants. We used t-tests to determine whether the magnitude of differences between GOALS and control groups varied across enrollment periods.

Subgroups defined by whether individuals started or completed activities. The main findings presented in this report do not differentiate between individuals enrolled in the pilot who participated in activities and those who did not. These estimates provide information about impacts that can be expected for all SNAP participants to whom GOALS activities were offered. However, because some individuals did not engage in GOALS or start an activity, these estimates mask how well individuals who actually participated in GOALS activities may have fared. For this reason, we conducted additional analyses to examine impacts among SNAP participants who actually engaged in the pilot and participated in activities.

We grouped activities into (1) job search or job search training activities (consisting mostly of independent job search) and (2) education or training activities (consisting of occupational skills training, basic education [GED class and the National Career Readiness Certificate], and work-based learning). We estimated differences in service receipt between GOALS and control groups and impacts on outcomes among individuals who started a pilot activity compared with those who did not and among those who completed a job search or job search training activity or completed an education or training activity compared to those who started but did not complete an activity.

To conduct this non-experimental analysis, we used a rich set of baseline data collected from all individuals enrolled in the pilot to estimate GOALS group members' propensity for starting an activity using regression-based predictive models. These models were then used to predict control group members' propensities to start an activity had they been in the GOALS group. The resulting propensity scores were then used to define subgroups of individuals in each research group based on the percentages of the GOALS group that started an activity. We repeated this process for GOALS group members who did not start an activity, completed an employment or training activity, completed a job search or job search training activity, or started but did not complete an activity.²⁰

C. Study limitations

This evaluation of the SNAP E&T pilots used an experimental design, rigorous analysis methods, and a multifaceted longitudinal data set to assess whether the pilots were effective in connecting SNAP participants with jobs that increased their incomes and reduced their need for public assistance benefits. Because individuals were randomly assigned to GOALS and control groups, we can confidently attribute differences in outcomes between the groups to GOALS services rather than to differences in the characteristics of the two groups when they enrolled into the pilot, such as differences in education, work readiness, and barriers to employment.

Nonetheless, the evaluation has several methodological limitations:

- 1. Some analyses do not include all individuals who enrolled in the pilot.** We have about three years of follow-up data for most, but not all, individuals who enrolled into the pilot. Because the reporting and data collection schedules did not always align, we had to limit some analyses to a subset of the individuals enrolled in the pilot. For example, survey data were collected only from individuals who were randomly assigned through December 2017. Similarly, although UI wage records were collected for all individuals who were randomly assigned, individuals who were randomly assigned later in the enrollment period contribute less than three years of data to the analysis. Thus, it is possible that analyses that included a full three years of data for all individuals who were randomly assigned might produce different findings. We assessed the sensitivity of our findings to these limitations by using the UI wage records for *all* individuals who were randomly assigned to estimate 2-year impacts of the pilot on outcomes and compared these impacts to those for individuals who were randomly assigned through September 2017—those for whom we had 3-year observation periods. Our findings were robust to this restriction, suggesting that the need to restrict the populations included in some analyses did not affect the main conclusions of the evaluation.
- 2. Survey nonresponse may lead to potential bias in estimates of service receipt and outcomes.** Data collected from the 12- and 36-month follow-up surveys play an important role in understanding differences between the GOALS and control groups in receipt of services available through SNAP E&T and in the community, as well as in estimating impacts on employment, earnings, and food security and well-being outcomes. With the exception of employment and earnings data in the UI wage records, much of this information is not available through other data sources. Even when it is, there are fundamental differences between UI and survey data in the types of jobs covered and the information available to assess job quality. However, because survey data were collected from

²⁰ Additional information regarding these procedures can be found in the technical supplement which accompanies the report.

individuals 12 and 36 months after random assignment, a nontrivial percentage of individuals enrolled in the pilot were not located via telephone or residential address and, thus, could not participate in the survey. (The response rates of the 12- and 36-month surveys were 56 and 66 percent, respectively.) As a result, differences in the characteristics of individuals who responded and did not respond to the survey could differ between GOALS and control groups. If this were true, it would bias the estimates of pilot impacts. To address this possibility, we performed a comprehensive nonresponse bias analysis using information collected before random assignment and constructed and applied survey weights based on these analyses to ensure that findings are representative of all individuals who enrolled into the pilot.

- 3. Having incomplete control group data in the cost-benefit analysis led to the use of estimated costs of control group services.** The cost-benefit analysis compares the costs of GOALS group services with their counterfactual—those services individuals would have received in the absence of the GOALS group services. Most grantees were unable to report detailed information on costs for the services received by control group members, so we estimated those costs using the unit costs of services that were similar to those the control group received, using data from a recently published evaluation of the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program. As a result, the difference in the costs of services represented in the cost-benefit analysis could be over- or underestimated.
- 4. The assessment of the effectiveness of the pilots on individuals who participated in activities was not based on an experimental research design.** The subgroup analysis examining differences in pilot impacts among individuals who did and did not start or complete an activity was important for assessing pilot effectiveness among individuals who engaged in the pilot. However, an important limitation of this analysis is that it is not based on an experimental design. The experimental design randomly assigned individuals who enrolled in the pilot to the GOALS group or the control group. Individuals in the GOALS group chose whether to start an activity and/or complete one based on factors that we could not necessarily observe. Thus, since individuals were not randomly assigned to start or complete activities, there is a risk that the factors predisposing an individual to greater participation in activities may influence their likelihood of gaining employment or earning higher wages, independent of their starting or completing an activity. To account for this potential bias, we used a rich set of baseline data available for all individuals enrolled in the pilot to generate weights that balanced the characteristics of GOALS group members who started or completed an activity and control group members who would have had a high propensity to start or complete an activity had they been in the GOALS group, thereby reducing the risk of selection bias.

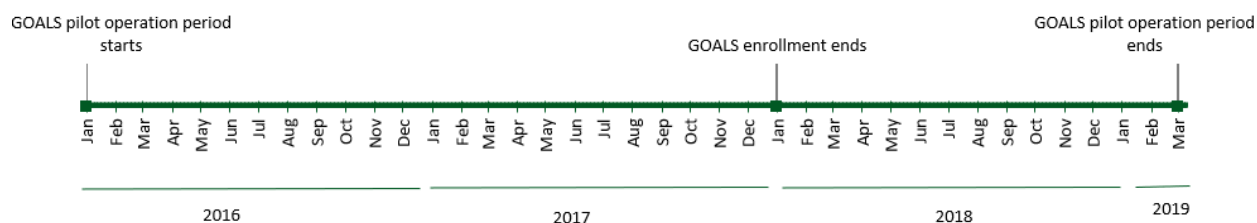
III. GOALS enrollment and characteristics

This chapter describes patterns of enrollment in the pilot and the local economic context in which the pilot operated. It also describes the characteristics of enrolled individuals at the time of random assignment and compares the characteristics of those who enrolled in the pilot earlier to the characteristics of those who enrolled later.

A. Patterns of enrollment

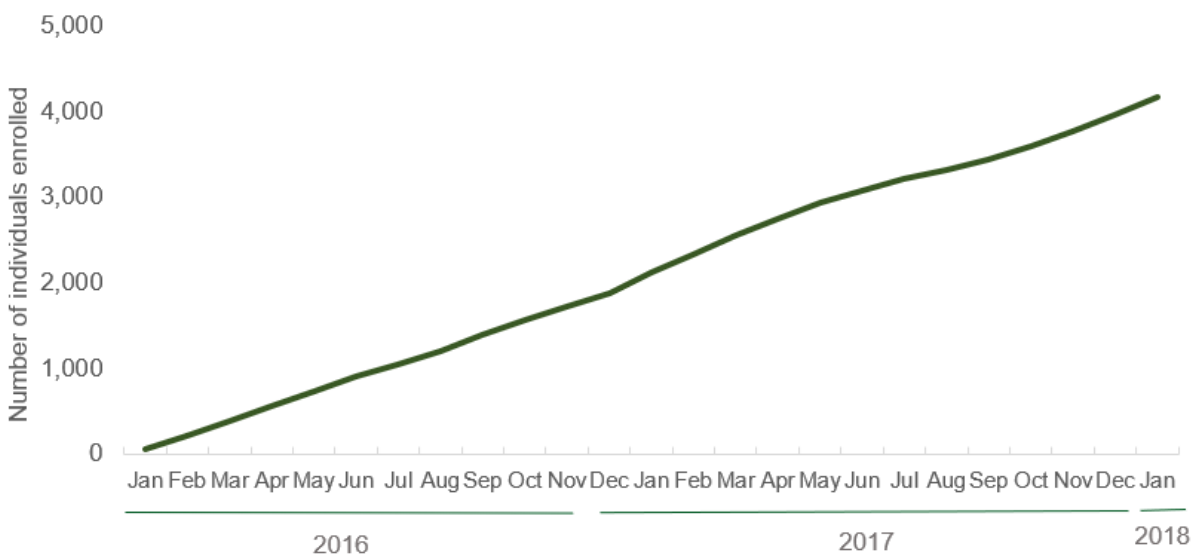
From January 2016 to January 2018, Kansas enrolled 4,170 individuals into the pilot (Exhibit III.1). SNAP participants who enrolled in the pilot were randomly assigned in roughly equivalent numbers to the GOALS group and a control group. The number of individuals enrolled increased steadily over time, averaging about 156 individuals per month in 2016, 174 individuals per month in 2017, and 205 individuals per month in 2018 (Exhibit III.2).

Exhibit III.1. Overview of pilot enrollment



Source: SNAP employment and training enrollment data (January 2016 to March 2019).

Exhibit III.2. Cumulative number of individuals enrolled in each month of the enrollment period



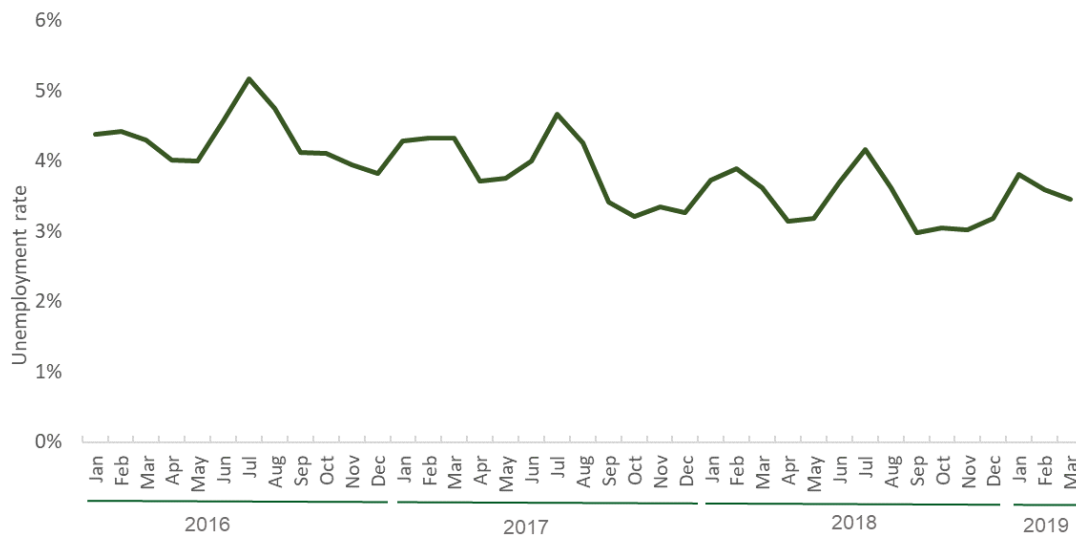
Source: SNAP E&T enrollment data (January 2016 to January 2018).

Note: All values are numbers of individuals enrolled and include both GOALS and control group members. Individuals enrolled in the pilot include all GOALS and control group members who completed a baseline enrollment registration and did not subsequently revoke their consent to participate in the evaluation of the pilot. (4,166 out of the 4,170 enrolled individuals).

B. Local economic context in the GOALS pilot area over time

The counties in which GOALS operated experienced relatively low and falling unemployment rates, with average monthly unemployment falling from about 4.5 percent at the start of the pilot period to about 3.5 percent at the end of the period, in early 2019 (Exhibit III.3). During the first year and a half of the pilot operation (January 2016 to July 2017), the average monthly unemployment rate was between 3.7 and 5.2 percent. From August 2017 until the pilot stopped offering services in March 2019, unemployment hovered between 3 and 4.3 percent.

Exhibit III.3. Local unemployment rate in Kansas' pilot area for each month of pilot operation



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics (January 2016 to March 2019).

Note: All values are average monthly unemployment rates across the 35 counties in which the pilot operated.

Common occupations among the general population in the region of the pilot remained generally consistent from 2016 through 2019 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). The most common occupations throughout this period were office and administrative support such as customer service representatives, receptionists, administrative assistants and office clerks; production occupations such as machinists and assemblers and fabricators; sales and related occupations such as cashiers and retail salespersons; food preparation and serving related occupations such as fast food and counter workers, waiters and waitresses, and cooks and cafeteria workers. Transportation and material moving occupations, such as delivery truck drivers, passenger vehicle drivers, and workers in the airline industry, moved into the most common occupations by 2019, replacing education, training and library occupations (Exhibit III.4).

Exhibit III.4. Common occupations and median wages in Kansas's pilot area over time

Wage (hourly in dollars)	2016	2019
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	14.50	15.74
Production Occupations	16.59	18.35
Sales and Related Occupations	11.44	12.26
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	9.08	9.50
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	18.87	-
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	-	15.29

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Note: Data in this table represent the five most common jobs in 2016 and 2019 based on the total number of employees in the pilot area. The areas included in this table (Nonmetropolitan northeast Kansas, Nonmetropolitan northwest Kansas, Nonmetropolitan southeast Kansas, Nonmetropolitan southwest Kansas, Lawrence, Manhattan, Topeka, and Wichita) are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and may not fully align with the areas of Kansas in which the pilot was offered.

C. Characteristics of enrolled individuals

The baseline registration form captured demographic, residential, and economic characteristics at the time of random assignment for individuals who enrolled in the pilot. Exhibit III.5 and Appendix Table C.1 show the key characteristics of individuals who enrolled from January 2016 to December 2017—the individuals on whom many of this report's analyses are based.²¹ The majority of individuals enrolled in the pilot were female (61 percent), and just over half were White. The average age was 37, with 13 percent between 18 and 24 years old and 69 percent between 25 and 49 years old. Over three-quarters had at least a high school diploma or equivalent education. Around 14 percent were married or cohabiting and 42 percent lived in households with children. Most individuals (90 percent) lived in a metropolitan or micropolitan area.²²

Virtually all individuals enrolled in the pilot had been employed at some point (98 percent), but only 16 percent were employed at the time of random assignment (Exhibit III.5). About 30 percent were consistently employed in the two years preceding random assignment, meaning they were employed for at least 7 out of the preceding 8 quarters, while 31 percent were either not employed or employed for only one of the preceding 8 quarters.

We also assessed individuals' barriers to employment based on whether they completed high school and if they were employed in the 12 months before random assignment. Almost all individuals (93 percent) faced neither or only one of these barriers. Seven percent faced the most barriers, defined by not being employed in the past 12 months and completing less than high school or the equivalent.

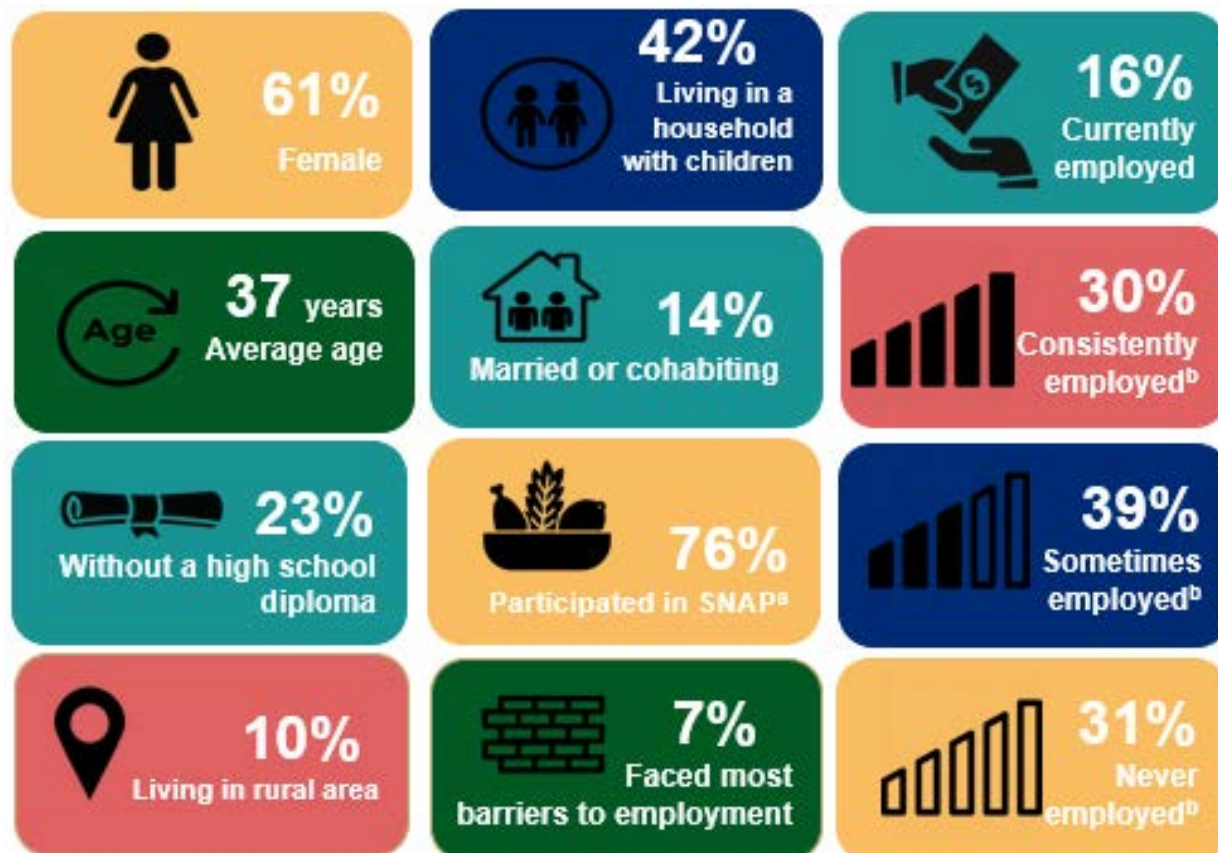
²¹ Compared to analyzing outcomes for all enrolled individuals, analyzing them for individuals who were randomly assigned through December 2017 allows for a longer observation period of about three years in which to observe service receipt and impacts on outcomes. As shown in Appendix Table C.1, the characteristics of this group of individuals were similar to those for all individuals who enrolled in the pilot.

²² Urbanicity is measured using the Economic Research Service's 2010 Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes. Metropolitan areas are defined as urbanized areas of 50,000 people or more or areas in which most or many commuters in the area commuted to an urbanized area. Micropolitan areas are large urban clusters of 10,000 to 49,999 people or areas in which most commuters in the area commuted to a large urban center.

III. GOALS enrollment and characteristics

Most individuals (76 percent) had participated in SNAP in the year before enrolling in the pilot. About 29 percent participated for 1 to 6 months of the year and slightly less than half (47 percent) participated for more than 6 months.

Exhibit III.5. Baseline characteristics of individuals enrolled in the pilot



Source: SNAP employment and training baseline information registration form (January 2016 to December 2017 data).

Note: All values are percentages unless otherwise noted. Individuals enrolled in the pilot through December 2017 include all GOALS and control group members who completed a baseline enrollment registration and did not subsequently revoke their consent to participate in the evaluation of the pilot. (3,961 out of the 4,170 enrolled individuals).

^a Participated in SNAP reflects any SNAP participation in the year before random assignment based on SNAP administrative records. All individuals who enrolled into the pilot were required to be on SNAP at the time of random assignment.

^b Employment experience is defined using UI wage record data for the two years before random assignment. "Consistently employed" includes individuals who were employed for at least 7 out of 8 quarters preceding random assignment. "Sometimes employed" includes individuals who were employed for 2 to 6 quarters preceding random assignment. "Never employed" includes individuals who were employed for at most 1 quarter preceding random assignment.

D. Characteristics of individuals who enrolled earlier versus later

Some analyses in this report examine differences in service receipt and impacts between individuals who were enrolled earlier versus later in the enrollment period. Below we summarize differences in baseline characteristics of GOALS group members in these two groups of individuals.

III. GOALS enrollment and characteristics

Later enrollees in the GOALS group were less likely than earlier enrollees to not have at least a high school diploma or equivalent education (23 versus 26 percent) and to live in a rural area (6 versus 12 percent; Appendix Table C.4). Later enrollees in the GOALS group were more likely than earlier enrollees to be a race or ethnicity other than Hispanic, Asian, Black, non-Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander/Native American, or White, non-Hispanic, or to be more than one race or ethnicity (8 versus 6 percent), to have a smaller household size (2.7 versus 2.9 people), to live in a metropolitan area (58 versus 53 percent), and to have been receiving SNAP for 1 to 3 months in the year before random assignment (21 versus 15 percent).

IV. Implementation analysis

In this chapter, we describe the implementation of the GOALS pilot based on qualitative analysis of data collected through staff interviews, focus groups, and case studies of individuals in GOALS. Data presented in this chapter were collected during the pilot planning, implementation, operational, and close-out periods, from January 2015 through March 2019 (Exhibit IV.1 provides a pilot timeline).

Exhibit IV.1. Pilot timeline

Pilot activity	Date
Grant awarded	March 2015
Enrollment began	January 2016
Enrollment ended	January 2018
Services ended	March 2019

In the following sections, we provide information about the pilot background and describe the planning and early implementation process. We then detail services and operations, including the recruitment and enrollment processes; control group services and pathways; and GOALS group services and pathways, management and collaborations, service receipt patterns, barriers among GOALS group members, staffing, and performance reporting. We also discuss the sustainability and replicability of GOALS services after the pilots ended, and summarize the key findings discussed in this chapter. Unless otherwise noted, each section describes the policies implemented, not what was planned.

A. Pilot background

DCF was the lead agency for GOALS. The GOALS project manager, who had worked for DCF for many years before the beginning of enrollment, provided the impetus to apply for the SNAP E&T pilot. She wanted to implement a voluntary SNAP E&T program that was rapidly responsive to employer needs and demonstrate that when services are offered in an uplifting and positive way, SNAP participants will take advantage of them and remain engaged without being required to do so. DCF engaged KU as a key partner to help with the research necessary to provide the rationale for the proposed GOALS services, and the two agencies collaborated to write the grant proposal. This new relationship was established for the pilot.

DCF aimed to provide a much more comprehensive set of services and activities to individuals in the GOALS group than was available under the existing SNAP E&T program. The GOALS model—Stabilize, Train, Place, and Sustain—included the following key services and activities: intensive case management using career navigators to provide one-on-one assessments; client-centered interviewing; referrals to specific stabilization services and activities; job-readiness preparation; job search, development, and matching; job placement; occupational skills training; soft skills and life skills training; adult basic education; mental health and substance use disorder counseling; job retention; support services; and ongoing coaching.

Although DCF was the primary GOALS service provider, several other local organizations and institutions served as providers. For example, GOALS collaborated with community colleges, faith-based organizations, and other community organizations and business to offer GOALS services such as occupational skills training, soft skills and life skills training, and mental health and substance use disorder counseling.

DCF and its partners and providers implemented GOALS in 35 Kansas counties in four regions: northeast (NE), south-central (SC), southeast (SE), and southwest (SW). DCF also operated the existing SNAP E&T program but offered it in only eight of Kansas's 105 counties. The program provided light-touch case management and limited occupational skills training, primarily to prepare individuals to become certified nursing assistants and commercial truck drivers. At the start of the pilot, Kansas expanded existing SNAP E&T services from those eight counties to 36 counties throughout the State, including counties in three of the four pilot regions; existing SNAP E&T services were not available for control group members in the pilot's SE region.

DCF and its partners selected the four pilot regions because they represented a mix of urban and rural areas with higher rates of poverty and varying availability of community resources but also had employers who needed skilled workers and contained occupational skills trainings that could meet the needs of those employers.

Although enrollment in GOALS was open to any SNAP participant, GOALS targeted work registrants. Among work registrants, GOALS staff focused recruitment efforts on the following groups of individuals that the staff viewed as likely to be chronically unemployed or to have the most significant barriers to employment: ABAWDs; single parents who were underemployed and still required food assistance to support their families; individuals with a criminal justice background; and individuals with substance use disorder issues.

B. Pilot planning and implementation

DCF and KU collaborated to implement GOALS. DCF managed and operated GOALS, conducted recruitment and enrollment, and provided GOALS services. The management staff included a project manager who oversaw all aspects of the pilot; an operations manager who supervised the four regional team leads; and a data liaison who managed data for the pilot. In each of the four regions, DCF staff provided direct services to the GOALS group. These staff included a GO (Generating Opportunities) team lead (director of GOALS services in each region), career navigators, and employer liaisons. KU managed the GOALS data and provided financial literacy training and language and cultural competency training to GOALS staff. KU staff also helped facilitate collaboration and build staff capacity skills through professional development; and brought together employers, community-based organizations, and other community partners and providers to review GOALS progress and plan ahead through quarterly gatherings known as collective impact meetings.

DCF and KU staff began planning for pilot implementation in April 2015. During the planning phase, staff identified and secured additional partners and providers, hired and trained staff, established a data management system, and developed marketing and recruitment materials in consultation with a marketing firm. The pilot originally scheduled enrollment to begin in November 2015; however, the planning phase extended until December 2015, and the start of pilot enrollment was delayed until January 2016.

