



Expanding Opportunities & Reducing Barriers to Work: Washington 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

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



Expanding Opportunities & Reducing Barriers to Work: Washington Final Report

May 2022

Gretchen Rowe, James Mabli, Julia Lyskawa, Julie Hartnack, Kelley Monzella, Leah Shiferaw, Amy Defnet, Peter Schochet, Milena Raketic, and Dallas Dotter

Submitted to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Nutrition Service
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314
Project Officer: Anita Singh
Contract Number: AG-3198-B-15-0002

Submitted by:

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

Suggested citation

Gretchen Rowe, James Mabli, Julia Lyskawa, Julie Hartnack, Kelley Monzella, Leah Shiferaw, Amy Defnet, Peter Schochet, Milena Raketic, and Dallas Dotter. (2022). Expanding Opportunities & Reducing Barriers to Work: Washington Final Report. Prepared by Mathematica, Contract No. AG 3198-B-15-0002. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support.

Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and should not be construed to represent any official USDA or U.S. Government determination or policy.

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	v
Glossary	vii
Overview	ix
Executive Summary.....	x
I. Introduction.....	1
A. Overview of Washington’s pilot.....	2
B. Evaluation of SNAP E&T pilots	4
C. Organization of this report	5
II. Data and methodology.....	7
A. Data sources	7
B. Analysis approach	8
C. Study limitations	18
III. RISE enrollment and characteristics	20
A. Patterns of enrollment.....	20
B. Local economic context in the RISE pilot area over time	21
C. Characteristics of enrolled individuals.....	22
D. Characteristics of individuals who enrolled earlier versus later	23
IV. Implementation analysis	25
A. RISE background	25
B. Pilot planning and implementation	26
C. Services and operations	27
D. Sustainability and replicability.....	39
E. Key implementation analysis findings	40
V. Participation analysis	42
A. Participation in RISE.....	42
B. Education, occupational skills training, and work-based learning.....	46
C. Support services.....	48
D. Case management	50
E. Extent and timing of RISE exits	50

VI. Differences in service receipt for the RISE and control groups.....	53
A. Differences between research groups in participation in activities	53
B. Differences between research groups in activity completion	56
C. Differences between research groups in receipt of case management and support services	58
VII. Impacts on employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and well-being outcomes	61
A. Impacts of RISE on labor market outcomes.....	61
B. Impacts of RISE on receipt of public assistance	68
C. Impacts of RISE on food security, health, well-being, and housing status.....	72
D. Impacts of RISE on employment, earnings, and SNAP participation among individuals who started or completed an employment or training related activity	73
VIII. Analysis of the costs and benefits of RISE group and control group services	76
A. Description of the costs of RISE	76
B. Difference in costs of all services received by the RISE and control group members ..	79
C. Cost-benefit analysis of RISE group services	83
IX. Conclusion.....	88
A. Summary of findings.....	88
B. Placing findings in the context of the workforce evaluation literature.....	91
C. Discussion	92
References	96

Exhibits

I.1	RISE locations.....	2
I.2	Pilot characteristics.....	4
II.1	Measures of costs and benefits	15
III.1	Overview of pilot enrollment.....	20
III.2.	Cumulative number of individuals enrolled in each month of the enrollment period.....	20
III.3	Local unemployment rate in the RISE pilot area for each month of pilot operation	21
III.4	Common occupations and median wages in Washington’s pilot area over time.....	22
III.5	Baseline characteristics of individuals enrolled in the pilot	23
IV.1	Pilot timeline	25
IV.2	Client flow and pilot pathways.....	28
V.1	Percentage of RISE group members who engaged in services	43
V.2	Percentage of RISE group members who started an activity	44
V.3	Percentage of RISE group members who completed an activity, among those who started one	45
V.4	Number of activities started by RISE group members (percentage).....	46
V.5	Percentage of RISE group members who started any occupational skills training and the five most common types of training	47
V.6	Percentage of RISE group members who participated in work-based learning and average amount of subsidy received	48
V.7	Percentage of RISE group members who received support services, by type	49
V.8	Amount of support services received among those who received support services	49
V.9	Amount and type of RISE group members’ contacts with case managers	50
V.10	Percentage of RISE group members who exited within each quarter.....	51
V.11	Percentage of RISE group members who exited, by reason.....	52
VI.1	Participation in any RISE, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered services	54
VI.2	Participation in RISE, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered services, by year after random assignment.....	55

VI.3	Participation in specific RISE, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered services	56
VI.4	Percentage of RISE group members who completed education or training activities, by year after random assignment	57
VI.5	Percentage of RISE group members who received an occupational certificate or license, overall and by year	58
VI.6	Receipt of case management through RISE, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered programs, overall and by year	59
VI.7	Receipt of support services through RISE, existing SNAP E&T or community-offered programs, overall and by type	59
VII.1	Total earnings based on UI wage records, by year	62
VII.2	Total earnings based on survey data, by year	62
VII.3	Total earnings based on UI wage records, by quarter.....	63
VII.4	Total earnings based on survey data, by quarter	63
VII.5	Employment rates based on UI wage records, by year	64
VII.6	Employment rates based on survey data, by year	65
VII.7	Characteristics of current job among individuals employed at the time of the 36-month survey	66
VII.8	SNAP participation rates based on SNAP administrative data, overall and by year.....	69
VII.9	Impacts on average monthly SNAP benefit amount based on SNAP administrative data, overall and by year.....	70
VII.10	SNAP exit rates and mean number of months of SNAP participation based on SNAP administrative data	71
VII.11	Impacts on food security, based on 36-month survey data	72
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.....	74
VII.13	SNAP participation rates based on SNAP administrative data, by whether an individual started an activity	75
VIII.1	Summary of RISE costs.....	77
VIII.2	Costs of RISE services, by service type.....	78
VIII.3	Costs of RISE services per RISE group member.....	79
VIII.4	Total costs of all RISE group and control group services	80
VIII.5	Costs for the RISE and control groups, by service type	81
VIII.6	Costs of all services per RISE and control group member	82

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) by Mathematica and MDRC. It would not have been possible without the contributions of many individuals and organizations whose guidance, information, and efforts were critical to the Evaluation of SNAP E&T pilots and the successful completion of this report. We are especially grateful to the individuals who participated in the SNAP E&T pilots, particularly those individuals who completed surveys and participated in focus groups. We also want to give special thanks to the staff members of the State agencies who implemented the SNAP E&T pilots as well as the partners and service providers. Staff from these organizations worked with us to implement the evaluation, provided important information and data, and participated in interviews. We also acknowledge contributions from staff at Insight Policy Research, who played a role in the implementation site visits and led the collection of SNAP administrative data; and Decision Information Resources, who assisted in data collection for the 12-month survey of individuals enrolled in the pilots.

We also are extremely appreciative of the staff at FNS Office of Policy Support (OPS) and FNS Office of Employment and Training (OET) for providing ongoing guidance and feedback on evaluation plans and for reviewing this report. In particular we thank the evaluation's FNS project officer, Anita Singh, as well as her predecessors in this role, Wesley Dean and Danielle Deemer. For this particular evaluation site, we are indebted to Rachel Gragg, the current OET liaison for Washington, and Jackie Windfeldt, the former Washington OET liaison.

The many individuals who contributed to the evaluation and this report are shown below, under their respective organizations in alphabetical order.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support (OPS) and FNS Office of Employment and Training (OET)

Wesley Dean (fmr. OPS)	Rachel Gragg (OET)	Anita Singh (OPS)
Danielle Deemer (fmr. OPS)	Moira Johnston (OET)	Eric Williams (OPS)
Marcie Foster (OET)	Kathryn Law (OPS)	Kaila Wilson (fmr. OET)
Leigh Gantner (OET)	Loretta Robertson (OET)	Jackie Windfeldt (fmr. OET)

Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Washington Employment Security Department (ESD), and Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA)

Charleen Anderson (fmr. DSHS)	Melissa Ford Shaw (DSHS)	Anni Smith (DSHS)
Christina Barras (DSHS)	Glen Haynes (DSHS)	Felicia Talbott (DSHS)
Michael Barabe (HCA)	Shavana Howard (fmr. DSHS)	Madeline Veria-Bogacz (ESD)
Reza Bouzarjomehri (HCA)	Lance Krull (DSHS)	Kellyn Westra (DSHS)
John Camp (fmr. DSHS)	Ryan McLean (DSHS)	Scott Wheeler (ESD)
Sandy Crews (ESD)	Cyndi Presnell (HCA)	Shannon Williams (DSHS)
Linette Davis (DSHS)	Shelly Riddle (DSHS)	George Xu (DSHS)
	Babs Roberts (DSHS)	Kathy Zimmerman (DSHS)

Members of the Technical Working Group

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)
Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield (National Skills Coalition)		

Mathematica

Jeremy Berman	Julie Hartnack	Kelley Monzella
Rachel Bleiweiss-Sande	Leah Jennings	Nora Paxton
Felita Buckner	Kristen Joyce	Allison Pinckney
Jim Cameron	Miranda Kharsa	Milena Raketic
Molly Cameron	Wamaitha Kiambuthi	Linda Rosenberg
Barbara Carlson	Patrick Lavallee	Gretchen Rowe
Laura Castner	Cathy Lu	Betsy Santos
Sharon Clark	Timothy Luyster	Peter Schochet
Mason DeCamillis	Julia Lyskawa	Leah Shiferaw
Amy Defnet	James Mabli	Dan Thal
Dallas Dotter	Kim McDonald	Andy Weiss
Mary Kay Fox	Effie Metropoulos	Dan Welsh
William Garrett		

MDRC

Jonathan Bigelow	Anastasia Korolkova	Natasha Piatnitskaia
Stephen Freedman	Cynthia Miller	Stephanie Rubino
Barbara Goldman	Frieda Molina	Kelsey Schaberg
Gayle Hamilton	David Navarro	Susan Scrivener
Brandon Hawkins	Keith Olejniczak	Makenzi Sumners
Richard Hendra	Nikki Ortolani	Kemar Taylor
Gloriela Iguina-Colón	Liza Paudel	Betsy Tessler
	Alexandra Pennington	Donna Wharton-Fields

We also want to acknowledge the report reviewers and editors at Mathematica and additional reviewers at MDRC, the staff at the Mathematica's Survey Operations Center, the entire research team's efforts in conducting field research and analyzing the qualitative data as well as the efforts to collect, process, and analyze the quantitative data, and the hard work and additional support from research assistants and administrative assistants.

Glossary

ABAWD	Able-bodied adult without dependents. 18- to 49-year-old adult who is not disabled and does not have dependents
BFET	Basic Food Employment and Training. The existing SNAP E&T program in Washington
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
CBO	Community-based organization
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
DSHS	Washington Department of Social and Health Services
eJAS	Electronic Jobs Automated System. The service use data system in Washington
ESD	Washington Employment Security Department
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
GED	General Education Development. A group of subject tests which, when passed, certify that the test taker has high school-level academic skills
HMO	Health maintenance organization
IEP	Individual employment 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
LWIA	Local workforce investment area. A group of one or more counties that provide workforce development services
MIS	Management information system
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)
RISE	Resources to Initiate Successful Employment. The SNAP Employment and Training pilot implemented in Washington
SBCTC	State Board of Community and Technical Colleges
SFS	Strategies for Success. A six-week life skills course
SJI	Seattle Jobs Initiative
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
WDC	Workforce development council
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
WorkFirst	Washington state TANF program

Overview

This report presents findings from the evaluation of a SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) pilot—Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE)—that was implemented in Washington from February 2016 to December 2018. This was one of 10 pilots Congress authorized and funded under the Agricultural Act of 2014 that offered enhanced SNAP E&T services to assist SNAP participants in obtaining employment. The Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) enrolled 5,092 SNAP participants in the pilot, with roughly half randomly assigned to the RISE 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 employment and training services and any other employment and training services available in their communities). DSHS targeted five groups of work registrants—the long-term unemployed, those experiencing homelessness, those with limited English proficiency, veterans, and noncustodial parents with a delinquent payment history—who also had multiple or significant barriers to employment. RISE services were voluntary and expanded upon the existing SNAP E&T program. RISE services were offered in four counties and included comprehensive case management, extensive wraparound and support services, a mandatory six-week life skills course called Strategies for Success (SfS), and work-based learning opportunities, in addition to basic services offered under BFET (job search assistance and job placement).

Although Washington had a SNAP E&T program in place for many years, DSHS teamed with several existing and new partners and providers to design and deliver a package of enhanced services for RISE. DSHS anticipated a high demand for RISE services, but providers struggled to identify and enroll individuals who met the eligibility criteria (having multiple or significant barriers to employment) and faced challenges in retaining individuals in the program. Despite the challenges in getting RISE group members to engage in services, they were more likely than control group members to start an activity, complete an activity, and receive a support service. However, their increased engagement did not lead to an increase in earnings or employment and generally did not affect rates of SNAP participation. Because RISE group members did not earn significantly more than control group members, the overall cost of implementing the pilot outweighed its benefits.

The lack of impacts may reflect the small differences in rates of participation and completion of employment or training-related activities between the RISE and control groups. DSHS faced a unique challenge when this pilot started, as it already operated a robust SNAP E&T program in the State. For RISE to be most likely to have an impact on individuals' outcomes, DSHS had to ensure it was able to identify, develop, and implement services that were significant enhancements to what the control group could already receive. The primary differences between RISE and the existing services were offering the SfS course, work-based learning, and more robust support services. However, less than half of RISE group members started SfS and fewer completed it; virtually no one started work-based learning; and although RISE offered more generous support services, they were offered inconsistently across providers. Therefore, many RISE group members did not receive the services or participate in the activities that were the main differentiators between RISE and the control, resulting in small differences in overall rates of participation in education or training-related activities between research groups. This suggests that having a robust existing SNAP E&T program, created less room for substantial improvement in take-up and completion of activities through RISE and likely contributed to the lack of impacts.

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, Kentucky, 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 a criminal history 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—Washington.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.

Washington pilot background

In February 2016, the Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), which administers SNAP, began enrollment in its pilot, Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE), in four counties (King, Pierce, Spokane, and Yakima). From February 2016 to March 2018, DSHS enrolled 5,092 SNAP participants in the pilot. It targeted five groups of work registrants³—the long-term unemployed, those experiencing homelessness, those with limited English proficiency, veterans, and noncustodial parents with a delinquent payment history—who also had barriers to employment (including having at least one “critical barrier,” such as homelessness, domestic violence, criminal history, and substance use disorders; or three “general barriers,” such as lacking needed skills, a high school diploma, child care, or transportation).

RISE services were voluntary and expanded upon the existing SNAP E&T program called Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET). BFET offered job search assistance, job placement, and limited participant reimbursement for support services. RISE group members could receive the basic services offered under BFET but also were offered comprehensive case management, extensive wraparound and support services to address barriers, a six-week life skills course called Strategies for Success (SfS), and work-based learning opportunities (on-the-job training, subsidized and regular employment, and internships and externships). As appropriate, noncustodial parents also were referred to the State’s Alternative Solutions program to help those with a child support enforcement order to understand child support policies and help them arrange payment plans for arrears, lift suspension of drivers’ licenses, develop family reunification plans, and explore child support debt forgiveness.

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

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

³ 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.

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 RISE group or a control group in roughly equivalent numbers. Individuals assigned to the RISE group were eligible for the enhanced set of services developed under the pilot, whereas control group members were eligible for services available through the existing SNAP E&T program in the State (BFET). Individuals in both the RISE 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. This research design allows us to confidently attribute differences in outcomes between the groups to the RISE 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 RISE staff and RISE 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

RISE overview

DSHS developed RISE to be more client centered and to focus on reducing short- and long-term barriers. The pilot also allowed DSHS to engage hard-to-serve populations, who were not well served by BFET. DSHS administered RISE and contracted with 22 community-based organizations and three community and technical colleges to conduct intake and deliver services. DSHS also contracted with the Washington Employment Security Department (ESD), the Washington Division of Child Support, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and the local workforce development councils in each pilot county to provide or oversee services.

After random assignment, individuals who were assigned to the RISE group met with a case manager to complete a barrier assessment and plan for reducing those barriers sufficiently to take part in RISE activities. Once barriers were resolved or reduced, which could take a few weeks to several months, individuals enrolled in the six-week SfS course. After completing SfS and developing an individual employment plan, providers could connect individuals with occupational skills training, education, work-based learning opportunities, or employment based on their specific goals. All members of the RISE

group received comprehensive case management and support services while they participated in activities.

Services and activities offered to RISE group members included:

Strategies for Success. The SfS course was required for all RISE group members. The course consisted of six modules that covered five areas: work concepts, health and well-being, communication, personal strength builders, and community engagement. Staff from ESD delivered the course in person four days a week. SfS instructors reported that it was not uncommon for individuals to start and stop SfS due to their barriers, which extended the time it took an individual to complete the course beyond six weeks. Focus group members reported mixed views of SfS. Some described positive experiences, whereas others did not find much value in the course or expressed frustration with the content and length. Of those focus group members who had left RISE before completing services, many cited the length of SfS as their reason. To respond to low completion rates and concerns from staff, DSHS and ESD made several changes to the process to allow individuals more flexibility in completing the course.

Education and training. RISE group members participated in education and occupational skills training based on their goals. Individuals who were not proficient in English or who needed basic education skills were referred to adult education services. Individuals who were interested in postsecondary education or occupational skills training could participate in these activities at local community colleges or other training providers in the area. Some providers offered training in house. The types of occupational skills training individuals pursued varied based on interests and goals, and the duration of training could last three to nine months.

Work-based learning. RISE offered up to 240 hours of work-based learning (including internships, externships, on-the-job training, and subsidized and unsubsidized employment) to some individuals after they completed SfS. Providers targeted the opportunities to individual who had a skill deficiency or a gap in their resume, or specifically requested a work-based learning opportunity. Not all providers allocated funds for work-based learning, so some of them were not able to offer paid work-based learning opportunities. In these situations, case managers indicated they would still try to find unpaid work-based learning opportunities or regular job placements. Some providers later negotiated for increased contract budgets to be able to offer more work-based learning opportunities, but slots were still limited for most providers.

Job search and placement assistance. Many providers offered job search assistance and job placement services to individuals. RISE case managers often provided assistance with writing resumes, identifying employers, and interviewing strategies through one-on-one case management meetings. Job search assistance and job placement activities mostly occurred after individuals completed SfS and/or their work-based learning activities (if applicable).

Comprehensive case management and support services. RISE providers offered comprehensive case management to all individuals throughout each step of the RISE pathway. The RISE model included comprehensive case management focused on mentoring, coaching, and reducing barriers to employment by providing support services. Although RISE case managers were required to make contact with each member of the RISE group at least weekly, many staff reported communicating with individuals more frequently, especially at the beginning of RISE when caseloads were low. To address barriers to employment and participation, RISE offered support services, including assistance with transportation (such as gas cards, driver's license fees, bike repair, and car repair); basic education and training expenses (such as books, tools, testing fees, and supplies); clothing; child care; medical services not covered by

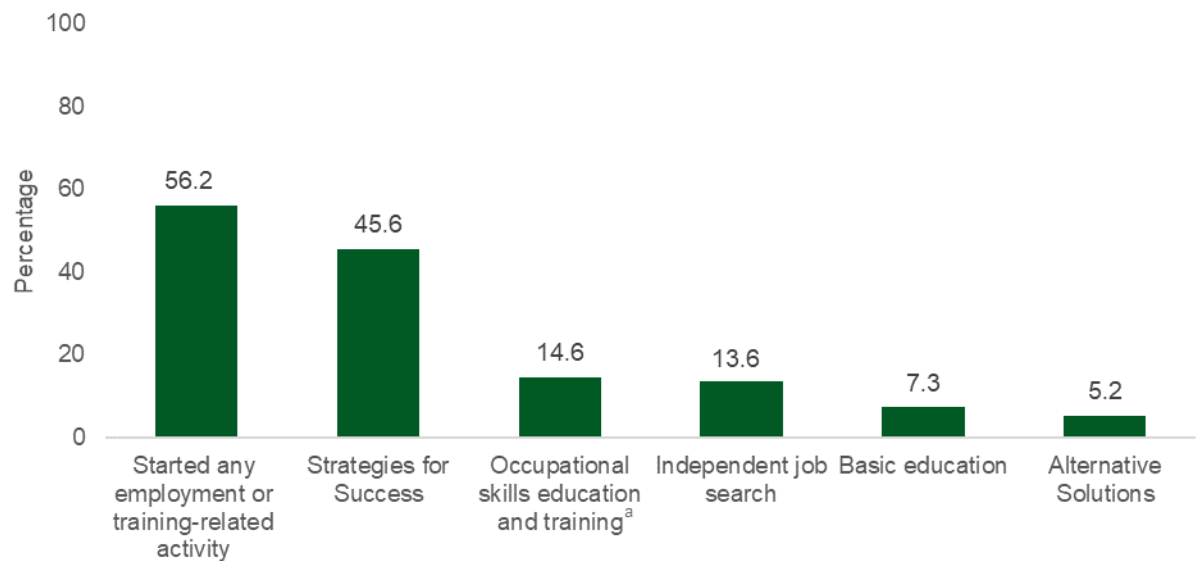
insurance (for example, counseling and eyeglasses); housing (such as short-term rental assistance); utilities; and personal hygiene expenses. However, providers did not budget for support services consistently; a few providers did not offer the full range of supports or at the same value.

RISE also referred individuals to the Alternative Solutions program, which helped to reduce barriers related to child support. The program, administered by the Division of Child Support, assisted individuals owing arrears on their child support by educating them on child support policies and procedures, signing them up for child support payment plans, releasing revoked driver’s licenses, stalling enforcement actions against them, convening review boards to explore writing off some of their debt, and helping them work toward family reunification.

Participation in RISE services and activities

Almost all (91 percent) of the individuals randomly assigned to the RISE group received at least one service, meaning they were assessed, completed their IEP, or started an employment or training-related activity. However, only slightly more than half of RISE group members (56 percent; Exhibit ES.1) ultimately started an employment or training-related activity. Most of those started SfS (46 percent), but only 27 percent of RISE group members (or 60 percent of those who started SfS) completed it and were able to begin other activities. Fewer individuals started each of the other employment or training-related activities, such as occupational skills training (15 percent) or basic education (7 percent). Only about 1 percent of RISE group members started work-based learning, an activity that differentiated RISE from BFET. Of those who completed occupational skills training, only 1 percent obtained a credential or certification.

Exhibit ES.1. About half of RISE group members started an employment or training-related activity, with most starting Strategies for Success or occupational skills training



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,548 RISE group members.

^a Based on the data provided, occupational skills training and postsecondary education could not be separated for analysis. However, individuals mostly earned occupational skills training certifications rather than postsecondary degrees.

Almost all RISE group members (94 percent) had at least one contact with a case manager; 63 percent of individuals received a support service. The majority (58 percent) received transportation assistance, and 20 to 30 percent of individuals received other types of supports such as hygiene assistance, clothing, housing assistance, or assistance with education and training-related materials. On average, RISE group members who received support services each received a total of \$798 in support services payments.

Individuals spent an average of seven months in RISE. Most exited RISE within their first year, and the majority of exits happened within six months after enrollment. Individuals most often exited due to loss of contact with case managers or because the individual chose to leave RISE before completing services. Many individuals who enrolled in the pilot exited SNAP in the first 12 months after random assignment.