The pilot was rolled out later than planned because of the amount of time it took to secure the provider contracts and hire staff. For example, DCF had challenges reaching agreements on contract specifics (such as disagreements over the numbers of individuals to be served or the costs for certain services) and getting contracts put into place. The lack of a definite start date also delayed the start of the contract process with the providers. Additionally, as with most large bureaucracies, the DCF hiring process was slow and cumbersome leading to the placement of some individuals into positions that did not match their

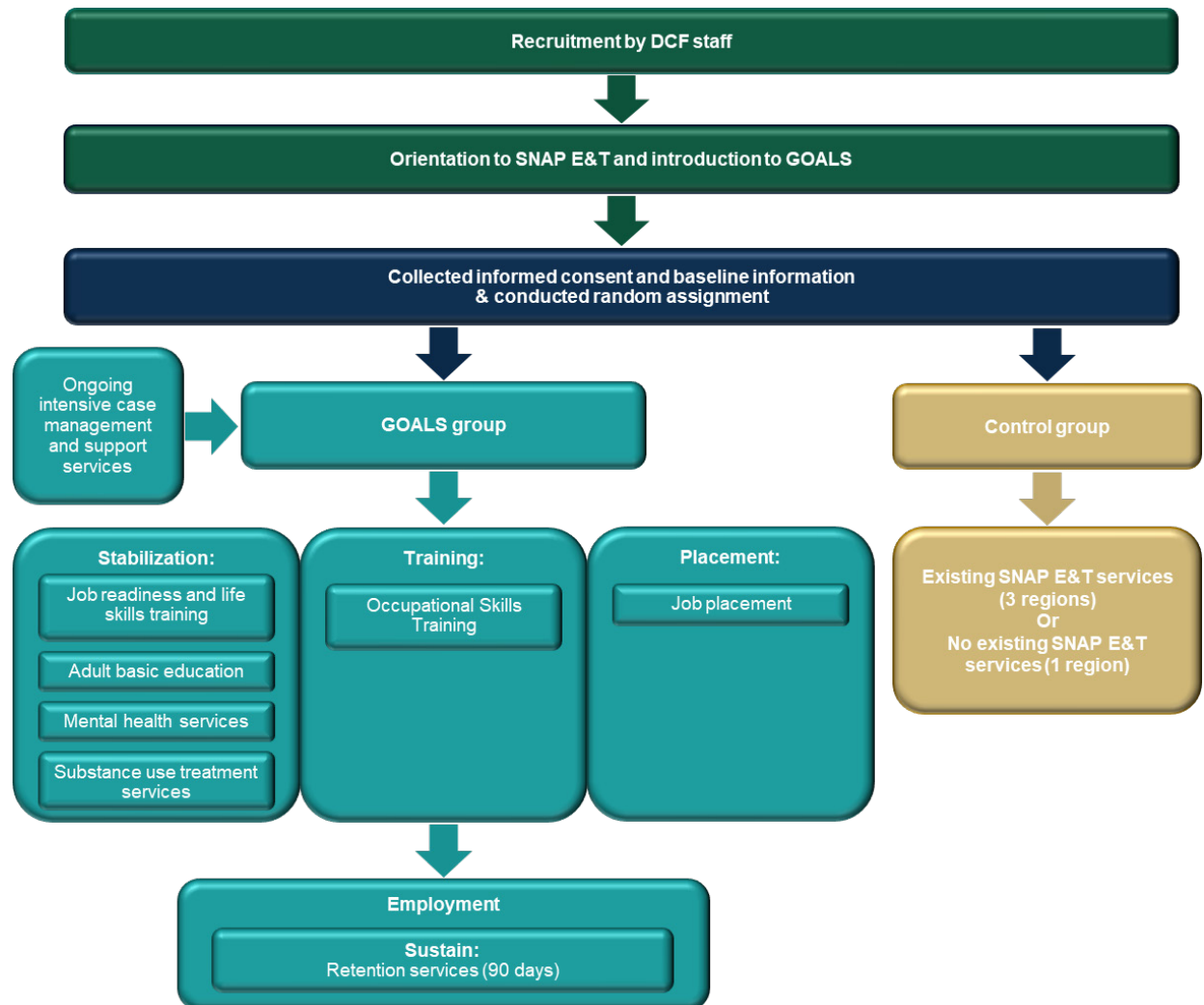
strengths. Essentially, according to staff, scaling the idea for GOALS across four regions of the State was a challenge.

For more information about pilot planning and implementation, please see Expanding Opportunities & Reducing Barriers to Work: Kansas Interim Report interim report (Hamilton 2021).

C. Pilot services and operations

As Exhibit IV.2 shows, staff recruited work registrants and invited them to an orientation. Individuals interested in and eligible for the pilot were then enrolled in the evaluation and randomly assigned to either the control group or the GOALS group. Those assigned to the control group were offered existing SNAP E&T services where available (all regions except the SE region), and those assigned to the GOALS group were invited to participate in an intake and assessment process with a career navigator. After the assessment process, GOALS group members began to receive services and activities that typically followed the model of Stabilize, Train, Place, and Sustain, though services and activities were tailored to each individual and could be accessed in any order or simultaneously.

Exhibit IV.2. Pilot flow and pathways



1. Recruitment and enrollment

GOALS was marketed to individuals applying for SNAP as a new applicant and to existing or recertifying SNAP participants in a variety of ways, including through posters, flyers, letters, and word of mouth. For example, GOALS staff identified newly approved SNAP applicants and existing or recertifying SNAP participants through weekly reports, and called and sent these individuals flyers and letters inviting them to attend a GOALS orientation.

Staff also distributed flyers throughout the community, such as to libraries and homeless shelters, attended community meetings to inform local agencies about GOALS, and encouraged those agencies to refer individuals to them. The primary referral source, however, was SNAP eligibility workers, who informed individuals about GOALS during the SNAP benefits application or recertification process. As such, GOALS staff said it was essential to maintain a good relationship with the eligibility workers and to be accessible in case the worker identified someone that wanted to speak with a GOALS staff member about the opportunity.

Additionally, GOALS staff utilized the DCF office lobby areas to market and recruit for GOALS. Not only were GOALS posters and flyers displayed in the offices, but GOALS staff also distributed flyers to individuals in the DCF offices and talked one-on-one to individuals. For example, staff asked whether the individuals were SNAP participants and whether they were employed, and then quickly assessed whether GOALS would be a good fit. Staff in one region said they increasingly used the lobby recruiting method towards the end of the enrollment period because SNAP eligibility workers were busy learning a new data system and had less time to focus on referrals.

There was no assessment for entry into the pilot other than determining eligibility; to be eligible for the pilot, one had to be eligible for SNAP, age 18 or older, and residing in a county served by GOALS.²³ In addition, ABAWDs had to be enrolled no later than the middle of their second month of SNAP receipt if they were not participating in qualifying employment, education, or training activities.²⁴ Pilot enrollment took place during the orientation. If an attendee was interested in GOALS, staff obtained informed consent, collected baseline information, and randomly assigned the individual to either the GOALS group or the control group.

Many GOALS staff remarked that recruitment was not a challenge—all the strategies put into place were successful. The pilot met its enrollment targets throughout the enrollment period and ultimately exceeded them, enrolling a total of 4,170 individuals—280 more than its target of 3,890.

²³ Although the pilot *targeted* work registrants, it was not limited to work registrants.

²⁴ SNAP participation for ABAWDs is limited to three months in every three years if ABAWDs are not participating in qualifying employment, education, or training activities. If ABAWDs were not already participating in a qualifying activity by the second half of their second month of SNAP receipt, they are sent a SNAP benefits closure letter informing them that they will no longer be eligible to continue receiving SNAP benefits as of the end of the third month. DCF originally enrolled ABAWDs who were not active in other qualifying activities into the pilot at any point during their three-month SNAP eligibility period, but DCF eventually changed to enrolling them only through the middle of their second month.

2. Control group services and pathways

Individuals assigned to the control group were referred to the existing SNAP E&T program team at DCF, except in the SE region where no program existed. In the SE region, individuals assigned to the control group left orientation with a sheet listing local resources, including contact information for organizations that could help with employment, housing, and mental health issues. DCF case managers in the existing SNAP E&T program in the other regions reported that they did their best to help individuals become work ready and make connections to employers. They could also refer control group members to get a GED and to some limited occupational skills training and informally refer them to the local workforce agency for training; however, case managers rarely had time to follow up on these referrals.²⁵ Case managers in the existing SNAP E&T program had fewer resources to offer, relative to the career navigators in GOALS; however, they did provide some support services. For example, case managers assisted individuals with obtaining work uniforms and with transportation, though this was usually contingent upon the individual's progress. In addition, case managers had high caseloads of about 80 to 100 individuals and the existing SNAP E&T program did not have dedicated employer liaisons to make connections with employers and match individuals to jobs. As a result, individuals in the existing SNAP E&T program, unlike individuals in GOALS, needed to do more on their own to improve their employability. On average, individuals in the existing SNAP E&T program received about three months of services followed by 90 days of retention services.

3. GOALS group services and pathways

Individuals assigned to the GOALS group received an appointment letter with the phone number and email address of their assigned career navigator or immediately met with the career navigator. (If career navigators could not see the individual on the day of pilot enrollment, they tried to schedule the first appointment within a few days.)

Though GOALS services were individualized, the typical pattern of service receipt followed the model of Stabilize, Train, Place, and Sustain. The intensive case management phase (Stabilize) included individualized assessments, barrier identification, adult basic education, mental health or substance use disorder counseling, life skills and pre-employment training, and support services (such as transportation and child care assistance); this phase was projected to take about eight weeks. The remainder of the model called for occupational skills training if warranted (Train), job placement (Place), and postemployment services (Sustain). On average, GOALS was intended to last approximately 180 days (about six months).

The initial intake, which started the assessment process, usually occurred in the first meeting. It could take one to two hours but could be continued in a second meeting (usually within the next few days) if the individual did not have time to complete the process on the first day. Assessments, which helped identify barriers and strengths, skills, and interests, included a staff administered self-assessment on paper and an online career exploration assessment. Career navigators continued to conduct informal assessments in their conversations with individuals in GOALS over the next few appointments.

The self-assessment was a collection of questions and assessments used to gather background information such as education and work history as well as to identify needs and other barriers related to, for example, substance use or mental health concerns. GOALS started off using the CAGE tool. About nine months

²⁵ Certified nursing assistant training was the only funded training available for individuals in the control group receiving existing SNAP E&T services during the pilot.

into the pilot, they added two others: the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) and Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10). At the completion of the assessments, the career navigator worked with the GOALS group members to identify short- and long-term goals and create an individualized action plan. The career navigator often sent the individual home from the first appointment with some type of support (minimally, a gas card or bus pass), along with action items to complete within the following two to three weeks.

Post-assessment activities were individualized and assigned based on a combination of the individual's assessments and interests and career navigator guidance. Although stabilization services generally preceded training, which usually preceded job placement, there was no rigid service sequence, and services could be accessed simultaneously. Soft skills and occupational skills training providers often further assessed GOALS group members using, for example, the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) or WorkKeys.

Barrier reduction/support services. If the assessment process identified barriers, the next step in the career navigators' work during the Stabilize phase was often barrier removal. For mental health and substance use disorders, career navigators referred individuals to various community-based organizations for services, depending on the region. For example, in the SC region, the career navigator usually set up an informal 'meet and greet' with a Substance Abuse Center for Kansas (SACK) licensed addiction counselor at the DCF office. If the individual agreed, the SACK counselor further assessed them at the SACK office and determined the type and intensity of care needed (for example, in-patient or out-patient services). The SACK counselor remained in weekly contact with the GOALS group member and collaborated with GOALS to determine when an individual may be ready for other GOALS services including placement. The counselor also served as a resource for the GOALS staff. In the last year of GOALS, staff also began collaborating with community organizations in the NE and SC regions that implemented peer mentoring services.

To alleviate transportation barriers, GOALS staff had access to flexible funding and could provide bus passes (\$25–\$55/month) or gas cards (\$35/month, or as much as \$300 to help with car repairs).

An individual's experience in GOALS

One GOALS group member completed GOALS and started a new job within six months. Soon after, he stopped receiving food assistance—all despite having gaps in his employment history and having been previously incarcerated.

At the time of the interview, he was still employed. His employer had paid for him to complete commercial driver's license (CDL) training, offered a good benefit package, and provided potential for advancement.

Before enrolling in the pilot, he was unemployed. He had been applying to jobs but had added challenges because of his criminal justice background. He enrolled in GOALS because he wanted a job that offered benefits and had advancement opportunities.

Most of his time in GOALS was spent completing job-readiness training, which he said was valuable because it helped him set attainable goals, create a resume, and learn how to be successful in job interviews. He also said attending the daily job-readiness training classes helped relieve some of the stress of unemployment, such as not having a job to go to everyday. During the last week of training, he started a job that paid more than a living wage in Kansas. GOALS then gave him \$300 for car repairs in order to ensure he had reliable transportation to his new job.

He spoke very highly of GOALS and said he did not think he would have gotten the job he did without having participated in it.

Additionally, GOALS could provide interview clothing (up to \$75), work clothing or equipment (such as steel-toed boots, up to \$75), license or testing fees, and other assistance, such as eyeglasses or hearing aids, at the discretion of the regional GO team lead. Although GOALS had support service spending guidelines, GOALS GO team leads granted permission to exceed spending caps for individual support services on a case-by-case basis. For example, if the GOALS group member had a child, the GO team lead might have permitted a career navigator to provide two bus passes. In the last year of the pilot, staff had even more flexibility to provide additional rounds of support services to reengage individuals. For example, staff reported giving some individuals additional gas cards as well as additional clothing allowances. Staff also referred GOALS group members to outside organizations for assistance with, for example, paying rent and utilities or court fines, although outside resource availability depended on the region—the SW region had limited resources. Additionally, some providers used donations and other funding sources to support individuals. For example, one provider offered a food pantry, and another said they had helped pay for medical prescriptions.

When GOALS group members were asked about the cost of participating in GOALS services, some reported that support services became unavailable after the first few months of participation. However, most noted that GOALS covered “everything.” For example, one GOALS group member said, *“They gave you gas vouchers, so therefore, they made it easy for everyone to get there. If you needed to get there, they got you there.”*

Basic education and soft skills. To help fill gaps in adult basic education and improve workplace soft skills and life skills, GOALS referred individuals to Bridges or Partners4Success (P4S) classes. A GOALS provider that offered one of these classes explained that the curricula for Bridges and P4S were very similar because they were both evolutions of a third class, called Partners in Change. However, she noted that Bridges was less rigid and allowed the providers more flexibility in implementing the class.

Bridges was either six weeks in length, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Thursday or five weeks in length, from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday. P4S was eight weeks in length, gradually increasing from three hours per day to eight hours per day, Monday through Friday. Both classes provided training that covered life skills, basic education, conflict resolution, and job search skills, among other career readiness skills. The goal of the classes was to enable individuals to become self-sufficient and better able to manage their lives, which, in theory, would allow them to better manage and retain employment. The classes focused on topics such as goal setting, parenting, cooking, coping with crisis, money management, and responsibility. SACK counselors were also invited to present on substance use disorders and mental health challenges—giving them another opportunity to identify individuals that needed support. Employment-related modules included employability skills, such as work ethic, teamwork, and problem-solving; workplace math; and communication. The classes also covered resume writing and interviewing skills and included mock interviews.

GOALS employer liaisons also recruited employers to participate in P4S and Bridges—to conduct Q&A sessions with the GOALS group members, conduct tours of their workplaces, and conduct mock interviews—and they tried to invite employers that matched GOALS group members’ interests. Employers were impressed with P4S and Bridges. One employer expressed his feelings about the classes:

“The people, when they go into the [class] and when they come out, they’re two totally different people. It was mentioned before about self-confidence—it’s that, it’s being able to interview. It’s being able to have the confidence to interview and the skills necessary to know what to say and what not to say. It’s a huge benefit.”

Career navigators lauded Bridges and P4S; many spoke in interviews about the difference these classes made in helping GOALS group members improve their basic skills and become more prepared to begin and maintain employment. Moreover, one GOALS staff member explained that these classes enabled them to vouch for individuals to employers, which was especially helpful to individuals who did not have a substantial work history. For example, staff was able to say that the individual showed up on time every day, demonstrating a positive work ethic. They were also able to speak to the individual's character, describing how the individual engaged in the class.

More than one GOALS group member noted that participating in one of these classes helped their self-esteem. One GOALS group member stated:

"...At the time I was between jobs, and the reason I took it is because of the work ethic skills they teach you... the resume skills they teach you, the mathematics skills they teach you. It's basically just like, I've been out of school for almost like...20 years...It takes you back to ...preparation, and being to work on time, and job proficiency, all that stuff. It actually brought me back to what I was lacking and refreshed my memory of what I was lacking before, when I was between jobs. So, actually it is a very great [class], and it actually taught me a lot, and it landed me a great job, too."

Over time, GOALS services became more robust. This improvement was partly because of the increase in service availability—mainly Bridges and P4S—throughout the four pilot regions. P4S was offered in all four regions. Bridges was initially offered in the SE region and then expanded to the SC region. Starting in 2017, both classes were made more widely available across the pilot regions, and some career navigators said that they referred as many individuals in GOALS to these classes as slots permitted. However, the GOALS administrators later reduced the availability of P4S and prioritized Bridges in part due to P4S's strict attendance policy. For example, individuals had been expelled from P4S (and were not allowed to graduate) for being late to orientation or missing classes—even if they had valid excuses.

GOALS staff also connected a few GOALS group members to an online life skills and work readiness class called Work Ready Concepts (WRK). WRK provided individuals with a laptop and hotspot that they could keep if they completed the class—staff indicated this was a good option for individuals that lived in rural areas. Building off Bridges and P4S, GOALS staff eventually established an in-house rotating workshop series starting in 2018 that covered adult basic education, job readiness, and life skills training. The workshops had rolling start dates rather than the set schedules of Bridges and P4S—an attempt to increase engagement in these types of services and activities. Some regions also offered one-off workshops on topics such as basic computer skills or budgeting. They also invited guest speakers and professionals from the community to present on topics such as expungement.

Occupational skills training. If warranted, career navigators referred GOALS group members to occupational skills training, which occurred after completion of Bridges or P4S, instead of a referral to these pre-employment trainings, or at any time. The training component of GOALS (Train) included short-term occupational skills training, which was limited to four to six weeks. GOALS collaborated with several providers to offer several occupational skills training options. Occupational skills trainings varied by region and included administrative assistant, certified nursing assistant and certified medical assistant, introduction to manufacturing, forklift operation, OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) certification, construction math, or basic welding, masonry,

tooling, or carpentry. GOALS continued to expand its occupational skills training throughout the service period in response to demand. GOALS administrators formed new collaborations in 2017 and 2018 and expanded the relationship with others to increase occupational skills training opportunities in each region. For example, GOALS added sheet metal aeronautics training in the SC region, at the completion of which individuals had the opportunity to interview with a local aerospace company. In the SE Region, a former GOALS staff member transitioned to a local community college and worked to create more occupational skills training opportunities and strengthen the previously established relationship between GOALS and the college.

Some GOALS group members felt that activities were limited and could have included more occupational skills training and work-based learning opportunities appropriate for the local economy. However, one individual spoke about how he could count on GOALS staff to help him achieve his goal of obtaining a GED and a welding certificate. He said, *“It’s a long road ahead, and there [are] some hurdles, but with their help, it’s going to be a lot easier to get over the hurdles.”*

One occupational skills training provider noted how they worked to educate GOALS staff about their service options and requirements. They said this helped encourage GOALS staff to refer GOALS group members that might have been interested in occupational skills training and to ensure that they only referred individuals who would meet the eligibility criteria and be a good fit.

Case management. GOALS used a client-driven strength-based case management approach. This approach acknowledged that individuals had barriers but suggested focusing on a growth mindset—building up an individual’s strengths. The expectation was an even 50/50 effort on behalf of the staff and the GOALS group member—though staff acknowledged they sometimes offered more support to help an individual overcome a hurdle. The goal was to let the individual lead rather than the staff member so that the individual could “personally actualize their future.”

Career navigators remained in frequent contact with GOALS group members via email, telephone, and text and typically met in person about once a month but sometimes as often as every week. The frequency of in-person meetings was affected by caseload sizes, which grew over time and then reduced towards the end of the pilot. Upon the completion of enrollment, staff indicated they had more time to engage and provide case management services to GOALS group members. Staff also said that getting work cell phones helped them better communicate with GOALS group members—especially text messaging.

Career navigators continued to actively engage with GOALS group members during the Stabilize and Train phases, including during occupational skills training, or P4S or Bridges courses. For example, career navigators attended some classes and met with individuals during breaks or after the class. Career navigators also separately checked in with provider staff. For example, if SACK was providing the GOALS group member with services, the career navigator checked in with the SACK counselor to find out if the GOALS group member was engaging. If not, the career navigator followed up with the GOALS group member.

GOALS staff also often teamed up to provide case management services to GOALS group members. For example, career navigators would meet with the individuals and their training instructor or SACK counselor. Career navigators even continued to work closely with GOALS group members until they became employed. Thus, during the period of job search, both a career navigator and an employer liaison engaged with individuals.

Most of the GOALS group members said that they were pleased with the case management they received and felt comfortable reaching out to career navigators when they needed assistance. Several individuals said that GOALS, and especially their career navigators, helped them with their confidence. One individual shared:

“...My caseworker’s been giving me confidence, just building me up. And interview clothes and stuff like that, she helped me get prepared to go on interviews and stuff. And right now, I’m currently working, so yeah, she kind of did all that.”

Career navigators said that one of the biggest case management challenges was the limitations of what they could pay to help individuals.

Employment services. In preparation for the Place phase of GOALS, employer liaisons met with individuals early on during case management to get to know them. However, they would not regularly engage or start looking for jobs for them until the career navigator indicated that they were work ready and their resumes were complete. GOALS did not use a formal assessment to determine when an individual was work ready but some indicators included completing trainings, establishing appropriate email addresses, recording professional voicemail greetings, being prepared to handle questions about criminal justice backgrounds, having proper interview clothing, being prepared for interviews, and having a 30-second pitch about themselves. While GOALS group members worked on becoming work ready, the employer liaisons made contacts with new employers to introduce them to GOALS; maintained contact with new and existing employers through visits, phone calls, and emails; and kept employers engaged by inviting them to attend in-house workshops and other Bridges or P4S activities or to conduct mock interviews. Staff said the most impactful collaborations with employers was with those that were involved in the P4S and Bridges classes. Staff said this not only benefited GOALS group members but also the employers because these classes were an opportunity to “shop for job seekers.”

When individuals were ready for job placement, the employer liaisons began engaging with them regularly via in-person meetings as well as through text, phone, and email. Like the career navigator, the employer liaison built a relationship with the individuals and helped with barriers. The employer liaison helped identify available jobs that matched the individuals’ skills and interests. In some cases, they also sent or personally delivered resumes to potential employers and advocated for individual GOALS group members. For example, if the individual completed occupational skills training, the employer liaison spoke to the individual’s commitment or attendance rates. Even if an employer liaison made a placement and the GOALS group member turned out not to be a good fit, the employer liaison could get feedback from the employer and make stronger connections in the future.

One employer described the close relationship between employer liaisons and employers:

“If I have an opening, I email my contact over at our local DCF, and she’ll come back with, ‘Well, I have four or five people that I think might be good for that, and here you go’...It’s like using an employment agency without paying the cut.”

The decision about where to apply was always up to the GOALS group member, but the employer liaison gave them information and advice about employers. For example, the staff shared information about an employer’s hiring practice or advice informed by the feedback from other GOALS group members who had worked for the employer.

GOALS relationships with employers continued to expand and grow stronger throughout the pilot implementation period. By the end of the pilot, employers increasingly engaged in Bridges and P4S classes (where, for example, they conducted mock interviews) and hired GOALS group members. Over the last couple of years of the pilot, employer liaisons transitioned away from actively building new employer relationships to maintaining established relationships. This transition allowed the employer liaisons to focus on matching individuals to job openings. Focusing on the GOALS group members proved especially valuable in serving formerly disengaged individuals with significant barriers to employment. However, staff said that as unemployment numbers became lower, it was hard to find high-paying jobs. For example, in the rural SE region, staff said job development became more challenging towards the end of the pilot because GOALS staff had exhausted many of their employer resources, and there were fewer job openings.

Staff reported that individuals with a criminal justice background and a lack of education faced the most significant barriers to employment. Staff also said they faced challenges providing placement services to older individuals looking to transition careers. However, staff said that having dedicated job developers was extremely valuable in assisting GOALS group members overcome barriers and secure employment. They suggested that without the employer liaisons, the employment rates would not have been as successful. GOALS staff said that the amount of time they worked with GOALS group members to secure employment varied but suggested the average was about one to four months.

Retention services. Once individuals were employed, the employer liaison or ESS staff provided retention services (Sustain). These services included contacting GOALS group members at least once a month and helping address challenges to remaining employed, such as transportation problems, and sometimes involved referring them back to the career navigator for additional support services. GOALS also sometimes hosted guest speakers at the DCF offices to present on retention and advancement-related topics. Retention services also involved helping individuals find quick reemployment if they lost a job. Retention services were available for 90 days after an individual became employed, regardless of whether they stopped participating in SNAP, and were not included in the 180 days of GOALS services. (Individuals typically exited from GOALS after 180 days.)

4. GOALS services management, partnerships, and communication

Throughout the service period, the GOALS management structure and organization generally remained the same. Collaborations with partners and providers changed slightly but were strong overall, and communication across GOALS staff, partners, and providers was regular and thorough. One change to the staffing structure was that the SC region rather than the NE region began staffing the Salina office, because DCF felt that it was easier for the SC staff to get to Salina. The overall management team consisted of the project manager and operations manager at DCF and several staff at KU. In each of the four regions, a GO team lead supervised the career navigators and employer liaisons. The GO team leads reported to the operations manager, who reported to the project manager. The only change to this structure was that about two years into the pilot, the employer liaisons, who originally reported to a central senior employer liaison, later reported to their regional GO team lead, and the senior employer liaison became the operations manager, who oversaw the GO team leads. Staff reported that the original structure was challenging and left the employer liaisons feeling disconnected from the rest of their local teams. They said the new structure made the teams more cohesive and improved communication and flexibility.

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According to DCF leadership, the teams in three of the four regions were strong from the start, and relationships and collaboration continued to get stronger as the pilot matured. For example, the regional teams met regularly to discuss how best to serve GOALS group members, and the employer liaisons become part of those conversations after the reporting structure had changed. Participating in these conversations helped better prepare employer liaisons to match individuals to jobs.

The collaboration with KU was unusually strong. KU typically played a “behind the scenes” role as a partner for a variety of projects and worked well in this same role supporting DCF as the lead organization for GOALS. KU staff provided technical assistance on project management, professional development for staff, data management, and management of the collective impact meetings and partner relationships, among other functions.

DCF collaborated with several providers to serve GOALS group members. For example, Episcopal Social Services helped GOALS DCF staff provide retention services in the SC region. GOALS also used external providers for P4S and Bridges, occupational skills training, and mental health and substance use disorder counseling. Some of the providers that GOALS began collaborating with as early as the planning phase included:

- Butler Community College (P4S)
- Neosha County Community College (Bridges)
- Garden City Community College (P4S)
- Episcopal Social Services (Initially provided space for the P4S and then became a Bridges provider in January 2017)
- Bethel House training Institute (certified nursing assistant and certified medical assistant training)
- Business Education and Training Analysis—division of Butler Community College (administrative assistant training)
- Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas (commercial driver’s license training)

Staff reported that organizations and employers were increasingly interested in working with GOALS because it continued to demonstrate its ability to benefit GOALS group members and employers alike. GOALS developed many new collaborations during the implementation period to provide additional occupational skills training opportunities as well as other GOALS services and activities including:

- The Southeast Kansas Career and Technical Education Center (C-Tec) at Fort Scott Community College (introductory occupational skills training in welding, masonry, manufacturing, and construction).
- Labette Community College (8-week welding course and an introduction to manufacturing course)
- Wichita State University Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology (sheet metal aeronautics training)
- SACK (mental health and substance use disorder counseling)

Throughout the implementation period, GOALS also stopped working with some providers for a variety of reasons. For example, GOALS ended its agreement with one provider a few months after the pilot began when a State audit found the provider was overspending and inflating its caseloads. Another provider that was providing training in rural locations went out of business. A third provider had an instructor that did not pass a background check. Other initial provider relationships dissolved due to

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reasons such as a lack of referrals or because GOALS administrators replaced them with a less expensive provider.

Additionally, because Bridges was less expensive to license and implement than P4S, and because the Bridges curriculum's attendance requirements for individuals were not as rigid as in the P4S curriculum, GOALS ended its partnership with the Salina Adult Education Center—the organization that has the licensing rights for the use of the P4S curricula. Ending the partnership with the Salina Adult Education Center dissolved the financial agreement that allowed different GOALS providers across the state to use the P4S curriculum; however, Butler Community College (BCC) in the SC region continued offering P4S because they had permission through a separate agreement. Separately, GOALS purchased the rights to the Bridges curriculum and made that training more available across the regions.

GOALS provider agreements were initially established and managed by the project manager. However, as the pilot matured and the regional GOALS teams grew stronger, the regional GO team leads increasingly maintained the local provider relationships.

Staff stressed the importance of frequent and effective communication. Communication across regions and among partners and providers was both formal and informal. DCF held several regularly scheduled meetings, including a weekly administrative DCF and KU leadership team meeting. GO team leads also held regular meetings with each of their regional teams. They exchanged feedback about all of the GOALS group members and shared knowledge about outside resources.

Moreover, the regional GOALS staff regularly communicated and collaborated with the provider staff and other community organizations to best support GOALS group members. For example, each region organized quarterly collective impact meetings that included all key stakeholders and community partners (including GOALS providers, community organizations, and employers). KU facilitated collective impact meetings in each of the four regions, which brought together partners and providers who would be involved in GOALS but had not necessarily worked together before. The purpose of these meetings was, according to a representative from KU, “[to have] diverse organizations come together to solve complex social issues.” Depending on the region, attendees included staff from substance use disorder counseling organizations, community colleges, workforce centers, training providers, mental health counseling providers, and others. The idea behind collective impact was that all stakeholders have a common agenda or shared vision and should always be working toward it, not just sharing ideas. The five goals of collective impact were: (1) a common agenda, (2) backbone support (facilitation), (3) shared measures (what’s working), (4) continuous communication, and (5) ensuring the first four goals reinforce each other. KU facilitated the process of “system building” early on in these meetings and helped foster agreement on how to measure progress across partners and providers. In establishing the collective impact group and facilitating the ongoing relationships among its members, DCF and KU hoped to establish a resource that would be sustainable beyond the pilot.

Staff reported increasing attendance and engagement in the collective impact meetings—especially from employers. However, the rural SW region meetings had lower levels of participation due to the long distances that some would have to travel to be present. As a result, GOALS staff actively engaged in small business association meetings and localized community meetings to facilitate collaboration.

GOALS staff also established regular check-ins directly with provider staff to obtain progress updates on GOALS group members. For example, they held weekly or monthly meetings with some providers. Around the second week of a P4S or Bridges course, the GO team lead, career navigator, training instructor, and the GOALS group member met to discuss the GOALS group member’s progress.

Additionally, GOALS staff and provider staff communicated by phone, text, and email and collaborated about various matters as needed. For instance, provider staff reached out to GOALS staff to inform them that an individual may need additional support. Some service providers even shared weekly attendance reports with GOALS staff. Staff reported that having work cell phones and the ability to send text messages was instrumental in maintaining good communication.

5. GOALS group services and participation trends

Given that GOALS provided a highly individualized set of services that individuals could have accessed in any sequence, there was no set expectation for how many people would participate in which services. Nevertheless, staff recognized that many fewer individuals participated in occupational skills training than expected. And given the degree to which staff and individuals in GOALS seemed to value Bridges and P4S, staff referred an increasing number of people to those classes, and participation tended to be strong, according to GOALS staff. Bridges and P4S were also more available than occupational skills trainings. As a result, the overall participation trend in GOALS was higher than anticipated participation in job-readiness skills activities and lower than anticipated participation in occupational skills training.

Drop-off points and exits. GOALS intended for individuals to be employed after six months, but some GOALS group members found employment in as soon as one month, while others received services for seven months or longer. One GOALS staff member said that if an individual had been searching for close to six months, they made finding employment for that individual a priority. The staff member also said that if GOALS group members continually lost jobs, then staff would sometimes take them off the job seeker list and stop connecting them to employers. Similarly, if the GOALS staff believed the GOALS group member was not actively trying to find employment, staff would stop providing leads until the individual started putting in his or her own effort.

Staff in at least three of the regions suggested that it was often challenging to keep individuals engaged in GOALS activities. Some staff noted that individuals sometimes found a job on their own and stopped participating in services. One GO team lead reported that most individuals showed up for the initial appointment and that their region did not have a challenge with engagement and had a low rate of closing GOALS cases; closed cases were usually due to an individual moving out of State. A career navigator in another region said that there was a 50 percent drop-off between pilot enrollment and the first appointment. Another GO team lead reported that if an individual was a “no call, no show” twice, the team sent a “close” letter, waited 10 days for a response and, if there was no response, closed the case. Some staff said it would have been helpful if there had been a consequence for nonparticipation.

When enrollment ended in January 2018, DCF and its partners and providers focused on reengaging individuals who may have not initially engaged in training or lost SNAP eligibility but then regained it. Staff implemented a mix of statewide and regional efforts. They utilized multiple strategies to reach disengaged individuals, including monthly newsletters, individualized postcards using a behavioral economics framework, telephone calls, and marketing of GOALS success stories in the words of GOALS group members. They also used newer service offerings as motivation for individuals who stopped engaging early in the service period. Additionally, they attempted to reengage individuals who lost a job or who may have been working but were ready for advancement. Not having updated contact information for GOALS group members was the biggest reengagement challenge. Additionally, engagement challenges remained due to barriers such as transportation.

Participation trends. Staff reported that barriers to participation in services were common and included lack of adequate transportation, low education and skill levels, substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and criminal justice backgrounds. Several GOALS group members also suggested that if an individual started but did not complete Bridges or P4S, it was usually because the individual had a negative attitude or had challenges in a classroom setting after being out of school for quite some time.

Lack of adequate transportation was the most frequently reported barrier to starting services, continuing in services, or completing various activities. One provider noted that the support that GOALS provided for transportation assistance did not always cover the costs. Another provider suggested that bus passes were not helpful to individuals that worked the second or third shift because busses did not run that late. In contrast, GOALS group members who participated in a focus group generally agreed that there were no barriers to participation that GOALS staff did not address. One GOALS group member specifically noted that transportation was *not* a barrier: “*There sure ain’t no barriers to getting there, because they make sure you get there. If they have to come pick you up themselves, they will.*”

As part of the reengagement efforts following the completion of enrollment, DCF offered additional transportation assistance in the form of extra funds for gas. However, transportation challenges also included the long distances some individuals had to travel to get to GOALS offices or other GOALS provider locations.

6. Staffing

Over time, GOALS operations became more stable, partly because of the increase in and stabilization of staff throughout the four pilot regions. For example, changes in the staffing supervision structure as described previously, moving some staff into positions that better fit their skills, as well as an overall increase in the number of staff produced improvements. However, GOALS immediately faced some staffing challenges during the pilot planning period, including hiring delays due to administrative processes. Additionally, despite GOALS supervisors reporting that staff satisfaction was high and that staff felt working for GOALS was rewarding, some pilot regions still had ongoing challenges with staff capacity and turnover. Staff reported that unplanned staffing changes broke the continuity of services received GOALS group members.

Staff reported that they learned many lessons while operating GOALS, and that they would do some things differently if they could start over. Many of the reported lessons revolved around how to staff GOALS. Both frontline staff and managers—including almost every person interviewed—stressed the importance of having the right GOALS staffing configuration from the start, as well as enough staff to cover all individuals in GOALS within the geographic territory of each region. They also emphasized the importance of taking time to hire individuals who are a good fit for their positions, rather than rushing to bring on staff for a quick rollout. One staff member suggested that the use of existing DCF staff for GOALS was beneficial because they were already familiar with DCF policy and procedures. Many also said that, in hindsight, it would have been better to have in place at the start of the pilot some of the reporting relationships that were instituted later—for example, having the employer liaisons report to the regional GO team leads instead of to a central coordinator.

GOALS faced some added staff turnover and some shifting of staff in the last year of its implementation. For example, some career navigators and employer liaisons started to resign towards the end of the implementation period, in part due to the uncertainty around the future of GOALS. However, GOALS management anticipated this and made prompt adjustments to ensure that coverage remained adequate.

For example, when the SE Go team lead resigned, they were quickly replaced by one of the career navigators. Additionally, due to the decreasing number of active GOALS group members, it was not always necessary to fill all vacant positions. For example, in some regions, the number of employer liaisons and career navigators decreased but remained sufficient to serve all active GOALS group members.

7. Performance management

KU provided a staff member, a data evaluation coordinator, who spent most of his time on data management for the pilot. DCF also assigned a data liaison to spend 100 percent of his time on the pilot. These two staff members created a SharePoint site that career navigators used to track service receipt data for the GOALS group; employer liaisons also used it to track employer engagement, and GOALS management used it to share staff training materials and the like. The data evaluation coordinator also used the data to help provide management guidance for GOALS. GOALS participation and performance data were presented at the quarterly collective impact meetings, where all stakeholders reviewed it and discussed strategies to improve performance.

Data management staff created the SharePoint site to address a month-long lag before activity was available in the DCF management information systems (MIS); the SharePoint site enabled pilot management to access real-time data and report it to evaluators. In addition, the data evaluation coordinator could access this SharePoint site to see services receipt data, which was helpful because he could not access the DCF systems directly (as he was not a DCF employee). Other data-related challenges included the State transitioning to a new MIS during the pilot and bad staff data entry habits that were reported during interviews.

Staff reported that data entry and documentation of participation in activities and case notes—some of which would be needed to operate a similar set of services, regardless of whether an evaluation was included—were challenging, because activities and notes were documented in three different systems. In addition to the two systems that DCF used, pilot management created a third pilot-specific database using SharePoint (mentioned above), because the other two systems had limitations and were scheduled to be phased out. In 2018, DCF implemented a new system that replaced the two DCF systems, reducing the total number of systems used by pilot staff from three to two.

The transition to the new system required staff to spend time training on new practices and procedures to document and track service receipt. The transition also caused delays in reengaging individuals via letters because of the time it took to transfer information, including addresses, from the old system to the new one.

D. Sustainability and replicability

DCF planned to discontinue GOALS services and activities under SNAP in March 2019. Compared to existing SNAP E&T services, SNAP E&T services after March 2019 were to incorporate some aspects of GOALS, such as in-house workshops, Bridges classes, some additional occupational skills training opportunities, and job placement services. However, with less funding available the services were expected to be less intensive or have limited opportunities. In addition, services were only to be offered to ABAWDS.

IV. Implementation analysis

DCF was to continue offering GOALS but they planned to do so under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) rather than SNAP. In considering what it would take to replicate GOALS, or a similar effort, staff shared the following reflections:

- **Extended build-up period.** Staff suggested that the speed at which they rolled out the pilot was too fast and resulted in hasty decisions that hindered success. For example, staff emphasized the importance of taking the time to hire staff who are good fits for their positions, rather than rushing to bring on staff for a quick rollout. Several staff mentioned that if they could start over, they would roll out the pilot much slower, over several years, rather than in less than one year. One administrator suggested starting in one community or region first and then taking what they learned from that experience and adapting implementation to each new community.
- **Invest in marketing.** Staff contributed their enrollment success to quality marketing materials—which they established in consultation with a marketing firm. Though, staff also suggested that if they were to do it over, they would have started to advertise the pilot earlier with greater intensity.
- **Staffing is critical.** Staff at all levels highlighted the role of the employer liaison, and the collaboration between the employer liaison and career navigator, as critical factors to the success of GOALS. Staff noted that the employer liaison was in the unique position of being able to build relationships between the employer, provider, and GOALS group member. However, staff also noted the challenge of finding and maintaining the right staff. Staff said that some of the initial hires were not all the best fit for their roles and that the staffing structure – before the employer liaisons began reporting to their local Go team leads – was not optimal. Staff also stressed the importance of immediately hiring enough staff.
- **Offer secondary education and more occupational skills training.** In addition to offering the highly rated and successful Partners4Success and Bridges classes, staff suggested that it is necessary to have increased availability of occupational skills training. Staff noted challenges building occupational skills training opportunities across the State in multiple regions. GOALS staff first had to get to know the communities, find training providers, establish a relationship, and finally execute an agreement. Staff also suggested adding the opportunity for individuals to earn a high school credential.
- **Relationships with community organizations are essential.** Staff suggested that sustaining the relationships with providers and organizations in the community is essential. They said the collective impact meetings helped inform the community about the pilot, kept everyone connected and in the loop, and prevented the duplication of services. Several staff suggested that these successful collaborations allowed GOALS to give individuals a safety net that went beyond what DCF could do on its own. Some staff described the community organizations as an extension of the pilot.
- **Expanding support services.** Staff believed that offering mental health and substance use counseling services in addition to support services such as transportation assistance was extremely important. However, many staff suggested having more flexibility concerning what staff could use support service money to purchase. For example, staff would have liked the ability to pay for additional services such as obtaining a driver's license.

E. Key implementation analysis findings

Key findings from the implementation analysis are summarized below.

- **GOALS combined a flexible set of services and activities that could be tailored to each individual's interests with the availability of immediate, flexible funding to meet individual needs.** It also provided individualized attention through close relationships with career navigators and employer liaisons. Together, these factors made the Stabilize, Place, and Sustain portions of the GOALS model relatively strong for those who engaged actively in the offered services and activities. Staff largely attributed GOALS group members' ability to engage in activities and become employed to the ability to customize services and activities for each individual, the flexible funding to meet certain needs, and the close individual attention of staff.
- **GOALS staff and GOALS group members viewed the job-readiness training as strong and effective.** Staff spoke highly of the P4S and Bridges classes and lauded how much they made a difference in helping individuals improve their basic skills and become more prepared to start and keep employment. Some reported advantages of including these classes in GOALS were that they involved employers who could get to know individuals that might apply for positions with them; they provided some classroom experience and sometimes work experience that individuals could include on their resumes; and they enabled the employer liaisons to observe individuals' behavior in the classes and thus be able to vouch for them with employers. These classes were more widely available and saw more participation than occupational skills trainings. As a result, occupational skills training played a smaller role in GOALS than was anticipated.
- **Collective impact meetings were valuable in facilitating collaboration and coordination of the various partner and providers.** Collective impact meetings brought together stakeholders with common goals who had never worked together before. The new relationships among these partners and providers, and the alignment of their goals, resources, services, and supports, positioned GOALS well to work on improving local systems so that individuals could easily access a comprehensive array of services seamlessly throughout the communities and providers could reduce or eliminate duplication of services. The meetings also enabled GOALS and its partners and providers to agree on performance benchmarks and use data to drive the management of GOALS. The relationships developed through the collective impact meetings were likely to continue beyond the grant, indicating a level of system change that came from working together on GOALS.

V. Participation analysis

In this chapter, we present findings on the services that GOALS group members received and the employment or training-related activities in which they chose to participate. Using the administrative service use data recorded by service providers, we examine overall engagement in GOALS, the types of activities in which individuals participated, the order in which they typically proceeded through them, and how long they spent in each type of activity. The chapter also presents details about participation in education, occupational skills training, and work-based learning activities; support services received; and the timing of and reasons for exiting GOALS.²⁶ In addition, to account for potential differences in implementation and availability of services for individuals who enrolled at different times, we estimated several service receipt measures by enrollment timing to describe differences in participation between those who enrolled in the pilot earlier compared to those who enrolled later.²⁷ Appendix D contains additional data on the characteristics of those who did or did not complete GOALS activities and a discussion of service receipt among subgroups, based on characteristics at the time of random assignment, as indicated by the baseline registration form.

A. Participation in GOALS

After enrolling in the pilot at DCF, GOALS group members either immediately met with a career navigator or received an appointment letter scheduling them to meet with a career navigator within the next few days. During their initial meeting and subsequent meetings, GOALS group members completed assessments to identify barriers, strengths, skills, and interests and worked with career navigators to create individualized action plans (IAPs). After completing these intake activities, GOALS group members generally began to receive services that aligned with the model—**Stabilize:** (1) intensive case management, (2) job search training, (3) basic education, (4) social services including mental health and substance use disorder counseling, and (5) support services; **Train:** (6) short-term occupational skills training; **Place:** (7) job search and placement²⁸; and **Sustain:** (8) post-employment or retention services.

²⁶ We also planned to analyze details about the intensity of case management GOALS group members received. However, the DCF MIS lacked quantifiable data on this subject.

²⁷ The GOALS pilot enrollment spanned over a 24-month period but the service period was fixed. Consequently, the service period for individuals who enrolled in 2016 could have received services for 38 months. In contrast, those who enrolled in 2017 could only receive services up to 26 months; those who enrolled in 2018 could only receive services for up to 14 months. This range is large for the entire pool of GOALS group members (Appendix table D.2), but all group members (100 percent) had a potential window of at least 12 months in which to receive services, and more than half (61 percent) were enrolled early enough to allow for 24 months of services. However, actual participation rates show that only 21 percent of GOALS group members participated in services for 12 months, and 6 percent participated for 24 months. Therefore, the variation in service period does not appear to have affected actual participation in services (Appendix Table D.2).

²⁸ As mentioned in Chapter IV, many GOALS group members engaged with the Bridges and P4S programs. These programs helped GOALS group members to fill gaps in basic education and improve workplace soft skills and job search skills. Because these programs covered a variety of topics, the job search training, basic education, and job search activities presented in this chapter all may capture participation in the Bridges and P4S programs.

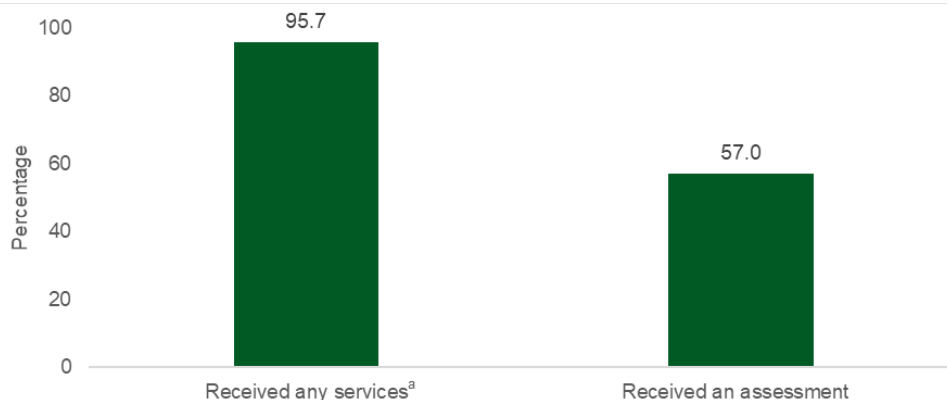
1. Overall engagement in GOALS

Almost all individuals in the GOALS group (96 percent) received services, meaning they started an assessment or an employment or training-related activity, or received a support service offered through GOALS (Exhibit V.1).²⁹ This high rate of engagement likely reflects that most individuals started an intake with a career navigator either immediately after or within a few days of random assignment to the GOALS group.

However, despite this high rate of engagement, only 57 percent of GOALS group members completed an assessment.³⁰ When comparing the baseline characteristics (age, gender, race and ethnicity, education, employment status, and presence of children in the household) of individuals who did and did not receive services, we find few differences between the two groups; the same was true for individuals who did and did not receive an assessment (Appendix Table D.12).

After random assignment, most GOALS group members received services and completed assessments.

Exhibit V.1. Percentage of GOALS group members who engaged in services



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,088 GOALS group members.

Information about the completion of individualized action plans (IAPs), which were completed during intake, was not captured in any of the DCF MIS systems.

^a "Received any services" measures engagement in activities, including assessments, employment or training-related activities, and support services; the measure does not include orientations, case management, and developing an IAP because individuals often engaged once to meet with a case manager or develop an IAP, but then did not return for more meaningful activities and services.

Length and timing of engagement. On average, individuals in the GOALS group who engaged in services spent over seven months (214 days) receiving pilot services (Appendix Table D.5). Nearly all individuals began receiving services within the first quarter after random assignment (94 percent), with the remaining individuals engaging after Quarter 1 (Appendix Table D.6).

²⁹ The measure does not include orientations, case management, or the creation of an IAP because individuals often engaged in these activities during their initial meeting for the GOALS program but then did not return for more meaningful activities and services.

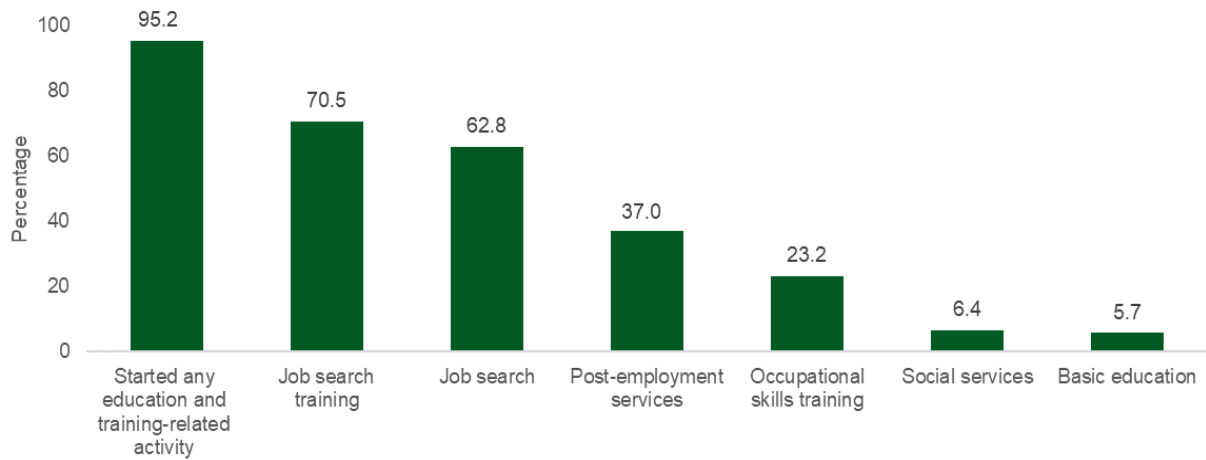
³⁰ Although findings from Chapter IV suggest that individuals also completed individualized action plans during intake, this information was not captured in any of the DCF MIS systems.

2. Engagement in activities

Almost all of the GOALS group members started an employment or training-related activity (Exhibit V.2). Individuals most commonly started job search training (71 percent) and job search (63 percent), although many GOALS group members also received post-employment or retention services (37 percent) or started occupational skills training (23 percent). Fewer individuals participated in social services and basic education (6 percent for both activities).

Almost all GOALS group members participated in an activity and most of those who started one completed it. Job search training and job search activities were most commonly started and completed.