Differences in service receipt for the RISE and control groups

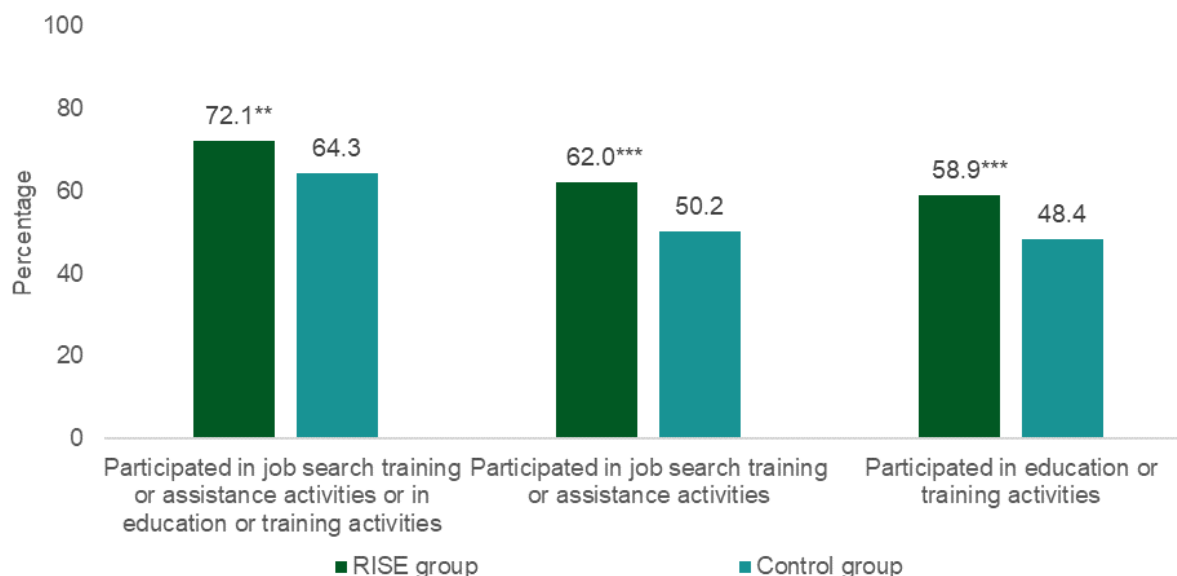
Whether RISE impacted individuals' employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance depends, in part, on whether there were differences between the RISE and control groups in their receipt of services and their participation in and completion of activities. To provide context for the impacts of RISE, 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 RISE, through existing SNAP E&T, or were generally available in the community, through programs such as Work Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) or through community colleges, nonprofits, or other organizations.

During the three years following random assignment, the RISE group was more likely than the control group to participate in job search training activities and in education and training activities. Seventy-two percent of the RISE group participated in a job search training or assistance activity or in an education or training activity compared to 64 percent of the control group (Exhibit ES.2). In addition, the RISE group was more likely than the control group to participate in job search training or assistance activities (12 percentage point difference) and education or training activities (11 percentage point difference). Relative to the control group, the RISE group was more likely to participate in job search training activities and in education and training activities in Year 1 following random assignment. Rates of participation in job search training activities were similar across research groups in Years 2 and 3. Likewise, the rate of participation in education or training-related activities was slightly higher for the RISE group, relative to the control group, in Year 2 but the rates were similar between groups in Year 3. The RISE group had higher rates of participation than the control group in general job skills training (12 percentage points), but not in other types of activities such as occupational skills training, education, or work-based learning.

RISE group members also were more likely than control group members to complete an activity. Compared with individuals in the control group, individuals in the RISE group were 12 percentage points more likely than control group members to complete an activity but were just as likely to receive an occupational certificate or license. There was a significant difference in the percentage of individuals who received one in Year 1 following random assignment (4 percentage points), but not in Years 2 and 3.

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

Exhibit ES.2. Over a three-year period, the RISE group participated in activities offered by RISE, existing SNAP E&T, or the community at higher rates than the control group



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

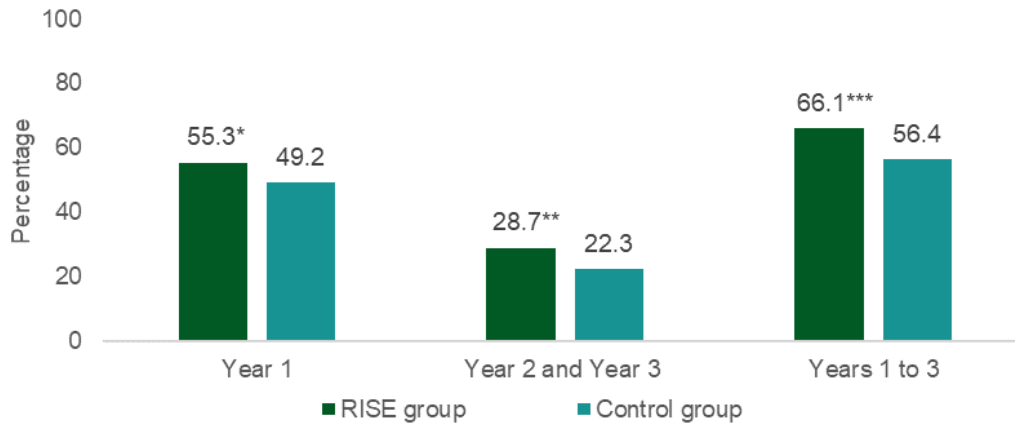
Notes: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

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

RISE group members were also more likely than the control group to receive case management (66 versus 56 percent; Exhibit ES.3). On average, RISE group members had five additional contacts with an employment professional or case manager than control group members (13 versus 7 contacts, with rounding).

RISE group members also were more likely than control group members to receive support services. About 83 percent of individuals in the RISE group received a support service compared to 73 percent in the control group (Exhibit ES.4). The largest differences were for the receipt of transportation assistance; housing assistance; and clothes, uniforms, tools, or other supplies and equipment.

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

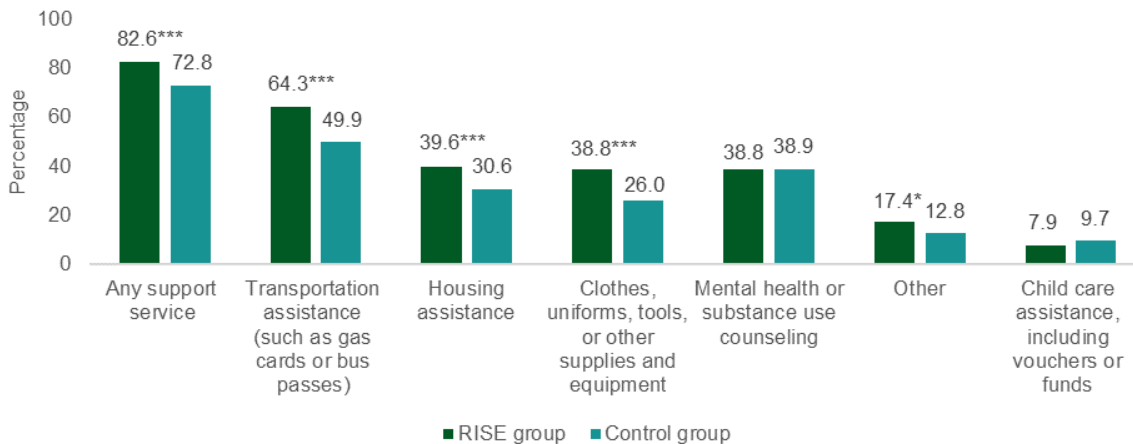


Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Notes: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members. The 12-month survey requested information about receipt of case management and support 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 and support services between the date of the 12-month interview and the date of the 36-month interview. As a result, it is not possible to estimate receipt of assistance separately in Years 2 and 3.

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

Exhibit ES.4. RISE 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.

Notes: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members. "Other" included assistance with payment of utilities such as electricity, phone, heat, or gas; food assistance; and assistance with medical care.

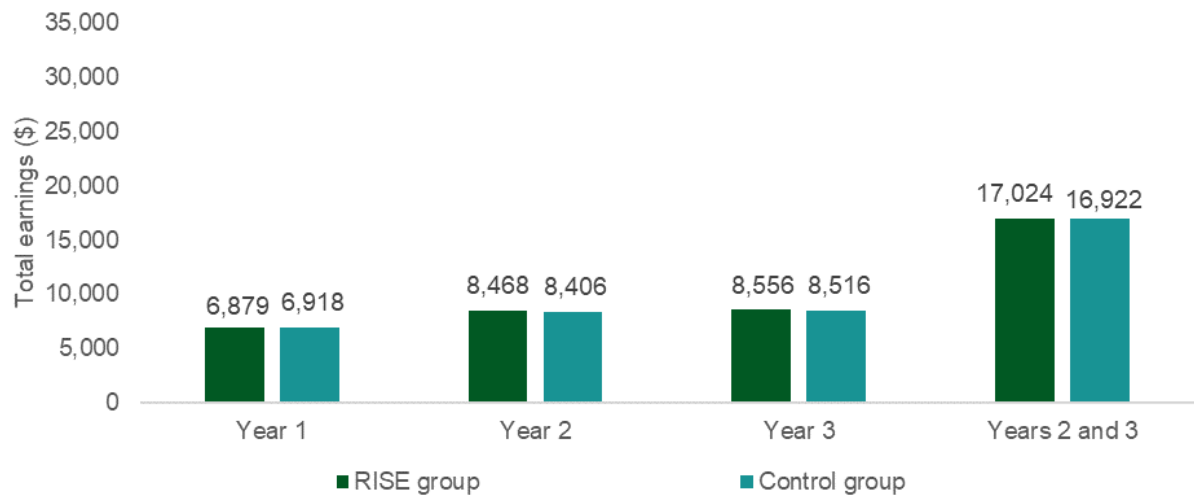
***/**/* Difference between the RISE group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Impacts of RISE on employment and SNAP participation outcomes

We estimated the impacts of RISE on individual outcomes over the three years following random assignment. Before analyzing the data, we selected two primary outcomes: earnings (based on both the UI and survey data) and SNAP participation. Analyses of earnings and employment were based on both UI and survey data due to differences in data coverage or quality, or in the analysis samples and time periods covered in the data. 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 RISE 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, RISE 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 (Exhibits ES.5 and ES.6). Based on each data source, both research groups experienced increases in average earnings over time.

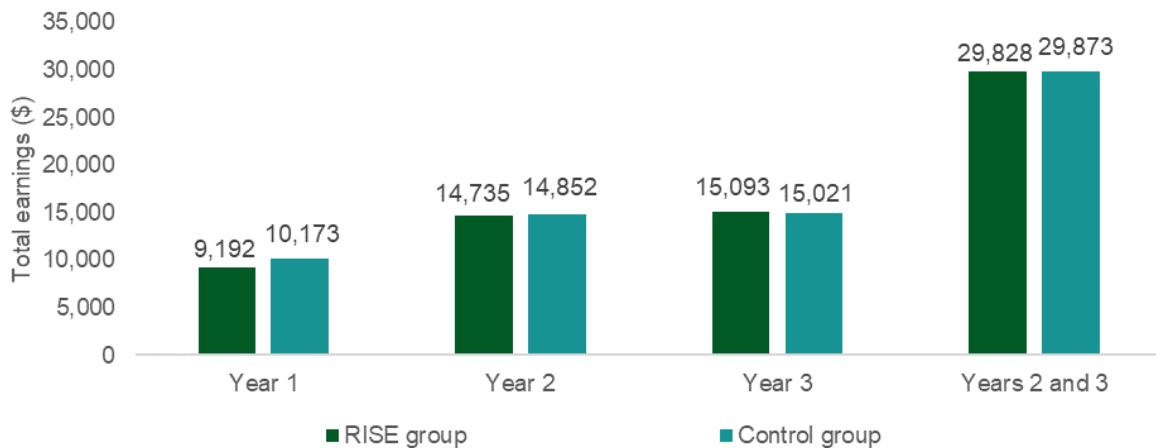
Exhibit ES.5. RISE did not affect earnings (UI data)



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,235 RISE group members and 2,231 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the RISE group and control group is significantly different from zero at the .01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

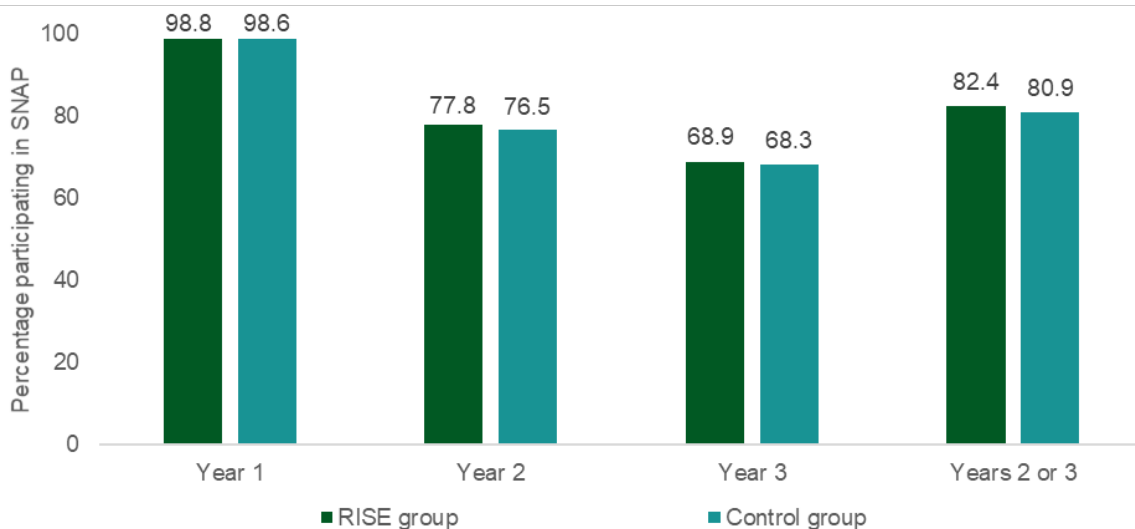
Exhibit ES.6. RISE did not affect earnings (survey data)

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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

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

SNAP participation. RISE did not affect SNAP participation. About 82 percent of RISE members and 81 percent of control group members participated in SNAP at some point during this period (Years 2 and 3) after random assignment (Exhibit ES.7). The lack of impacts of RISE on SNAP participation reflects similar decreases each year in the rate of SNAP participation for the RISE and control groups. For example, SNAP participation rates decreased from about 99 percent for both groups in Year 1 to about 69 percent in Year 3.

Exhibit ES.7. SNAP participation rates based on SNAP administrative data were similar for the RISE and control groups in each year

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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,235 RISE group members and 2,231 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the RISE 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 both UI and survey data, RISE did not lead to an increase in the percentage of individuals who were employed in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) following random assignment. Based on the UI data, about 63 to 64 percent of individuals in each research group were employed in Years 2 and 3, and based on the survey data, 73 percent of individuals in the RISE group and 71 percent of individuals in the control group were employed. In both data sources, the employment rates in Years 1, 2, and 3, individually, were similar across research groups.

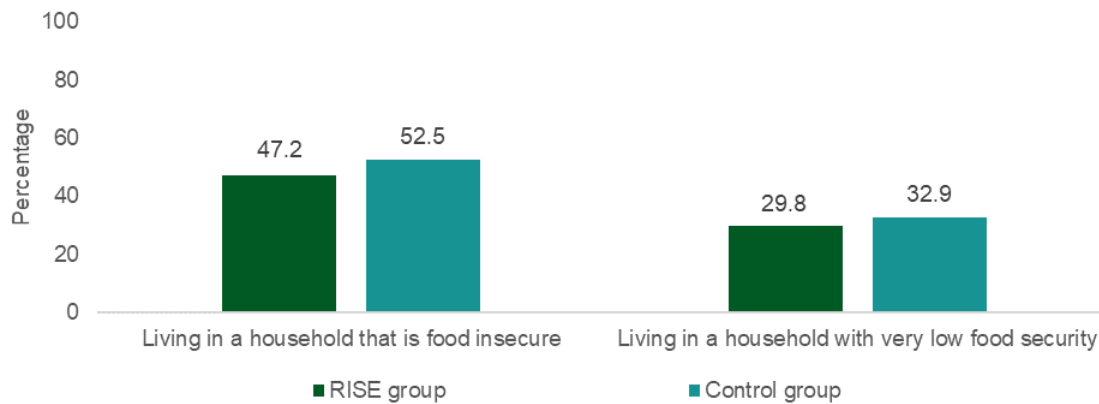
Employment rates provide information about the percentage of individuals employed during a given time period but do not describe the extent or duration of employment. To assess these employment characteristics, we examined the average amount of time individuals were employed each year. Findings were similar to those for rates of employment. Both data sources showed that the RISE and control groups were employed for similar numbers of quarters/months in each year. Also, there were generally no impacts of RISE on hours worked or on the characteristics of jobs among the employed. The majority of employed individuals in both research groups received an employer-offered benefit, but those in the RISE group who were employed were 10 percentage points more likely than employed control group members to receive paid holidays. They were also more likely than employed control group members to be a regular status employee and were less likely than employed control group members to be self-employed or a day laborer.

SNAP benefits and exit. There were no impacts of RISE on the average SNAP benefits received, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the maximum benefit amount. The average SNAP benefit amount in Years 2 and 3 for the RISE group was \$76 less than for the control group, but the difference was not statistically significant.

The RISE and control groups had similar likelihoods of exiting SNAP across the three years following random assignment—74 percent of the RISE group and 73 percent of the control 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 26 percent of the RISE group participated in SNAP for the full three years, SNAP participation at the end of this period was 58 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 57 percent of the RISE 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), 33 percent had two spells, and 10 percent had three or more spells. For the control group, these percentages were 57, 32, and 11, respectively.

Impacts of RISE on other outcomes

Rates of food insecurity were similar in the RISE and control groups. About 47 percent of RISE group members were food insecure compared to 53 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 (30 versus 33 percent).

Exhibit ES.8. RISE did not affect food insecurity

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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

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

There generally were no statistically significant differences between the RISE 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 research 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 (60 versus 61 percent), and similar percentages of each group were homeless (7 versus 8 percent).

RISE costs relative to benefits

RISE costs. DSHS and its partners and providers reported spending \$23,362,819 from April 2015 to December 2018 on the planning and implementation of RISE (\$2,282,258 during the planning period, \$4,154,067 for recruitment, and \$16,926,494 for RISE services and activities). The FNS grant funded 73 percent of these costs; partners and providers leveraged other funding sources for the remaining 27 percent. Administration costs accounted for 46 percent of total costs, including time for staff meetings, supervision, and other activities (\$10,763,356). Direct services accounted for 26 percent of total costs (\$6,163,139), with case management and support services 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 RISE and control group members—that is, the differential costs of RISE services—and compared the differential costs of RISE to the value of benefits received by RISE group members. As in the analysis of services received, we considered costs associated with all services and activities, including those delivered by RISE as well as community programs and organizations. This approach reflects the fact that impacts of RISE on individuals' outcomes, such as earnings, were influenced by *all* services individuals received during the 36-month follow-up period, not just those received through RISE.

Based on data from the survey, the estimated total costs of all RISE group services were \$27,545,011, including costs for both direct services and ongoing administration. This estimate is about 18 percent higher than the costs of RISE services alone (\$23,362,819), which indicates that some RISE group members received services from community programs and organizations while they were enrolled in

RISE. The services received by the control group measure what services would have been available to the RISE group members if RISE were not in place. The estimated costs of all control group services received by the RISE group members were \$7,232,984, including costs for direct services and ongoing administration. On average, the total costs of all direct services and activities received by RISE group members was \$7,884 per individual, on average. The total costs of all services control group members received through existing SNAP E&T and the community were \$2,566, on average.

Estimates of the benefits received by RISE group members reflect earnings and fringe benefits they accrued during the 36-month follow-up period. These data were obtained from the two sources of data 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 RISE group benefits and costs relative to the control group from multiple perspectives, including those of (1) individuals enrolled in RISE, (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 RISE group members received were positive for RISE 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 \$4,667 per RISE group member according to UI wage records and by \$5,804 per RISE group member according to 36-month survey data. These findings were robust to changes in assumptions about benefits and costs from all perspectives, such as the values of fringe benefits, taxes, and present values.

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 RISE—the innovative SNAP E&T program Washington designed and implemented targeting SNAP work registrants with barriers to employment—was effective in achieving these goals.

Although Washington had a robust existing SNAP E&T program in place for many years, DSHS teamed with several existing and new partners and providers to design and deliver a package of enhanced services for RISE. DSHS anticipated a high demand for RISE services, but providers struggled to identify and enroll individuals who met the eligibility criteria (RISE targeted individuals with multiple or significant barriers to employment) and faced challenges in retaining individuals in the program. Despite the challenges in getting RISE group members to engage in services, they 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. Because RISE group members did not earn significantly more than control group members, the overall cost of implementing the pilot outweighed its benefits.

RISE impacts in context of employment and training literature. The RISE 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 RISE. 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 offered by RISE (such as intensive job readiness and soft skills training and support services) could be effective. As a result, it is important to understand how take-up and completion of RISE activities and receipt of services, as well as challenges experienced in implementation may have contributed to the evaluation findings.

Discussion of RISE impacts. Although RISE did not lead to increased earnings and reduced participation in SNAP, it increased the percentages of individuals who received case management and support services relative to the control group, as well as the percentage of those who participated in employment or training-related activities. This accomplishment is notable, given the prevalence and extent of barriers RISE group members faced—only 9 percent were employed at the time of random assignment, and 28 percent did not have a high school diploma. Many individuals faced other barriers related to homelessness, domestic violence, criminal backgrounds, and mental and physical health issues. The higher rates of receipt of case management and support services among RISE group members, particularly transportation assistance, may have allowed them to overcome barriers associated not only with starting employment or training-related activities, but also sustaining participation over time and ultimately completing those activities. Indeed, individuals in the RISE group participated for two months longer and two hours more per week than the control group; the RISE group also had higher completion rates. These differences did not translate into impacts on individuals' earnings, however.

The lack of an impact may reflect the small differences in rates of participation and completion of employment or training-related activities between the RISE and control groups. DSHS faced a unique challenge when this pilot started, as it already operated a robust SNAP E&T program (BFET) in the State. DSHS had to ensure it was able to identify, develop, and implement services that were significant enhancements to what the control group could already receive through BFET for RISE to be most likely to have an impact on individuals' outcomes. The primary differences between RISE and BFET were offering the SfS course, work-based learning, and more robust support services. However, less than half of RISE group members started SfS and fewer completed it. Virtually no one started work-based learning, despite DSHS's goal of having 15 percent of RISE group members participate. Also, although the RISE support services were more generous than those offered under BFET, they were offered inconsistently across providers, and some providers stopped offering support services if they exhausted their budgets in a given year. Therefore, many RISE group members did not receive the services or participate in the activities that were the main differentiators between RISE and BFET, which resulted in small differences in overall rates of participation in education or training-related activities between research groups. Although the RISE group had higher rates of participation than the control group in general job skills training (some of what was provided through SfS), there were no significant differences between the two groups for other types of activities, including occupational skills training, education, or work-based learning. All of these findings suggest that having a robust existing SNAP E&T program, created less room for substantial improvement in take-up and completion of activities through RISE and likely contributed to the lack of impacts.

In addition, because only slightly more than half of RISE group members participated in a substantive activity, the overall impacts on outcomes such as earnings could have been diluted by those who did not participate in activities. 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 and earnings for individuals who started an activity, and no impact on employment and earnings for those who did not start one. It also showed a similar pattern of findings for individuals who completed activities versus those who started but did not complete them, although differences across impacts were not statistically significant. Overall, this evidence suggests that the take-up of RISE employment or training-related activities may have played a role in connecting individuals to meaningful employment.