Exhibit V.2. Percentage of GOALS group members who started an activity

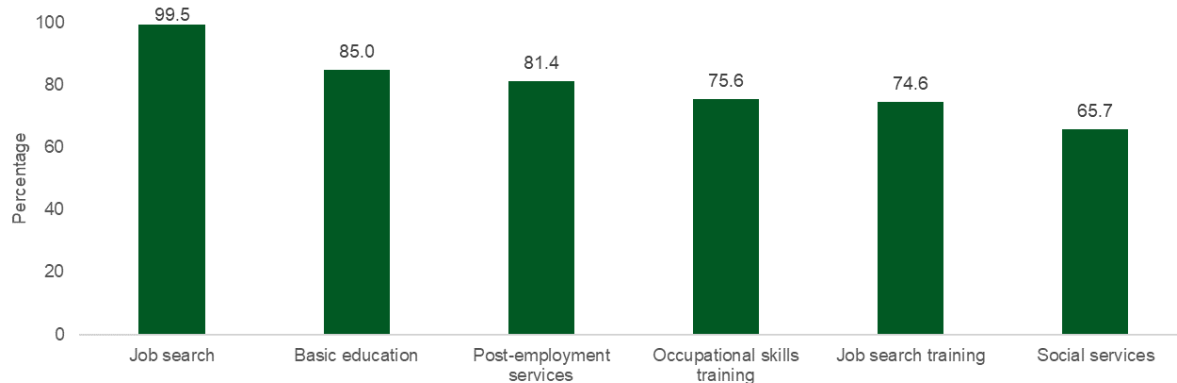


Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,088 GOALS group members.

Among those who started an activity, 80 percent of individuals completed at least one activity (Appendix Table D.3). Completion rates by type of activity started ranged from 50 percent of the few individuals who started work-based learning to nearly 100 percent of those who started job search (Exhibit V.3; Appendix Table D.3). There were no significant differences among those who did and did not complete job search training and post-employment services and few differences among those who did and did not complete the other common activities (Appendix Table D.13).

Exhibit V.3. Percentage of GOALS group members who complete an activity, among those who started one



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,088 GOALS group members.

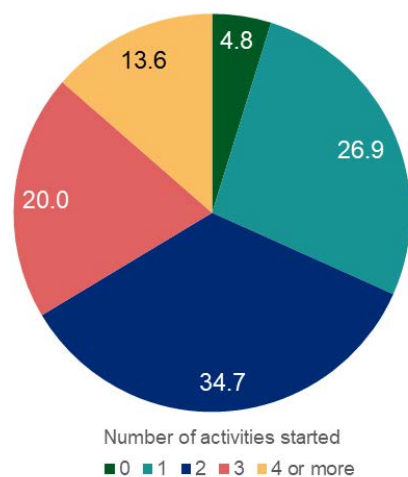
Length and timing of engagement. Individuals in the GOALS group who started an activity spent an average of three to six months participating, depending on the activity (Appendix Table D.5). Individuals spent the most time in social services and job search training (176 and 172 days, respectively) and the least amount of time in basic education (91 days). Individuals spent a similar amount of time in occupational skills training and receiving post-employment services (113 and 112 days, respectively) and spent slightly more time in job search and placement activities (127 days). Almost all individuals started an employment or training-related activity in the first quarter after random assignment (94 percent); the remaining 2 percent started it between Quarters 2 and 6. There was much more variation in the timing of activity completion—the largest percentage of those who started an activity completed it in the first and second quarters (38 and 30 percent; respectively), but many also completed activities in Quarters 3 (8 percent), and 4 percent completed them between Quarters 4 and 6.

Number and order of activities. Although GOALS activities typically followed the Stabilize, Train, Place, and Sustain model, service receipt was tailored to each GOALS group member and could be accessed in any order or simultaneously. Exhibit V.4 shows that most GOALS group members either engaged in just one (27 percent) or two (35 percent) employment or training-related activities. Many individuals who participated in employment or training-related activities started multiple activities on the same day (37 percent). These individuals most frequently started both job search and job search training on the same day. GOALS group members who started their activity sequence with just one activity commonly started job search (30 percent) or job search training first (28 percent; Appendix Table D.5). Among those who participated in just one activity, the majority participated in job search (52 percent) or job search training (41 percent; Appendix Table D.5).

For GOALS group members who participated in more than one activity, the most common combination of activities was job search training and job search (60 percent). The average length of time between starting these two activities was a little less than two months (Appendix Table D.5). GOALS group members who participated in more than one activity also commonly engaged in either job search training or job search before receiving post-employment services (41 and 33 percent, respectively). The GOALS program model envisioned that GOALS group members would only begin to receive post-employment services once they secured a job. In general, among individuals who started more than one activity, there was a period of about five months between starting job search training or job search and receiving post-

employment or retention services. This suggests that individuals generally were not receiving post-employment services while engaging in job search or job search training activities.

Exhibit V.4. Number of activities started by GOALS group members (percentage)



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,088 GOALS group members.

Earlier versus later enrollment. Because some service and GOALS policies and data collection practices changed over time, we examined whether there were differences in start and completion rates of employment or training-related activities for those who were enrolled in the pilot earlier versus later. Generally, we found significant differences in the overall rates of starting or completing activities. Those who enrolled in the pilot later were less likely than those who enrolled earlier to start or complete an employment or training-related activity (3 and 28 percentage point differences, respectively; Appendix Table D.4). Those enrolled later were more likely than those who enrolled earlier to start or complete job search training (37 and 11 percentage point differences, respectively) and start occupational skills training (10 percentage point difference); they were less likely to start or complete job search (53 percentage point difference for both) and to start or complete basic education (6 percentage point difference and 5 percentage point difference, respectively). These findings are likely driven by DCF's implementation of a new MIS system during the pilot period. The new MIS system used different activity codes than the original MIS systems. As a result, the same activity could have been classified differently in the different systems. The new system was implemented toward the end of pilot operations, with testing of the new system beginning in May 2017. If many of the individuals who were enrolled into the pilot earlier had exited GOALS by the time DCF switched systems, this switch would have disproportionately affected individuals who enrolled into the pilot later.

B. Education, occupational skills training, and work-based learning³¹

In this section, we explore education and occupational skills training activities GOALS group members started and completed in more detail.³² Over a quarter of GOALS group members (26 percent) started any education, occupational skills training, or work-based learning activity (Exhibit V.5). Most GOALS group members (76 percent) that started any education, occupational skills training, or work-based learning activity completed it (Appendix Table D.7).

1. Education and occupational skills training

Few GOALS group members participated in education activities (6 percent; Appendix Table D.3). Only a handful of these individuals were working to obtain their high school equivalency certificate (less than 1 percent; Appendix Table D.7). Findings from Chapter IV suggest that most individuals engaging in education activities were receiving basic education services through programs like Bridges and P4S.

Over a quarter of GOALS group members started any education, occupational skills training, or work-based learning activity.

About one quarter of GOALS group members participated in some type of occupational skills training (23 percent; Appendix Table D.3).³³

Exhibit V.5. Percentage of GOALS group members who started and completed any occupational skills training education, or work-based learning activity and received a credential

Outcome	GOALS group
Started any occupational skills training, education, or work-based learning activity (%)	26.1
Completed any occupational skills training, education, or work-based learning activity (%)	20.0
Received an occupational skills training credential or certification (%)	NA
Sample size	2,088

Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: NA indicates that the grantee or provider was not able to provide the data.

³¹ The GOALS program model did not include work-based learning. As a result, less than one percent of GOALS group members participated in some type of work-based learning activity. Of these individuals, one quarter (25 percent) completed the work-based learning activity that they started (Appendix Table D.7).

³² Details about the types of occupational skills trainings that GOALS group members started and completed, as well as any degrees or certifications they earned, were not captured in the DCF MIS systems and as a result are not presented in this section.

³³ Details about the types of occupational skills trainings that GOALS group members started, as well as any degrees or certifications they earned, were not captured in the DCF MIS systems. However, these details were captured through the implementation research presented in Chapter IV. The implementation research finds that occupational skills training could include Certified Nursing Assistance and Certified Medical Assistant, introduction to manufacturing, forklift operation, OSHA and CPR certification, construction math, or basic welding, masonry, tooling, or carpentry.

C. Support services

This section explores support service receipt in more detail.³⁴ Most GOALS group members received at least one support service (79 percent). Most of these individuals started receiving support services within their first quarter after random assignment (51 percent), whereas 5 to 11 percent of individuals first received a support service in Quarters 2 through 4. The remaining 5 percent of individuals first received a support service after their first year, in Quarters 5 through 10 (Appendix Table D.6).

Over three quarters of GOALS group members received a support service.

Support services in relation to other measures. We assessed whether participation in GOALS and employment or training-related activities differed for those who did and did not receive a support service. On average, individuals who received a support service remained in GOALS for 123 days longer than those who did not (Appendix Table D.8). In addition, 81 percent of individuals who started an employment or training-related activity received a support service, compared with only 29 percent of those who did not start an activity. A majority of individuals who completed an activity (81 percent) received a support service. This difference likely reflects that those who completed activities were in GOALS longer (which resulted in more monthly assistance, or the receipt of support services enabled group members to continue participating in GOALS).

Earlier versus later enrollment. Those who enrolled in the pilot later were more likely to receive support services than those who enrolled earlier (82 percent compared to 76 percent; Appendix Table D.4).

D. Extent and timing of GOALS exits

The majority of GOALS group members (79 percent) exited GOALS within 12 months of random assignment; 16 percent left in their second year, and the remaining 6 percent left in their third year (Exhibit V.6). Most individuals left in the first and second quarters after random assignment (24 and 25 percent, respectively). Among those who exited within 3 months, 60 percent received a support service. Among those who exited within 12 months, 77 percent received a support service (Appendix Table D.10). Almost all GOALS group members exited after they participated in an employment or training-related activity (94 percent); a substantial percentage (40 percent) of those who exited later re-entered GOALS again (Appendix Table D.10).

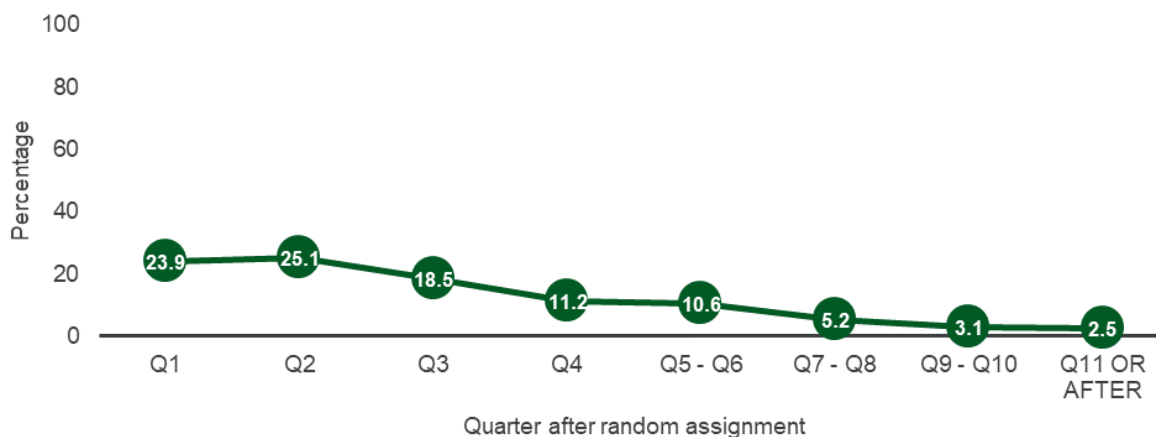
Most individuals exited GOALS within their first year after random assignment; just over 5 percent exited in the third year.

There were few differences in the characteristics of those who left GOALS early (within Quarter 1) and those who left later (after Quarter 1). Those who exited earlier were more likely to be 18 to 24 years old

³⁴ Details about the types and amounts of support services and the length of time support services were received were not captured in the DCF MIS systems. However, through implementation research, we learned that individuals could receive transportation assistance, in the form of bus passes (\$25-\$55/month), gas cards (\$35/month) and car repairs (up to \$300), interview clothing (up to \$75), work clothing or equipment (up to \$75), license or testing fees, and other assistance on the discretion of the GO team lead.

(7 percentage point difference) and to have a degree (3 percentage point difference; Appendix Table D.11).

Exhibit V.6. Percentage of GOALS group members who exited within each quarter



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,088 GOALS group members.

The most common reason for exit was that GOALS group members left before completing services (43 percent; Exhibit V.7). About one in four GOALS group members left for employment and 17 percent became ineligible. We found similar patterns of exit associated with loss of SNAP benefits using SNAP administrative data; 22 percent of EPIC group members exited SNAP in the month before, the month of, or the month after exit from EPIC; Appendix Table D.10).

Nearly a quarter of GOALS group members (24 percent) reported leaving because they found employment. We found slightly lower employment patterns around the time of exit from GOALS using UI wage data. About 46 percent of GOALS group members were already employed at the time of exit (at least three months before exit) and 20 percent started employment around the time of exit (between two months before to two months after the exit date). Thirty-four percent of GOALS group members did not become employed around the time of exit (Appendix Table D.10). The group of GOALS group members who exited the program because they found employment may not include the 46 percent who were employed while in GOALS and decided to leave the program because of changes in hours, wages, or satisfaction with their current job.

Exhibit V.7. Percentage of GOALS group members who exited, by reason

Exits	GOALS group
Left before completing services	43.2
Exited due to employment	24.2
Became ineligible	17.2
Exited due to GOALS ending	6.9
Other ^a	8.5
Sample size	2,088

Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

^aRepresents that no exit reason was coded.

VI. Differences in service receipt for the GOALS and control groups

In this chapter, we describe how GOALS and control group members differed in their receipt of services based on participation in GOALS, existing SNAP E&T, or other services and programs available in communities. Understanding differences in services receipt is important for interpreting findings about the impacts of GOALS on employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance (discussed in Chapter VII). Impacts on these outcomes are unlikely to occur without a meaningful difference in the services received by the GOALS and control groups.

In presenting findings, we begin with a description of differences between the research groups in participation in job search training or assistance activities and education or training activities. We also examine differences in participation in specific components of education or training activities, including general job skills training, occupational skills training, education, and work-based learning activities.³⁵ We then examine differences between the two groups in rates of completion, the amount of time spent in different activities, and receipt of case management and support services. (We discuss how these differences varied across a select number of subgroups in Appendix E.) Unless noted otherwise, participation in activities and receipt of services are measured over the 36-month period after random assignment.

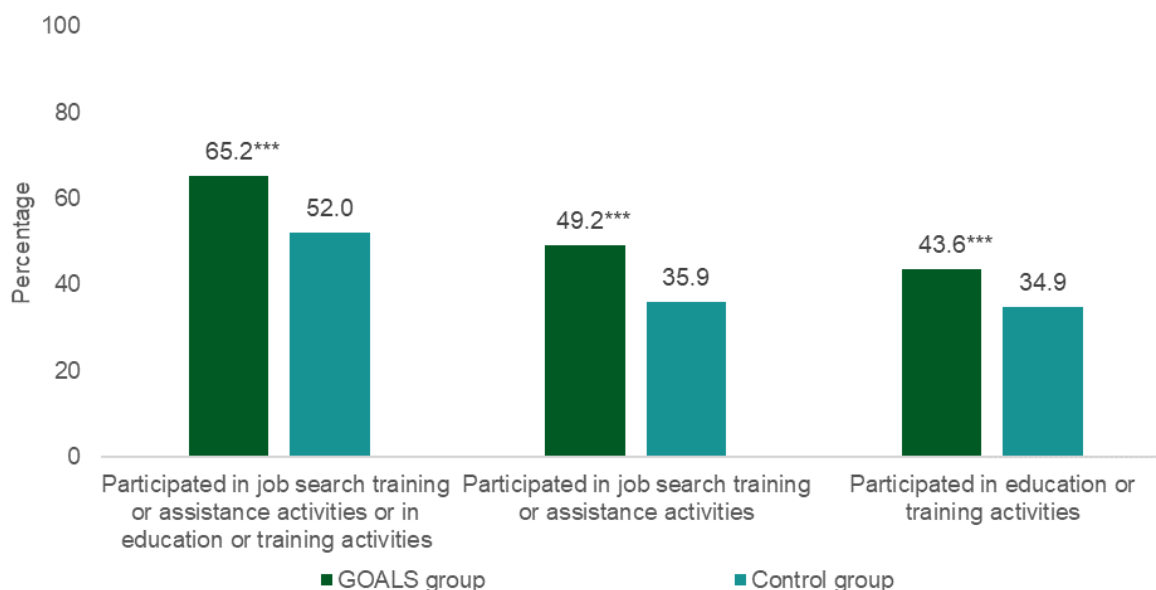
A. Differences between research groups in participation in activities

Individuals in the GOALS group participated in activities at higher rates than individuals in the control group. Sixty-five percent of the GOALS group participated in a job search training or assistance activity or education or training activity compared to 52 percent of the control group (Exhibit VI.1). Relative to individuals in the control group, individuals in the GOALS group were more likely to participate in job search training or assistance activities (13 percentage point difference) and education or training activities (9 percentage point difference).

Relative to the control group, the GOALS group was more likely to participate in job search training activities or in education or training activities during the three years following random assignment.

³⁵ The survey collected information on education or training activities or programs. For simplicity, we refer to them as “activities” in this chapter.

Exhibit VI.1. Participation in any GOALS, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered services



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

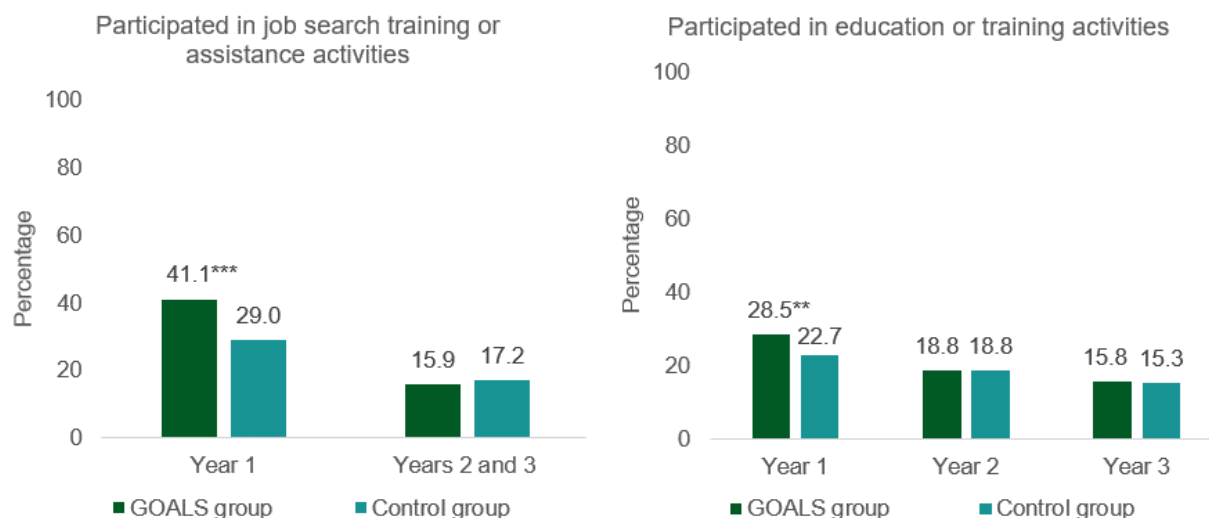
Note: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

There were differences in service receipt between the GOALS group and the control group only in the first year after random assignment (Exhibit VI.2). For example, in Year 1, there was a 6 percentage point difference between the GOALS group and control group in the percentage of individuals who participated in education or training activities. In addition, there was no difference in service receipt between the GOALS group and the control group after the pilot ended, indicating that GOALS group members were just as likely as control group members to receive services in the community. The difference between the GOALS and control groups in the percentage of individuals who participated in an education or training activity was 9 percentage points before the pilot ended and a statistically insignificant and negative 1 percentage point after it ended (Appendix Table E.2a). The differences between the two groups in rates of participation were larger for individuals randomly assigned later in the enrollment period (15 percentage points), relative to those assigned earlier (statistically insignificant 2 percentage points; Appendix Table E.10).

Differences between the GOALS and control groups in rates of participation occurred only during the first year after random assignment.

Exhibit IV.2. Time trends in participation in GOALS, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered services



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

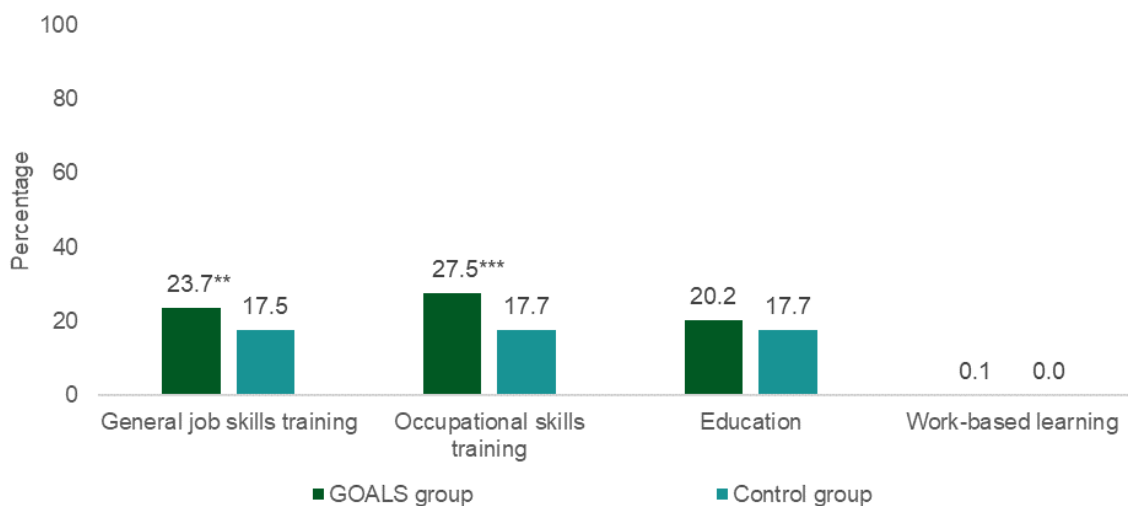
Note: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members. The 12- and 36-month surveys collected the start and end dates for participation in education or training programs, but not for participation in job search training or assistance activities. As a result, annual estimates of participation in job search training and assistance activities cannot be estimated separately for Years 2 and 3 after random assignment.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

GOALS group members were more likely than control group members to start specific components of education or training activities (Exhibit VI.3). The largest differences between the two groups were for occupational skills training (10 percentage point difference) and general jobs skills training (6 percentage point difference). There were no differences in rates of participation in education and work-based learning.

The GOALS group had higher rates of participation than the control group in occupational skills training and general job skills training, but not in education or work-based learning.

Exhibit VI.3 Participation in specific GOALS, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered services



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

B Differences between research groups in activity completion

In addition to being more likely than the control group to start education and training activities, the GOALS group was also more likely to complete them (Exhibit VI.4). Overall, GOALS group members were 9 percentage points more likely than control group members to complete any type of education or training activity.

Differences between the two groups in rates of completion were largest in the first year after random assignment (7 percentage point difference) and were small in the second and third years (1 and 2 percentage point differences, respectively; Exhibit VI.4). Completion rates and differences between the GOALS and control group were larger later in the enrollment period than earlier. Some individuals—7 percent of GOALS group members and 10 percent of control group members—reported they were still engaged in an activity at the time of the 36-month follow-up survey. Individuals engaged in an activity at the time of the 36-month survey were most commonly still in education activities, as reported by 4 percent of GOALS group members and 7 percent of control group members.

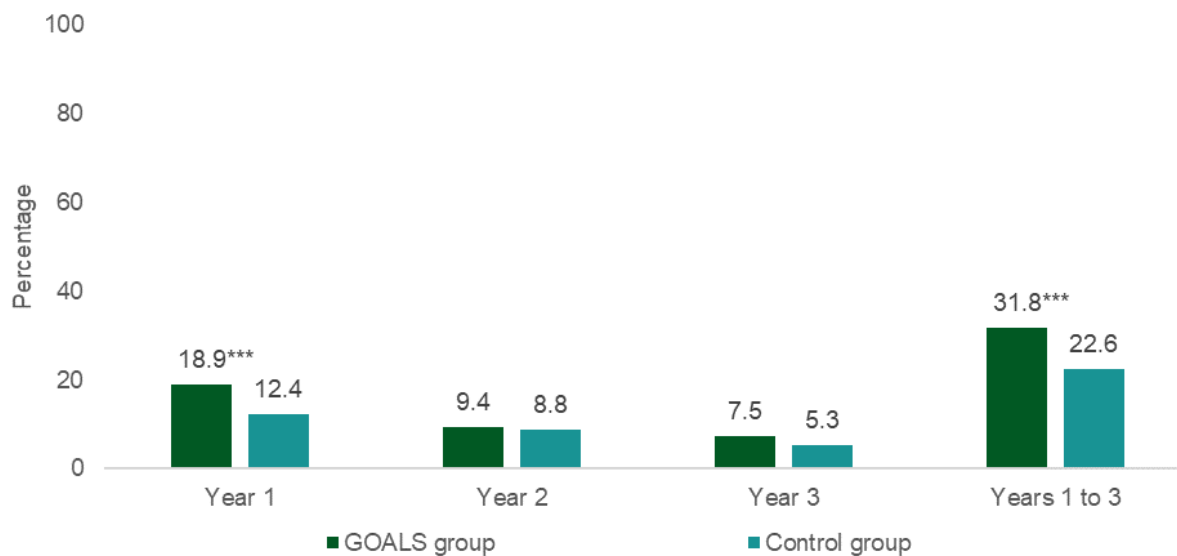
Individuals in the GOALS group also were more likely than those in the control group to complete each type of activity, such as general job skills training (6 percentage point difference), occupational skills training (7 percentage point difference), and education (4 percentage point difference; Appendix Table E.3). There was a negligible difference between the two groups in the rates of completion for work-based learning activities, in part reflecting the small percentages (less than 1 percent) of individuals who started this activity.

Individuals in the GOALS group spent, on average, about the same number of months in activities as individuals in the control group (about four months; Appendix Table E.3). However, GOALS group members spent more total time in activities, because they spent more hours per week in activities than control group members (8 hours versus 4 hours). In each of the three years following random assignment,

VI. Differences in service receipt for the GOALS and control groups

the GOALS group spent a similar number of months in activities but more hours per week, relative to the control group (Appendix Table E.4).

Exhibit VI.4. Percentage of GOALS group members who completed education or training activities, by year after random assignment



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

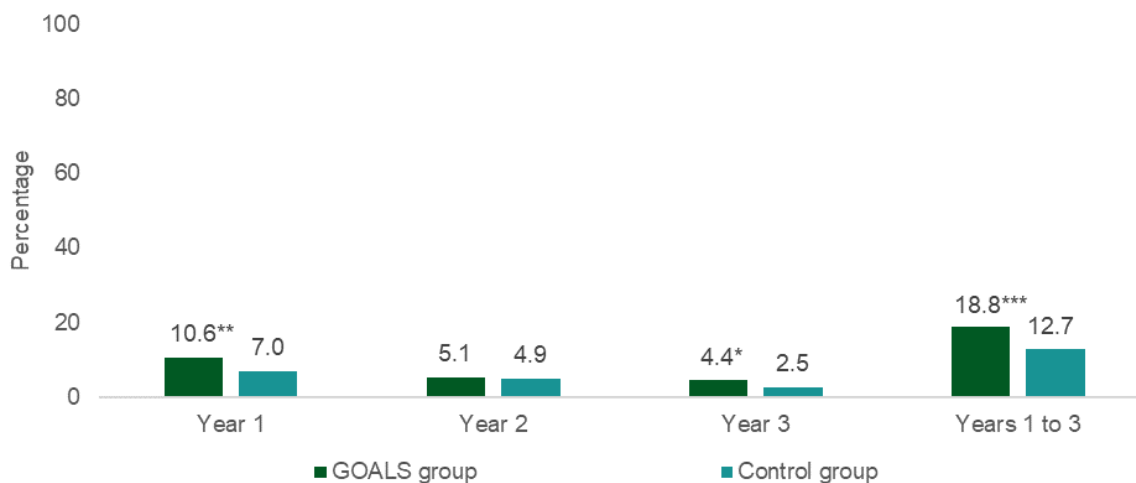
***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Individuals in the GOALS group were also more likely than those in the control group to receive an occupational certificate or license (6 percentage point difference; Exhibit VI.5). There was a significant difference in the percentage of individuals who received one in Years 1 and 3 (p -value = 0.066) following random assignment, but not in Year 2.

The difference between the two groups in the rate of completion was 15 percentage points for individuals randomly assigned later in the enrollment period, compared with no effect for those randomly assigned earlier in the period. The difference between research groups in receipt of an occupational certificate or license was not statistically different for individuals randomly assigned earlier versus later in the enrollment period (Appendix Table E.10).

GOALS group members were more likely than control group members to complete activities and earn an occupational certificate or license.

Exhibit VI.5. Percentage of GOALS group members who received an occupational certificate or license, overall and by year



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

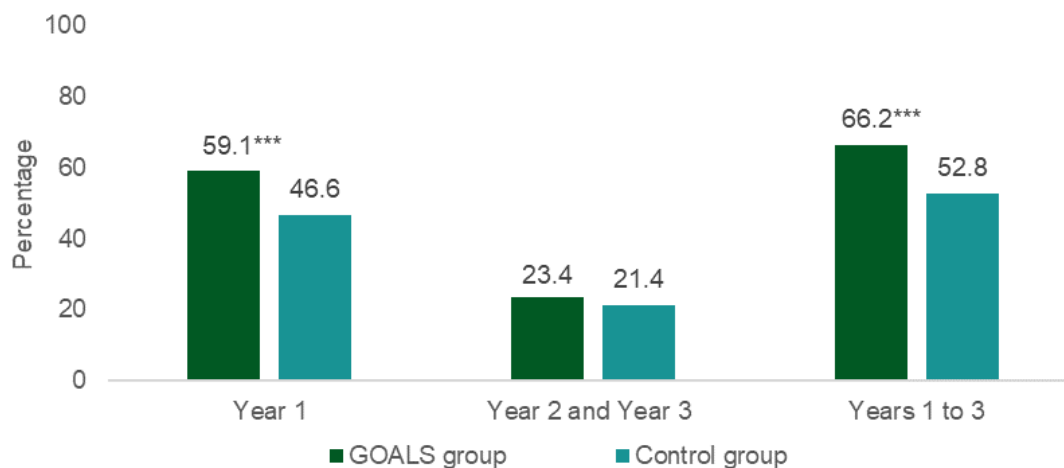
***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

C. Differences between research groups in receipt of case management and support services

GOALS group members were more likely than control group members to receive case management services, including career counseling and one-on-one assistance from employment professionals or case managers (13 percentage point difference; Exhibit VI.6). The difference between the two groups was largest and statistically significant in the first year following random assignment (12 percentage point difference). The difference in receipt of case management was similar in size for the GOALS group, relative to the control group, for individuals who were randomly assigned earlier versus later in the enrollment period (Appendix Table E.10).

GOALS group members were more likely than control group members to receive case management and support services.

Exhibit VI.6. Receipt of case management through GOALS existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered programs, overall and by year



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members. The 12-month survey requested information about receipt of case management between the date of random assignment and the date of the 12-month interview. The 36-month survey requested information about receipt of case management between the dates of the 12- and 36-month interviews. As a result, it is not possible to estimate receipt of assistance separately in Years 2 and 3.

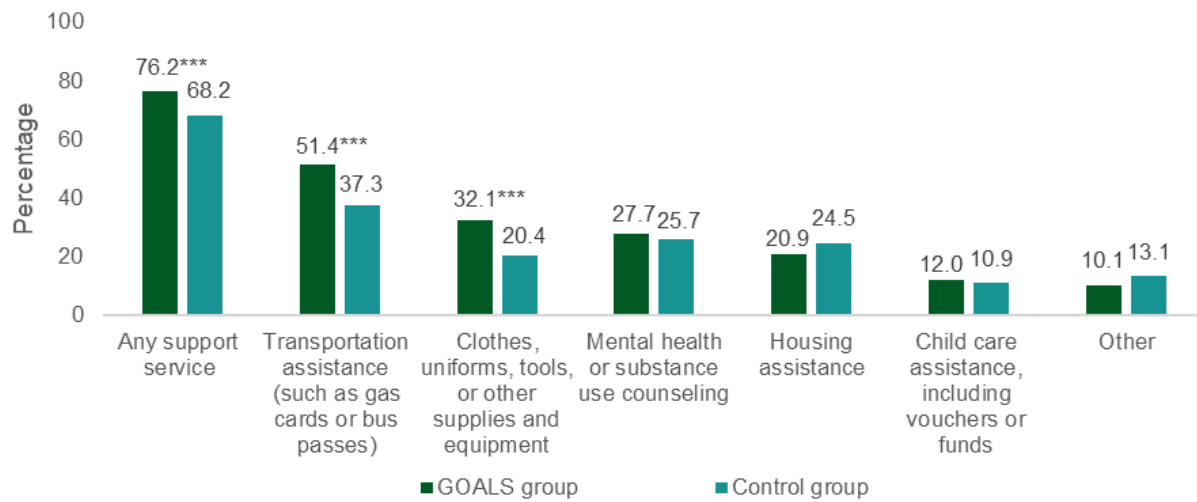
***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

On average, GOALS group members had about three additional contacts with an employment professional or case manager relative to control group members 9.3 versus 6.5 contacts; Appendix Table E.6). There were no differences in mode of contact (in person versus by phone) between the research groups (Appendix Table E.7).

GOALS group members also were more likely than control group members to receive support services. About 76 percent of individuals in the GOALS group received a support service compared to 68 percent in the control group (Exhibit VI.7). The largest differences between the two groups were for the receipt of transportation assistance (51 versus 37 percent) and receipt of clothes, uniforms, tools, or other supplies and equipment (32 versus 20 percent). There were no statistically significant differences between the GOALS group and the control group in receipt of childcare assistance housing assistance, mental health or substance use counseling, and other support services.

Individuals in the GOALS group were more likely than those in the control group to receive support services in the first year following random assignment but not in the second or third year. There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups for individuals randomly assigned earlier versus later in the enrollment period.

Exhibit VI.7. Receipt of support services through GOALS, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered programs, overall and by type



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members. "Other" included assistance with payment of utilities such as electricity, phone, heat, or gas; food assistance; personal care items such as glasses; and assistance with medical care.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

VII. Impacts on employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and well-being

In this chapter, we examine whether the generally higher rates of engagement and service receipt among individuals in GOALS, as described in Chapter VI, translated into impacts on employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and key measures of well-being, including food security, health, well-being, and housing. We also examine whether impacts differed according to whether individuals started or completed GOALS activities. In Appendix F, we present information about how impacts on employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and food security varied across subgroups.

As described in Chapter II, we focus on impacts in the two-year period consisting of Years 2 and 3 after random assignment. We aim to balance any concerns about how the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected outcomes in Year 3 with measuring impacts on outcomes beyond Year 1 following random assignment after many individuals had time to participate in GOALS activities.

A. Impacts of GOALS on labor market outcomes

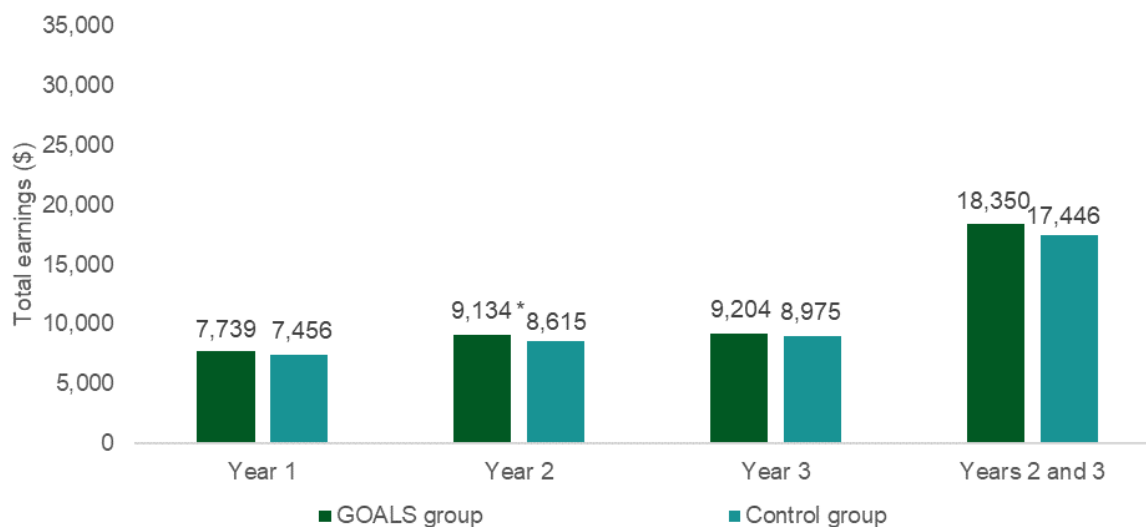
This section presents impacts on key labor market outcomes. Outcomes from both UI wage records and survey data were measured by year and quarter after random assignment. Some outcomes based on the survey data were measured at the time of the survey, approximately 36 months after random assignment.³⁶

1. Impacts on earnings, employment, and hours worked

Earnings. Based on both UI and survey data, GOALS had few impacts on earnings, with the exception of a positive effect in Year 2 according to UI data (p -value = 0.097). No impacts were observed for Years 1 through 3 for the survey data and in Years 2 and 3 combined, for either data source (Exhibits VII.1 and VII.2). Based on each data source, both research groups experienced increases in average earnings between Years 1 and 2, but little change between Years 2 and 3.

³⁶ For survey-based outcomes, we defined the quarter after random assignment as the first three months after the month of random assignment. The months included in this quarter sometimes differed from the calendar quarter, which we used to define the first quarter after random assignment for outcomes based on UI wage records.

Exhibit VII.1. Total earnings based on UI wage records, by year

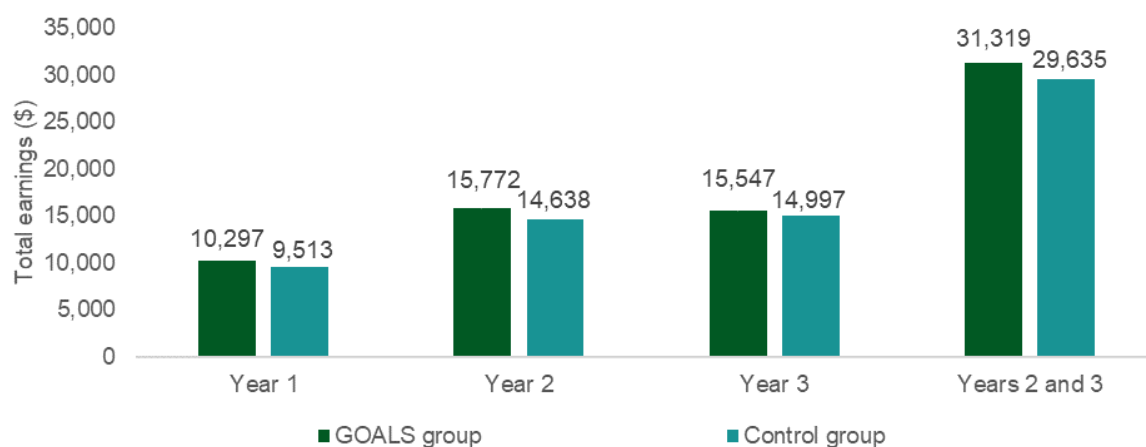


Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,987 GOALS group members and 1,974 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Exhibit VII.2. Total earnings based on survey data, by year



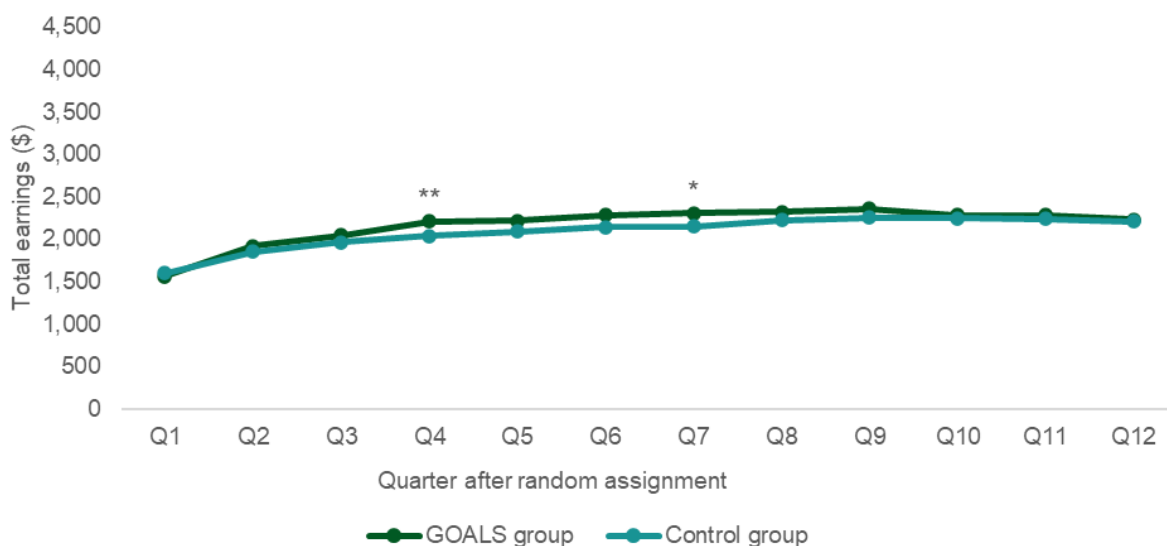
Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Based on both UI data and survey data, there were few statistically significant differences between the research groups in earnings in any quarter (Exhibits VII.3 and VII.4), with the exception of two quarters from each source (Quarters 4 and 7 based on UI wage records, p -value = 0.081 in Quarter 7; Quarters 4 and 5 based on survey data, p -value = 0.095 in Quarter 4) in which the GOALS group had higher earnings than the control group. These findings of few statistically significant impacts were similar for individuals who were randomly assigned earlier versus later in the enrollment period (Appendix Table F.19).

Exhibit VII.3. Total earnings based on UI wage records, by quarter

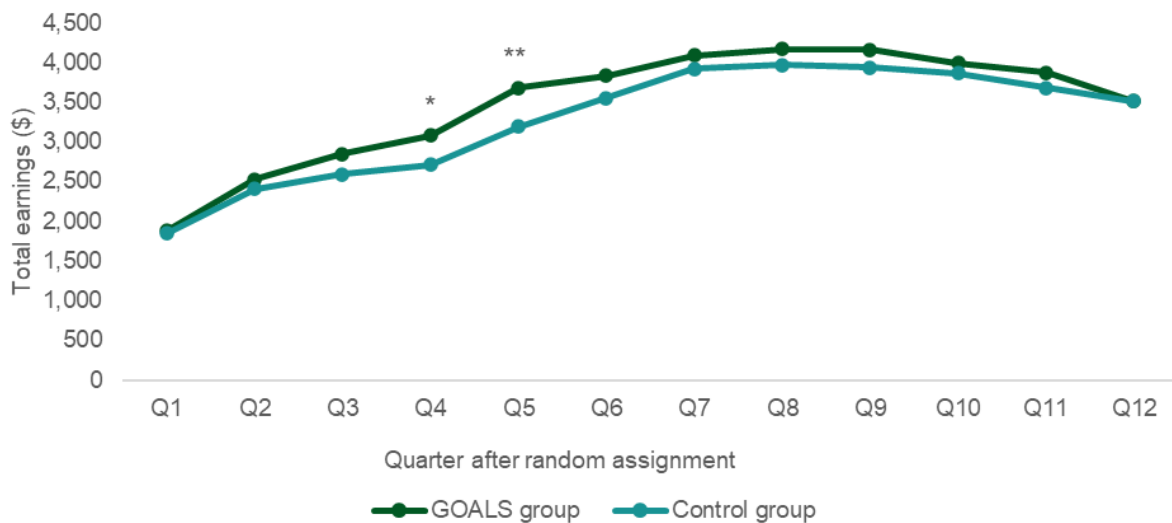


Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,987 GOALS group members and 1,974 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Exhibit VII.4. Total earnings based on survey data, by quarter



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

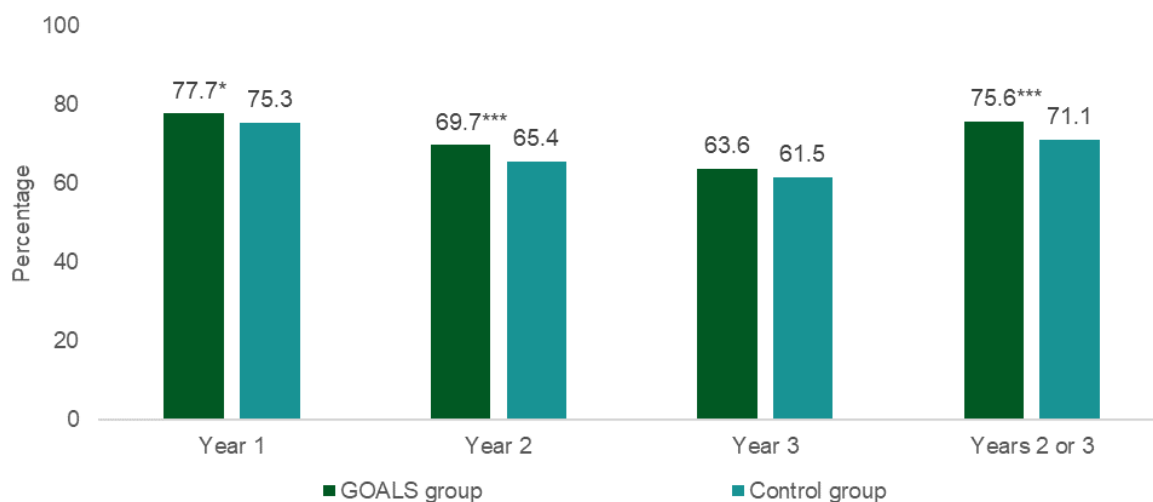
Note: Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Employment. Based on the UI data, GOALS led to a 5 percentage point increase in employment in the two-year period of Years 2 and 3 (76 for the GOALS group versus 71 percent for the control group; Exhibit VII.5). The largest impacts were in Years 1 and 2 (2 percentage points and 4 percentage points, respectively; p -value = 0.056 in Year 1). The difference between research groups in Year 3 (2 percentage

points) was not statistically significant. Quarterly impacts were observed for several quarters between Quarters 4 through 8, (Appendix Table F.2).

Exhibit VII.5. Employment rates based on UI wage records, by year



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,987 GOALS group members and 1,974 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

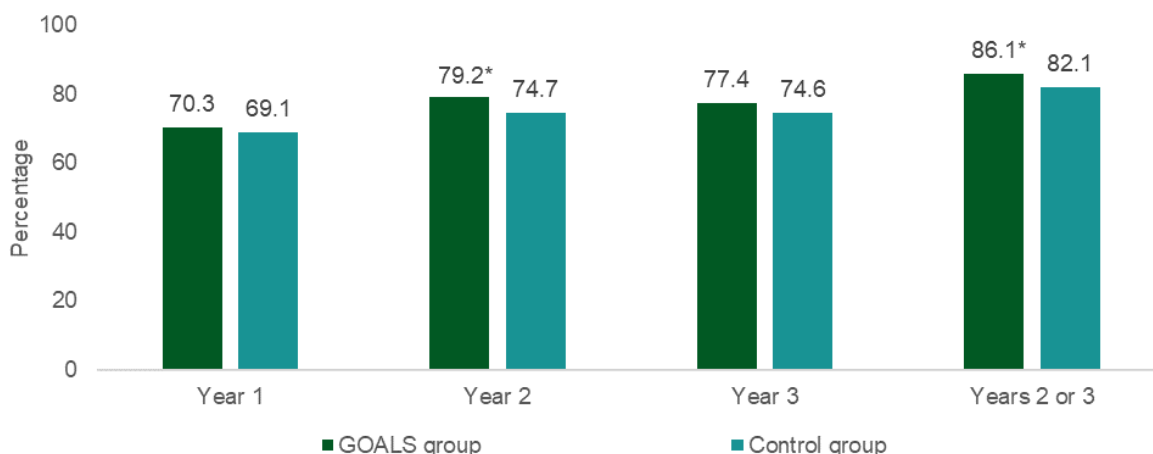
There was a comparable statistically significant difference between research groups in employment rates across the two-year period from Year 2 to 3 based on the survey data (86 versus 82 percent; p -value = 0.078; Exhibit VII.6). The largest impact was in Year 2 after random assignment (79 versus 75 percent; p -value = 0.092). In contrast to findings based on UI data, differences in employment rates were not observed in individual quarters over the period (Appendix Table F.4). Impacts on employment were similar for groups of individuals who were randomly assigned earlier and later in the enrollment period (Appendix Table F.19).

GOALS led to an increase in employment in the Year 2 to 3 combined period, based on UI data and survey data.

Employment rates provide information about the percentage of individuals who were employed during a given time period but do not describe the extent or duration of employment. To assess these employment characteristics, we examined the average number of quarters (UI data) and months (survey data) individuals were employed each year. Findings were generally similar to those for rates of employment. UI data showed that, relative to the control group, the GOALS group was employed for more quarters per year in Years 1 and 2 but not in Year 3 (Appendix Table F.2). Survey data, however, showed no differences between the two groups in months employed per year (Appendix Table F.4).

Hours worked. Among all individuals randomly assigned, those in the GOALS group worked roughly the same number of hours per week as those in the control group, with the exception of one statistically significant increase in Quarter 5 (Appendix Table F.5). GOALS group members worked an average of 17 hours per week in Year 1 and increased to 23 hours per week in Year 3. Similarly, control group members worked an average of 17 hours per week in Year 1 and increased to 22 hours per week in Year 3.

Exhibit VII.6. Employment rates based on survey data, by year



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

2. Impacts on characteristics of current jobs

Exhibit VII.7 presents characteristics of jobs individuals held at the time of the 36-month survey.³⁷ This information was available only for individuals employed at the time of the 36-month survey (54 percent of both groups). For this reason, the measures in Exhibit VII.7 are non-experimental, and the results do not represent the causal effects of GOALS on job characteristics.

Among individuals who were employed at the time of the 36-month survey, GOALS group members and control group members held jobs with somewhat different characteristics, particularly in terms of hours per week and benefits. In both research groups, about two-thirds of individuals were employed full time, and a similar fraction earned less than \$500 per week (Exhibit VII.7). Employed GOALS group members worked on average about 2 hours more per week than control group members, and there was no difference between the two groups in weekly earnings. The majority of employed individuals in both research groups received at least one employer-offered benefit, and GOALS group members were more likely to receive selected benefits. Employed GOALS group members were more likely than employed control group members to receive health insurance (68 versus 60 percent), paid vacation (65 versus 55 percent), and pension or retirement benefits (56 versus 48 percent). Most employed individuals in both research groups were regular status employees working full time or part time, although employed GOALS group members were less likely than control group members to work in a temporary or on-call job. Common occupations included office and administrative support, food preparation and serving, and health care support. With the exception of the GOALS group being less likely than the control group to be employed in educational instruction and library, occupations were similar across research groups.