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

- **Earnings impacts might depend on the type of activities in which individuals participated.** Earnings impacts may not be apparent for all RISE group members, but that finding does not mean specific activities, such as occupational skills training or work-based learning, were ineffective. Assessing the effectiveness of services and activities separately and in combination would help to identify promising practices for improving outcomes.
- **The COVID-19 pandemic began during the 36-month follow-up survey period.** Outcomes measured in Year 3 for participants who were randomly assigned in the pilot between March 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. However, there is no indication that it may have hindered our ability to identify impacts in Year 3. Earnings, employment rates, and SNAP participation rates generally were similar in Year 1 and Year 2. Although it is possible that impacts may have emerged in Year 3 in the absence of the pandemic, the pre-pandemic patterns of changes in outcomes over time do not provide much support for this conclusion. Nevertheless, the pandemic may have affected individuals' ability to participate in employment or training-related activities in Year 3 and also may have affected outcomes differently based on their occupation, if they were employed, or the occupation they were training to enter.
- **RISE costs were higher than the financial benefits of the program, but this primarily reflects the absence of an impact on earnings.** The net benefit was negative for RISE due to the differential costs of RISE group services not being 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 some of the RISE services and activities were newly developed for the pilot and were experimental (such as Sfs and work-based learning). Even though we excluded the costs of planning and recruitment in considering the cost differential between RISE and control group services, the costs of RISE 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.

Despite RISE not leading to impacts on earnings or receipt of public assistance, SNAP E&T program administrators can learn from the implementation of the RISE model. Many programs serve a range of individuals, including some portion facing substantial barriers that limit engagement in employment or program activities. Most SNAP E&T program models are not designed to fully support this population because addressing such barriers may require a substantial amount of time and resources to resolve. For this reason, DSHS chose to develop and test the RISE model specifically for the subset of individuals who had significant barriers to employment. To work with this population, DSHS designed a model that had upfront comprehensive assessments of potential barriers and developed goal-based IEPs providing steps for overcoming them. It also focused on reducing barriers before referring individuals to employment or training-related activities, giving them the time and flexibility needed to stabilize their lives and set themselves up for success in activities or a job. These kinds of models require that case

managers have sufficient time and manageable caseload sizes to offer the coaching and support individuals require to progress. Although providing larger amounts of support services to an individual or hiring more staff for case management may not be feasible for all SNAP E&T programs, administrators could change models to include more upfront assessments and planning for resolving barriers. Also, allowing more flexibility for individuals to move through the program at their own pace could help meet the needs of hard-to-serve populations.

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 who were enrolled in the pilot. 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 history 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 services,⁶ 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

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.

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).

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—Washington.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 Washington's pilot

Washington began enrolling participants in its pilot, Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE), on February 1, 2016, in four counties (Exhibit I.1). Three of the four pilot counties (King, Pierce, and Spokane) include both urban and suburban areas, whereas Yakima County is primarily rural. King County, which includes Seattle, and Pierce County, which includes Tacoma, represent the first and second most populous counties in Washington, respectively. In the year before Washington began RISE enrollment, the average unemployment rate in the State was 5.2 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019).

Exhibit I.1. RISE locations



The Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) administers SNAP. Its SNAP E&T program, called Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET), is voluntary. At the time of the evaluation, BFET was offered to all SNAP participants, but many of those who participated were able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs)—adults ages 18 to 49 who are not disabled and have no dependents. ABAWDs and others interested in the program were referred to a contracted service provider in their local area to receive SNAP E&T services. DSHS contracted with more than 65 service providers that offer assessment, job search assistance, basic education, occupational skills training, job placement, case management, and support services. DSHS reported that,

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.

before the pilot, 70 percent of individuals in BFET found employment at the median hourly wage after participating in the program.

DSHS, in collaboration with other State agencies, community-based organizations (CBOs), and community colleges, developed RISE to provide target services to the 30 percent of individuals in BFET who were not finding employment because they faced barriers not being addressed through the existing services. RISE targeted five groups of work registrants—the long-term unemployed, those experiencing homelessness, those with limited English proficiency, veterans, and noncustodial parents with a delinquent payment history—who also had barriers to employment (including having at least one “critical barrier,” such as homelessness, domestic violence, criminal history, and substance use disorders; or three “general barriers,” such as lacking needed skills, a high school diploma, child care, or transportation).⁹ DSHS administered RISE and contracted with 21 CBOs and three community and technical colleges to conduct intake and deliver services (Exhibit I.2). Of the 21 CBOs, 4 offered services in multiple counties; all others offered services within a single county. DSHS also contracted with several organizations to provide or oversee services, including the Washington Employment Security Department (ESD), the Division of Child Support, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and the local workforce development councils in each pilot county.

RISE group members could receive the basic services offered under BFET but also were offered comprehensive case management, extensive wraparound and support services to address barriers, a six-week life skills course called Strategies for Success (SfS), and work-based learning opportunities (on-the-job training, subsidized and regular employment, and internships and externships). As appropriate, noncustodial parents also were referred to the State’s Alternative Solutions program to help those with a child support enforcement order to understand child support policies and help them arrange payment plans for arrears, lift suspension of licenses, develop family reunification plans, and explore child support debt forgiveness.

From February 2016 to March 2018, Washington enrolled 5,092 SNAP participants into the pilot. Individuals enrolled were randomly assigned in roughly equivalent numbers to a treatment group (that received enhanced services; referred to as “the RISE group”) and a control group (that received existing SNAP E&T services). DSHS continued providing services until December 2018.

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.

Exhibit I.2. Pilot characteristics

Characteristics	
Pilot operation period	February 2016 to December 2018
Location	King County, Pierce County, Spokane County, Yakima County
Grantee agency	Washington Department of Social and Health Services
Key partner	State Board of Community and Technical Colleges
Key providers	Washington Employment Security Department Washington Division of Child Support Local workforce development councils 21 community-based organizations Three community and technical colleges
Target population	Work registrants who were long-term unemployed, homeless, veterans, noncustodial parents with child support arrears, or with limited English proficiency, and who had at least one critical or at least three general barriers to employment
Number enrolled	5,092
Program type	Voluntary
Existing SNAP E&T program	Job readiness training, basic skills/English as a second language training, occupational skills training, job search assistance, job placement, and participant reimbursement for support services
Key RISE services	Comprehensive case management Extensive wraparound and support services to address barriers A mandatory six-week life skills course (Strategies for Success) Work-based learning opportunities (on-the-job training, subsidized and regular employment, and internships and externships) All available Basic Food Employment and Training services

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 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 Washington for each component of the evaluation (Rowe et al. 2021). The implementation and cost analyses described the planning and early implementation periods of the pilots, 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 (4,466, or 87.7 percent) who eventually enrolled in the pilots.

The interim report described several notable findings:

- **Implementation.** Washington successfully developed services, expanded the number of providers in the pilot areas, enrolled individuals within a year of receiving the grant, and implemented the pilot model mostly as intended. However, staff faced some challenges, including identifying and enrolling individuals and keeping those who were enrolled engaged in services. Those enrolled also faced significant barriers, and staff found it took more time and resources than anticipated to help individuals resolve these barriers, which also led to slow progression through services.
- **Participation.** Although almost all individuals in the RISE group met with a case manager, started an assessment, or received a support service, just over half of this group ultimately started an employment or training-related activity. Most RISE group members left the pilot within 12 months after enrollment, with the majority leaving in the first 6 months, often before completing services.
- **Impact.** Although the RISE group was more likely than the control group to start and complete job search training activities and education and occupational skills training activities, RISE did not lead to an increase in employment and earnings, but did lead to an increase in the likelihood of participating in SNAP within the first year after individuals enrolled.

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 DSHS stopped providing services in December 2018. 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 RISE 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 RISE.
- Chapter V presents findings from the participation analysis, which describe the services that individuals in the RISE group received.
- Chapter VI describes differences in the services received by the RISE group and the control group.
- Chapter VII presents findings from the impact analysis, which describes the impact of RISE on employment, earnings, benefit receipt, and other outcomes.
- Chapter VIII describes the costs of services the RISE 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 an overview of the SNAP E&T program; 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 RISE 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 (November 2018): The last year of pilot operations, as well as planning for the end of the pilot and sustainability of its 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 DSHS and State-level, the partner, and RISE service providers; structured observations of service provider operations; in-depth interviews with four RISE group members who participated in activities and received services; three in-person focus groups with individuals who were actively participating or had previously participated in RISE; and two focus group (one in person and one virtually) with employers that provided work-based learning opportunities to RISE group members. The employers spanned a variety of industries and represented areas across Washington.

3. **Administrative service use data.** DSHS and its providers collected and shared administrative data that documented the types of training, education, and services they provided to RISE group members and, where applicable, 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 RISE's service period (December 2018).
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

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.

who had earnings for 8 quarters (two years) before the date of random assignment, at least 12 quarters after random assignment for individuals randomly assigned through September 2017, and at least 8 quarters after random assignment for individuals randomly assigned after September 2017. The data contained earnings amounts for each quarter, which we also used to construct indicators of quarterly employment status.

5. **SNAP administrative data.** DSHS provided SNAP administrative caseload data. We used these data to construct measures of receipt of public assistance (receipt of SNAP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF]), SNAP and TANF benefit amounts, and income. We also used these data to characterize individuals' recent history of SNAP participation. DSHS provided monthly data 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 were 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 (1,576 RISE and control group members). We also conducted telephone surveys about 36 months after random assignment among individuals who responded to the 12-month survey (989 RISE and control group members). 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 between the 12- and 36-month surveys. These surveys also 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 and end dates (if applicable); and characteristics of the jobs, such as hours worked per week, weekly earnings, job type, fringe benefits, and occupation.
7. **Cost data.** To estimate RISE costs, we collected data from cost workbooks completed by DSHS and partners and providers through the end of the RISE service period. The workbooks were the basis for calculating total costs and describing the categories of costs for the RISE 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 RISE 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 we incorporated the information from technical assistance and monitoring into findings when appropriate. Information from the focus groups and case studies is included to provide context; however, it is important to note that we collected these data from small numbers of RISE individuals and employers, and their experiences and opinions are not necessarily representative of the entire RISE group or all employers.

We organized the data by topic, interviewee, and pilot office to facilitate analysis by type of respondent (for example, DSHS 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 lessons learned.

2. Participation analysis

The participation analysis used administrative service use data recorded by service providers to summarize engagement and participation in services and activities following random assignment for RISE group members (control group members were not included in this analysis). The data measured individuals' receipt of services and participation in activities during the entire service period in which individuals could have been engaged in services (February 2016 through December 2018). All individuals enrolled in RISE through March 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 randomly assigned through December 2017 (Appendix Table D.1).¹¹

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

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

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

The analysis was based primarily on 12- and 36-month survey data, which were available for both RISE and control group members 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, whereas the 36-month survey provided similar information from the date of the 12-month interview until about 36 months after random assignment. We combined these 12- and 36-month survey data to form a single longitudinal data file that describes, for each member of the RISE and control groups, the employment-related services and education and training activities in which they participated 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

¹¹ Due to the limitation of available data, the main impact analyses restricted the individuals included to those 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 RISE and control group members; we present some 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 (*continued*)

through RISE; existing SNAP E&T; or providers in the community, such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs, community colleges, nonprofits, or other organizations.

We compared regression-adjusted averages of measures of service receipt for the RISE 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 RISE and control groups were statistically significant.

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

To estimate how RISE affected individuals' outcomes, we compared the average outcomes of the RISE and control groups over the 36 months following random assignment. Because RISE and control group members' baseline characteristics on average 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 included employment status, earnings, and job characteristics, such as hours worked and occupation. We measured employment and earnings 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.

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

included education in the form of adult basic education or General Education Development (GED) courses, English as a second language (ESL) classes, or college courses; occupational skills training programs that prepared individuals for specific occupations; general job skills training programs that helped individuals learn widely applicable job skills and readied them for work; and work-based learning activities, such as paid or unpaid internships and apprenticeships.

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).

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 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 have differed 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 randomly assigned from February 2016 through December 2017, whereas UI wage records for RISE included individuals randomly assigned from February 2016 through September 2017. The shorter time frame for the UI wage records reflects a typical lag in the availability of these administrative data associated with employer reporting schedules and the need for State agencies to process data after employers have reported them. Finally, we note that even though there are differences between the data sources, each should provide unbiased estimates of the impacts of RISE on the outcomes they measure because the RISE and control groups were balanced on 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 RISE 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 or because of survey nonresponse or missing administrative records data. Regressions controlled for individuals’ characteristics as measured at the time of random assignment.¹⁶ We used t-tests to determine whether there were significant differences between the RISE 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 the RISE and control groups were representative of all individuals enrolled in the pilot in the State. We constructed these weights to reflect the random

¹⁵ An analysis of the differences in individual characteristics of survey responders and nonresponders, and the differences between research groups, is in the technical supplement.

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

¹⁷ Analyses in this report tested for statistical significance at the 0.01, 0.05, and 0.10 levels. We used the 0.10 level because the evaluation was assessing the effectiveness of new interventions for which there was no previous evidence of effectiveness for SNAP participants. A more stringent statistical significance threshold often is 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 aimed 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.

assignment process and, for analyses based on the survey data, adjust for survey nonresponse bias based on observable characteristics recorded prior to random assignment.

We estimated the impact of RISE 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 RISE. To help guard against this problem, known as multiple 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 RISE 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 63 percent of individuals who were randomly assigned through December 2017, the COVID-19 pandemic took place during their third year after random assignment [defined by the nationwide enactment of the CARES Act on March 27, 2020].) Although RISE'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 RISE. 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 RISE received in dollar terms through changes in earnings and public assistance with the costs of the services provided during the RISE service period. The analysis estimates the extent to which the benefits exceeded the costs of providing services to the RISE 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 RISE; (2) the costs of all services provided to RISE group members through RISE and the community; and (3) the costs of all services provided to control group members through existing SNAP E&T 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 RISE and control group members received is the basis for the cost-benefit analysis.

Costs of RISE. The costs of the RISE included those for planning, recruiting, and delivering services. We based the estimates of RISE costs on cost data provided by DSHS 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. DSHS, YWCA,

P4P and 33 partners and 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 (February 2016–December 2018) through the end of services and closeout activities, which occurred in January 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 RISE 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 RISE 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 RISE group members through RISE, 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 DCBS and partners and providers on participation in RISE services only. We used data on the unit (or per-service) cost of RISE 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 RISE group members. In addition to estimating the costs of RISE, we estimated the cost of *all* services that RISE group members received from the RISE and the community. We used the costs of all RISE group services in the cost-benefit analysis because the benefits RISE 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 RISE services.

- **Total costs, costs by service type, and costs per individual.** We estimated the costs of all services RISE group members received per individual using the same method we used to estimate the per individual costs of RISE. 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 RISE group members received.

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

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.

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 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. 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 We adjusted (inflated) the WIA cost estimates to 2016 dollars to facilitate a direct comparison with RISE group cost workbook estimates, which we also adjusted to 2016 dollars.

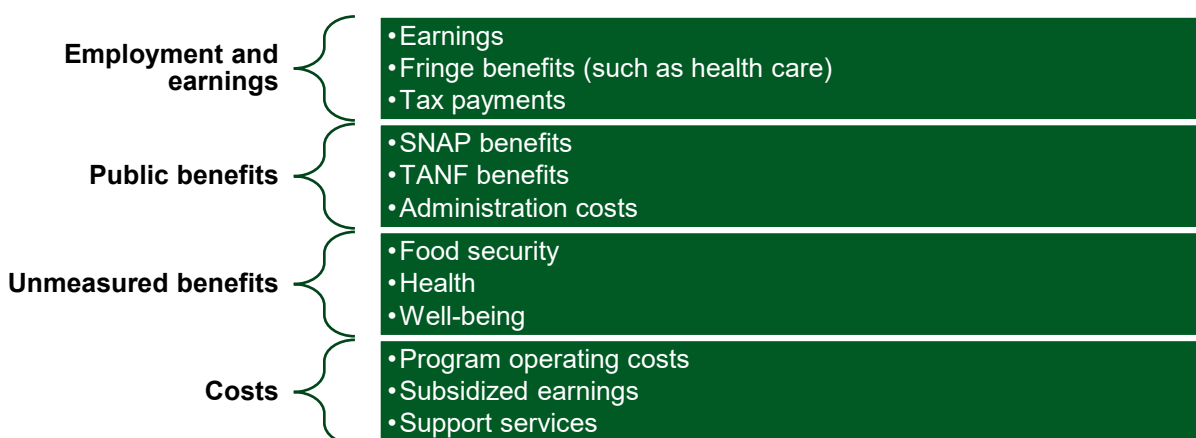
- **Total costs, costs by service type, and costs per individual.** We used the same method to estimate the costs of all control group services that we used to estimate the costs of all RISE group services. We attributed the WIOA unit cost of each service to individual-level data on participation in the services control group members reported receiving through 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 RISE group benefits and costs, relative to the control group, from three perspectives: (1) individuals enrolled in RISE, (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 RISE 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.1). 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 RISE 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 RISE group services exceeded their costs. A benefit-cost ratio less than 1 suggests that the benefits of all RISE group services, relative to the services RISE group members would have received otherwise, did not outweigh their costs within the 36-month follow-up period. In other words, the costs exceeded the benefits realized.

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 RISE started incurring service costs and individuals started accruing benefits.

- **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 RISE 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 RISE 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 RISE.**

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

6. Subgroup analyses

For many of these analyses, we examined subgroups that may have been affected differently by the services offered to the RISE 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 enrolled through December 2017 into two groups based on when they were enrolled in the pilot—those enrolled before versus after the midway point of the pilot’s full enrollment period (February 2016 to February 2017 versus March 2017 to December 2017). We meant the mid-enrollment distinction 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 individuals. We used t-tests to determine whether the magnitude of differences between RISE 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 who were offered the RISE activities. However, because some individuals did not engage in RISE or start an activity, these estimates mask how well individuals who did participate in such activities may have fared. For this reason, we conducted additional analyses to examine impacts among SNAP participants who did engage in the pilot and participate 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 RISE and control groups, as well as 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 or 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 RISE 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 RISE group. The resulting propensity scores were then used to define subgroups of individuals in each research group based on the percentages of the RISE group that started an activity. We repeated this process for RISE 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 RISE and control groups, we can confidently attribute differences in outcomes between the groups to RISE services rather than differences in the characteristics of the two groups when they enrolled in the pilot, such as differences in education, work readiness, or barriers to employment.

Nonetheless, the evaluation has several methodological limitations:

- 1. Some analyses did not include all individuals who enrolled in RISE.** 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, we collected survey data only from individuals randomly assigned through December 2017. Similarly, although we collected UI wage records for all individuals who were randomly assigned, those randomly assigned later in the enrollment period contributed less than three years of data to the analysis. Thus, it is possible the 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 two-year impacts of the pilot on outcomes and compared these impacts to those for individuals randomly assigned through September 2017—those for whom we had three-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 have led to potential bias in estimates of service receipt and outcomes.** Data collected from the 12- and 36-month follow-up surveys played an important role in understanding differences between the RISE and control groups in receipt of services available through SNAP E&T and in the community, as well as 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 available, 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 we collected survey

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

data from individuals 12 and 36 months after random assignment, we were unable to locate a nontrivial percentage of individuals enrolled in the pilot via telephone or residential address; thus, they could not participate in the survey. (The response rates of the 12- and 36-month surveys were 45 and 63 percent, respectively.) As a result, characteristics of individuals who responded and did not respond to the survey could have differed between RISE and control groups. If true, this situation 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 were representative of all individuals who enrolled in 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 RISE group services with their counterfactual—those services individuals would have received in the absence of the RISE 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 RISE’s effectiveness 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 was not based on an experimental design. The experimental design in the main analysis randomly assigned individuals who enrolled in the pilot to the RISE group or the control group. Individuals in the RISE group chose whether to start an activity and/or complete one based on factors we could not necessarily observe. Thus, because individuals were not randomly assigned to start or complete activities, there is a risk that the factors predisposing individuals to greater participation in activities may have influenced 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 RISE group members who started or completed an activity and control group members who would have had a high propensity to start or complete one had they been in the RISE group, thereby reducing the risk of selection bias.

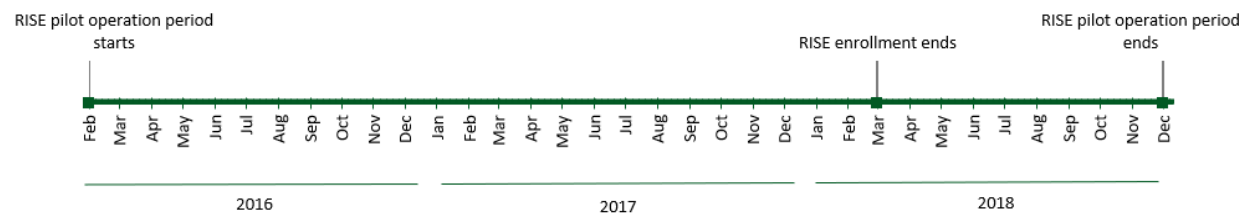
III. RISE enrollment and characteristics

This chapter describes patterns of enrollment into 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

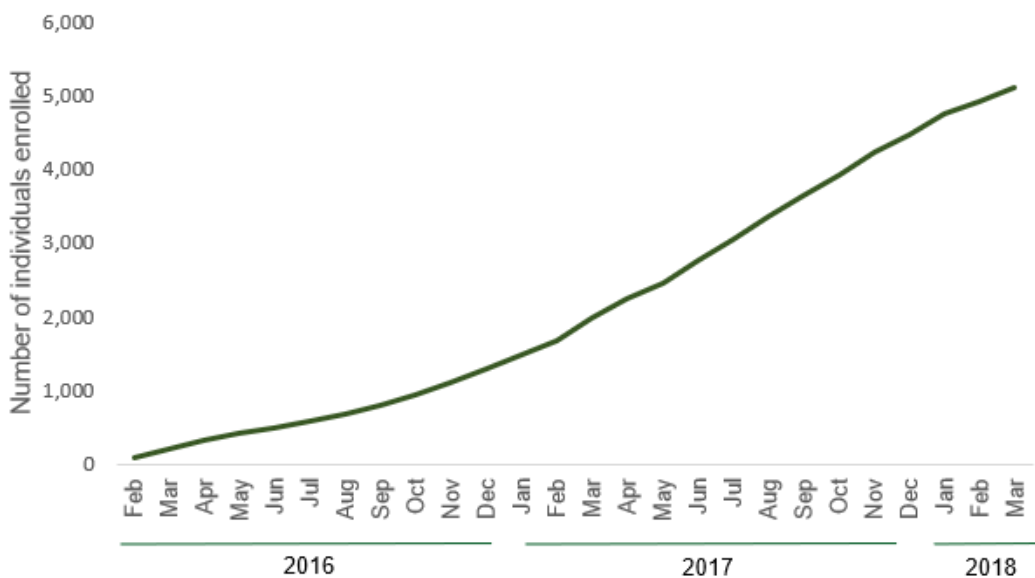
From February 2016 to March 2018, Washington enrolled 5,092 individuals into the pilot (Exhibit III.1). SNAP participants who enrolled in the pilot were randomly assigned in roughly equivalent numbers to the RISE group and a control group. The number of individuals enrolled increased over time, averaging about 118 individuals per month in 2016, 265 individuals per month in 2017, and 207 individuals per month in 2018 (Exhibit III.2).

Exhibit III.1. Overview of pilot enrollment



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation enrollment data (February 2016 to December 2018).

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



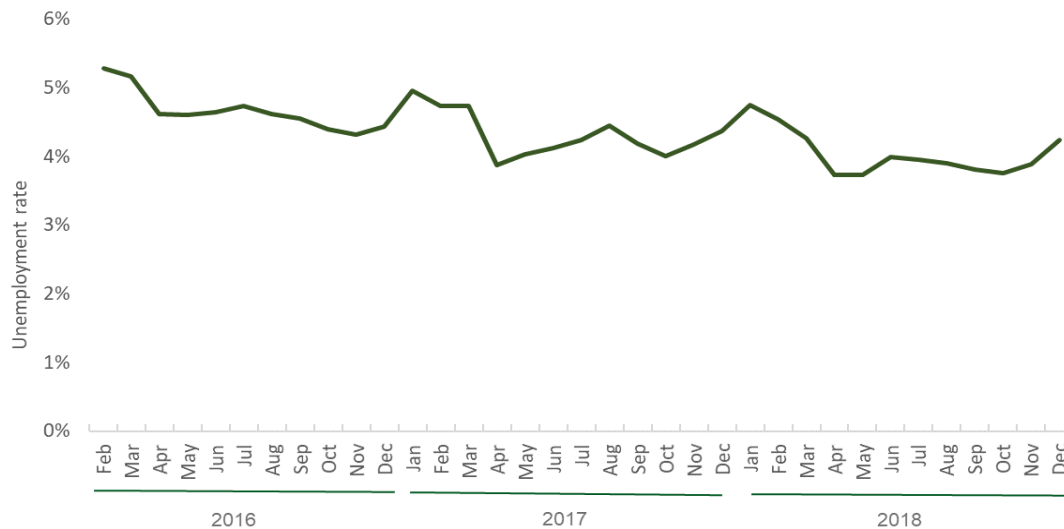
Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation enrollment data (February 2016 to March 2018).