³⁷ The survey captured information about the jobs at which individuals were working at the time the survey was conducted (their “current job”). If individuals were working two or more jobs, they were asked to report on the one at which they worked the most hours.

Exhibit VII.7. Characteristics of current jobs among individuals employed at the time of the 36-month survey

Characteristic (%)	GOALS group	Control group	Difference
Employed at the time of the 36-month survey interview	53.8	53.7	0.1
Hours worked per week			
Less than 20	11.9	16.4	-4.5
21 to 34	17.6	19.9	-2.3
35 or more (employed full time)	69.5	63.7	5.8
Average	36.9	35.0	2.0*
Weekly earnings			
\$1 to \$499	62.0	66.5	-4.4
\$500 to \$999	32.3	29.3	3.1
\$1,000 to \$1,499	3.8	3.4	0.4
\$1,500 to \$2,000	1.5	0.9	0.7
\$2,000 and above	0.3	0.0	0.3
Benefits available at job			
Any benefit	79.0	73.9	5.1
Health insurance or HMO/PPO plan	67.6	60.1	7.5*
Dental insurance	56.0	56.0	-0.1
Paid vacation	64.0	54.7	9.3**
Paid holidays	64.4	59.8	4.7
Paid sick leave	49.3	43.1	6.2
Any paid time off	71.2	65.0	6.2
Pension or retirement benefits	56.2	48.3	7.9*
Tuition assistance or reimbursement	27.5	25.6	2.0
Type of employment			
Regular full or part time	88.9	84.4	4.5
Temporary or on call	2.5	8.8	-6.3***
Self-employed or independent contractor or consultant	6.6	5.1	1.5
Day laborer	2.0	1.7	0.3
Occupation			
Office and administrative support	11.8	9.8	2.0
Food preparation and serving	7.7	12.0	-4.3
Healthcare support	8.3	11.6	-3.2
Sales	6.6	7.8	-1.2
Transportation and material moving	9.2	6.0	3.3
Personal care and service	7.8	6.2	1.6
Production	7.7	5.4	2.3
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.8	6.3	-2.5
Management	6.7	5.2	1.5
Educational instruction and library	0.9	3.5	-2.6**
Sample size	430	373	

Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 36-month survey, weighted data.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

HMO = health maintenance organization; PPO = preferred provider organization.

3. Impacts on changes in earnings and employment over time

The findings presented above describe employment, earnings, and hours worked in each quarter and year since random assignment. Although these findings allow us to assess changes in the average value of the outcomes over time across all GOALS or control group members, they obscure changes over time for each individual. In this section, we examine these types of changes or “dynamics” in employment, earnings, hours worked, and job characteristics.

As presented in Exhibit VII.5, based on UI data, employment rates were higher for the GOALS group than the control group in Years 1 and 2 but similar in Year 3. These findings are consistent with positive effects on being “sometimes employed” during the 12 follow-up quarters (Appendix Table F.20). There were no differences between the groups in the number of unemployment spells or other measures of dynamics. There were also no differences in these outcomes for individuals who were employed at the time of random assignment or for those who were not employed.

As presented in Exhibit VII.6, employment rates were higher for the GOALS group than the control group in Years 2 and 3 combined based on the survey data. However, based on those data, the percentage of individuals who experienced a job loss during the three-year period following random assignment was higher for the GOALS group than the control group (76 versus 71 percent; Appendix Table F.22).³⁸ On average, both research groups experienced similar numbers of unemployment spells, with about 42 percent experiencing one spell during this period and 45 percent experiencing two or more spells. Consistent with the findings on experiencing a job loss, the GOALS group was less likely to be employed at the 36-month survey, among those employed at the 12-month point (e.g., among those employed at the 12-month survey, 69 percent of the GOALS group were employed, compared with 75 percent of the control group).

At the time of both the 12- and 36-month surveys, most employed individuals in both research groups worked a single job (Appendix Table F.23). About 52 percent of the GOALS group had one job at the time of the 12-month survey; 5 percent had two jobs. At the time of the 36-month survey, these percentages were 49 and 5 percent, respectively. The GOALS group was more likely than the control group to have one job at the 12-month survey, reflecting an increase in the percentage having any job. The distribution of jobs held was similar for both groups at the time of the 36-month survey.

Exhibit VII.7 shows that GOALS generally had impacts on job characteristics related to hours worked, benefits and job type around the time of the 36-month survey. There were also some changes in the distributions of these characteristics from the 12-month to the 36-month survey (Appendix Table F.24). Among both groups, individuals earned less at the 36-month point and were less likely to have any benefits. The GOALS group was more likely than the control group to receive any benefits at the 12-month interview but not at the 36-month interview.

The most common occupations at the time of the 12-month survey generally were similar to the most common ones at the time of the 36-month survey.

³⁸ Because these estimates are based only on individuals who were employed at some point in the period and thus at risk of experiencing a job loss, they are not experimental impacts.

4. Conclusions

GOALS did not lead to an increase in average earnings in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) based on UI or survey data.³⁹ There were statistically significant differences in earnings in two of the 12 quarters. GOALS led to increased employment in the two-year period based on UI data and survey data. There were impacts on employment in Years 1 and 2 but not Year 3, based on UI data. There were impacts on employment in Year 2, based on survey data, but not in Year 1 or 3. Based on UI data, impacts were present toward the end of the first year and for most of the second year but grew smaller in Year 3. There were no effects on hours worked per week in any year.

B. Impacts of GOALS on receipt of public assistance

This section presents findings on the impact of GOALS on the receipt of public assistance, as measured by SNAP administrative records and survey data. Most of the outcomes measuring receipt of SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid are based on the administrative data and were measured for each year and quarter after random assignment. Receipt of other forms of public assistance are based on survey data and capture receipt during Year 1 and during Years 2 and 3 combined after random assignment.

1. Impacts on SNAP participation

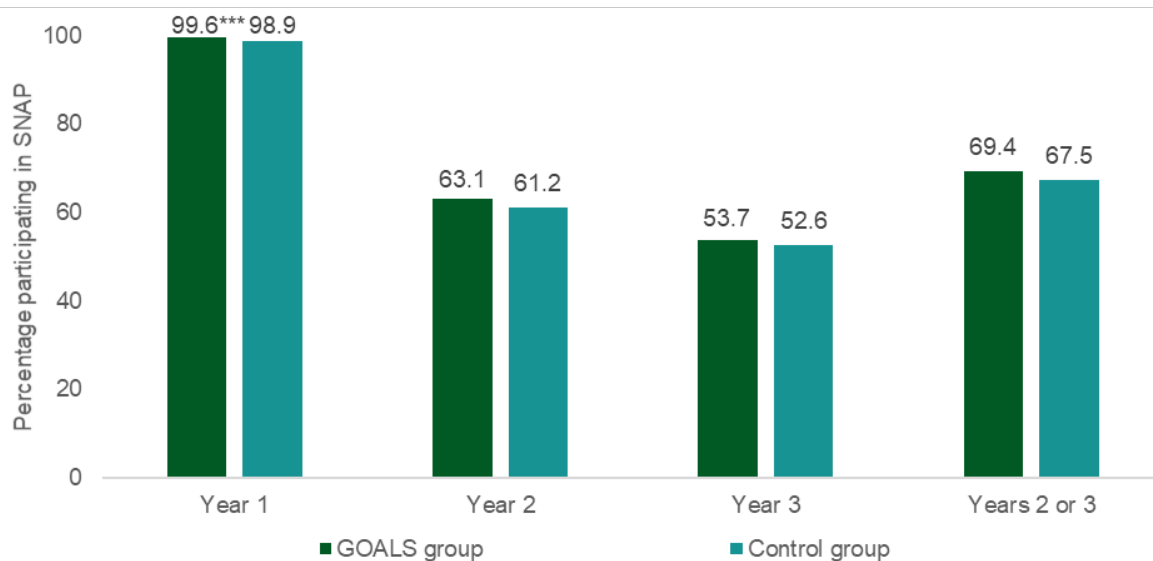
GOALS did not lead to a statistically significant change in the likelihood of participating in SNAP in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) after random assignment. About 69 percent of GOALS group members and 68 percent of control group members participated in SNAP during this period (Exhibit VII.8). The lack of impacts of GOALS on SNAP participation reflects similar decreases each year in the rate of SNAP participation for the GOALS and control groups. For example, despite a small significant difference in Year 1, SNAP participation rates for both groups decreased from just less than 100 percent in Year 1 to 53 percent in Year 3. There were significant differences across groups in SNAP participation rates in Quarters 1 and 2, but nearly the same percentage of individuals in each group participated in SNAP in other quarters (Appendix Table F.8). There were no significant impacts on SNAP participation for individuals who were randomly assigned earlier or later in the enrollment period (Appendix Table F.19).

GOALS generally did not affect SNAP participation.

The impacts of GOALS on the average SNAP benefits received, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the maximum benefit amount, were similar to those on SNAP participation rates. Average SNAP benefit amounts for the GOALS group were \$96 (p -value = 0.03) greater than those for the control group in Year 1, but the differences were smaller and not statistically significant in Years 2 and 3 (Exhibit VII.9). Average SNAP benefit amounts were \$28 to \$38 higher for the GOALS group than the control group in the first few quarters but these differences were smaller and not statistically significant in the remaining quarters (Appendix Table F.9).

³⁹ The analyses for employment and earnings presented above measured outcomes over a three-year period and were based on individuals randomly assigned through September 2017 based on UI data and December 2017 based on survey data. The findings based on UI data for individuals randomly assigned through September 2017 were similar to those based on UI data for all individuals who were randomly assigned.

Exhibit VII.8. SNAP participation rates based on SNAP administrative data, overall and by year



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation SNAP administrative data, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,987 GOALS group members and 1,974 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Looking at SNAP benefit amounts received as a percentage of the maximum possible benefit (based on SNAP unit size) provides a better comparison across SNAP units of different sizes than the nominal benefit amounts. The findings for benefits received as a percentage of the maximum possible benefit were the same as for nominal benefits. GOALS group members received, on average, about 2 percent more of the maximum possible benefit compared to the control group in Year 1 (58 versus 56 percent; p -value = 0.01), but differences between the GOALS and control groups were smaller and not statistically significant in Years 2 and 3 (Exhibit VII.9). For both research groups, most of the decrease in the percentage of the maximum possible benefit received over time can be attributed to individuals exiting SNAP. For example, among the GOALS group, the percentage of the maximum benefit amount received decreased by about 27 percentage points between Years 1 and 3. During this same period, the percentage of GOALS group members participating in SNAP decreased by about 46 percentage points (Appendix Table F.8).

On average, the GOALS and control groups participated in SNAP for a similar number of months in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3). Each group participated in SNAP for 10 of the 24 months, on average, during this period (Appendix Table F.25), and about 18 to 19 months during the 36-month period (Exhibit VII.10). The average length of participation differed slightly in Year 1 but was similar across research groups in Years 2 and 3. GOALS group members had similar likelihoods of exiting SNAP across the three years relative to control group members—about 85 percent of each group exited SNAP at some point during the three years after random assignment. Individuals who exited SNAP included those who left and did not re-enter SNAP in the period, as well as those who left and re-entered before the end of the period. Thus, even though 15 percent of the GOALS group participated in SNAP for the full three years, SNAP participation in Quarter 12 was higher (43 percent), reflecting that individuals left and re-entered SNAP during the three-year period (Appendix Table F.8). The percentage of individuals who exited and then re-entered SNAP was similar for the GOALS and control groups (54 versus 51 percent,

VII. Impacts on employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and well-being

respectively), with about 25 percent of each group re-entering within 4 months of exit (Appendix Table F.25). These patterns of exiting and re-entering SNAP resulted in both research groups having a similar number of SNAP spells (a single spell consists of remaining on SNAP for the full three-year period or exiting and not re-entering). About 55 percent of the GOALS group had a single SNAP spell, 32 percent had two spells, and 13 percent had three or more spells. For the control group, these percentages were 58, 29, and 13 percent.

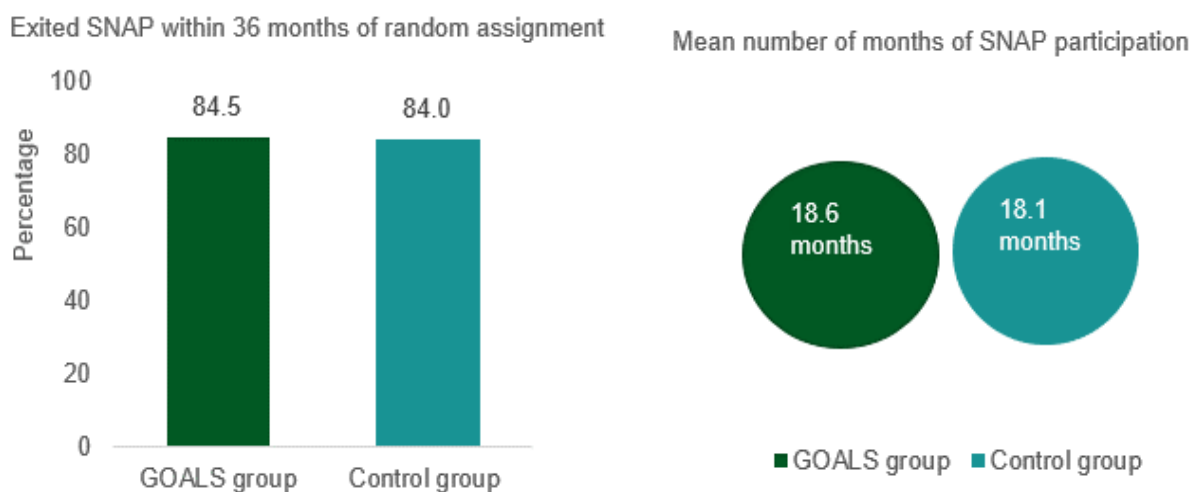
Exhibit VII.9. Impacts on average monthly SNAP benefit amount based on SNAP administrative data, overall and by year

Average SNAP benefits	GOALS group	Control group	Difference
Average SNAP benefits received (\$)			
Year 1	2,657	2,561	96**
Year 2	1,695	1,667	28
Year 3	1,543	1,471	71
Years 2 and 3	3,237	3,138	99
Average monthly SNAP benefits received as a percentage of maximum benefit amount ^a			
Year 1	58.0	55.8	2.2**
Year 2	33.8	33.9	-0.1
Year 3	30.5	29.8	0.7
Years 2 and 3	32.3	32.0	0.3
Sample size	1,987	1,974	

Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation SNAP administrative data, weighted data.

^a Maximum household SNAP benefit amounts normalized by household size.

Exhibit VII.10. SNAP exit rates and mean number of months of SNAP participation based on SNAP administrative data



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation SNAP administrative data, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,987 GOALS group members and 1,974 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

2. Impacts on TANF and other forms of public assistance

Impacts on TANF participation were estimated using SNAP administrative data. A small percentage of each research group participated in TANF in each year (Appendix Table F.10). GOALS had no effect on participation in TANF across the full period, with the exception of small decrease in Quarter 9 (1 percent for the GOALS group compared with 2 percent for the control group). The patterns held for TANF benefit amounts, with no differences between the two groups, with the exception of a reduction of \$5 in Quarter 9 (\$5 for the GOALS group compared with \$10 for the control group; Appendix Table F.10).

GOALS led to an increase in Medicaid participation throughout the three-year period. In Year 2, for example, 39 percent of the GOALS group participated in Medicaid, compared with 36 percent of the control group. Quarterly increases in Medicaid participation remained at 2 to 3 percent throughout each quarter of follow-up (Appendix Table F.10).

Using the survey data, we also estimated impacts of GOALS on receipt of other forms of public assistance, including receipt of general assistance; UI; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Section 8, Housing Choice Vouchers, or Public Housing Assistance; Medicaid; and the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).⁴⁰ There were generally no impacts on the receipt of these forms of public assistance in Year 1, in Years 2 and 3, or during the three-year period (Appendix Table F.11). However, individuals in the GOALS group were about 4 percentage points less likely than those in the control group to receive housing assistance during Year 1. The most commonly received benefit among both research groups was Medicaid (58 percent, for both groups).

3. Conclusions

GOALS generally did not affect SNAP participation. The difference between research groups was small but statistically significant in the first two quarters of follow up, but there were no statistically significant differences in Years 2 and 3. GOALS also led to an increase in SNAP benefit amounts in Year 1—both nominally and as a percentage of the maximum benefit amount—but not in Years 2 and 3. GOALS did not affect TANF participation and had few impacts on the receipt of other public assistance.

C. Impacts of GOALS on food security, health, well-being, and housing status

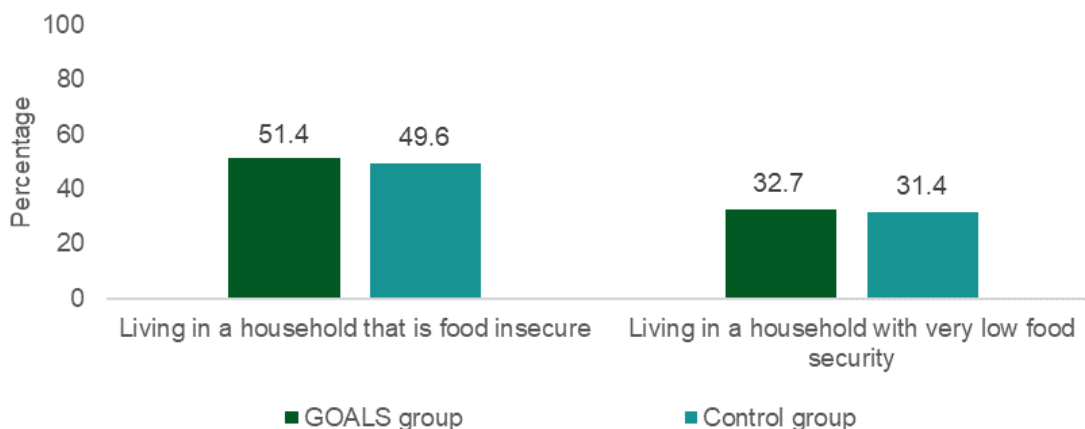
This section presents findings on GOALS's impacts on food security, health, well-being, and housing status, as reported in the survey data. Most of these outcomes reflected individuals' circumstances at the time of the 36-month follow-up survey. An exception was food security status, which was reported based on the 30 days before the survey.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Because the 36-month survey requested information about receipt of public assistance benefits between the 12- and 36-month survey interviews, it was not possible to separately estimate receipt of public assistance in Years 2 and 3.

⁴¹ Food security is having access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Individuals who experience food access limitations due to lack of money or other resources are said to be food insecure. Those who cannot afford enough to eat may experience a particularly severe form of food insecurity where at times one or more household member experiences reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns referred to as very low food security. The outcomes of food insecurity and very low food security are based on responses to 10 questions about difficulty meeting basic food needs due to lack of money to be spent on food. Individuals who affirmed at least 3 out (*continued*)

The GOALS and control groups had similar rates of food insecurity. About 51 percent of GOALS group members were food insecure compared to 50 percent of control group members (Exhibit VII.11). There were also no statistically significant differences in the rates of very low food security (a severe form of food insecurity; 33 versus 31 percent). There were no differences in impacts on food insecurity among individuals who were randomly assigned earlier versus later in the pilot (Appendix Table F.19).

Exhibit VII.11. Impacts on food security, based on 36-month survey data



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 36-month survey, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 613 GOALS group members and 557 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Among individuals who were food insecure at the time of the 12-month survey, those in the GOALS group were just as likely as those in the control group to be food insecure at the time of the 36-month interview (Appendix Table F.27). There also were no distinguishable differences between research groups in the percentage of individuals who had very low food security at both the 12-month and 36-month interviews (56 percent for both research groups). Together, these findings suggest that both research groups experienced similar changes in food security status between the 12- and 36-month interviews.

There were no statistically significant differences between the GOALS group and the control group for other outcome measures related to health, well-being, and housing status (Appendix Table F.12). Thirty percent of each research group screened positively for depression. Both research groups had similar levels of health (23 percent of the GOALS group versus 26 percent of the control group reported having very good or excellent health at the time of the survey) and self-esteem and self-efficacy scores. The majority of each research group owned or rented a home or apartment (77 versus 79 percent), and similar percentages of each group were homeless (2 percent).

D. Impacts of GOALS on employment, earnings, and SNAP participation among individuals who started or completed an employment or training-related activity

The findings presented in Sections A, B, and C do not differentiate between individuals enrolled in the pilot who participated in activities and those who did not. In the evaluation literature, this approach often

of 10 questions were classified as food insecure; those who affirmed at least 6 were classified as having very low food security.

is called an “intention-to-treat” (ITT) analysis. Impact estimates based on an ITT analysis provide information about expected effects for all SNAP participants to whom pilot activities were offered. However, because some individuals did not engage in the pilot or start an activity, ITT findings mask how well individuals who did participate may have fared. In this section, we present results of analyses that differentiate individuals in the GOALS group who did and did not engage in GOALS and participated in activities. This analysis, often referred to as a “treatment-on-the-treated” analysis, provides insights about how greater engagement in pilot activities may have translated into different participation experiences and, ultimately, into different impacts.⁴²

We assessed engagement in activities in three ways:

1. Comparing individuals who started an activity to those who did not
2. Comparing individuals who started and completed a job search or job search training activity to those who started but did not complete an activity
3. Comparing individuals who started and completed an education or training activity to those who started but did not complete one⁴³

Earnings and employment. Based on both the UI and survey data, there were no significant impacts on earnings in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) for individuals who started an activity (Exhibit VII.12). There were positive earnings impacts based on UI data for individuals who did not start an activity, though the difference in earnings impacts between those who did and did not start an activity were not statistically significant.

Based on UI data there were positive impacts on employment rates in the two-year period for individuals who started an activity, but no impacts for those who did not start one (Exhibit VII.12). GOALS led to a 4 percentage point difference between research groups in employment rates (75 versus 71 percent) among individuals who started an activity, and no effect among individuals who did not start an activity. However, this difference in impacts across the two groups was not statistically significant. Based on survey data, there were no impacts on employment in the two-year period among those who started an activity or those who did not start one.

GOALS led to increased employment in Years 2 and 3 for individuals who started an activity but not for those who did not start one, based on UI data. This difference was not statistically significant.

⁴² Because individuals in GOALS chose whether to start an activity and/or complete one based on factors we could not necessarily observe, the findings presented in this section are nonexperimental. The results do not represent the causal effects of GOALS on outcomes.

⁴³ There are many ways to quantify the extent to which those enrolled in the pilot engaged in activities—for example, the number of workshops in which someone participated, the number of hours an individual spent in an occupational skills training program, or the number of basic education courses an individual completed over time. Our approach for measuring engagement in pilot activities balanced the objectives of contrasting groups with well-defined, policy-relevant differences in participation across pilots with limiting the number of groups so that each analysis group had a sufficient number of individuals to yield informative estimates.

Exhibit VII.12. Impacts on total earnings and annual employment rates in Years 2 and 3, based on UI wage records and survey data, by whether individuals started an employment or training-related activity

Outcome	Started an activity			Did not start an activity		
	GOALS group	Control group	Difference	GOALS group	Control group	Difference
Total earnings (\$)						
Based on UI data	18,197	17,741	455	18,902	15,762	3,140*
Based on survey data	31,399	29,782	1,617	32,356	28,776	3,580
Employment rate (%)						
Based on UI data	75.4	71.3	4.1***	76.1	70.2	5.9
Based on survey data	87.0	83.6	3.4	82.7	73.3	9.4

Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data. SNAP employment and training evaluation 36-month survey, weighted data.

Note: Estimates based on UI data are from 1,630 GOALS group members and 1,618 control group members who started an activity; and 357 GOALS group members and 356 control group members who did not start an activity. Estimates based on survey data are from 517 GOALS group members and 479 control group members who started an activity; and 96 GOALS group members and 78 control group members who did not start one.

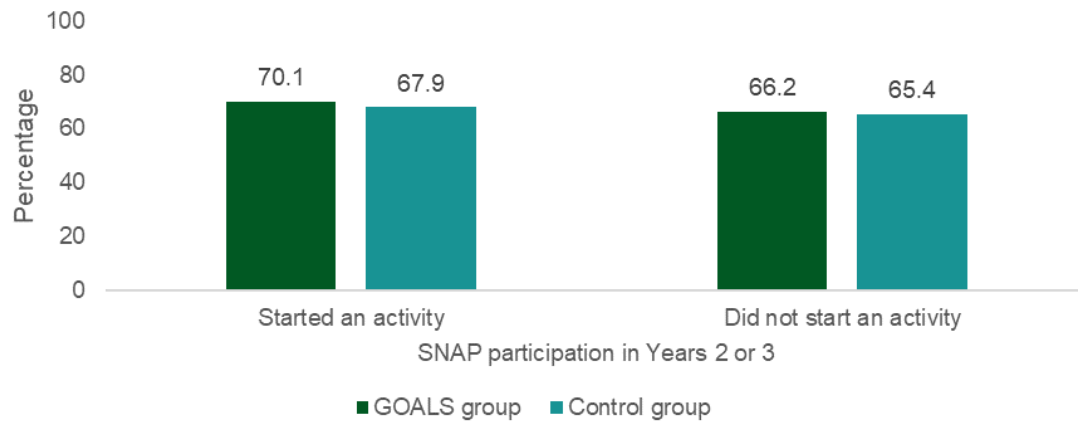
***/**/* Difference between the GOALS group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

^^^/^^/^ Significantly different from individuals who did not start an activity at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Based on UI data, GOALS had a positive impact on employment in Years 2 or 3 for individuals who completed an education or training activity, and no significant impact for those who started but did not complete one. However, there were no statistically significant differences in impacts on earnings or employment between those who completed an education or training activity and those who started but did not complete an activity (Appendix Table F.14). Similarly, the survey data show no difference in impacts on employment or earnings between individuals who completed an activity and those who started but did not complete one (Appendix Table F.16).

SNAP participation. The SNAP participation rate for the GOALS group was higher than the rate for the control group among individuals who started an activity and among those who did not start one, but this difference was not statistically significant in either group (Exhibit VII.13). There were generally few impacts on average monthly SNAP benefits received in either group (Appendix Table F.17). There were positive and statistically significant impacts on SNAP participation rates among individuals who completed an education or training activity, compared with no significant effects for those who completed job search or job search training activities and those who started but did not complete an activity (Appendix Table F.18).

Exhibit VII.13. SNAP participation rates based on SNAP administrative data, by whether an individual started an activity



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation SNAP administrative data, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,630 GOALS group members and 1,618 control group members who started an activity; and 357 GOALS group members and 356 control group members who did not start an activity

***/**/* Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

^^^/^^/^ Significantly different from individuals who did not start an activity at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

VIII. Analysis of the costs and benefits of GOALS group and control group services

In this chapter, we build on the findings from the impact analysis by comparing the benefits that individuals received in dollar terms through changes in earnings and public assistance with the costs of the services provided. This cost-benefit analysis describes the extent to which the benefits exceeded the costs of providing services to the GOALS group when compared with the benefits and costs of providing services to the control group (referred to as the *net benefit*). The net benefit provides context for how well GOALS group outcomes (benefits) offset the costs of administering the services. We calculate the net benefits from the perspectives of the individuals enrolled in GOALS and of government and taxpayers. The benefit to society is the sum of the net benefits from the other two perspectives.

We first describe the costs of GOALS, including those for planning, recruiting, and delivering services. We then present the estimated costs of all services provided to GOALS group members through GOALS, existing SNAP E&T, and the community and the costs of all services provided to control group members through existing SNAP E&T and the community. We estimate the costs of all services because any benefits individuals experienced through increases in employment and earnings are the result of all of the services they received during the follow-up period, not just those offered through GOALS. We then present the findings from the cost-benefit analysis and estimate the net benefit of services provided to the GOALS group, compared with services provided to the control group. We conducted sensitivity analyses to test the robustness of our findings to changes in key assumptions and present those findings together with the cost-benefit analysis. All costs and the dollar values of benefits presented in this chapter have been adjusted to 2016 dollars, as this was the year that GOALS started providing services and individuals started accruing benefits.

A. Description of the costs of GOALS

This section provides detail on the total costs of GOALS services, the costs of GOALS services by type, and the average cost of GOALS services per individual.

1. Total costs of GOALS

FNS awarded DCF a grant of \$13,509,000 to develop and provide GOALS services. DCF and its partners and providers reported spending \$10,631,954 on planning, recruiting, and delivering GOALS services (Exhibit VIII.1).⁴⁴ These costs included \$493,113 for planning (5 percent of total costs) and \$987,891 for recruitment (9 percent). GOALS service costs—for ongoing administration and delivering direct services—totaled \$9,150,949, which was 86 percent of total costs.⁴⁵ Ongoing

GOALS cost a total of \$10,631,954, with service costs accounting for 86 percent of this amount.

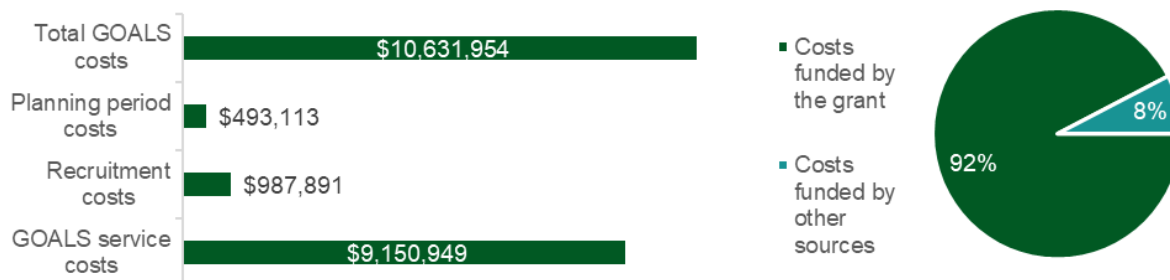
⁴⁴ The costs for planning and recruiting affected both GOALS and control group members, whereas the costs for operating GOALS services affected only the GOALS group.

⁴⁵ Service costs included costs of both ongoing administration and delivering direct services and activities. Ongoing administration costs included time for staff meetings, supervision, and other activities. Direct service costs included (*continued*)

VIII. Analysis of the costs and benefits of GOALS group and control group services

administration, which included time for staff meetings, supervision, and other activities, cost \$6,069,072 (57 percent of total costs). Direct service costs represented the remaining \$3,801,877 (29 percent, not shown). The FNS grant funded 92 percent of total costs, or \$9,821,437; 8 percent, or \$810,517 were leveraged from other sources.

Exhibit VIII.1. Summary of GOALS costs



Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by GOALS grantee, partners, and providers, 2015-2019; and SNAP employment and training evaluation survey of direct service provider time use, 2016-2018.

Notes: The planning period was considered to encompass the time between when DCF and their partners began designing GOALS (after grant award) and GOALS started enrolling individuals (April 2015 to January 2016). Quarterly workbooks reported the costs of the planning period, and recruitment and GOALS services following the start of GOALS. We estimated the breakdown of recruitment, GOALS direct service, and ongoing administration costs using data from a time-use survey of direct service provider staff. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars.

Appendix Table G.2. summarizes costs through March 2019 by cost category, including (1) staff costs (including volunteer time), (2) partner and provider direct service costs, (3) supply and equipment costs, and (4) overhead and operating costs. DCF and GOALS partners and providers reported that they spent \$6,498,099 on staff costs and \$1,867,371 on overhead and operating costs. About one-fifth of all costs covered direct services for partners and providers (\$2,067,872). The remaining costs (\$198,612) covered supply and equipment costs. The FNS grant covered almost all costs. Funding from other sources primarily covered staff costs, accounting for 12 percent of total staff costs (\$798,515).

2. Costs of GOALS services, by type of service

Service costs accounted for the largest share of GOALS expenditures. We estimated the costs of specific types of services offered through GOALS, including those of ongoing administration and direct services. The two largest service expenditures for GOALS services were for education, which accounted for \$2,961,905 or 28 percent of total GOALS service costs, and case management, which accounted for \$2,158,883 or 20 percent of total GOALS service costs (Exhibit VIII.2). Support services and job readiness or life skills workshops accounted for smaller shares of total GOALS service costs—20 and 10 percent of total GOALS service costs, respectively.

time staff spent providing services and activities to individuals, including time for tasks such as writing case notes or recording administrative data, and direct costs for resources such as textbooks or support services. Both ongoing administration and direct service costs included the costs of staff, supplies and equipment, overhead, facilities, and indirect costs.

Exhibit VIII.2. Costs of GOALS services, by service type

	Total service costs	Percentage of total
Total costs	\$10,631,954	100.0
Recruitment costs	\$987,891	9.3
Planning period costs	\$493,113	4.6
GOALS service costs ^a	\$9,150,949	86.1
Assessments	\$580,285	5.5
Case management ^b	\$2,158,883	20.3
Job readiness or life skills workshop	\$1,067,501	10.0
Education	\$2,961,905	27.9
Occupational skills training	\$222,220	2.1
Support services	\$2,072,574	19.5
Work-based learning	\$0	0.0
Other direct service contracts ^c	\$87,582	0.8

Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by GOALS grantee, partners, and providers, 2015-2019; and SNAP employment and training evaluation survey of direct service provider time use, 2016-2018.

Notes: The estimated costs of case management, job readiness or life skills workshop, and assessments include costs for staff, supplies and equipment, and overhead and operating costs, which were allocated by using the average percentage of time spent on these activities in the time-use survey. We assumed that the reported costs of support services, other direct service contracts, work-based learning, occupational skills training, and education already include costs for staff, supplies and equipment, or overhead and operating costs. Other direct service contracts included a contract to support the collection of case management and participation data. We assumed that these costs were either built into those payments or the associated staff time and costs were represented as case management. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars.

^a Total GOALS service costs include the costs of direct services and ongoing administration.

^b Case management includes one-on-one meetings with GOALS group members and time spent on case notes or referrals.

^c Other direct service contracts for the GOALS group included a contract to support the collection of case management and participation data. This is the actual cost reported for other direct service contract costs (which covered GOALS group services only).

3. Costs of GOALS services, per individual

GOALS group members each received different combinations of services through GOALS based on their needs and interests. As a result, the costs of serving each GOALS group member varied based on the number and types of services in which they participated. Exhibit VIII.3 describes the cost of GOALS services per individual. We separately present costs of operating GOALS from the costs of resources that were provided directly to GOALS group members – subsidized earnings provided to individuals for activities such as work-based learning; and support services provided to offset the costs of participation in GOALS, such as transportation or training supplies.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Operating costs included all service costs other than those provided directly to individuals through subsidized earnings or support services. These costs represent the time and resources required to deliver services.

VIII. Analysis of the costs and benefits of GOALS group and control group services

The total estimated costs of GOALS services per individual ranged from \$1,113 to \$28,571 but averaged \$4,452 per GOALS group member. The largest share of these costs was the cost of operating GOALS (\$4,124) with the remaining \$328 allocated to support services provided to individuals while in GOALS.

GOALS services cost an average of \$4,452 per individual.

Exhibit VIII.3. Costs of GOALS services per GOALS group member

Per individual costs of services	Mean
Total GOALS service costs	\$4,452
GOALS operating costs ^a	\$4,124
Subsidized earnings while in GOALS	\$0
Support services while in GOALS	\$328
Sample size	2,088

Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by GOALS grantee, partners, and providers, 2015-2019; SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data

Notes: The cost of services per GOALS group member are the means of the individual-level estimates of the costs of services for each GOALS group member based on the services they received and the per individual costs by service type. The estimated mean costs per GOALS group member include all individuals who enrolled in GOALS, including those who disengaged soon after enrollment and those who participated in multiple services over a longer period of time. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars. Cost per GOALS group member: standard error \$132; range \$1,113–\$28,571; confidence interval \$3,866–\$4,382.

^a GOALS operating costs are the estimated cost of direct services including the ongoing administration cost. We included the costs of any supplies and equipment incurred during the planning period in this estimate because those materials directly benefitted GOALS group members once service delivery began. No other planning period or recruitment costs are included.

B. Difference in costs of all services received by the GOALS and control group members

Whereas Section A describes the costs to DCF and their partners and providers for developing GOALS and providing services to GOALS group members, this section describes the costs of *all* services the GOALS group members received through GOALS, existing SNAP E&T, and the community during the GOALS service period. In the cost-benefit analysis, we use the difference in the average costs of all services GOALS and control group members received per individual through GOALS, existing SNAP E&T, and the community and compare these costs to benefits. We use these differences in costs because impacts of GOALS on individuals' outcomes such as earnings, were influenced by all services the sample members received during the 36-month follow up period, not just those received by the GOALS group through GOALS. In this section, we present estimates of the total costs of all services GOALS and control group members received and examine service cost differentials overall, by service type, and per individual.

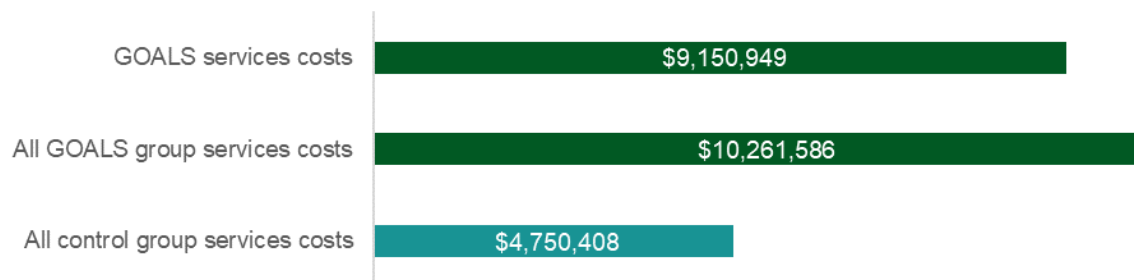
1. Total costs of all GOALS group and control group services

Based on data from the 12- and 36-month follow-up surveys, the estimated total cost of all GOALS group services was \$10,261,586, including costs for both direct services and ongoing administration (Exhibit VIII.4). This estimate is about 12 percent higher than the cost of GOALS services alone (\$9,150,949),

VIII. Analysis of the costs and benefits of GOALS group and control group services

suggesting that GOALS group members might have received some services from community-offered sources while enrolled in GOALS.⁴⁷

Exhibit VIII.4. Total costs of all GOALS group and control group services



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by GOALS grantee, partners, and providers, 2015-2019; SNAP employment and training evaluation survey of direct service provider time use, 2016-2018; WIA Gold Standard Evaluation cost estimates 2012; FNS-583 data 2018; and SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: The estimates were calculated as the product of the costs per GOALS group member for each type of direct service and the number of GOALS group members who received each type of direct service in the SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36- month survey data. Control group cost estimates were calculated as the product of the WIA costs per individual for each type of direct service and the number of control group members who received each type of direct service in the SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36- month survey data. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars.

The cost-benefit analysis assesses whether the enhanced GOALS services were effective enough to offset the difference in costs between the services received by the GOALS and control groups. The estimated costs of services received by the control group measure the services which would have been available to the GOALS group members if GOALS were not in place. The control group had access only to services available through the existing SNAP E&T program, which operated across 35 counties (excluding the Southeast region), or to services available through the community. The estimated cost of all control group services received was \$4,750,408, including costs for the delivery of direct services and ongoing administration (Exhibit VIII.4) and accounting for about a third of the cost of all GOALS group services.

2. Costs of all GOALS and control group services, by type of service

The difference between GOALS and control group costs of all services could reflect several factors, including how many services individuals received, how long the average individual spent in a given type of service or in services overall, or how much staff time or other resources those services required. Exhibit VIII.5 presents estimated costs of key GOALS and control group services, by type of service.

⁴⁷ The difference between the costs of the GOALS services in Section A and the costs presented for all services GOALS group members received in this section could reflect services that GOALS group members received outside GOALS, but the costs also could reflect the difference between administrative records of service use and each individual's recollection of services they received during the follow-up period. We examined the sensitivity of our findings to the use of these different data sources and found variation in reported participation in services by type. The findings of the cost-benefit analysis are robust to changes in the source of cost data based on UI wage record estimates of cumulative earnings but are different based on the source of cost data using 36-month survey data estimates of cumulative earnings. We describe these differences in Section C and present them in Appendix G.

VIII. Analysis of the costs and benefits of GOALS group and control group services

All GOALS group services. Education and case management accounted for the largest expenditures among all the services that GOALS group members received through GOALS, existing SNAP E&T, and the community. Education accounted for \$5,794,490 or 57 percent of total service costs, and case management represented \$1,767,746 or 17 percent of total service costs. Support services and job readiness or life skills workshops accounted for smaller shares of total service costs — 16 and 6 percent, respectively.

All control group services. Case management and education cost more than any other services that control group members received through existing SNAP E&T and the community. Case management accounted for \$2,412,973 or 51 percent of total service costs and education for \$1,249,507 or 26 percent of total service costs. Work-based learning, occupational skills training, and support services represented smaller shares of total service costs, at 14, 5, and 3 percent, respectively.

The costs of most services were higher for the GOALS group compared to the control group. In particular, education, support services, and job readiness or life skills workshops were more than triple the cost for the GOALS group, compared to the control group (\$5,794,490 versus \$1,249,507 for education; \$1,601,930 versus \$155,170 for support services; and \$586,920 versus \$47,282 for job readiness or life skills workshops). However, the costs of case management, work-based learning, and occupational skills training were lower for the GOALS group compared to the control group (\$1,767,746 compared to \$2,412,973 for case management; \$0 compared to \$651,038 for work-based learning; and \$28,575 compared to \$221,558 for occupational skills training).

Exhibit VIII.5. Costs for the GOALS and control groups, by service type

	All GOALS group services		All control group services	
	Total service costs	Percentage of total	Total service costs	Percentage of total
Total service costs ^a	\$10,261,586	100.0	\$4,750,408	100.0
Assessments	\$394,344	3.8	\$12,880	0.3
Case management ^b	\$1,767,746	17.2	\$2,412,973	50.8
Job readiness or life skills workshop	\$586,920	5.7	\$47,282	1.0
Education	\$5,794,490	56.5	\$1,249,507	26.3
Occupational skills training	\$28,575	0.3	\$221,558	4.7
Support services	\$1,601,930	15.6	\$155,170	3.3
Work-based learning	\$0	0.0	\$651,038	13.7
Other direct service contracts ^c	\$87,582	0.9	--	--

Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by GOALS grantee, partners, and providers, 2015-2019; SNAP employment and training evaluation survey of direct service provider time use, 2016-2018; WIA Gold Standard Evaluation cost estimates 2012; FNS-583 data 2018; and SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Notes: Cost estimates by service type were calculated as the product of the costs per individual for each type of direct service and the number of GOALS or control group members who received each type of service according to survey data on participation. Hyphens indicate that there were no costs associated with the service type, according to the data on participation in services for this estimate, which came from the SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month survey data. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars.

^a Total service costs include the costs of direct services and ongoing administration.

^b Case management includes one-on-one meetings with GOALS or control group members and time spent on case notes or referrals.

^c Other direct service contracts for the GOALS group included a contract to support collection of case management and participation data. This is the actual cost reported for other direct service contract costs (which covered GOALS group services only).

3. Costs of all GOALS and control group services per individual

GOALS and control group members each received different combinations of services, and the costs of serving each individual varied with the number and types of services in which an individual participated. In addition to providing context for the costs required to provide these types of services to individuals, the all GOALS and control group service costs per individual are the basis for the cost differentials used in the cost-benefit analysis.

Using data from the survey, Exhibit VIII.6 describes the cost of all services GOALS and control group members received during the GOALS service period, per individual. We present operating costs separately from the costs of resources provided directly to GOALS and control group members – subsidized earnings provided to individuals for activities such as work-based learning, and support services provided to offset the costs of participation in services, such as transportation or training supplies.

All services GOALS group members received through GOALS, existing SNAP E&T services, and the community cost \$6,074 per individual, on average.

The costs of all services received by GOALS group members (including those provided by GOALS, existing SNAP E&T services, and the community) ranged from \$1,113 to \$28,571 but averaged \$6,074 per GOALS group member. The largest component of this cost was operating costs, which were \$5,765. The costs of support services (\$310) accounted for the rest of the total service cost per individual.

Exhibit VIII.6. Costs of all services per GOALS and control group member

	All GOALS group services	All control group services
Total service costs	\$6,074	\$2,213
Operating costs ^a	\$5,765	\$1,825
Subsidized earnings while in services	\$0	\$313
Support services while in services	\$310	\$75
Sample size	2,088	2,078

Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by GOALS grantee, partners, and providers, 2015-2019; SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data; WIA Gold Standard Evaluation cost estimates 2012; and SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Notes: The cost of services per GOALS and control group member are the means of the individual-level estimates of the costs of services for each GOALS and control group member based on the services they received and the per individual costs by service type. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars. Cost per control group member: standard error \$188; range \$0–\$40,261; confidence interval \$1,456–\$2,193. Cost per GOALS group member (GOALS services, existing E&T services, or community-offered services): standard error \$351; range \$1,113–\$28,571; confidence interval \$5,075–\$6,455.

^a Operating costs are the estimated cost of direct services including the ongoing administration cost.

The costs of all services received by control group members ranged from \$0 to \$40,261 but averaged \$2,206 per control group member. Operating costs accounted for the largest share of this cost (\$1,818) and subsidized earnings and support services represented smaller shares (\$313 and \$75, respectively). The cost of all services per

All services control group members received through existing SNAP E&T services and the community cost \$2,206 per individual, on average.

control group member was about one-third of the cost of all services per GOALS group member, on average.

C. Cost-benefit analysis of GOALS group services

The purpose of the cost-benefit analysis is to estimate the benefits in dollar terms relative to the dollar costs of providing services. This section presents the findings of the cost-benefit analysis. We present results using the two sources of data on benefits used in the impact analysis: (1) UI wage records and (2) 36-month survey data.⁴⁸ The cost-benefit analysis uses a framework to present a comprehensive listing of GOALS group benefits and costs, relative to the control group, from multiple perspectives, including those of (1) individuals enrolled in GOALS, (2) government and taxpayers, and (3) society as a whole, which represents the sum of the other two perspectives. The primary cost-benefit finding from each perspective was the net benefit (the difference between total benefits and total costs). A positive net benefit means the benefits outweighed the costs, whereas a negative net benefit means the costs outweighed the benefits. In addition, we estimated the ratio of benefits to costs, which describes the return to society on each dollar invested. The benefit cost ratio is the quotient of the total benefit and the absolute value of the total costs. We also describe how our results differed according to changes in key assumptions for each of the cost-benefit accounting frameworks presented below.

1. Costs and benefits of all services for GOALS group members, based on UI wage records

The net benefit of services for the GOALS group compared to the control group were positive for GOALS group members but negative for government and taxpayers during the 36-month follow-up period (Exhibit VIII.7). This resulted in an overall negative net benefit to society. The benefit-cost ratio, or return on investment to society, was 0.38. These results emerged because there were only small differences in the cumulative earnings of GOALS and control group members during the 36-month follow-up period that, on average, did not offset the costs of the services.

*The net benefits of all services GOALS group members received were **positive** for GOALS group members but **negative** for government and taxpayers and for society during the 36-month follow-up period (UI wage records).*

Society. On average, all GOALS group services cost society \$2,248 more than control group services per individual. The difference primarily reflects the differential costs of GOALS group services, which were not offset by the benefits accrued through earnings and fringe benefits during the 36-month follow up period.

GOALS group members. On average, GOALS group members benefitted by \$1,415, compared with the control group. Higher cumulative earnings accounted for most of the benefits to GOALS group members, who received \$1,162 more than control group members did over the 36-month follow up period. We assumed that any subsidized earnings received while participating in work-based learning activities were included in the \$1,162 difference in earnings. The differences, however, were not statistically significant.

⁴⁸ We included impacts on cumulative earnings and SNAP and TANF benefit receipt in the cost-benefit analysis even if they were not statistically significant. These estimates are the best information we have on the qualitative differences in outcomes between the two groups. We noted statistically significant impacts where they were present in the exhibits.

VIII. Analysis of the costs and benefits of GOALS group and control group services

The GOALS group also had higher fringe benefits and received more in support services than the control group (\$243 and \$235, respectively). On average, GOALS group members owed \$390 more in tax payments than the control group. In addition, GOALS group members received higher SNAP benefits (by \$168), but a similar amount of TANF benefits (by -\$3), compared to the control group.

Exhibit VIII.7 Benefits and costs associated with GOALS services or community-offered services, for the GOALS group compared to the control group, UI wage records

	Perspective		
	GOALS group members	Government and taxpayers	Society
Benefits (\$)			
Employment and earnings			
Earnings (UI wage records)	1,162	0	1,162
Fringe benefits	243	0	243
Tax payments	-390	390	0
Use of public benefits			
SNAP benefits	168	-168	0
TANF benefits	-3	3	0
Reduced administration costs	0	-20	-20
Total benefits	1,180	206	1,386
Costs (\$)			
Net operating costs ^a	0	-3,947	-3,947
Net subsidized earnings while in services ^b	0	313	313
Net support services while in services ^b	235	-235	0
Total costs	235	-3,869	-3,634
Net benefit (\$)	1,415	-3,663	-2,248
Benefit-cost ratio			0.38

Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data; SNAP administrative data; SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by GOALS grantee, partners, and providers, 2015-2019; SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data; WIA Gold Standard Evaluation cost estimates, 2012; and SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Notes: Earnings, SNAP benefits, and TANF benefits are the impact estimates presented in Chapter VII. The net benefit is the difference between total benefits and total costs. A negative net benefit is a net cost. The benefit-cost ratio is the quotient of the total benefits and the absolute value of the total costs. A benefit-cost ratio greater than one represents greater benefits than costs, and a number less than one suggests fewer benefits than costs. All benefits and costs are presented in 2016 dollars. The standard error of the cost per GOALS group member is \$132 and of the cost per control group member is \$187.

^a This estimate is the difference between GOALS and control group costs per individual. This value excludes planning period costs but includes the costs of supplies and equipment incurred during the planning period that supported ongoing services once they started.

^b Subsidized earnings and support services directly benefit individuals while they are enrolled in services. We assume the subsidized earnings benefitting individuals were reflected in the earnings impacts presented as the first row in the benefits section of the exhibit. All earnings presented in the first row in the benefits section of the exhibit are included in the fringe and tax estimates, though we do not know the extent to which subsidized earnings would have translated into these benefits in practice. These subsidized earnings are offset by the costs to government and taxpayers, which is represented in the second row of the costs section of the exhibit. We presented the support services as a benefit (positive transfer) to individuals under the third row of the cost section of the exhibit and these support services are offset by the costs to government and taxpayers in the same row. Both subsidized earnings and support services are assumed to have a net neutral (zero) benefit to society because the benefits are offset by the costs.