Note: All values are numbers of individuals enrolled and include both RISE and control group members. Individuals enrolled in the pilot include all RISE and control group members who completed baseline enrollment registration and did not subsequently revoke their consent to participate in the evaluation of the pilot (5,087 out of the 5,092 enrolled individuals).

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

The counties in which RISE operated experienced fairly consistent unemployment rates during the pilot operation period, with average monthly unemployment across these areas fluctuating between 3.7 and 5.3 percent (Exhibit III.3). For the first year of pilot operation (between February 2016 and February 2017), the average monthly unemployment rate was between 4.7 and 5.3 percent. From March 2017 until the pilot stopped offering services in December 2018, unemployment fluctuated between 3.7 and 4.7 percent.

Exhibit III.3. Local unemployment rate in the RISE pilot area for each month of pilot operation



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics (February 2016 to December 2018).

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

Common occupations among the general population in the regions of the pilot remained fairly consistent from 2016 through 2019 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). The most common occupations throughout this period were office and administrative support such as office clerks, customer service representatives, administrative assistants, accounting and auditing clerks, and office clerks; 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 restaurant cooks; computer and mathematical occupations such as computer systems analysts, engineers, and software developers; and transportation and material moving occupations such as freight, stock, and material movers, stockers, and tractor-trailer truck drivers (Exhibit III.4).

Among the general population, median hourly wages for these occupations in 2016 ranged from \$12.06 (food preparation and serving related occupations) to \$51.97 (computer and mathematical occupations). Wages generally grew by \$2.08 to \$3.34 per hour from 2016 to 2019.

Exhibit III.4. Common occupations and median wages in Washington’s pilot area over time

Wage (hourly in dollars)	2016	2019
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	18.89	20.97
Sales and Related Occupations	15.91	18.12
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	12.06	15.40
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	35.44	37.62
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	51.97	--
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	--	18.91

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. In 2016, computer and mathematica occupations were among the top five most common occupations in the area, while in 2019, transportation and material moving occupations were more common. The areas included in this table (Seattle, Spokane, and Yakima) are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and may not fully align with the areas of Washington 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 February 2016 to December 2017—the individuals on whom many of this report’s analyses are based.²¹ More enrollees were non-Hispanic white than other races (44 percent) and over half were male (57 percent). The average age was 38, with 67 percent between 25 and 49 years old, and 18 percent between 50 and 59 years old. Over one-quarter of individuals did not have a high school diploma or equivalent education.

Most individuals (96 percent) lived in a metropolitan area;²² 11 percent were married or cohabiting. Almost one-fifth lived in households with children.

The majority of individuals had been employed at some point in the past (91 percent), but only 8 percent were employed at the time of random assignment (Exhibit III.5). About 16 percent were employed consistently in the two years preceding random assignment, meaning they were employed for at least seven out of the preceding eight quarters, whereas 48 percent either were not employed or were employed for only one of the preceding eight quarters.

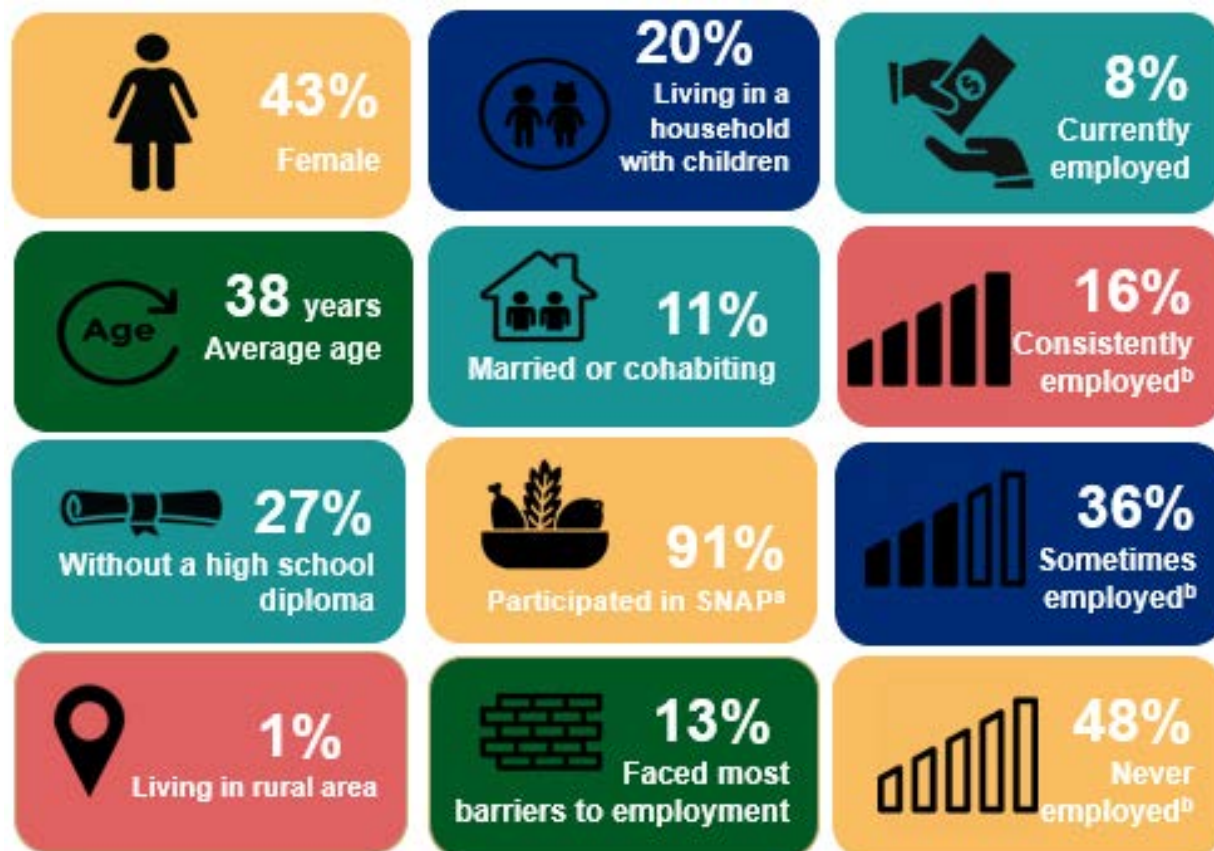
We also assessed individuals’ barriers to employment based on whether they completed high school and if they were employed in the 12 months before random assignment. Although 87 percent faced the fewest or moderate numbers of barriers, 13 percent faced the most barriers, defined as not being employed in the past 12 months and not completing 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 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 urbanized areas of 50,000 people or more or areas in which most or many commuters in the area commuted to an urbanized area.

Most individuals (91 percent) had participated in SNAP in the year before enrolling in the pilot. One quarter participated for one to six months of the year, and two-thirds (66 percent) participated for more than six months.

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



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

Note: All values are percentages unless otherwise noted. Individuals enrolled in the pilot through December 2017 include all RISE and control group members who completed baseline enrollment registration and did not subsequently revoke their consent to participate in the evaluation of the pilot (4,466 out of the 5,092 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 in 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 RISE group members in these two groups of individuals.

III. RISE enrollment and characteristics

Later enrollees in the RISE group were more likely than earlier enrollees to be between 25 and 49 years old, and less likely to be between 50 and 59 years old. They were also more likely to be Black, non-Hispanic (26 versus 22 percent), female (45 versus 41 percent) and living in a household with children (20 versus 17 percent; Appendix Table C.4). Later enrollees in the RISE group were less likely than earlier enrollees to have participated in SNAP in the year before random assignment (90 versus 92 percent).

IV. Implementation analysis

In this chapter, we describe the implementation of RISE based on qualitative analysis of the data collected through staff interviews, focus groups, and case studies with individuals in RISE. Data presented in this chapter were collected during the planning, implementation, operational, and close-out periods, from March 2015 through November 2018 (Exhibit IV.1 provides a pilot timeline).

Exhibit IV.1. Pilot timeline

Pilot activity	Date
Grant awarded	March 2015
Enrollment began	February 2016 ^a
Enrollment ended	March 2018
Services ended	December 2018

^aDSHS allowed providers to begin implementing the pilot without random assignment on December 1, 2015 to pilot test the process. Random assignment began in February 2016.

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 RISE group services and pathways, management and collaborations, service receipt patterns, barriers among RISE group members, staffing, and performance reporting. We also discuss the sustainability and replicability of RISE 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. RISE background

DSHS began its SNAP E&T program (BFET) in King County in 2005. The program subsequently has expanded to almost all counties in Washington. DSHS contracts with more than 65 service providers that offer assessment, job search assistance, basic education, occupational skills training, job placement, case management, and support services. DSHS reported that before the pilot, 70 percent of individuals in BFET found employment at the median hourly wage after participating in the program. However, upon further analysis of the remaining 30 percent of individuals in BFET, DSHS found that many were facing barriers to employment that were not being addressed through BFET's services.

DSHS viewed the pilot as an opportunity to implement changes that shifted the focus of the program from employment to self-sufficiency. BFET focused on connecting individuals to employment and included limited case management to address individuals' needs, whereas RISE was more client centered, focusing on reducing short- and long-term barriers, increasing self-sufficiency, and decreasing reliance on public assistance. Specifically, through RISE, DSHS staff sought to do the following:

- Create a comprehensive approach to reducing each individual's barriers to employment
- Provide formal and consistent job readiness and life skills training
- Foster provider-employer collaboration and support paid work-based learning opportunities to help individuals gain practical work experience before entering the job market

RISE also allowed DSHS to meet the needs of hard-to-serve populations who faced severe barriers. DSHS's goal was to target those segments of the population most in need of additional resources and

services. DSHS offered RISE to work registrants with “general or critical barriers” to employment from one of five target populations:

1. Veterans
2. Long-term unemployed (as of November 2017, this population included seasonal and temporary workers)
3. Non-custodial parents owing child support arrears
4. Individuals experiencing homelessness
5. Individuals limited in English proficiency

DSHS staff indicated that these five groups aligned with agency priorities and represented the types of individuals who were struggling to become successful in the BFET program.

DSHS selected four counties in which to implement RISE: King, Pierce, Spokane, and Yakima. DSHS selected King and Pierce counties because they were large and had many BFET providers, and Spokane County because DSHS wanted to continue to expand services in the area. DSHS also wanted to include a primarily rural county; it selected Yakima because it knew providers in the area were interested in BFET but had previously lacked the required funding to offer SNAP E&T programs.

DSHS leveraged established relationships with BFET service providers and contracted with entities that had expertise and experience in providing the types of services needed for the RISE model. The RISE group was offered comprehensive case management; extensive wraparound and support services to address barriers; a mandatory six-week life skills course (SfS); and work-based learning opportunities (such as on-the-job training, subsidized and regular employment, and internships and externships). Through an existing contract with the Division of Child Support, providers could also refer individuals to the Alternative Solutions program for additional services to reduce barriers related to child support and owing arrears. DSHS established new contracts with other key providers, including ESD to deliver the SfS course and the local workforce development councils (WDC) in each pilot county to coordinate work-based learning for individuals. DSHS also planned to partner with the Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI), an organization that helped start the BFET initiative in 2005, to support pilot implementation, but this partnership did not fully materialize. SJI was planning to provide technical assistance and help develop systems to support implementation but lacked capacity at the time. SJI did have limited involvement through the planning period.

B. Pilot planning and implementation

DSHS staff directed the overall planning and implementation of RISE, using BFET as the foundation for the new program. Beginning in late 2014, the DSHS BFET program manager led the grant-writing effort, recruited partners and providers, and facilitated both internal and external work groups to discuss different aspects of the pilot’s design. DSHS established external work groups comprising CBO service providers, community college service providers, WDCs, and State agencies that met one or two times per month to inform the design of the key RISE services.

DSHS led the recruitment of and contract negotiation with partners and service providers, and finalized contracts with 18 CBOs and two community colleges in August 2015. Once the providers were selected, DSHS conducted an in-person training for all of them in late September 2015 and offered an annual training forum each spring, beginning in May 2016. DSHS recruited additional providers for RISE, resulting in contracts with 22 CBOs and three community colleges by the end of the pilot.

DSHS originally planned to begin enrollment in RISE on October 1, 2015, but it had not developed all of the systems needed to track the new services for RISE and the evaluation was not approved to start at that point, so the start date was delayed. Many providers had hired new frontline staff with the expectation that the pilot would begin enrollment on the original date, so DSHS allowed providers to begin implementing the RISE services on December 1, 2015; however, recruitment and marketing activities were limited, and individuals recruited before February 1, 2016 (the official start date) were not randomly assigned or included in the evaluation.

A key challenge for those involved in planning activities was distinguishing RISE services and activities from what providers already offered through BFET. For example, some providers already offered a comprehensive BFET program, complete with case management, occupational skills training, and work-based learning opportunities. In addition, some providers offered job readiness courses similar to what RISE would offer through SfS. DSHS staff worked from the early stages of the planning period through early implementation to help providers understand the differences between the two research groups and design distinct services and activities for RISE.

The development of the data system to track RISE services was also a challenge for DSHS. eJAS is Washington's primary system for documenting information and tracking service delivery—the same system other programs in Washington use, including BFET and WorkFirst, the State's TANF program. DSHS needed to develop several modules in eJAS to track RISE services, but despite starting this process immediately after award, the updates were not complete before RISE began. Provider staff had to track information externally until each module was completed—often for a year or more.

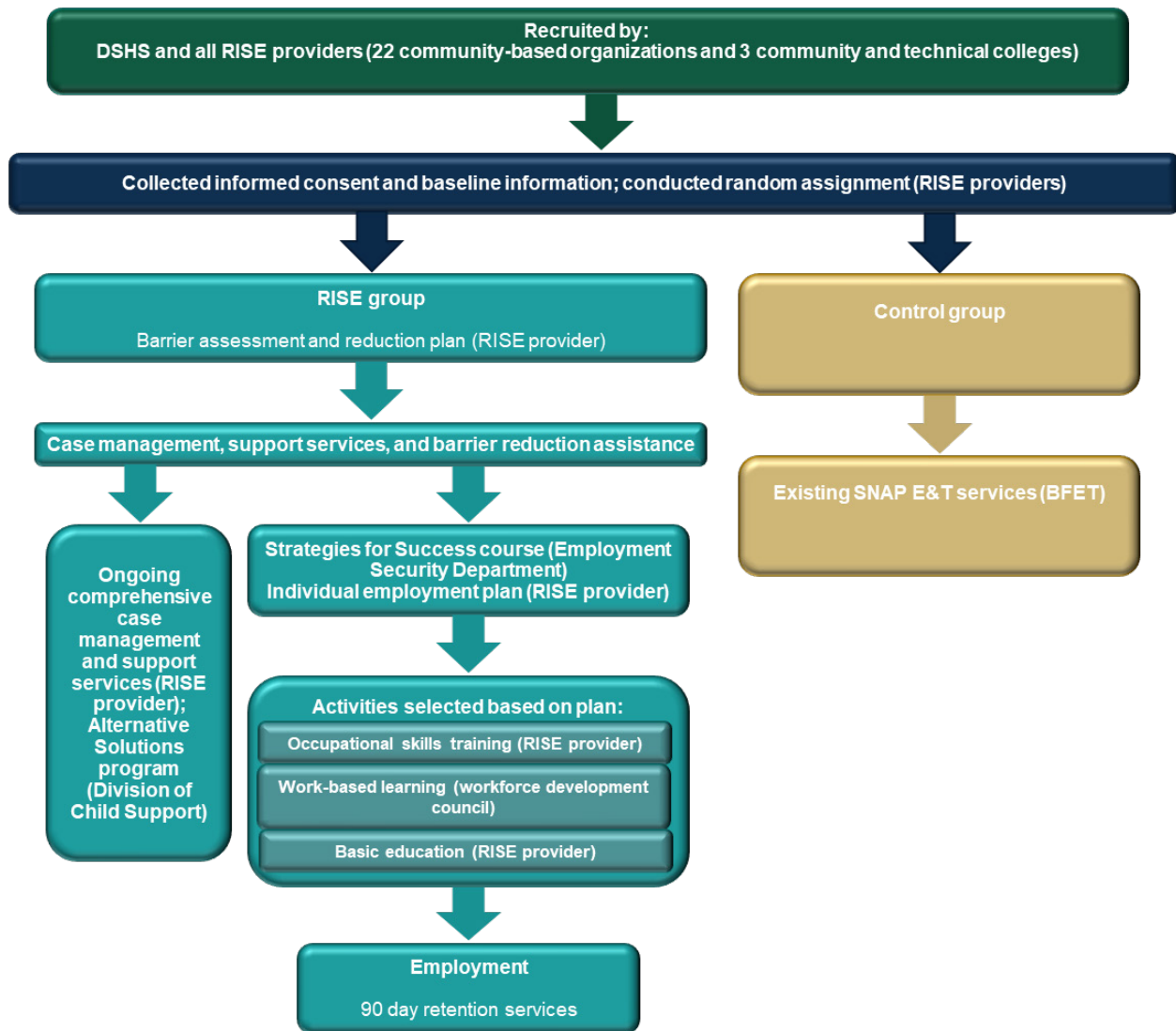
For more information about pilot planning and implementation, please see the Expanding Opportunities & Reducing Barriers to Work: Washington Interim Report (Rowe et al. 2021).

C. Services and operations

Beginning in February 2016, service providers conducted outreach, recruited individuals, confirmed their eligibility, and enrolled eligible individuals in the pilot using random assignment (Exhibit IV.2).

Individuals assigned to the control group received existing BFET services and were referred to a BFET case manager. Those assigned to the RISE group met with a RISE case manager to complete a barrier assessment (a detailed intake process that identifies all barriers each individual faces) and accessed support services to address any identified barriers. Once members of the RISE group sufficiently reduced their barriers to employment, which could take from a few weeks to several months, they enrolled in the six-week SfS course. After completing SfS and developing an individual employment plan (IEP), providers could connect individuals with work-based learning opportunities, occupational skills training, education, and other services based on their specific goals. All RISE group members received comprehensive case management and support services while they participated in activities.

Exhibit IV.2. Client flow and pilot pathways



Note: Beginning in summer 2017, RISE allowed certain individuals to take SfS simultaneously while participating in work-based learning. Beginning in December 2017, RISE allowed certain individuals to take an expedited version of SfS.

BFET = Basic Food Employment and Training

1. Recruitment and enrollment

Both DSHS and provider staff helped recruit individuals for the pilot. DSHS staff's role was limited primarily to mass marketing and advertising. DSHS hosted two press conferences and mailed postcards announcing RISE to all work registrants and ABAWDS in the four pilot counties. DSHS also created a website for providers and the public to access information about RISE. However, the RISE case managers and dedicated outreach staff at each provider were primarily responsible for outreach and recruitment. They conducted extensive outreach in their local communities by delivering presentations to local organizations that served the target populations, setting up information tables in SNAP eligibility offices, collecting internal referrals, and conducting outreach directly to people in public places. Service providers

IV. Implementation analysis

in each RISE county collaborated to periodically host orientation events from fall 2016 to fall 2017, but provider staff reported that these events were not very effective in attracting new individuals to RISE.

Individuals interested in RISE met with the provider staff who enrolled them. Staff first verified an individual's work registrant status and confirmed that the individual was a member of one of the five target populations. Staff then screened for barriers to determine that the individual had at least one critical or three general barriers to employment. Critical barriers included homelessness, domestic violence, criminal history, and substance use disorders. General barriers included a lack of job skills, a high school diploma, child care, or transportation. After confirming that an individual met all of the eligibility criteria, staff randomly assigned the person either to the RISE group or the control group.²³ RISE group members could complete their barrier reduction plan immediately after random assignment or could schedule another appointment to meet later with a RISE case manager. Control group members were referred to an in-house BFET case manager (if the provider offered BFET in addition to RISE) or a BFET provider in the community (if the provider did not offer BFET).

DSHS initially targeted 14,000 individuals for RISE (7,000 in the RISE group and 7,000 in the control group). However, enrollment lagged behind targets during the first year, and providers reported challenges in finding and enrolling individuals in the pilot because of the strict eligibility criteria. In May 2017, FNS approved DSHS's request to lower its enrollment target to 5,088 (2,544 RISE and 2,544 control).

Staff identified outreach and recruitment as one of their primary challenges. Because the existing BFET program is voluntary, providers do not need to actively recruit individuals to BFET, thus, many providers had to develop referral networks and outreach strategies from scratch, which took time, effort, and resources. As a result, even experienced service providers said that identifying and recruiting eligible work registrants was a challenge. Providers also lacked a mechanism to target potentially eligible individuals within their counties. Because of a Washington statute, DSHS initially was unable to share lists of work registrants with providers; however, in July 2016, DSHS received approval from the State attorney general to share such lists. DSHS began providing the lists in fall 2016, although their use to contact work registrants varied by provider.

Enrollment began to increase in the second year of RISE. Providers credited several factors for this increase, such as using work registrant lists to facilitate targeted recruitment efforts, hiring dedicated outreach staff, and being able to enroll SNAP participants who were not work registrants beginning in early 2017. RISE staff continued to enroll individuals into the pilot through March 2018 and ultimately exceeded its enrollment goal (enrolling 5,092 individuals). Providers found that effective recruitment strategies included conducting extensive "street outreach," where they could meet potential participants in person, as well as developing relationships with other organizations that served the RISE target population to facilitate broader referral networks.

²³ DSHS included youth ages 16 and 17 in RISE as well. Although adults had an equal chance of assignment to each group, youth were assigned to RISE at higher rates; 70 percent were randomly assigned to the RISE group. Because few youth would be targeted, DSHS wanted to ensure that a large group of youth would be more likely to receive the enhanced services offered through RISE.

2. Control group services and pathways

Services for the control group were available through the existing BFET program. The majority of RISE service providers also held BFET contracts and could therefore serve members of the BFET group in house. Ten providers offered RISE services only and had to refer any members of the BFET group to other providers in the community.

The BFET activities offered varied based on the provider to which individuals were referred. BFET providers had the flexibility to offer the activities that would best meet the needs of the populations they served as long as they remained within the mission of the BFET program: to help SNAP participants attain employment and earn a living wage. BFET providers offered a range of activities, including life skills or job readiness classes; occupational skills training; and job search assistance (including providing resume development, mock interviews, and job leads). If not available from a provider, BFET staff made referrals to other organizations or community colleges for basic education, postsecondary education, or occupational skills training. Participation in activities was determined primarily based on an individual's preferences, though each provider also could administer assessments to determine ability. The specific pathway depended on the provider and an individual's needs.

BFET also provided case management and support services. Staff provided limited case management and maintained higher caseloads (100–200 individuals per case manager at some organizations) than RISE staff. Communication with individuals in BFET could occur in person, over the phone, or via email, and usually occurred monthly. Limited support services, such as books, tuition, or transportation assistance, were available as well, though dollar amounts for those supports were lower than what was offered through RISE. BFET support services focused on what the individual needed to obtain employment, not necessarily what was needed to reduce barriers.