VIII. Analysis of the costs and benefits of GOALS group and control group services

***/**/* Difference in earnings between the GOALS group and control group significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Government and taxpayers. Providing GOALS group services cost government and taxpayers \$3,663 more per individual, on average, than providing control group services did. The difference is largely attributable to the higher costs of providing services (including GOALS and community services) to GOALS group members. The average difference in the cost of the two groups' services was \$3,869, including \$3,947 in operating costs and \$235 in support services. The costs of subsidized earnings reported by control group members were \$313 on average, while GOALS group members reported they did not receive any subsidized earnings. GOALS group members also received higher amounts of SNAP benefits, relative to control group members, which was a cost to government and taxpayers in benefit allotments (\$168, on average) and administration costs (\$20).

We conducted sensitivity analyses to test the robustness of our findings based on UI wage records to changes in key assumptions, including: (1) the values of benefits associated with increases in earnings, such as fringe benefits and taxes; (2) the values of costs and benefits when accounting for factors such as inflation and present value; (3) the assumption that subsidized earnings were reported to State UI agencies and are reflected in earnings impacts; and (4) the services received by GOALS group members were primarily through GOALS and not from existing SNAP E&T and the community. The results were robust to changes in all of our key assumptions about benefits and costs from all perspectives (Appendix Tables G.10 through G.12). The costs to the government and taxpayers always outweighed the benefits to the GOALS group members, so there was a negative net benefit to society regardless of changes in assumptions, ranging from \$608 to \$2,561 per individual. The GOALS group services led to a positive net benefit for individuals based on changes to all assumptions related to fringe benefits, taxes, and discount rates. Estimated net benefits per individual ranged from \$1,102 to \$1,530. The assumption that subsidized earnings were *not* included in UI wage records led to a net benefit of \$1,102 per individual, compared to \$1,415 under our main assumptions. However, regardless of changes to key assumptions, GOALS group services resulted in a negative net benefit to government and taxpayers, ranging from \$2,041 to \$3,918 per individual.

2. Costs and benefits of all services for GOALS group members, according to 36-month survey data

The findings based on 36-month follow-up survey data were similar to those based on UI wage records. The net benefits of all GOALS group services were positive for GOALS group members and society but negative for government and taxpayers during the follow-up period (Exhibit VIII.8). The benefit-cost ratio was 0.73. The costs of the GOALS group services were offset to a greater degree by increases in cumulative earnings for the GOALS group, relative to the control group, according to survey data. However, even when accounting for higher earnings, the benefits of GOALS group services did not offset the costs of those services during the follow-up period, on average.

*The net benefits of all services GOALS group members received were **positive** for GOALS group members but **negative** for government and taxpayers and society during the 36-month follow-up period, according to survey data.*

Society. GOALS group services cost society \$964 more than control group services did per individual. This estimated negative net benefit according to survey data was less than the net benefit according to UI wage records data, primarily because of (1) the difference in reported earnings for GOALS group members (\$2,225 according to survey data versus

VIII. Analysis of the costs and benefits of GOALS group and control group services

\$1,162 according to UI wage records) and (2) the difference in fringe benefits (\$465 compared to \$243). However, according to survey data, these higher earnings and benefits did not offset the costs of services during the 36-month follow-up period.

Exhibit VIII.8. Benefits and costs associated with GOALS services or community-offered services, for the GOALS group compared to the control group, 36-month survey data

	Perspective		
	GOALS group members	Government and taxpayers	Society
Benefits (\$)			
Employment and earnings			
Earnings (survey data)	2,225	0	2,225
Fringe benefits	465	0	465
Tax payments	-698	698	0
Use of public benefits			
SNAP benefits	168	-168	0
TANF benefits	-3	3	0
Reduced administration costs	0	-20	-20
Total benefits	2,156	514	2,670
Costs (\$)			
Net operating costs ^a	0	-3,947	-3,947
Net subsidized earnings while in services ^b	0	313	313
Net support services while in services ^b	235	-235	0
Total costs	235	-3,869	-3,634
Net benefit (\$)	2,391	-3,355	-964
Benefit-cost ratio			0.73

Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data; SNAP administrative data; SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by GOALS grantee, partners, and providers, 2015-2019; SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data; and WIA Gold Standard Evaluation cost estimates, 2012.

Notes: Earnings, SNAP benefits, and TANF benefits are the impact estimates presented in Chapter VII. The net benefit is the difference between total benefits and total costs. A negative net benefit is a net cost. The benefit-cost ratio is the quotient of the total benefits and the absolute value of the total costs. A benefit-cost ratio greater than one represents greater benefits than costs, and a number less than one suggests fewer benefits than costs. All benefits and costs are presented in 2016 dollars. The standard error of the cost per GOALS group member is \$132 and of the cost per control group member is \$187.

^a This estimate is the difference between GOALS and control group costs per individual. This value excludes planning period costs but includes the costs of supplies and equipment incurred during the planning period that supported ongoing services once they started.

^b Subsidized earnings and support services directly benefit individuals while they are enrolled in services. We assume the subsidized earnings benefitting individuals are reflected in the earnings impacts presented as the first row in the benefits section of the exhibit. All earnings presented in the first row in the benefits section of the table are included in the fringe and tax estimates, though we do not know the extent to which subsidized earnings would have translated into these benefits in practice. These subsidized earnings are offset by the costs to government and taxpayers, which is represented in the second row of the costs section of the exhibit. We present the support services as a benefit (positive transfer) to individuals under the third row of the cost section of the exhibit and these support services are offset by the costs to government and taxpayers in the same row. Both subsidized earnings and support services are assumed to have a net neutral (zero) benefit to society because the benefits are offset by the costs.

VIII. Analysis of the costs and benefits of GOALS group and control group services

***/**/* Difference between GOALS group and control group significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

GOALS group members. According to survey data, GOALS group members received a net benefit of \$2,391, relative to the control group. The GOALS group had higher cumulative earnings and fringe benefits compared to the control group (by \$2,225 and \$465, respectively). We assumed that the \$2,225 difference in earnings includes any subsidized earnings received while participating in work-based learning activities. GOALS group members higher tax payments by an average of \$698, compared to control group members. Other benefits and costs to individuals were the same as those presented in the findings based on UI wage records, with support services accounting for a small share of benefits for GOALS group members (\$235 more than for control group members); GOALS group members received higher SNAP benefits and a similar amount of TANF benefits, compared to the control group.

Government and taxpayers. According to survey data, government and taxpayers experienced a cost of \$3,355 per individual for providing all GOALS group services. The higher earnings received by GOALS group members also benefitted government and taxpayers in the form of higher taxes. Government and taxpayers realized a benefit of \$698 in higher tax payments per GOALS group member, compared with control group members. As presented in the UI wage record findings, service provision cost government and taxpayers an average of \$3,869 more per GOALS group member, compared to control group members, and these costs were not offset by benefits to government and taxpayers during the 36-month follow up period.

We conducted a similar set of sensitivity analyses to test our key assumptions based on survey data, including: (1) the values of benefits associated with increases in earnings, such as fringe benefits and taxes; (2) the values of costs and benefits when accounting for factors such as inflation and present value; and (3) the services GOALS group members received were primarily offered through GOALS and not from existing SNAP E&T services and the community. The results were robust to changes in almost all of our key assumptions about benefits and costs from all perspectives (Appendix Tables G.10 through G.12). GOALS group services led to a negative net benefit for society for most assumptions, ranging from \$843 to \$1,075. There was one exception; the assumption that GOALS group members received services only through GOALS and not through existing SNAP E&T or the community resulted in a positive net benefit of \$677 per GOALS group member. GOALS group members experienced a net benefit from GOALS group services based on changes to all assumptions related to fringe, taxes, and discount rates, with estimates of net benefits to GOALS group members ranging from \$2,280 to \$2,502. Government and taxpayers faced a negative net benefit for GOALS group services regardless of changes to key assumptions, ranging from \$1,732 to \$3,630.

IX. Conclusion

The goal of the 10 SNAP E&T pilots was to test innovative strategies to increase SNAP participants' employment and earnings and reduce their need for public assistance benefits. Through its comprehensive data collection and rigorous experimental design, this evaluation assessed whether GOALS—the innovative SNAP E&T program Kansas designed and implemented targeting new and current SNAP work registrants—was effective in achieving these goals. This final report presents findings from several inter-related analyses. Findings from the implementation analysis describe the planning and implementation of the pilot, its services and operations, and the components that may be sustainable or replicable. Findings from the participation and impact analyses describe receipt of services, participation in activities, and impacts on individuals' outcomes for up to three years after enrollment. Finally, the cost-benefit analysis describes the costs of services and compares the benefits of receiving services to the costs of providing these services. This chapter summarizes and discusses key findings from all these analyses.

A. Summary of findings

DCF successfully coordinated with partners and providers in the community to provide individualized employment and training services for their SNAP participants. Although GOALS had some staffing challenges and took longer than expected to establish occupational skills training and mental health and substance use counseling providers, those who engaged in GOALS services found the P4S and Bridges classes to be an especially strong and effective component. GOALS group members were more likely than control group members to start an activity, complete an activity, and receive support services. However, increased engagement among GOALS group members did not lead to an increase in earnings over time. Because GOALS group members did not earn significantly more than control group members, the overall cost of implementing the pilot outweighed the benefits. These findings are described in more detail below. We also provide additional context for these findings in Section C.

1. GOALS implementation

DCF aimed to provide a more comprehensive set of services and activities through GOALS than was available under the existing SNAP E&T program. In addition, GOALS expanded the availability of E&T services (through GOALS or the existing SNAP E&T program) from eight counties to 36 counties throughout the State. DCF collaborated with partners and several other local organizations and institutions to provide GOALS services. The GOALS model—Stabilize, Train, Place, and Sustain—included intensive case management with client-centered interviewing and ongoing coaching; support services; referrals to mental health and substance use disorder counseling and other stabilization services and activities; soft skills and life skills training; occupational skills training; adult basic education; job-readiness preparation; job search, development, matching, and placement; and job retention. Despite some challenges with staffing, GOALS found success in providing customized services to meet individual needs. In particular, the P4S and Bridges classes, which combined several services and activities, were valued by both staff and GOALS group members. Additionally, despite delays establishing service providers to expand services and activities, GOALS capitalized on its ability to build lasting relationships and collaborations through its collective impact meetings.

2. Service receipt among GOALS group members

Nearly all of the individuals randomly assigned to the GOALS group engaged in some type of service, meaning they started an assessment or an employment or training-related activity, or received a support

service offered through GOALS.⁴⁹ Additionally, virtually all of GOALS group members (95 percent) started an employment or training-related activity, such as job search training or job search, after they completed intake and assessments. Among individuals who started an activity, completion rates were highest for job search training (100 percent) and lowest for work-based learning (50 percent).

Individuals spent an average of seven months engaging with GOALS activities. More than three-quarters exited GOALS within their first year (79 percent), with most exiting during the first and second quarters. Most individuals who exited chose not to engage in services (43 percent) or they found employment (24 percent).

3. Differences between GOALS and control groups in service receipt

The ability of GOALS to impact employment, earnings, and individuals' receipt of public assistance benefits depends, in part, on whether there are differences between the GOALS and control groups in receipt of services and in participation in and completion of employment or training-related activities. Relative to the control group, the GOALS group was more likely to participate in job search training activities and in education and training activities during the three years following random assignment. According to the survey data, rates of participation in these activities were 13 and 9 percentage points higher, respectively, among the GOALS group, relative to the control group. These significant differences between the GOALS and control groups in rates of participation existed for the first year after random assignment despite the finding that about half of control group members participated in job search training activities or in education and training activities. The GOALS group also had higher rates of participation than the control group in general job skills training and occupational skills training, but not in education or work-based learning.

GOALS group members also were more likely than control group members to complete an activity. In the first year after random assignment, GOALS group members were 9 percentage points more likely than control group members to complete any type of education or training activity. Relative to the control group, the GOALS group spent, on average, about the same number of months participating in activities and four hours more per week in activities. The GOALS group was more likely than the control group to receive an occupational certificate or license (6 percentage point difference).

The GOALS group was more likely than the control group to receive case management (13 percentage point difference). The GOALS group was also more likely than the control group to receive support services (8 percentage point difference). The largest differences between the two groups were observed for transportation assistance (51 versus 37 percent).

4. Impacts of GOALS on individuals' outcomes

The findings from the analyses of the two primary outcomes in the second and third year after random assignment show that GOALS did not lead to an increase in earnings based on either the UI wage data or survey data and generally did not affect rates of SNAP participation. Related analyses of employment data showed that GOALS increased the percentage of individuals who were employed over the two-year period (Years 2 and 3), by about 5 percentage points (based on UI wage data) and 4 percentage points

⁴⁹ The measure does not include orientations, case management, or the creation of an IAP because individuals often engaged in these activities during their initial meeting for the GOALS program but then did not return for more meaningful activities and services.

(based on survey data), relative to the control group. There were no differences in impacts on earnings or employment in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) across several subgroups defined by barriers to employment, employment history, and household income. Two exceptions were larger impacts on employment and earnings for older individuals, relative to younger individuals, and larger impacts on employment and earnings among individuals in households without children, relative to those with children.

Similar percentages of individuals in each research group participated in SNAP throughout the three-year follow-up period. SNAP participation rates decreased each quarter after random assignment by about the same amount for each research group, resulting in similar participation rates in Year 3 (54 versus 53 percent). This pattern of findings is consistent with the fact that GOALS did not affect earnings. Although GOALS group members were more likely than control group members to be employed in two of the three years following random assignment, earnings were similar for both groups across years. These findings were generally consistent across subgroups, with the exception that GOALS led to a reduction in SNAP participation for older individuals (age 50 or older) in contrast to small increases for younger individuals.

Because these findings do not differentiate between individuals enrolled in the pilot who participated in activities and those who did not, they provide information about expected effects among all SNAP participants if they were offered activities similar to those included in GOALS. However, because some individuals did not engage in the pilot or start an activity, these findings mask how well individuals who participated in GOALS activities may have fared. Analyses that compared outcomes for GOALS group members based on whether they started at least one activity showed that greater engagement in GOALS activities translated into different participation experiences but not to different impacts. Among those who started an activity, GOALS led to impacts on employment (based on both UI and survey data) and impacts on earnings (based on survey data), but there was no statistically significant difference in impacts between those who did and did not start an activity.

Changes to GOALS policies or procedures after the pilot began (i.e., expanding the skill training services offered and adding direct referrals to mental health and substance abuse counseling) did not affect the likelihood of GOALS group members starting or completing activities. Analyses that compared impacts among individuals who were randomly assigned earlier versus later in the enrollment period showed that there were no differences in impacts between the two groups.

5. GOALS costs and cost-benefit analyses

DCF and its partners and providers reported spending \$10,631,954 from April 2015 to March 2019 on the planning and implementation of GOALS (\$493,113 during the planning period, \$987,891 for recruitment, and \$9,150,949 for GOALS services). The FNS grant funded 92 percent of these costs; partners and providers leveraged other funding sources for the remaining 8 percent. The cost-benefit analysis compares the benefits individuals received through earnings and public assistance with the average costs of *all* services GOALS and control group members received per individual. The costs of all services GOALS group members received through GOALS, existing SNAP E&T services, or the community were about 75 percent higher than the costs of GOALS alone (\$10,261,586, or \$6,074 per individual, on average). The costs of all services control group members received through existing SNAP E&T and the community were about one third of the costs of all services GOALS group members received (\$4,750,408, or \$2,206 per individual, on average).

GOALS group benefits and costs relative to the control group are presented from multiple perspectives, including those of (1) individuals enrolled in GOALS, (2) government and taxpayers, and (3) society as a whole, which represents the sum of the other two perspectives. The net benefits of GOALS group services were negative for society during the 36-month follow-up period according to UI wage records and 36-month follow-up survey data (by \$2,248 and \$964 per treatment group member, compared with control group members, respectively). GOALS group services led to a net benefit for individuals due to higher earnings and receipt of support services while in services (\$1,415 and \$2,391, respectively). However, the services GOALS group members received were a larger cost to government and taxpayers (\$3,663 and \$3,355, respectively), compared to the benefits. The benefits did not offset the costs of the services, on average, during the 36-month follow-up period.

B. Placing findings in the context of the workforce evaluation literature

The GOALS study findings are consistent with the previous literature that has often found small or no labor market effects of employment and training programs for low-income populations offering similar services as GOALS. Comprehensive literature reviews are provided in Barnow and Smith (2015), Card et al. (2018), Vollmer et al. (2017), and Goger et al. (2020). This literature covers a range of employment and training activities and support services offered by both ongoing programs as well as grant programs similar to GOALS, using impact designs with rigorous control (or comparison) groups.

The literature suggests that programs serving low-income populations can typically engage individuals and increase their receipt of services relative to those received by the study control groups in their local areas. These differences can be large, especially for the receipt of occupational skills training and subsidized employment, translating into positive effects on the percentages of individuals who participate in training activities and the attainment of associated certificates and credentials. However, few of the studies have found that the programs lead to long-term increases in earnings or independence from public assistance (at least over the time period covered by the studies, which is typically less than four years).

There are notable exceptions, however, that show that the types of activities and services (such as occupational skills training and support services) offered by GOALS could be effective. McConnell et al. (2021) found using nationally representative samples from a randomized control trial that had access to WIOA intensive services—one-on-one staff assistance such as assessments, coaching, career counseling, and service referrals—increased earnings by about 15 percent over a three-year follow-up period and yielded benefits that exceeded costs from the perspective of society. This evaluation, however, found no earnings effects of WIOA-funded occupation skills training. Further, several reviews of the existing literature on the role of supportive services in employment and training programs suggest that low-income populations receiving supportive services, in combination with technical training and other ancillary services, such as case management, can have more positive employment and earnings outcomes compared to groups that do not receive such wraparound services (Davis et al. 2013; Gueron and Hamilton 2002; Maguire et al. 2010; U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2014). Another notable exception is the random assignment evaluation of STEP Forward (Walter et al. 2017) which found that the impacts of subsidized employment offered to the treatment group continued into the fourth year, well after the subsidies had ended. Similarly, Reed et al. (2012) found statistically significant positive impacts of registered apprenticeships, even nine years after program entry.

The literature also suggests that interventions that *combine* several strategies to help low-income individuals find and keep jobs appear more effective than any *single* strategy (Vollmer et al. 2017).

Further, “meta-analyses”—that use regressions to combine and analyze impacts from different studies—find that total program effects are more than the sum of the effects of each of the program’s strategies. Thus, implementation and other factors that affect how well multiple components of a program are operationalized and delivered are crucial determinants of a program’s success. Relatedly, the literature has consistently found considerable diversity in program impacts across individuals (females and the long-term unemployed tend to experience larger benefits) and across labor market conditions (programs are less likely to show positive effects during periods of economic growth), but the patterns are not always consistent across studies.

Overall, the observed increases in the rates of take-up and completion of GOALS activities and receipt of services, and the lack of earning impacts for GOALS fit within the broader related literature. Although comparing the findings in this evaluation to those in the literature is informative, it is important to consider that differences in target populations, local economies, and varied experiences in implementing activities and services available in a pilot or program make it challenging to form direct comparisons to other studies. The next section provides context for the evaluation findings from this perspective.

C. Discussion

Although GOALS did not lead to increased earnings and reduced participation in SNAP, it successfully increased the percentages of individuals who received case management and support services, relative to the control group, as well as the percentage of individuals who participated in employment or training-related activities. This is a notable accomplishment given the prevalence and extent of barriers faced by individuals who enrolled in the pilot—only 16 percent were employed at the time of random assignment and 23 percent did not have a high school diploma. The higher rates of receipt of case management and support services among GOALS group members, particularly transportation assistance, may have allowed individuals to overcome barriers associated not only with starting employment or training-related activities but with sustaining participation over time and ultimately completing the activity.

In addition, GOALS led to increased employment (based on UI wage data and survey data) in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3). This suggests that the greater service receipt and activity participation during that time increased the chances of finding a job. However, these jobs did not pay appreciably more than those obtained by the control group, resulting in no impact on earnings.

Despite GOALS robust job development services likely leading to a higher rate of employment, unresolved barriers may have affected job retention or hindered opportunities to increase earnings. Information collected from pilot and provider staff underscores the degree to which GOALS group members faced significant barriers to GOALS participation and employment. Individuals often lacked adequate transportation, and many had substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and criminal justice backgrounds. Although GOALS had substantive case management and support services, some GOALS group member’s barriers remained. For example, given the rural nature of some of the pilot locations, transportation challenges not only included lack of funds but also meant long distances between GOALS group members residence and GOALS services or employment. Staff also said some rural areas lacked the necessary resources to help with all barriers. Staff noted that despite an increase in the availability of skilled jobs in the SC region, GOALS group members struggled to overcome their barriers.

Although P4S and Bridges classes were readily available, delays in setting up occupational skills training providers may have contributed to the low participation rates in the type of skill building activities that might have led to higher paying jobs. Although P4S and Bridges were valued by individuals who

participated in them, and GOALS group members obtained life skills and job-readiness skills and had job developers, they might not have obtained the necessary certifications through occupational skills training that could lead to high-paying jobs. The occupational skills training component was also short-term, typically from four to six weeks in length, suggesting that longer-term training may be necessary to produce significant increases in earnings. Finally, staff noted many GOALS group members had low education levels, yet GOALS did not include secondary educational credential attainment.

It is possible that the impacts on outcomes such as earnings were diluted by the fact that, while the GOALS group was more likely than the control group to start and complete employment or training-related activities, the differences in participation and completion rates between research groups were less than 10 percentage points. To assess this possibility, we compared impacts for individuals who did and did not start an employment or training-related activity. This exploratory analysis showed an impact on employment, but not earnings, for individuals who started an activity, and no impact on employment and earnings for those who did not start an activity. However, differences in impacts across groups were not statistically significant. In a similar analysis based on completion status, we found an impact on employment for individuals who completed education or training activities, but no impact for those who started but did not complete activities or those who completed job search or job search training activities. These differences across completion groups were not statistically significant. There were no impacts on earnings for any of the completion groups.

The evidence suggests that the take-up and completion of GOALS employment or training-related activities was not the main factor behind the lack of impacts on earnings. It is possible that some GOALS group members who participated in employment- or training-related activities may have continued to face substantial barriers to employment and may have benefited from additional or more intensive case management and support services. Learning more about the barriers to starting and completing these activities would help identify which case management and support services were able to promote greater participation in employment or training-related activities. This would also help to understand challenges faced by GOALS group members who participated in these activities, allowing program staff to adapt the content or delivery of these activities to be more impactful. Also, understanding how receiving certifications, diplomas, degrees, or occupational licenses can differentially affect the prospect of employment for GOALS group members should also be explored.

Finally, staff also indicated that as unemployment numbers generally dropped across Kansas (falling from about 4.5 percent at the beginning of pilot operations to about 3.5 percent towards the end), it was hard to find high-paying jobs for GOALS group members. Many of the more common occupations in the areas, such as food preparation services and office and administrative support, did not require technical skills but also did not pay high wages. Additionally, staff in the rural SE region said GOALS had exhausted many of their employer resources, and there were fewer job openings.

When considering the overall findings from the GOALS pilot, there are a few additional factors that may have contributed to the results, including the following:

- **Earnings impacts may depend on the type of activities in which individuals participate.** Individuals in the GOALS group were offered a wide range of services and activities. Earnings impacts may not be apparent for all GOALS group members, but this does not mean that specific activities such as occupational skills training or education services are ineffective. Assessing the effectiveness of services and activities separately and in combination would help to identify promising program components for improving outcomes. Because many GOALS group

members participated in multiple activities, isolating the effect of a single type of activity can be challenging. It would be helpful to classify individuals who received different sets of services into mutually exclusive and distinct groups. For each group, describing participation in activities and estimating impacts on outcomes would help to identify specific services and activities, or combinations of them, that most effectively increase earnings and improve outcomes.

- **The COVID-19 pandemic which began during the 36-month follow-up survey period may have affected the magnitude of the impacts found in Year 3.** Outcomes measured in Year 3 for individuals who were randomly assigned in the pilot between April 2017 and December 2017 could have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which began to dramatically affect life in the United States in March 2020. We found evidence of positive impacts on earnings in Year 2, based on UI data, and positive effects on employment based on both data sources, driven by impacts in Years 1 and 2. It is possible that the pandemic contributed to the fading of impacts by Year 3. However, we cannot identify what the impacts would have been in the absence of the pandemic. Learning more about the effects of the pandemic on outcomes for each research group would deepen our understanding about the potential effects of GOALS. For example, the pandemic likely affected individuals' outcomes differently based on their occupation if they were employed or the occupation they were training to enter. It would be useful to assess whether impacts on earnings and employment in Year 3 differed based on these factors.
- **The absence of an impact on earnings is one of several reasons why the net benefit of GOALS was negative.** However, this negative net benefit primarily reflects the differential costs of GOALS group services, which were not offset by the benefits accrued through earnings and fringe benefits during the 36-month follow up period. When interpreting this finding, it is important to consider that GOALS services were new and experimental. The purpose of the SNAP E&T pilot was to test new approaches to services. GOALS targeted individuals with high barriers to engaging in services and obtaining employment, and DCF led the development of new partnerships in their communities that did not exist previously. Even though the costs of planning and recruitment were excluded in considering the cost differential between GOALS and control group services, the costs of GOALS group services were likely higher for the three years of the pilot than they would have been if administered over a longer period of time.

Although outcomes for GOALS were mixed, SNAP E&T program administrators can learn from the implementation of the GOALS model. For example, GOALS staff attribute their enrollment success to having engaged a marketing firm in developing their recruitment materials. They also said the collective impact meetings helped inform the community about the pilot, kept everyone connected and in the loop, and prevented the duplication of services. The meetings also enabled GOALS and its partners and providers to agree on performance benchmarks and use data to drive the management of GOALS. Moreover, these community relationships are likely to be maintained, indicating a level of system change as a result of GOALS.

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