3. RISE group services and pathways

All RISE group members followed the same pathway, which DSHS initially estimated would take individuals 12 to 14 months to complete. All individuals assigned to RISE met with a case manager to begin an assessment. The first meeting between the individual and the case manager focused on identifying the individual's barriers to employment and determining a plan for reducing those barriers sufficiently so he or she could take part in other RISE services. Providers indicated that this first meeting lasted 60 minutes and took place in person.

Because the RISE model viewed barrier reduction as an ongoing process, comprehensive case management and support services (such as transportation and child care) could be provided simultaneously with all other services in the RISE pathway, though the effort to reduce critical barriers would be concentrated in the months directly following enrollment. Case managers assessed individuals to determine whether they were reducing barriers enough to move into activities; staff indicated that this assessment was subjective, based on whether the individual was stable and whether his or her critical barriers had been resolved or reduced to a manageable level. When their barriers had been sufficiently reduced, individuals enrolled in SfS. After completing SfS, individuals would complete an IEP to outline their goals and determine the steps needed to achieve them. Based on each individual's preferences and goals, individuals could pursue education, training, work-based learning, and employment.

Comprehensive case management. RISE offered comprehensive case management to all individuals throughout each step of the RISE pathway. The RISE model included comprehensive case management focused on mentoring, coaching, and reducing barriers to employment through the provision of support

IV. Implementation analysis

services. Although RISE case managers were required to make contact with each RISE group member at least weekly, many staff reported communicating with individuals more frequently, especially at the beginning of RISE, when caseloads were low. Case management meetings occurred mostly in person, though case managers would check in with individuals through phone, text message, social media, and email as well. During case management meetings, providers discussed the individual's progress in reducing barriers and any new barriers that had developed; provided support services, if needed; and coached individuals on reaching their goals. Providers reported that caseloads remained low throughout the first year of RISE, allowing case managers to offer individuals one-on-one attention, which they felt was essential for serving a target population facing many barriers. Focus group members indicated that their case managers were accessible, responsive, empathetic, and supportive.

RISE providers in only Spokane County used a team-based case management approach to meet RISE group members' needs and keep them engaged in services. Case managers, the SfS instructor, and the employment navigator (who developed and matched individuals to work-based learning opportunities) communicated regularly to discuss each active individual's performance in RISE and the individual's needs and goals. The employment navigator participated in some SfS classes to begin to build a rapport with RISE group members; the navigator, case manager, and individual would meet to discuss the individual's next steps after SfS. Staff reported that this team-based case management approach helped facilitate information sharing between each organization and also helped each entity better serve members of the RISE group.

Support services and barrier reduction. To address barriers to employment and participation, RISE offered comprehensive support services, including assistance with transportation (such as gas cards, bus passes, ferry fares, ride-sharing fees, driver's license fees, bike repair, and car repair); basic education and training expenses (such as books, tools, testing fees, supplies, union dues, professional license fees, and criminal background checks); clothing; child care; medical services not covered by insurance (such as counseling, eyeglasses, birth certificates, Social Security cards, and prescription medications); housing (such as short-term rental assistance); utilities; and personal hygiene expenses. In November 2017, DSHS expanded support services to allow providers to offer cell phones and cell phone minutes to RISE group members. Providers reported that transportation assistance and housing assistance were the two most requested support services.

RISE case managers allocated support services to RISE group members based on their individual barriers. Beginning in March 2018, DSHS updated its support service policy, which imposed funding limits for some support services, though the limits exceeded what was available through BFET; gas cards, medical expenses, and personal hygiene did not have any funding limits. For support services with limits, a cap was placed on the amount an individual could receive annually. Additionally, individuals could receive only a maximum of 30 percent of the allowed support service amount from the point of enrollment through the completion of the third module of SfS.

Support service limits per year, by type

- Transportation services: \$1,200
- Car repair: \$1,000
- Books, tools, and supplies: \$800
- Basic education/training expenses: \$800
- Clothing: \$800
- Child care: \$700
- Housing: \$3,500

Even with the funding limits, staff noted that the comprehensive and flexible nature of the support services was important for serving individuals in RISE. Staff indicated that individuals with minor barriers, such as those related to transportation, skill deficiency, or child care, spent only a few weeks in

the barrier reduction phase and often progressed to SfS more quickly than those with more serious barriers. By contrast, individuals experiencing critical barriers, such as homelessness, domestic violence, or substance use disorders, could spend a full year in the barrier reduction phase without progressing to SfS.

The evaluation found inconsistent provision of support services across providers. Providers serving individuals in all four counties indicated that they offered a limited set of support services in the first year of RISE because they were not aware of the breadth of support services available through RISE and did not account for these services when creating their contract budgets. Providers limited the distribution of some supports as a result. For example, two providers serving individuals in three counties reported that their agencies did not budget for housing assistance or personal hygiene supports, so they were not able to assist individuals in reducing those barriers during the first year of the pilot. Providers later negotiated for increased contract budgets to provide more support services to RISE group members. In some cases, once a provider exhausted the funding it allocated for certain supports, it stopped providing that support altogether.

Alternative Solutions program. RISE also offered individuals access to the Alternative Solutions program to reduce barriers related to child support. The Alternative Solutions program, administered by the Division of Child Support, assists individuals owing child support arrears by educating them on child support policies and procedures, signing them up for child support payment plans, releasing revoked driver's licenses, stalling enforcement actions against them, convening review boards to explore writing off some of their debt, and helping them work toward family reunification. If an individual identified a child support barrier, the RISE case manager would contact the Alternative Solutions case manager and set up an appointment for the three of them to meet and determine which services the individual needed.

Strategies for Success. The six-week, 96-hour SfS course was required for all members of the RISE group. It consisted of six modules that covered five areas: work concepts, health and well-being, communication, personal strength builders, and community engagement. Staff from ESD delivered the course in person in a classroom setting, often at a local WorkSource location (American Job Center) or community college. The class typically ran for four hours per day, Monday through Thursday, with Friday as a makeup day. ESD did not offer classes on nights or weekends. Some providers received approval from DSHS to offer SfS in house using their own instructors. These providers were motivated to offer their own SfS course because they were serving a special population, such as those with limited English proficiency, and sought to tailor the course to that population.

Individuals who enrolled in the course could start with any module; the modules did not need to be completed sequentially. However, DSHS and ESD initially required individuals to complete the first module before the sixth module. After providers reported that this policy delayed some individuals from starting or progressing through SfS, DSHS and ESD changed the policy in summer 2017 so individuals did not need to do so. SfS instructors reported that it was not uncommon for individuals to start and stop SfS, which extended the individual's completion of the course beyond six weeks.

Focus group members reported mixed views of SfS. Some described positive experiences, whereas others did not find much value in the course or expressed frustration with the content and length. Of those focus group members who had disengaged from RISE, many cited the length of SfS as their reason. They found the course to be too long, given the hardships they faced; several left before completing it to engage in employment because they believed working was a better use of their time. Focus group members also noted that the quality of the SfS content was dependent on the quality of the instructor. Some had

engaging instructors who covered the content well, whereas others were trained by a case manager with little to no teaching experience.

Instructors also reported challenges with the length of the course and keeping individuals engaged. DSHS and ESD made additional changes to the process to address some of these concerns. In summer 2017, RISE allowed certain individuals to take SfS simultaneously with participating in work-based learning if the individual and case manager both agreed it would be appropriate to do so. In December 2017, RISE allowed certain individuals to take an expedited version of SfS to decrease the amount of time required to finish all six modules.

Individual employment plan. After completing SfS, individuals worked with their case managers to complete an IEP during an in-person meeting. Although RISE group members' experiences were fairly similar up to this point, providers noted that the IEP determined the next set of services each individual would receive. Using the IEP, individuals identified their education, occupational skills training, and employment goals, and the steps and time frame for meeting those goals. Similar to the barrier assessment, case managers and RISE group members would continually update the IEP as individuals met their goals or the goals changed.

Education and occupational skills training. RISE group members participated in education and occupational skills training based on the goals defined in their IEP. Some providers offered occupational skills training in house, whereas others referred individuals to local community colleges or other training providers in the area.

The types of education and occupational skills training individuals pursued varied widely and included phlebotomy training, forklift training, culinary arts, warehouse training, certified nursing assistant training, food handler licensing, and commercial driving. Education and training opportunities could last from three to nine months.

RISE also offered ESL and GED classes to individuals with limited English proficiency or in need of basic education skills. They could take these classes before or after participating in SfS. ESD required RISE group members to obtain an ESL Level 5 or 6 to start the SfS course. Providers reported that this requirement was challenging for RISE group members and often delayed their progression to SfS.

Work-based learning. RISE offered up to 240 hours of work-based learning (including internships, externships, on-the-job training, and subsidized and unsubsidized employment) to some individuals after they completed SfS. Providers reported that not every individual needed work-based learning and they would explore opportunities with individuals if they had a skill deficiency or a gap in their resume, or specifically requested a work-based learning opportunity. In addition, not all providers allocated funds for work-based learning, so some of them were unable to offer paid opportunities. In these situations, case managers indicated they would still try to find unpaid work-based learning opportunities or regular job placement. Some providers later negotiated for increased contract budgets to be able to offer more work-based learning opportunities, but slots were still limited for most providers.

An employment navigator in each county was responsible for building connections with local employers and coordinating work-based learning opportunities. They worked with case managers and RISE group members to identify an appropriate work-based learning placement for each individual, based on the individual's interests and goals. In August 2016, DSHS introduced an electronic system listing all available work-based learning opportunities, though employment navigators could seek out additional opportunities to meet individuals' goals, if needed. Providers noted that it took longer for some

individuals to obtain work-based learning opportunities because the workloads of employment navigators in the larger counties were generally very large. As a result, providers indicated they would sometimes coordinate their own work-based learning placements for RISE group members.

The employers who participated in focus groups indicated that their experiences with members of the RISE group were positive, and many of the individuals exceeded their expectations while participating in work-based learning opportunities at their organizations. Many employers also hired the individuals after they had completed their work-based learning experience. Most employers stated that their businesses were usually short of staff, so they found value in—and in some cases even relied on—individuals they found through programs like RISE to fill staffing needs at a relatively low cost. Employers suggested ways the work-based learning component of RISE could be improved, such as making the experience longer, scheduling RISE case management meetings or SfS classes so they did not conflict with work hours, and improving communication between the employer and RISE staff.

Job search and placement assistance.

Many providers offered job search assistance and job placement services to individuals. Some providers focused on employment services and offered assistance in writing resumes, identifying employers, and interviewing strategies. RISE case managers often provided these services to individuals through one-on-one case management meetings; some RISE case managers collaborated with the employment navigators to locate job opportunities. Job search assistance and job placement activities mostly occurred after individuals completed SfS and/or their work-based learning activities (if applicable), though if individuals needed

A RISE group member's experience

This individual was a single man who moved to Washington from California about seven years earlier to be closer to his brother. He had one son who lived out of the State. Depression, coupled with relationship issues with his ex-girlfriend, contributed to his losing his housing, job, and driver's license. He was living in a local men's homeless shelter and working as a contractor and carpenter when he learned about RISE from a provider who was conducting outreach at the shelter. The sincerity of this provider and the prospect of getting help with some of his barriers attracted him to the program. His case manager provided him with bus passes and helped him get his driver's license reinstated. He was in weekly contact with his case manager, mostly by telephone or through texting, but sometimes in person.

He enjoyed the SfS course and completed it in just over a month. From the classes, he learned how to market himself and to network—skills he thought were important to refresh. Upon completing SfS, his case manager helped him improve his resume, get his contracting license, purchase tools, and set a goal to earn \$45 an hour—a wage he felt was high enough to be able to support himself and move out of the shelter.

At the time of the visit, he had successfully completed the RISE program and was receiving job retention services. He had been running his own contracting business for about five weeks and met his goal of earning \$45 an hour. His case manager was helping him to become bonded and insured, and he was considering pursuing additional education to improve his business management skills. He was able to move out of the shelter into a faith-based men's group home.

He reported that RISE helped him believe in himself again, and that SfS was useful and interesting. He suggested only minor improvements to the program, such as providing bus passes for the full month at one time rather than weekly. He recommended the program to others, noting that RISE is there to help people as long as they are willing to put in the effort.

income while in SfS classes, their RISE case manager sometimes worked with them to identify suitable opportunities.

Job retention services. RISE group members who entered employment could receive job retention services while they continued to receive comprehensive case management and support services from their RISE case managers. Individuals received these services for a maximum of 90 days from the first day of employment or from the day SNAP ended, whichever came first.

4. RISE group services management, partnerships, and communication

A team of DSHS staff oversaw the day-to-day management of the pilot. DSHS assigned each pilot county a full-time RISE project consultant who served as the main point of contact for the service providers in that county. DSHS project consultants provided technical assistance to providers, answered their questions, discussed issues and implementation challenges, conducted case audits, and negotiated and monitored provider contracts. A full-time RISE project manager oversaw the work of the four project consultants at DSHS. Other State-level support staff included a program assistant to help with data management and ad hoc requests, a fiscal analyst to oversee the reimbursement process for support services, and a business technology analyst to implement changes to eJAS. The support staff worked only part time on RISE.

Provider staff reported that the DSHS program consultants assigned to their counties were open minded, flexible, and solutions oriented. Some providers had closer relationships with their program consultants than others because the number of providers in each county varied and some of them thus were able to receive more one-on-one assistance from their project consultants than others. DSHS staff indicated that their staffing structure of assigning one project consultant to each pilot county enabled the project consultants to develop close relationships with the providers they oversaw.

DSHS established regular processes for communicating with providers. It hosted quarterly in-person meetings for all RISE providers, monthly county-level provider meetings, and monthly cross-county case manager meetings. DSHS also organized annual RISE and BFET conferences at which providers were offered additional training and networking opportunities. Providers reported that these meetings and conferences enabled staff to share information regularly, collaborate on outreach activities, exchange best practices, and identify and solve problems. Despite this level of ongoing communication, some providers indicated that communication on changes to RISE policies and procedures (such as using the work registrant list for recruitment or tracking data when new eJAS modules were rolled out) was sometimes confusing, contradictory, and lacked written guidance. This issue was especially problematic during the early implementation period, when some policies, procedures, and systems were still in flux, but continued to be an issue throughout the pilot, particularly when providers were trying to train new staff.

DSHS also regularly monitored providers' implementation progress. RISE project consultants monitored provider performance through case record audits and contract monitoring site visits. The case audits consisted of a review of all of the information associated with an individual's case in eJAS to ensure that case managers were entering case notes weekly (as required), making appropriate referrals, allocating support services properly, and using thorough and accurate documentation for all eJAS fields.

Partnerships. DSHS developed relationships with new providers over time, whereas other relationships dissolved. DSHS began with 20 service providers (18 CBOs and 2 community colleges) to recruit individuals and provide case management. Over time, the group of RISE providers changed as follows:

- September 2016: One provider dropped out of RISE.
- July 2016: DSHS recruited 2 CBOs to expand the reach and capacity of RISE.
- October 2016: DSHS recruited another 4 CBOs and 1 community college; 1 existing RISE provider expanded to a new county.
- May 2017: DSHS recruited another CBO serving two counties.
- September 2017: DSHS did not renew the contract for a CBO that served two different counties because it felt the provider was not adhering to the RISE model. This CBO was the largest provider in the pilot, serving 820 individuals across Spokane and Yakima Counties; DSHS also did not renew the contract for one WDC, deciding instead to allow providers in one county to coordinate work-based learning opportunities internally instead of working with the WDC to offer those services.

None of the new providers added was an existing BFET provider, so although DSHS staff worked to train and orient these organizations, each provider took several months to ramp up its operations.

DSHS and provider staff reported that strong coordination and collaborations were a strength of RISE. Staff noted that RISE created new and lasting relationships between organizations. Its providers in each county reported collaborating with one another to coordinate outreach efforts and increase recruitment and enrollment. Several providers indicated that RISE helped to strengthen their relationship with DSHS as well.

5. RISE group services and participation trends

DSHS designed RISE to offer a standard pathway to all individuals, so service receipt followed a typical pattern. However, individuals in RISE faced barriers to participation and common drop-off points (meaning places in the flow of services that created obstacles or opportunities for individuals to stop participating or not move to the next step in the process).

Provider staff observed that individuals typically remained engaged in SfS for about three weeks; it was difficult to keep them in the course beyond that point. In addition, provider staff and focus groups members indicated that many individuals simply needed a job and were not interested in SfS. Because of these challenges, many individuals did not finish SfS and thus never progressed to other activities, including work-based learning. DSHS hoped to engage 15 percent of RISE group members in a paid work-based learning opportunity but reported having only about 11 percent of RISE group members in such an activity by fall 2018.

Participation trends and barriers. Providers and employers reported that many individuals in RISE faced significant barriers to employment and participation in services. The most commonly reported barriers were transportation, unstable housing, and mental and physical health issues. Many individuals faced multiple barriers simultaneously. RISE provided transportation assistance (for example, gas cards, bus passes) to help individuals travel to case management meetings, SfS classes, and employment and training activities. However, the amount or type of transportation assistance was not always enough to resolve barriers, particularly when an individual did not have a car, bus lines were too far from their home or destination, or buses were not running at the times the individual needed. Even with housing assistance, individuals faced challenges because of inadequate rental assistance, few available shelters, long waitlists for public housing, and high costs of housing in Washington. SfS instructors discussed how unstable housing was frequently an obstacle to individuals attending and completing the course. Similarly, mental

or physical health barriers impeded individuals from focusing on SfS course content and other RISE activities.

Because so many RISE group members faced critical barriers, providers reported that individuals were in the barrier reduction phase of the pathway longer than anticipated and many of them did not start SfS. An even smaller proportion completed the course or went on to pursue other RISE activities. Individuals with more manageable barriers were more likely to enroll in SfS more quickly, according to providers.

Drop-off points. Of those individuals who dropped out of RISE, most did so while in the barrier reduction phase or the SfS course. Those facing critical barriers, such as homelessness or substance use disorders, sometimes never moved beyond the barrier reduction phase because their barriers took much longer to resolve and were never reduced sufficiently for them to enroll in SfS. Staff and focus group members reported that the prospect of a six-week course was not always attractive to individuals looking for an immediate job and sometimes deterred RISE group members from starting or finishing the course. Both focus group members and provider staff reported that six weeks of SfS classes were too long to forgo the income that a survival job could bring them. Although RISE support services were comprehensive, both providers and focus group members indicated they were not enough to cover all of an individual's expenses during the six-week class period. Additionally, as discussed earlier, some aspects of SfS (such as the ESL requirements or the lack of night or weekend classes) contributed to challenges in individuals' ability to attend; providers indicated these factors might have contributed to drop-off.

The loss of the largest provider for fiscal year 2018 introduced another drop-off point. This provider served 820 individuals across two counties. Provider staff attempted to transition the individuals still active in RISE to other service providers in the area, but many of them did not engage with their newly assigned providers.

DSHS implemented several policy changes to address individuals' barriers and prevent drop-off. To help RISE group members progress through the RISE pathway faster, DSHS began allowing individuals to take an expedited version of SfS and/or participate in SfS and work-based learning simultaneously, though provider staff reported that few individuals chose to pursue these options. To encourage close communication between case managers and RISE group members and avoid drop-off because of loss of contact, DSHS allowed providers to offer cell phones and cell phone minutes to individuals. This approach also facilitated communication between RISE group members and employers. Providers noted that cell phones were especially key in keeping those individuals experiencing homelessness engaged in RISE. Finally, the policy changes DSHS implemented in November 2017 around support service limits were meant to create an incentive for RISE group members to continue with SfS beyond the third week of the class.

Re-engagement. High exit rates led DSHS and provider staff to increase their efforts to re-engage RISE group members who left before completing services. In fall 2017, DSHS staff began regularly supplying providers with lists of individuals who had left RISE, along with individuals' updated contact information. Both DSHS and provider staff cold-called and emailed individuals; in general, these efforts were unsuccessful. Providers also conducted more street outreach to try to re-engage individuals experiencing homelessness. Exit rates caused by voluntary withdrawal or loss of contact remained high throughout the pilot period, however.

6. Staffing

DSHS and providers experienced several changes to staffing during RISE. DSHS expanded its internal RISE team by hiring two additional project consultants in fall 2016, which allowed it to have one project consultant oversee the providers in each county. A RISE project manager oversaw the work of the four project consultants and other support staff. Three different individuals held the RISE project manager position, with staffing changes occurring in July 2016 and January 2018. The consensus among DSHS and provider staff was that the staffing and leadership changes within DSHS improved communication between the DSHS RISE team and providers because information was shared more clearly, consistently, and efficiently over time.

Most providers reported some level of staff turnover at different stages of RISE. This turnover affected service providers differently: larger providers reported hiring new staff quickly or using existing staff to cover temporarily, whereas smaller providers reported having to slow or halt RISE implementation until they could hire a replacement. Providers indicated that a better onboarding process and more training opportunities for new staff could help mitigate the challenges created by staff turnover. Two counties also experienced turnover in their employment navigator positions. Case managers reported that this turnover impeded their ability to connect RISE group members to work-based learning opportunities.

Providers made changes to their staff over time to respond to RISE's needs. They initially expanded their staff capacity to add new case managers and staff dedicated to outreach and recruitment. They also hired new frontline staff to provide case management for RISE; many of these staff were hired in fall 2015 through spring 2016. As enrollment slowly ramped up and caseloads increased, case managers reported having less time than before to focus on outreach activities. Providers responded by hiring staff to focus specifically on conducting direct outreach to those on the street or in public spaces, developing referral networks, and completing intakes. They noted that employing dedicated outreach staff led to increased enrollment and reduced some of the burden placed on RISE case managers who previously had needed to balance the demands of their caseload with recruitment activities. In the last year of RISE, several providers reported reductions in their staff. As enrollment ended and services were nearing their end, contract budgets were reduced, caseloads declined, providers downsized the number of RISE staff on their payroll, and case managers, who lacked job security, left for new positions. As individuals completed or left RISE, providers found that the caseload could be handled by fewer case managers. Some providers planned to transition RISE case managers to BFET or other programs after RISE ended, but others planned to lay off their staff.

7. Performance management

For DSHS staff and providers to use eJAS for implementing RISE, DSHS needed to develop modules on barrier assessment, support services, IEPs, and SfS, as well as update the system to include information about work registration and expand reporting features. The timeline for adding new components and functionality to eJAS spanned several months to a few years. Although DSHS initiated the process to upgrade eJAS to include RISE enhancements during the planning period, the eJAS team did not complete the system updates before RISE started. The first update—the barrier assessment module—rolled out in March 2016; other enhancements did not roll out until January 2017 or later.

Providers consistently reported feeling frustrated with the lack of reporting conducted through eJAS, especially in the early implementation period. Until the barrier assessment and IEP modules were available in the system, provider staff had to document required information on paper forms, which made

case management and performance management more time consuming. Also, after each new module was released, staff had to learn new procedures for tracking information in the system and then had to code the information into the system that they had collected on paper for months or years. This work often was time consuming.

Until February 2017, a full year after RISE began, DSHS staff did not have the ability to run any reports in eJAS, which prevented them from running automated queries to understand service utilization. Instead, DSHS staff would compile performance indicators “by hand,” reviewing each individual’s record in eJAS individually. As enrollment ramped up, this procedure became increasingly time consuming. Before April 2018, eJAS did not include a mechanism for tracking individuals’ weekly SfS progress. Before then, DSHS staff relied on attendance counts compiled manually by SfS instructors in each county. This method limited DSHS’s ability to monitor SfS progress and completion in real time.

D. Sustainability and replicability

Near the end of the pilot period, DSHS discussed how RISE group members would be served once RISE ended and which of its policies it might incorporate into its BFET program. All individuals still active in RISE at the end of the pilot period were to be transitioned to the BFET program. They would continue to be served by the RISE provider if it was also a BFET provider. If the provider was not a BFET provider, staff would refer the individual to another provider in the community that provided BFET services.

DSHS planned to fold some components of RISE into the BFET program, including a slightly modified, optional version of SfS and an expanded offering of supportive services. DSHS and providers found the SfS curriculum valuable and believed the focus on life and job skills would be useful to individuals participating in BFET. The proposed changes to SfS stemmed from DSHS and provider staff feedback indicating they would have liked more flexibility to connect individuals with the SfS modules that most closely addressed their specific needs, instead of requiring the full six-module course for everyone. DSHS also indicated that SfS would be an available service for WorkFirst (TANF) participants moving forward. DSHS also planned to explore whether and how to incorporate work-based learning into BFET.

To fully replicate the RISE model, DSHS and provider staff noted that additional policy changes and resources would be needed. They all consistently reported that the flexibility of funding and services was the most important component of RISE, and specifically identified comprehensive case management and support services as key for replication. However, they suggested that comprehensive case management and supports focusing on reducing barriers currently were not funded under the existing SNAP E&T program in Washington and would require a policy change and an expansion of program funding. Additionally, incorporating work-based learning opportunities and the Alternative Solutions program into BFET would require either additional collaboration with the WDCs (for work-based learning) or the Division of Child Support (for Alternative Solutions), or additional resources so providers could offer those services themselves.

Respondents reflected on what aspects of RISE they would change if they were to implement it again. DSHS and provider staff indicated that RISE would have benefited from some changes in the way certain roles were staffed. Providers thought their outreach and enrollment efforts would have been stronger if separate outreach and case management staff had been hired from the outset. Some providers wished they had offered SfS in house instead of referring RISE group members to ESD, especially because doing so could have afforded them the opportunity to target SfS content to the population they were serving and create a more seamless transition from barrier reduction to SfS engagement. Finally, for organizations

with experience in work-based learning and job development, providers felt staffing an in-house employment navigator to connect RISE group members with work-based learning would have been more efficient than working with an external navigator at the county WDC.

E. Key implementation analysis findings

Key findings from RISE's planning, implementation, operations, and close-out periods are summarized below.

- **Serving individuals with significant barriers to employment requires a model that offers time and flexibility.** RISE targeted individuals with barriers to employment that ranged in severity, with some barriers requiring substantial time and resources to resolve. The flexibility of the RISE pathway allowed individuals to move through it at their own pace as they addressed their barriers. However, case managers needed sufficient time and manageable caseload sizes to offer the coaching and support individuals required to progress through the pathway. Funding for a wide variety of support services and comprehensive case management that was not time limited gave providers the flexibility to meet participants' needs. Additionally, many of the policy and procedure changes that DSHS made throughout RISE were implemented with the goal of offering providers even more flexibility to meet individual needs and address barriers in creative ways.
- **Having the necessary infrastructure in place at the outset can facilitate smoother service delivery and data management.** DSHS experienced staffing changes, adjusted policies and procedures, and modified its data system after RISE began, due in part to DSHS and providers not having sufficient staff capacity during the planning and early implementation period to plan and implement all of RISE's needed structure. For DSHS, it meant not having enough staff to oversee and support service providers when RISE began. For providers, it meant they lacked the capacity to dedicate staff to outreach and ramping up enrollment. Changes to policies and procedures, although often made in an effort to improve implementation in some manner, introduced confusion among providers and required providers to continually retrain their staff on the RISE model, operations, and service delivery documentation. Without all of the RISE enhancements in place in eJAS at the start of the pilot, enrollment was slowed due to the lack of an automated way to verify work registration status, providers had to document some aspects of service delivery on paper for a long period, and DSHS staff did not have a quick or efficient mechanism for monitoring pilot performance. Both DSHS and provider staff acknowledged the likelihood of any pilot needing to make adjustments, but stressed the importance of implementing such changes early so operations could remain fairly stable afterward. If RISE had consistent staffing, stable policies and procedures, and an updated data system before launching, DSHS and providers might have been able to avoid some of the challenges they faced in service delivery and data management, thus making for a smoother implementation.
- **Requiring the same service pathway for all individuals may hinder engagement and completion.** Individuals in the RISE group all followed the same service pathway, regardless of their barriers and goals, and were required to complete the full SfS course. Although DSHS, provider, and partner staff expressed support for the RISE model, they also acknowledged that not every individual needed or could benefit from the full RISE pathway. Some individuals might have needed only some services, activities, or SfS modules, but because such an option was not offered, these individuals may have left activities or RISE before completing them. DSHS and provider staff concluded that RISE might have served the target population better if individuals could have had more control over their pathway by participating in only the SfS modules and activities that met their specific needs.

- **Collaboration between State agencies, partners, and providers can help expand SNAP E&T services throughout the State.** RISE was successful in bringing together staff from DSHS, CBOs, community colleges, the DSHS Division of Child Support, the ESD, and county-level WDCs to implement RISE in all four counties. DSHS teamed with several key partners and providers in the planning process to include different perspectives and bring targeted expertise to the design of RISE. This approach helped partners and providers see the value of RISE and laid the foundation for strong collaboration moving forward. Delivering RISE services through contracts with CBOs and community colleges allowed the State to implement a standard framework for the model while allowing each provider flexibility in tailoring its outreach efforts, developing local partnerships and referral networks, and addressing service needs of the population in its local area.

V. Participation analysis

In this chapter, we present findings on the services that RISE 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 RISE, 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; receipt of support services; receipt and intensity of case management services; and the timing of and reasons for exiting RISE. In addition, to account for potential differences in the 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.²⁴ Appendix D contains additional data on the characteristics of those who did or did not complete RISE activities and a discussion of service receipt among subgroups, based on characteristics at the time of random assignment as indicated in the baseline registration form.

A. Participation in RISE

After random assignment, RISE group members who engaged in services first met with a case manager, completed a barrier assessment and reduction plan, and were connected with support services. After addressing barriers, individuals were required to attend the six-week SfS course. Those who completed SfS worked with case managers to complete an IEP and engage in other employment and training activities. Individuals could participate in a combination of activities, including independent job search, basic education, occupational skills training, work-based learning, and the Alternative Solutions program (activities to reduce child support arrears and reunify families).

After random assignment, most RISE group members received services and three-quarters received an assessment.

1. Overall engagement in RISE

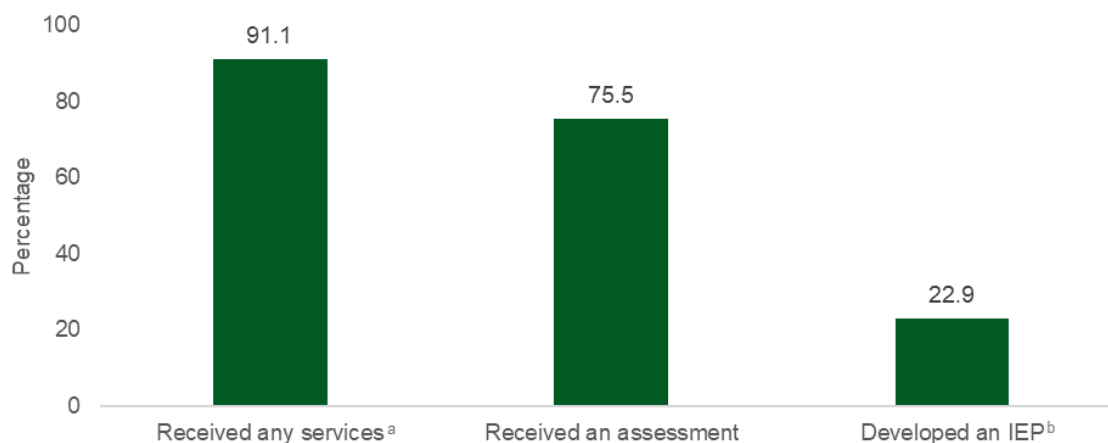
Most (91 percent) of the RISE group members received at least one service—that is, they started an assessment, completed their IEP, or engaged in an employment or training-related activity (Exhibit V.1).²⁵ About three-quarters (76 percent) continued with services and completed their barrier assessments, but only 23 percent developed an IEP. This number is

²⁴ The pilot extended enrollment over a 26-month period but the service period was fixed. Consequently, the service period for individuals who enrolled later was shorter than for those who enrolled earlier. For example, individuals who enrolled in 2016 could have received services for up to 35 months. In contrast, those who enrolled in 2017 could only receive services up to 24 months; those who enrolled in 2018 could only receive services for up to 12 months. This range is large across the entire pool of RISE group members (Appendix Table D.2), but most group members (88 percent) had a potential window of at least 12 months in which to receive services, and about one-quarter (25 percent) were enrolled early enough to allow for 24 months of services. However, the actual participation rates show that only 18 percent of RISE group members participated in services for 12 months, and 2 percent participated for 24 months. Therefore, the variation in service periods does not appear to have affected actual participation in services (Appendix Table D.2).

²⁵ The measure does not include case management and support services because individuals often engaged once to meet with a case manager or get a support service but did not return for more meaningful activities and services.

relatively low because the IEP was developed after an individual completed SfS (discussed in the next section). 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 or an assessment, we find few differences between the two groups. Individuals who received services or an assessment were more likely to be ages 18 to 49, male, and have a high school diploma or equivalent than those who did not receive them (Appendix Table D.12).

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



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,548 RISE group members.

^a “Received any services” measures engagement in activities, including assessments, developing IEP, and employment or training-related activities; the measure does not include orientations, case management, or support services.

^b The IEP was completed after an individual completed SfS.

IEP = individual employment plan

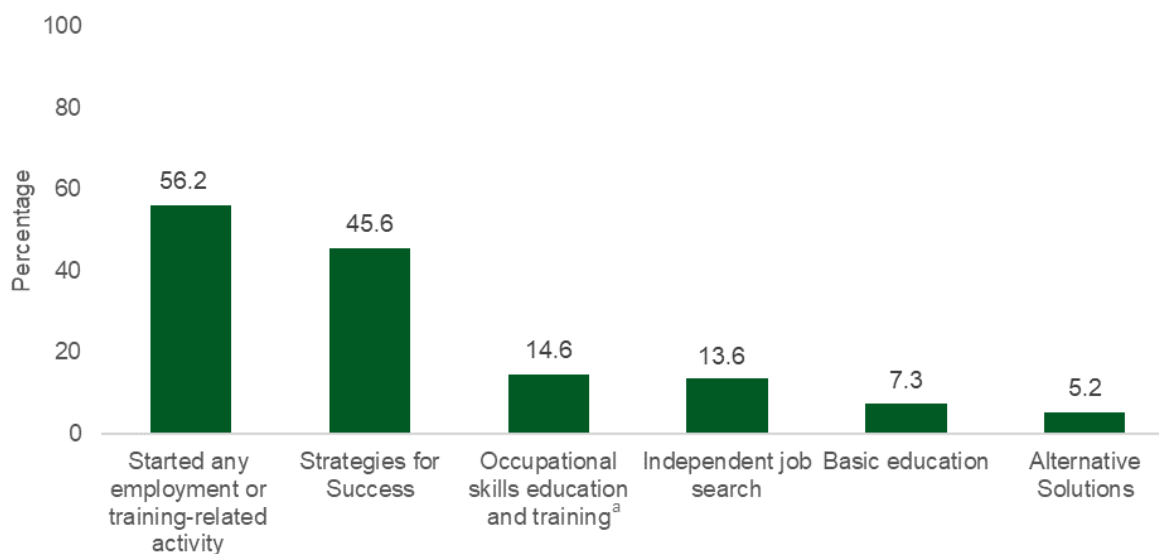
Length and timing of engagement. On average, individuals in the RISE group who engaged in services spent about seven months (220 days) in RISE (Appendix Table D.5). Overall, most individuals began receiving services within the first quarter after random assignment (89 percent), whereas only a few others first engaged after Quarter 1 (Appendix Table D.6).

2. Engagement in activities

Despite a high overall rate of engagement, only 56 percent of RISE group members ultimately started an employment or training-related activity after they completed intake and assessments (Exhibit V.2). Most of those (46 percent) started the SfS course. Fewer individuals started occupational skills education and training (15 percent), independent job search (14 percent), basic education (7 percent), an Alternative Solutions program (5 percent), or work-based learning (1 percent; not shown).

Fifty-six percent of RISE group members participated in an activity, and just over half of those who started one completed it. Work-based learning activities and SfS were those most commonly completed among those who started.

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



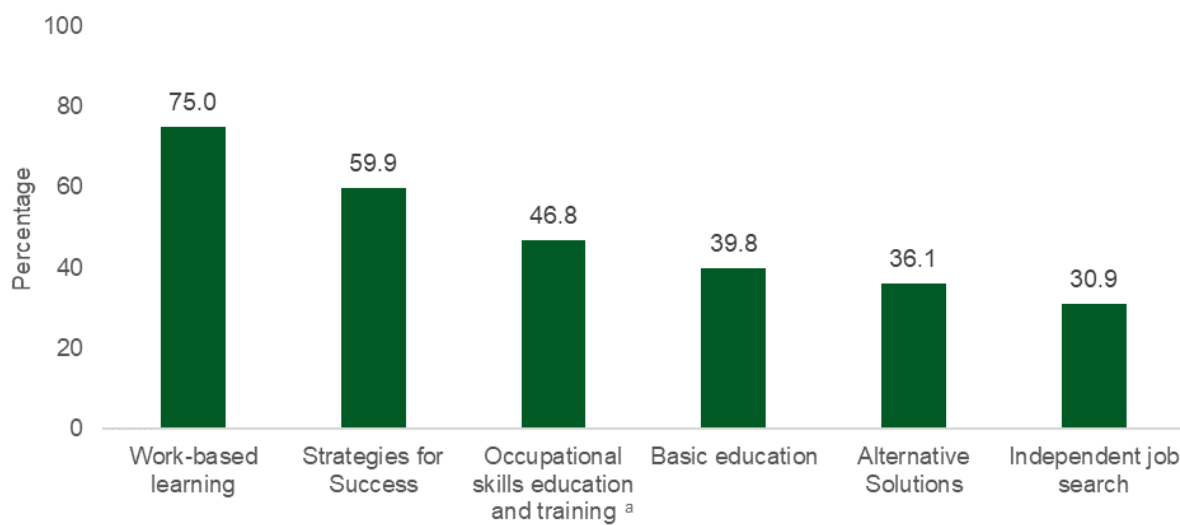
Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,548 RISE group members.

^a Based on the data provided, occupational skills training and postsecondary education could not be separated for analysis, but individuals mostly earned occupational skills training certifications rather than postsecondary degrees.

Among those who started activities, 57 percent of individuals completed at least one (Appendix Table D.3). However, completion rates by type of activity varied. Because individuals started SfS before other activities, it is not surprising that it had one of the highest completion rates (60 percent of those who started; Exhibit V.3). Most individuals participating in work-based learning activities completed them (75 percent), but note that few individuals (less than 1 percent) started work-based learning. Completion rates for other activities ranged from 31 percent (independent job search) to 47 percent (occupational skills education and training). There were few differences in characteristics between those who did and did not complete the most common activities; individuals who completed SfS were more likely to be older than 49 (10 percentage point difference) and have a degree (6 percentage point difference; Appendix Table D.13).

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



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

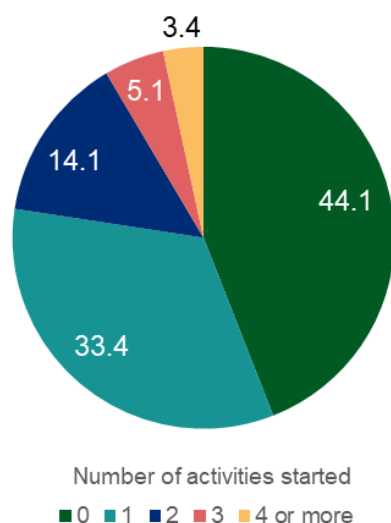
Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,432 RISE group members.

^a Based on the data provided, occupational skills training and postsecondary education could not be separated for analysis, but individuals mostly earned occupational skills training certifications rather than postsecondary degrees.

Length and timing of engagement. Individuals in the RISE group who started an activity spent an average of three to seven months participating, depending on the activity (Appendix Table D.5). Individuals spent three months (76 days) on average in SfS and seven months (214 days) in work-based learning. They spent a similar amount of time in Alternative Solutions and basic education (158 and 151 days, respectively). Although most individuals started an activity in the first quarter after random assignment (48 percent), 1 to 4 percent of individuals in the RISE group started activities between Quarters 2 and 5 (Appendix Table D.6). There was a similar trend for rates of completion, with the largest percentage of those who started an activity completing it in the first or second quarter (17 percent and 9 percent, respectively), and 1 to 3 percent completing it between Quarters 3 and 5.

Number and order of activities. Generally, an individual would start SfS and then move to at least one other activity; however, the data show that most individuals either did not participate in any activity (44 percent) or engaged in just one (33 percent; Exhibit V.4). Among individuals who started just one activity, 73 percent started SfS, as expected. A small percentage of individuals started basic education (8 percent), Alternative Solutions (7 percent), or occupational skills education and training (7 percent), instead of SfS (Appendix Table D.5).

For RISE group members who participated in more than one activity, the most common combinations of activities were SfS and independent job search (19 percent) and SfS and occupational skills education and training (18 percent). For both combinations of activities, the average length of time between starting the second activity after beginning SfS classes was four to five months (Appendix Table D.5). This finding suggests that individuals generally did not engage in multiple activities simultaneously. They likely had completed or were close to completing one activity (typically SfS classes) before moving to the next.

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

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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,548 RISE group members.

Earlier versus later enrollment. Because some service and RISE policies changed over time, we analyzed whether there was a difference in start and completion rates of employment or training-related activities for those who were enrolled in the pilot earlier versus later. RISE group members who enrolled later were less likely than those who enrolled earlier to start any activity (54 versus 61 percent) and less likely to complete any activity (30 versus 35 percent; Appendix Table D.4). Although DSHS made several changes to increase access to and completion of SfS after RISE began, those who enrolled later were less likely than those who enrolled earlier to start SfS classes (44 versus 48 percent), but there were no significant differences across periods in the rates of completing them.

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

Among just education, occupational skills training, or work-based learning activities (excluding SfS, independent job search, and the Alternative Solutions program), only 20 percent of individuals started one of these activities, and 46 percent of those who started at least one completed it (Appendix Table D.7). Thus, only about one third of all individuals starting an employment or training-related activity participated in education, training, or work-based learning. This section describes the types of education and occupational skills training RISE group members started and completed, as well as any degrees or certifications they earned through RISE. It also describes the types of work-based learning in which individuals participated and the average value of any subsidies employers received.

1. Education and occupational skills training

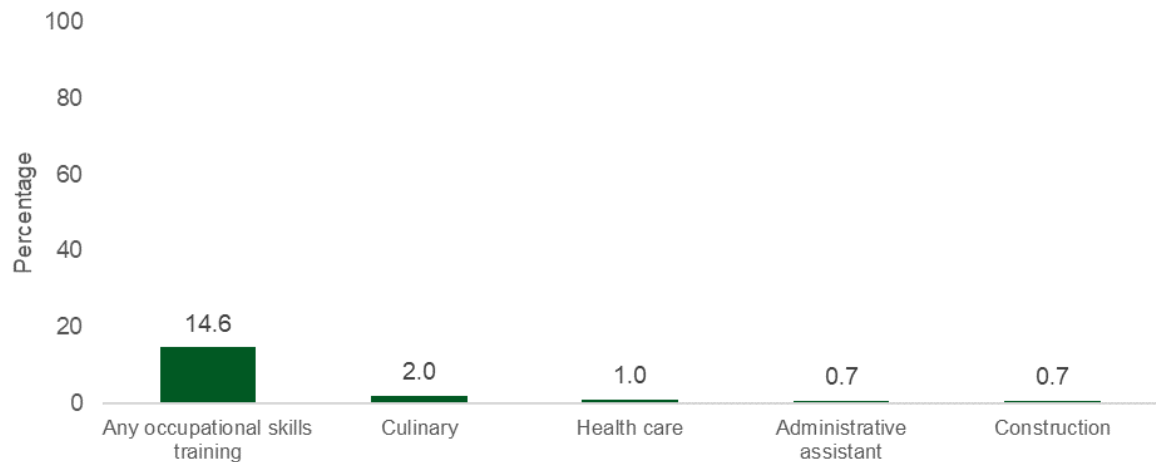
RISE group members could participate in basic education or postsecondary education activities, but limited data were available on who obtained degrees and what types. Seven percent of RISE group members started adult basic education and 3 percent completed it (or 40 percent of those who started). Although many of these individuals were likely working toward obtaining a GED or high school equivalency, RISE staff did not track whether individuals obtained a diploma or the equivalent. Some individuals also enrolled at the community college to obtain a postsecondary degree, but postsecondary

education was not tracked separately from occupational skills training, which often took place at community colleges. Less than 1 percent of individuals in RISE obtained a bachelor’s degree by enrolling in college (Appendix Table D.7).

Fifteen percent of RISE group members participated in some type of occupational skills training²⁶ (Exhibit V.5). Individuals had many choices for occupational skills training, so no one type of training had a large percentage of RISE group members starting it. Of the five most commonly started trainings, about 2 percent of RISE group members started culinary arts; less than 1 percent started training in health care, administrative assisting, construction, or warehousing (Exhibit V.5). Among those who started each type of occupational skills training, the completion rates were highest for those starting training for warehousing (89 percent), administrative assisting (60 percent), or health care (58 percent; Appendix Table D.7). Less than one percent of all RISE group members ultimately received an occupational skills training certification or credential.

About 15 percent of RISE group members started occupational skills training, but only 1 percent earned an occupational skills training credential or certification.

Exhibit V.5. Percentage of RISE group members who started any occupational skills training and the five most common types of training



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.
Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,548 RISE group members.

2. Work-based learning

Less than 1 percent of RISE group members engaged in work-based learning, which could include subsidized employment, work experience, or on-the-job training (Exhibit V.6). Most of the work-based learning placements were in subsidized employment (83 percent). Individuals also participated in work

Those who participated in work-based learning worked an average of 19 hours per week and employers were paid an average subsidy of \$7,249 per person.

²⁶ Based on the data provided, the percentage of RISE group members who started occupational skills training could not be separated from those who started postsecondary education. However, individuals mostly earned occupational skills training certifications rather than postsecondary degrees.

experience and on-the-job training (both 8 percent). Most RISE group members who started work-based learning completed it (75 percent); those who started work-based learning spent an average of 19 hours per week for about 31 weeks in the activity. RISE paid employers an average subsidy of \$7,249 per person for those who participated in work-based learning activities.

Exhibit V.6. Percentage of RISE group members who participated in work-based learning and average amount of subsidy received

Type of service	RISE group
Started work-based learning (%)	0.5
Type of work-based learning, among those who started (%)	
Subsidized employment	83.3
Work experience	8.3
On-the-job training	8.3
Completed work-based learning (%)	0.4
Completed work-based learning, among those who started (%)	75.0
Average amount of subsidy per person, among those who started (\$)	7,249
Average number of hours per week spent in work-based learning, among those who started	19.4
Average number of weeks spent in work-based learning, among those who started	30.6
Sample size	2,548

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

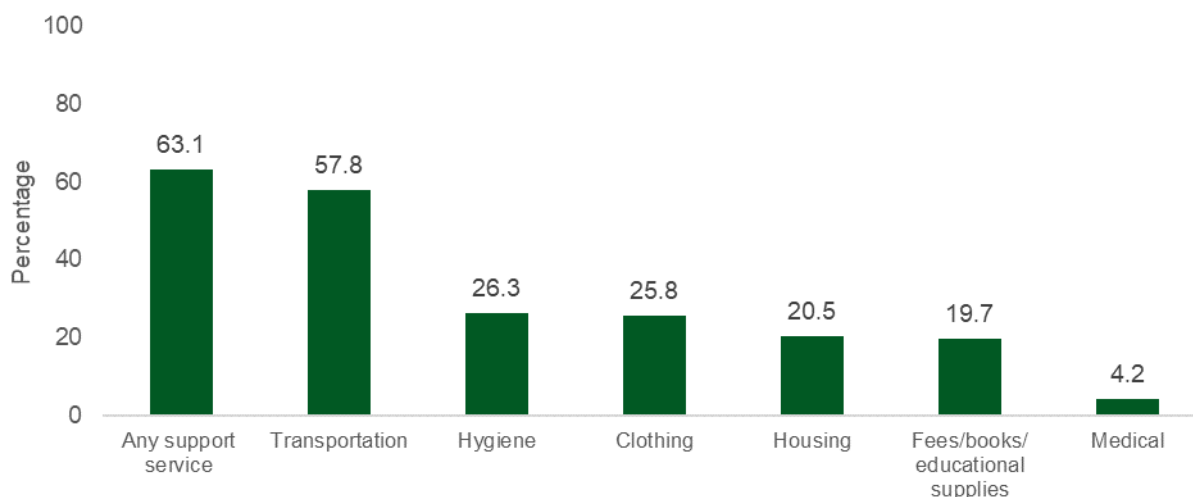
C. Support services

Many RISE group members received at least one support service (63 percent; Exhibit V.7). The majority received transportation assistance (58 percent); between 20 and 30 percent received other types of supports, such as hygiene assistance (26 percent), clothing (26 percent), housing assistance (21 percent), and assistance with education and training-related materials (20 percent). Most individuals started receiving support services within their first quarter after random assignment (53 percent), whereas 1 to 6 percent of individuals first received a support service in Quarters 2 through 4 (Appendix Table D.6).

More than 60 percent of RISE group members received a support service, receiving a total of \$798, on average.

Individuals who received a support service received some type of support service for four months, on average.²⁷ Individuals received transportation assistance for four months, but received assistance with hygiene, housing, or education and training-related materials for an average of two months each.

²⁷ Individuals who received support services in more than one month did not necessarily receive them in consecutive months.

Exhibit V.7. Percentage of RISE group members who received support services, by type

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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,548 RISE group members.

On average, RISE group members who received support services each received a total of \$798 in support services payments (Exhibit V.8). The average total amount by each type of support service was largest for housing (\$983). The total average amount for other support services was much lower than housing but in a similar range, from \$118 (medical) to \$272 (transportation).

Exhibit V.8. Amount of support services received among those who received support services

Type of service	Average amount
Average total amount of support services paid per person (\$)	798
Housing	983
Transportation	272
Fees/books/educational supplies	200
Clothing	195
Hygiene	173
Medical	118
Sample size	1,608

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

Support services in relation to other measures. We assessed whether participation in RISE 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 RISE for 102 days longer than those who did not (Appendix Table D.8). In addition, 82 percent of individuals who started an employment or training-related activity received a support service, compared to only 18 percent of individuals who did not start one. Most of the individuals who completed an activity received a support service (91 percent). Individuals who started and completed an employment or training-related activity received several hundred dollars more than those who started but did not complete one (\$1,293 versus \$972; Appendix Table D.8). This difference likely reflects that those who completed an activity were in RISE longer (resulting in more supports received).

Earlier versus later enrollment. There was no difference in support service receipt between those who enrolled in the pilot later compared to those who enrolled earlier (Appendix Table D.4).

D. Case management

The RISE model was designed to provide intensive case management to the RISE group members through weekly contacts with case managers. Exhibit V.9 shows that most individuals were in contact with case managers (94 percent), and those individuals had about 23 separate contacts while in RISE—an average of about 4 contacts per month. Contacts were made most frequently by telephone (50 percent of all contacts) and in person (38 percent of all contacts).

Most RISE group members were in contact with their case manager and they had an average of 22 contacts during RISE, mostly by telephone.

Exhibit V.9. Amount and type of RISE group members' contacts with case managers

Contact	Amount and type of contact
RISE members with any contact (%)	93.5
Average number of contacts per person (#)	21.5 ^a
Average number of contacts per person, among those with a contact (#)	22.7 ^a
Average number of contacts per person per month, among those with a contact (#)	3.8 ^a
Among contacts, type of contact (%)	
In person	37.9 ^b
Telephone	50.0
Electronic (email, text, social media)	12.0
Sample size	2,548

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

Note: Data in this table represent all contacts that case managers documented between themselves and individuals in RISE. Some of these contacts included indirect communications (such as mailing documents to an individual), but even these contacts likely provided a needed service that helped the individual. We did exclude some contacts, such as leaving a phone message or sending mass mailings, where applicable.

^a The number includes only those individuals randomly assigned on or after September 1, 2016, because RISE did not capture these data before that date.

^b The percentage includes only data from August 2017 through December 2018, because RISE did not capture these data before that date. These data should be viewed as showing only the general distribution of contacts by type, as the exact numbers may be affected by the truncated data collection period. Although the distribution is reasonable based on qualitative reporting from provider staff, the exact numbers of contacts by type are higher than the average number of contacts per month based on data from a longer period of time. It is possible individuals had more contact in the later months and the types of contacts may have changed over time.

Earlier versus later enrollment. There was no difference in the percentage of individuals with any contact with a case manager among those who enrolled in the pilot later compared to those who enrolled earlier (Appendix Table D.4).

E. Extent and timing of RISE exits

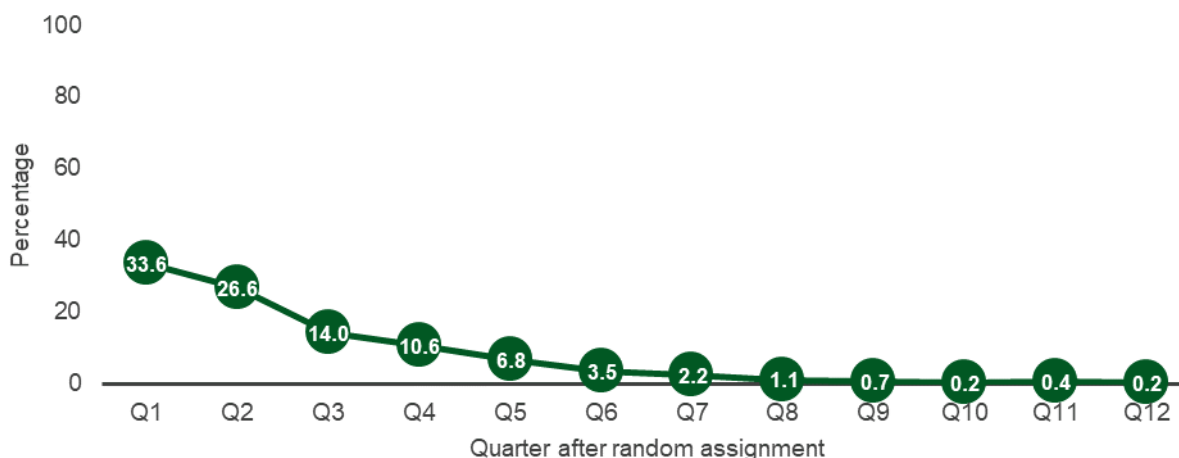
The majority of RISE group members (85 percent) exited the pilot within 12 months of random assignment (Exhibit V.10). Another 14 percent left in their second year, and the remaining approximately

2 percent exited in their third year. Most individuals left in the first and second quarters after random assignment (34 and 27 percent, respectively). Among those who exited within 3 months, 47 percent received a support service, compared to 61 percent of those who exited within 12 months (Appendix Table D.10). More than half of RISE group members exited after they participated in an employment or training-related activity (52 percent); only a small percentage (11 percent) of those who exited later re-entered RISE (Appendix Table D.10).

The majority of individuals exited RISE within their first year after random assignment; only 2 percent exited in their third year.

There were some differences in the characteristics of those who left RISE early (within Quarter 1) and those who left later (after Quarter 1). Those who exited earlier were more likely to be White (a 5 percentage point difference), ages 18 to 49 (a 7 percentage point difference), male (a 4 percentage point difference), and to have less than a high school education (a 4 percentage point difference; Appendix Table D.11).

Exhibit V.10. Percentage of RISE group members who exited within each quarter



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,548 RISE group members.

Thirty-five percent of RISE group members left because case managers lost contact with the individual and closed the case, and 29 percent chose to leave without completing services and did not notify their case manager of this decision (“incomplete”). Sixteen percent of RISE group members exited after completing their service pathway, whereas 8 percent exited because RISE ended (Exhibit V.11). The providers did not track loss of SNAP as a reason for exit, but using SNAP administrative data, only 18 percent of RISE group members exited SNAP in the month before, the month of, or the month after their exit from RISE (Appendix Table D.10). This finding indicates that most exits from RISE were not associated with losing SNAP benefits.

Eight percent of RISE group members exited due to finding employment (Exhibit V.11). However, this percentage may not provide a full picture of employment around the time of exit. Using UI wage data, we examined the employment patterns around the time of exit from RISE. About 44 percent were already employed at the time of exit (at least three months before exit), and 17 percent started employment around the time of exit (between two months before to two months after the exit date). Forty percent did not become employed around the time of exit (Appendix Table D.10). The percentage reporting that they left

RISE for employment is lower than the percentage who obtained new employment in the UI wage data, but the RISE exit data may not reflect others with in the 44 percent who were employed while in RISE and decided to leave the program because of changes in hours, wages, or satisfaction with their current job.

Exhibit V.11. Percentage of RISE group members who exited, by reason

Exits	RISE group
Lost contact	35.1
Incomplete	29.0
Completed services	15.7
Exited for employment	8.1
Exited due to RISE ending	8.0
Ineligible	2.5
No show for scheduled appointment	1.5
Sample size	2,548

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

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

In this chapter, we describe how RISE and control group members differed in their receipt of services based on participation in RISE, existing SNAP E&T (BFET), or other services and programs available in communities. Understanding differences in service receipt is important for interpreting findings about the impacts of RISE 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 RISE 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.²⁸ 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.

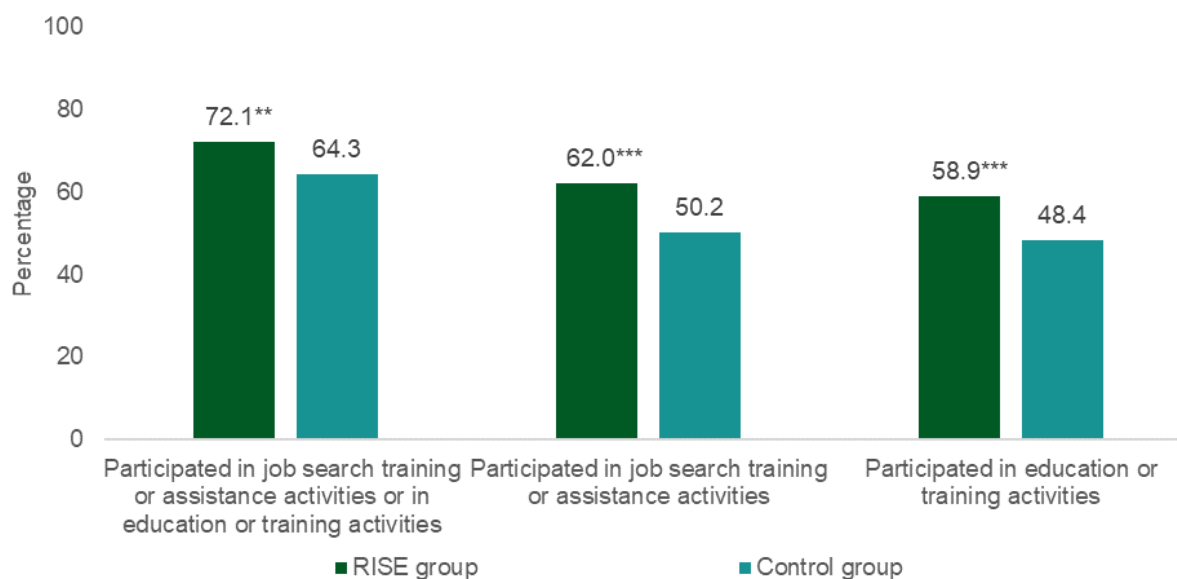
A. Differences between research groups in participation in activities

Individuals in the RISE group participated in activities at higher rates than individuals in the control group. Seventy-two percent of the RISE group participated in a job search training or assistance activity or education or training activity compared to 64 percent of the control group (Exhibit VI.1). Relative to individuals in the control group, individuals in the RISE group were more likely to participate in job search training or assistance activities (12 percentage point difference) and education or training activities (11 percentage point difference).

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

²⁸ 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 RISE, 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 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

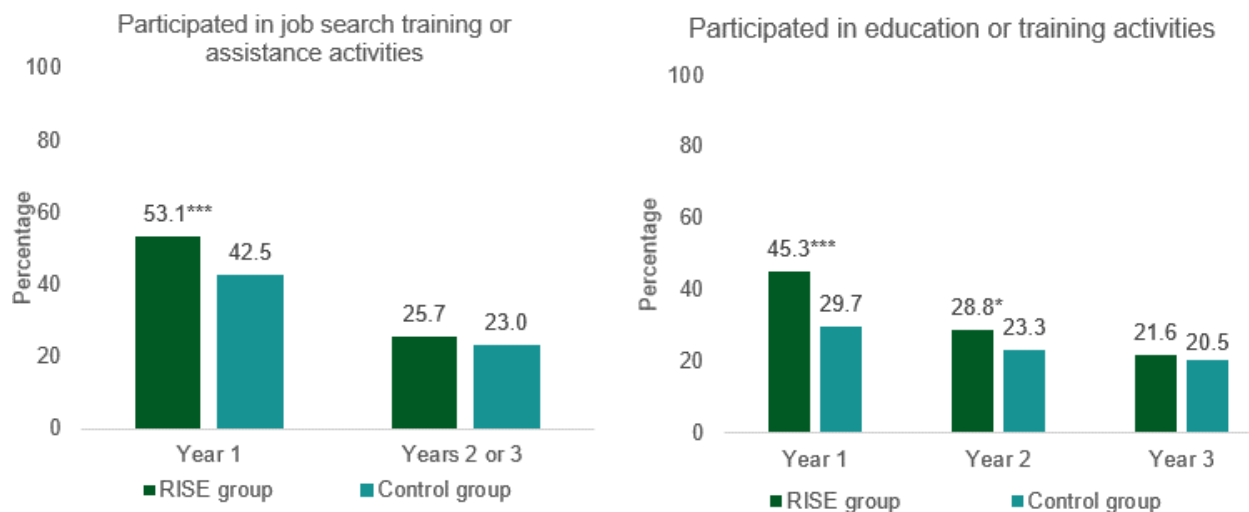
***/**/* Difference between the RISE group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

Differences in service receipt between the RISE group and the control group were largest in the first year after random assignment and decreased in size over time (Exhibit VI.2). For example, in Year 1, there was a 16 percentage point difference between the RISE group and the control group in the

The difference in rates of participation between the RISE and control groups was strongest in the first year and decreased over time, with no significant difference by Year 3

percentage of individuals who participated in education or training activities. By Year 3, this difference was positive but not statistically significant. This finding is consistent with the fact that the average individual in the RISE group participated in the pilot for about eight months. After Washington stopped providing RISE services, RISE group members did not continue receiving services in existing SNAP E&T or the community at higher rates than control group members—the difference between the RISE and control groups in the percentage of individuals who participated in an education or training activity was 12 percentage points before the pilot ended and not significantly different from zero after it ended (Appendix Table E.2a). The differences between the two groups in rates of participation for individuals randomly assigned earlier in the pilot period were also similar to those randomly assigned later (Appendix Table E.10).

Exhibit VI.2. Participation in RISE, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered services, by year after random assignment



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

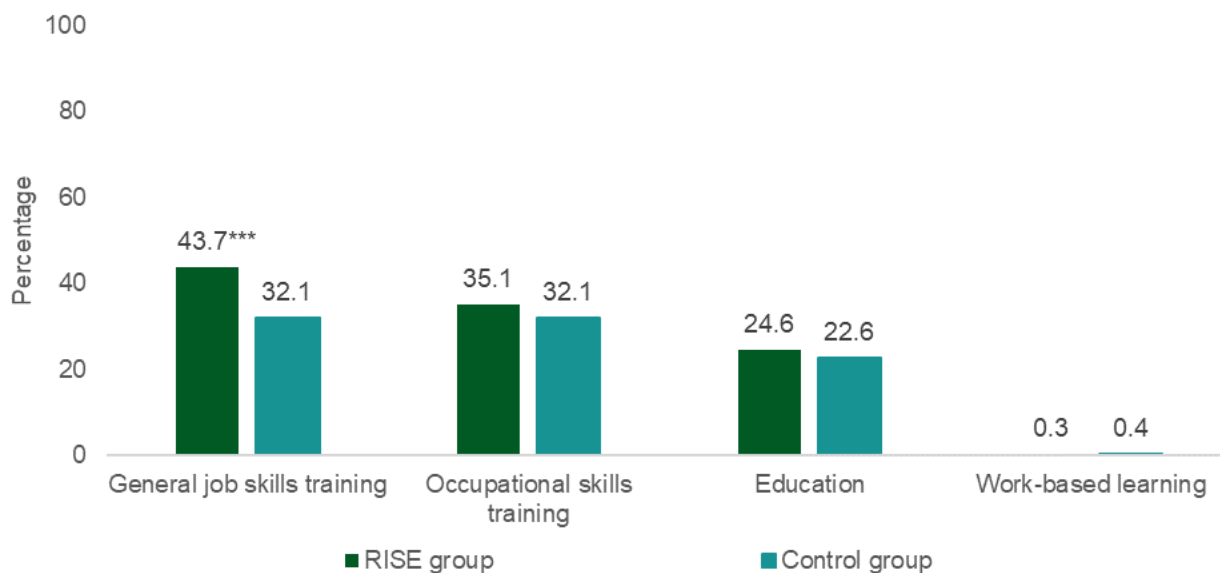
Note: Estimates are based on data from 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members. The 12- and 36-month surveys collected the start and end dates for participation in education or training programs, but not for participation in job search training or assistance activities. As a result, annual 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 RISE group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

RISE group members were more likely than control group members to start a general job skills training activity (12 percentage point difference; Exhibit VI.3). There was no difference between the two groups in rates of participation in other types of education or training activities, including occupational skills training, education, or work-based learning.

The RISE group had higher rates of participation than the control group in general job skills training, but not in other types of activities, including occupational skills training, education, or work-based learning.

Exhibit VI.3 Participation in specific RISE, 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 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

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

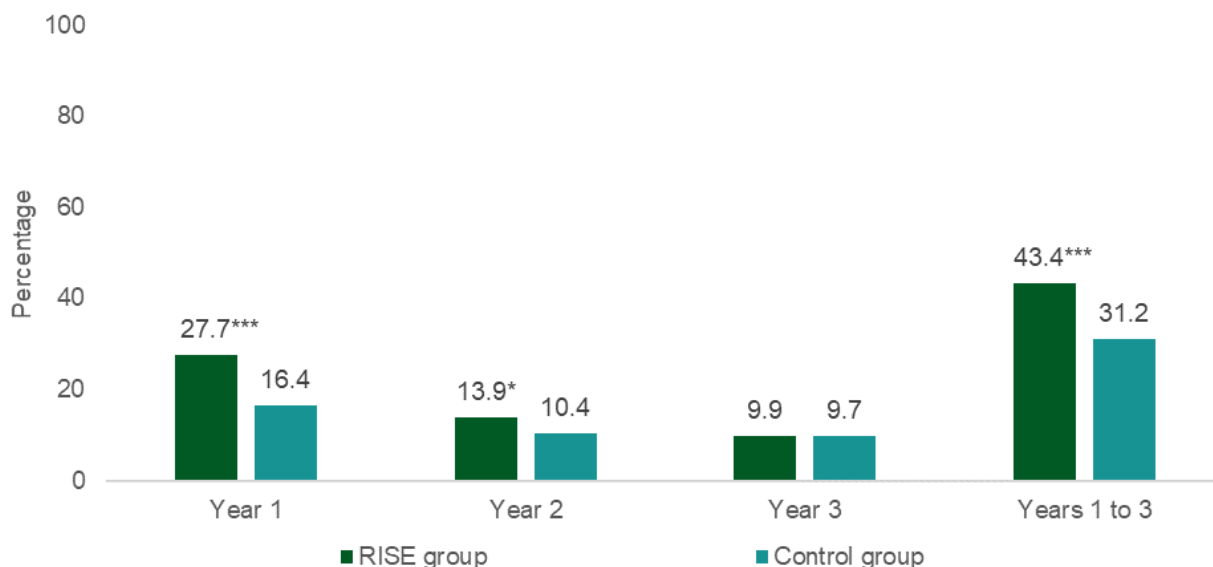
B. Differences between research groups in activity completion

In addition to being more likely than the control group to start education and training activities, the RISE group was also more likely to complete them (Exhibit VI.4). Overall, RISE group members were 12 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 (11 percentage point difference) and grew smaller and not statistically significant in the second and third years (Exhibit VI.4). Some individuals—12 percent of RISE group members and 11 percent of control group members—reported that they were still engaged in the activity at the time of the 36-month follow-up survey (Appendix Table E.3). Individuals engaged in an activity at the time of the 36-month survey were most commonly still in occupational skills training, as reported by 8 percent of RISE group members and 6 percent of control group members.

Individuals in the RISE group were more likely than those in the control group to complete general job skills training activities (12 percentage point difference) and education (4 percentage point difference; Appendix Table E.3), with no significant difference between the two groups in the percentage of who completed other types of activities, including occupational skills training or work-based learning activities.

Exhibit VI.4. Percentage of RISE 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 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

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

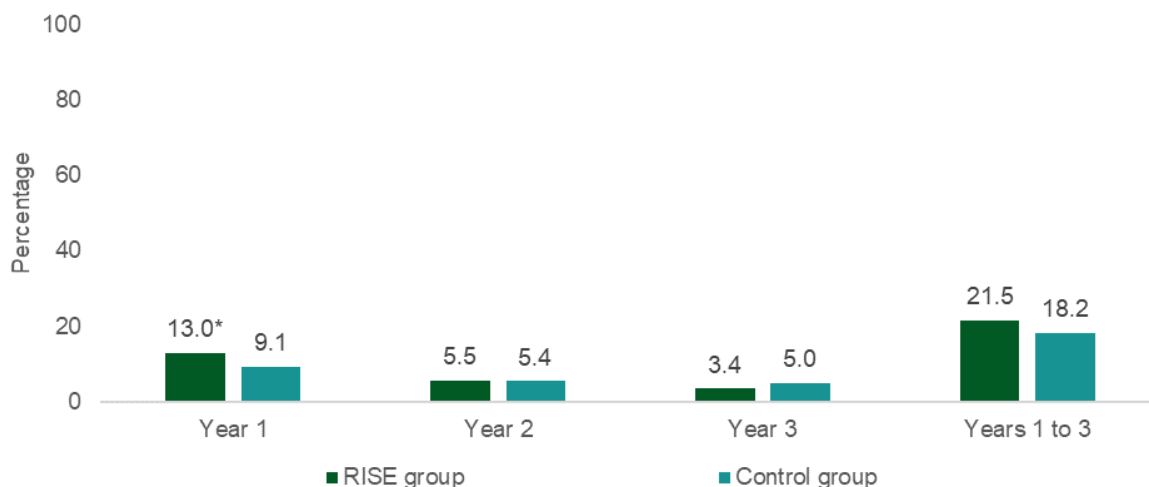
Individuals in the RISE group spent, on average, about two months longer in activities than individuals in the control group (seven versus five months; Appendix Table E.3). RISE group members also spent about 2 hours more per week in activities than control group members (10 versus 8 hours). In the first two years following random assignment, the RISE group spent more time per year and more hours per week in activities, relative to the control group. In the third year after random assignment, RISE group members spent more hours per week in activities than the control group, but there was no difference between groups in the mean length of time spent in activities that year.

Individuals in the RISE group were just as likely as those in the control group to receive an occupational certificate or license (Exhibit VI.5). There was a significant difference in the percentage of individuals who received one in Year 1 following random assignment, but not in Years 2 and 3.

RISE group members were more likely than control group members to complete activities and earn a high school diploma/GED.

The difference between the two groups in rates of completion of activities was greater for individuals randomly assigned later in the enrollment period versus earlier in the enrollment period, but this difference was not statistically significant. The average length of time spent in all activities were similar for both groups (Appendix Table E.10).

Exhibit VI.5. Percentage of RISE 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 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the RISE 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

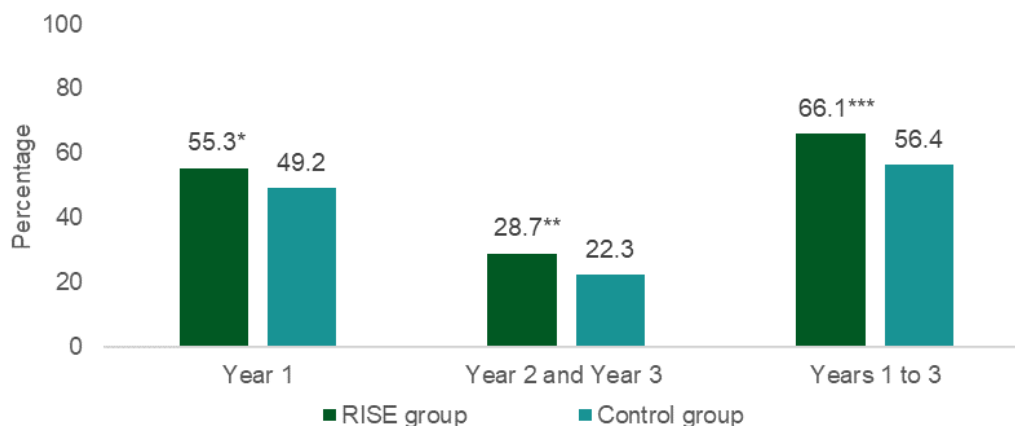
RISE group members were more likely than control group members to receive case management services, including career counseling and one-on-one assistance from employment professionals or case managers (10 percentage point difference; Exhibit VI.6). The difference between the two groups was similar in magnitude and statistically significant in all three years after random assignment (6 percentage point difference in year 1 and 7 percentage point difference in years 2 and 3). There was a similar difference between the two groups in case management receipt for individuals randomly assigned earlier versus later in the enrollment period (Appendix Table E.10).

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

On average, RISE group members had five additional contacts with an employment professional or case manager relative to control group members (13 versus 7 contacts, with rounding; Appendix Table E.6). There were no statistically significant differences in mode of contact (in person versus by phone) between the two groups (Appendix Table E.7).

RISE group members also were more likely than control group members to receive support services. About 83 percent of individuals in the RISE group received a support service compared to 73 percent in the control group (Exhibit VI.7). The largest differences between the two groups were observed for transportation assistance (64 versus 50 percent); clothes, uniforms, tools, or other supplies and equipment (39 versus 26 percent); housing assistance (40 versus 31 percent); and other support services (17 versus 13 percent). There were no statistically significant differences between the RISE group and the control group in receipt of mental health or substance use counseling or child care assistance.

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

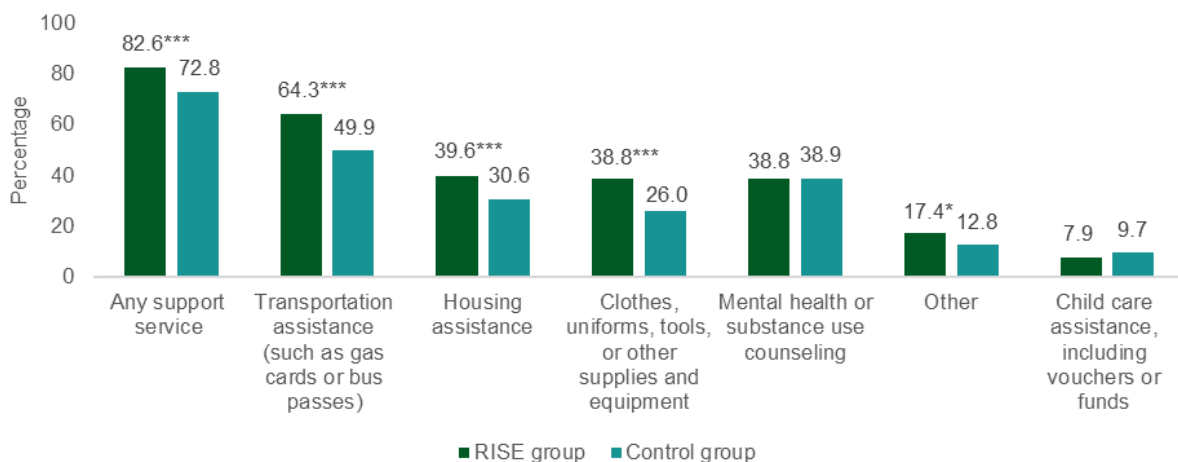


Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: Estimates cover the 36 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members. The 12-month survey requested information about receipt of case management and support 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 and support services between the date of the 12-month interview and the date of the 36-month interview. As a result, it is not possible to estimate receipt of assistance separately in Years 2 and 3.

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

Exhibit VI.7. Receipt of support services through RISE, 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 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members. "Other" included assistance with payment of utilities such as electricity, phone, heat, or gas; food assistance; and assistance with medical care.

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

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

Individuals in the RISE group were more likely than those in the control group to receive support services in the first year following random assignment, with no significant difference between the two groups in ensuing two years. Differences between the two groups were larger for individuals who were randomly assigned earlier versus later in the enrollment period (18 percentage points versus 5 percentage points; Appendix Table E.10).

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

In this chapter, we examine whether the generally higher rates of engagement and service receipt among individuals in RISE, 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 RISE 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 RISE activities.

A. Impacts of RISE on labor market outcomes

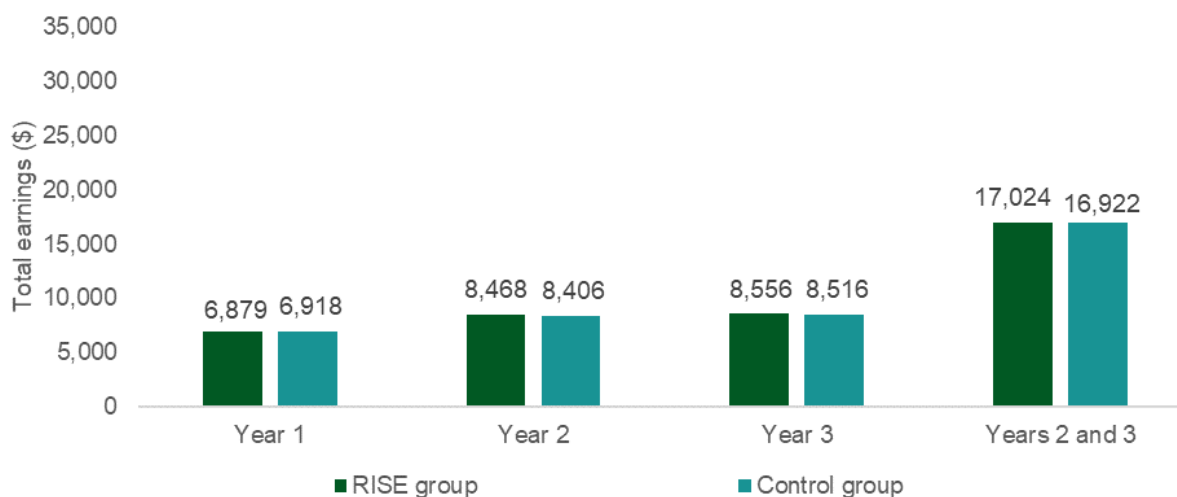
This section presents impacts on key labor market outcomes. Outcomes from both UI wage records and survey data were measured by year and quarter after random assignment. Some outcomes based on the survey data were measured at the time of the survey, approximately 36 months after random assignment.²⁹

1. Impacts on employment, earnings, and hours worked

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

²⁹ 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

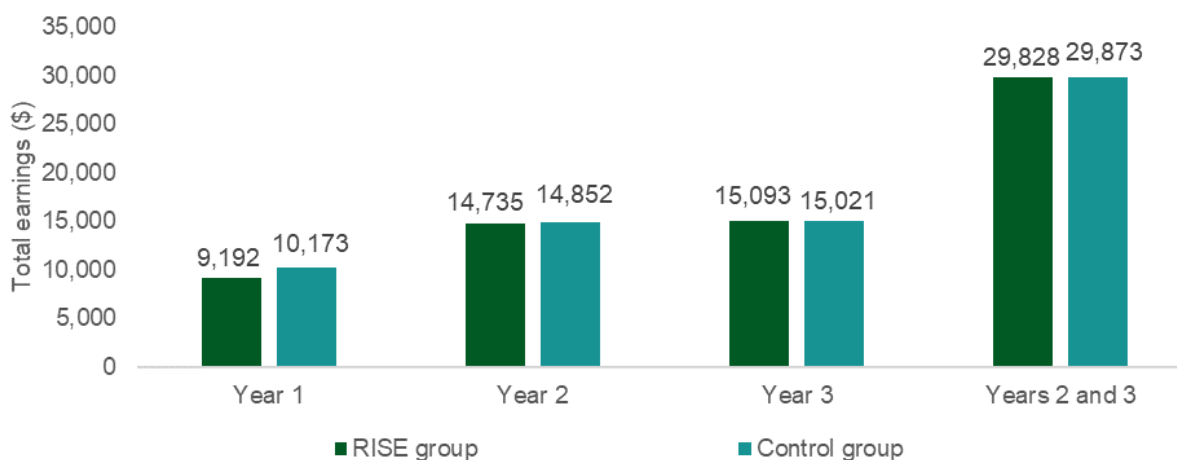


Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,235 RISE group members and 2,231 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the RISE group and control group is significantly different from zero at the .01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

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



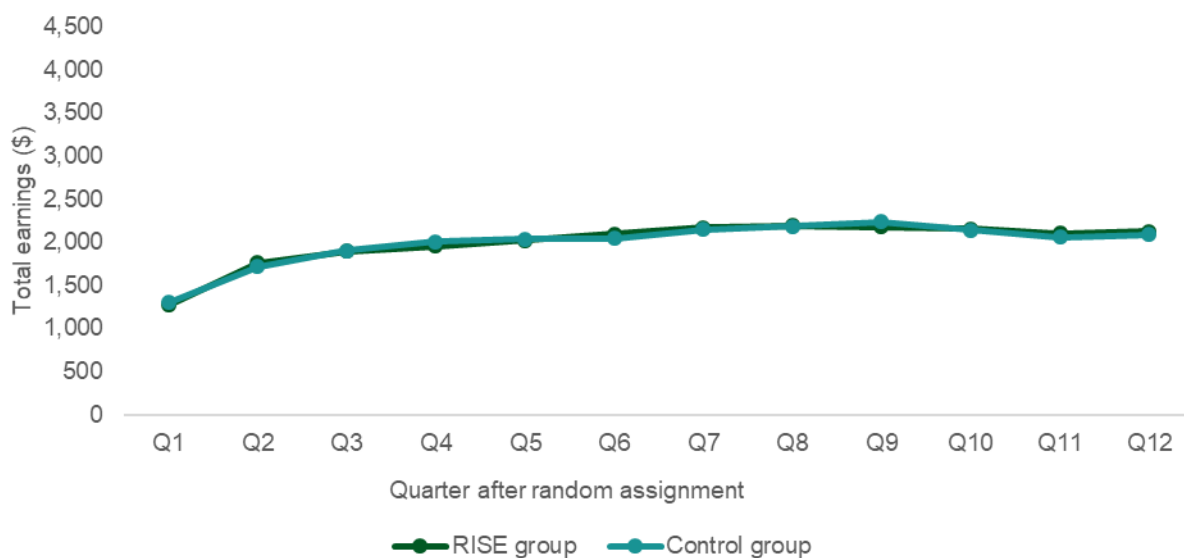
Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12- and 36-month surveys, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the RISE 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 and survey data, there were no statistical differences between the research groups in earnings in any quarter (Exhibits VII.3 and VII.4). These findings 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

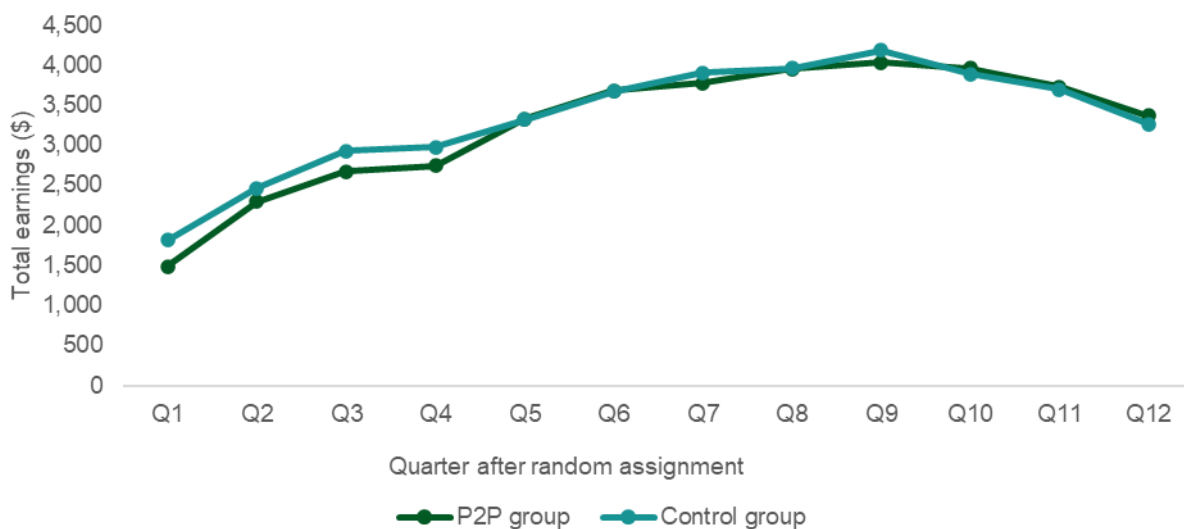


Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,235 RISE group members and 2,231 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the RISE 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 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

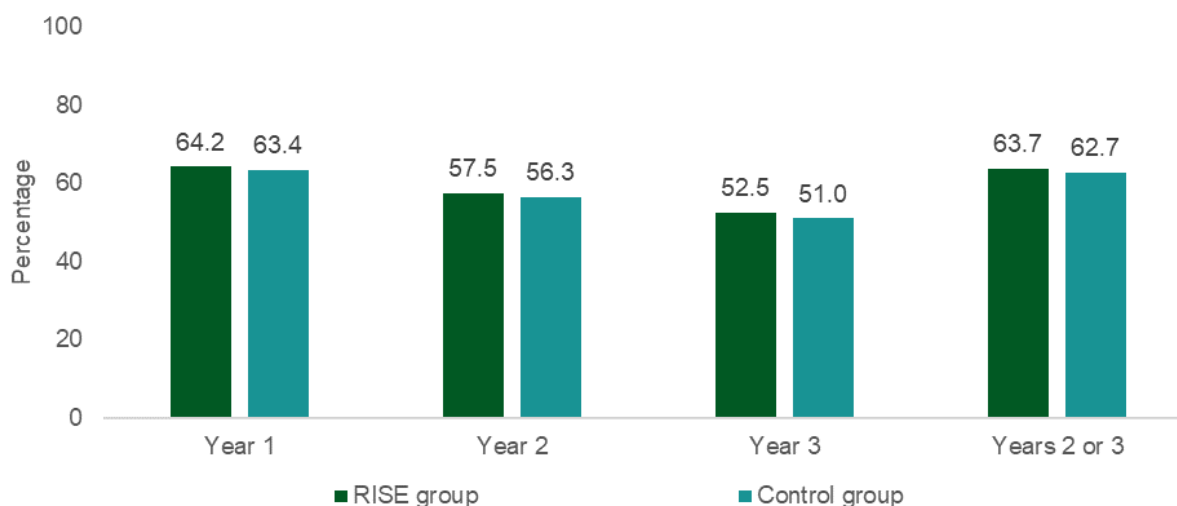
***/**/* Difference between the RISE group and control group is significantly different from zero at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test.

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

Employment. Based on both UI and survey data, RISE did not lead to an increase in the percentage of individuals who were employed in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) following random assignment (Exhibits VII.5 and VII.6). Based on the UI data, about 63 to 64 percent of individuals in each research group were employed in Years 2 and 3, and based on the survey data, 73 percent of individuals in the RISE group and 71 percent of individuals in the control group were employed. In both data sources, the employment rates in Years 1, 2, and 3, individually, were similar across research groups.

RISE did not lead to an increase in employment in the three-year period following random assignment based on UI or survey data.

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



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

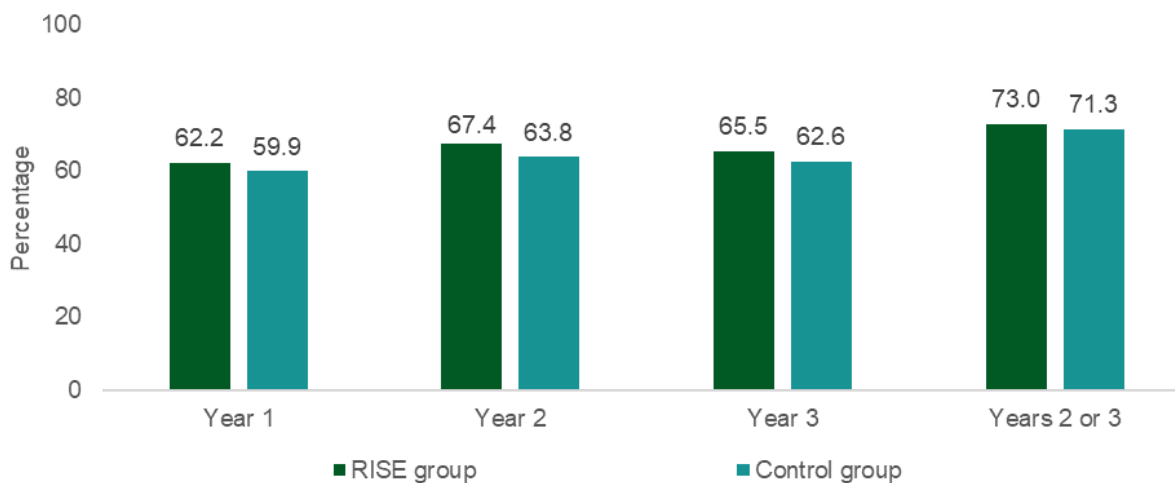
Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,235 RISE group members and 2,231 control group members.

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

Employment rates were also similar across research groups in each quarter (Appendix Tables F.2 and F.4). Based on both data sources, the employment rate for each research group increased from the first to the fourth or fifth quarter, then generally decreased over time. Separately examining Year 3 employment rate impact according to whether individuals were randomly assigned earlier or later in the enrollment period showed no impacts for either set of individuals (Appendix Table F.19).

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 similar to those for rates of employment. Both data sources showed that the RISE and control groups were employed for similar numbers of quarters/months in each year. (Appendix Tables F.2 and F.4).

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 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

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

Hours worked. Among all individuals randomly assigned, those in the RISE group worked roughly the same number of hours per week as those in the control group (Appendix Table F.5). RISE group members worked an average of 13 hours per week in Year 1 and increased to 17 hours per week in Year 3. Similarly, control group members worked an average of 14 hours per week in Year 1 and increased to 17 hours per week in Year 3. There were no statistically significant differences between research groups in any quarter.

2. Impacts on characteristics of current jobs

Exhibit VII.7 presents characteristics of jobs individuals held at the time of the 36-month survey.³⁰ This information was available only for individuals employed at the time of the 36-month survey (42 percent of the RISE group and 39 percent of the control group). For this reason, the measures in Exhibit VII.7 are non-experimental and the results do not represent the causal effects of RISE on job characteristics.

³⁰ 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.

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

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

Characteristic (%)	RISE group	Control group	Difference
Employed at the time of the 36-month survey	42.0	38.6	3.4
Hours worked per week			
Less than 20	18.5	19.0	-0.5
21 to 34	27.5	27.1	0.5
35 or more (employed full time)	53.7	53.9	-0.3
Average	33.7	33.1	0.6
Weekly earnings			
\$1 to \$499	44.8	49.4	-4.6
\$500 to \$999	46.8	40.2	6.6
\$1,000 to \$1,499	6.4	8.5	-2.0
\$1,500 to \$2,000	0.0	0.6	-0.6
\$2,000 and above	2.0	1.2	0.8
Benefits available at job			
Any benefit	82.8	78.3	4.5
Health insurance or HMO/PPO plan	59.9	59.6	0.3
Dental insurance	52.7	48.6	4.0
Paid vacation	57.5	48.5	9.0
Paid holidays	59.6	49.6	10.0*
Paid sick leave	72.2	68.5	3.8
Any paid time off	76.6	74.2	2.4
Pension or retirement benefits	51.4	51.1	0.3
Tuition assistance or reimbursement	22.1	20.2	1.9
Type of employment			
Regular full or part time	84.1	75.1	9.0**
Temporary or on call	11.8	6.9	4.9*
Self-employed or independent contractor or consultant	2.7	12.8	-10.1***
Day laborer	1.4	5.1	-3.8**
Occupation			
Transportation and material moving	11.0	13.8	-2.8
Office and administrative support	9.7	6.4	3.3
Food preparation and serving	5.1	7.7	-2.6
Sales	7.7	8.1	-0.4
Personal care and service	6.0	5.5	0.5
Production	9.6	3.3	6.3***
Construction and extraction	2.4	8.2	-5.8***
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	4.0	3.8	0.1
Management	6.1	2.5	3.6*
Protective service	4.1	2.0	2.1
Sample size	289	261	

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

***/**/* Difference between the RISE 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.

Among individuals who were employed at the time of the 36-month follow-up survey, RISE group members and control group members held jobs with generally similar characteristics (Exhibit VII.7). Just over half of individuals in both research groups were employed full time (54 percent for both groups). About 45 to 49 percent of employed individuals in both research groups earned less than \$500 per week. The majority of employed individuals in both research groups received at least one employer-offered benefit. Employed RISE group members were almost 10 percentage points more likely than employed control group members to receive paid holidays (60 versus 50 percent). Employed RISE group members were more likely than employed control group members to be a regular status employee (84 versus 75 percent) or a temporary or on-call employee (12 versus 7 percent) and were less likely than employed control group members to be self-employed (3 versus 13 percent) or a day laborer (1 versus 5 percent).

Common occupations included transportation and material moving (such as conveyor operators and industrial truck and tractor operators), office and administrative support, sales, and food preparation and serving. With the exception of the RISE group being more likely than the control group to be employed in production jobs (such as food processing, metal and plastic work, and textiles and apparel) and less likely to be employed in construction and extraction jobs, the occupations were similar across research groups.

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 RISE 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, there were no significant differences between research groups in employment rates in each year based on UI data. The RISE and control groups also had similar likelihoods of having one unemployment spell or two or more unemployment spells over the three-year period (Appendix Table F.20). This outcome was true for individuals who were employed at the time of random assignment and for those who were not employed.

As presented in Exhibit VII.6, employment rates were similar in Years 2 and 3 combined based on the survey data. The percentage of individuals who experienced a job loss during the three-year period following random assignment was also similar across research groups (66 versus 67 percent; Appendix Table F.22).³¹ On average, both research groups experienced similar numbers of unemployment spells, with 46 to 50 percent experiencing one spell in the period and 42 to 45 percent experiencing 2 or more spells. Both groups also had similar likelihoods of being unemployed at the time of the 12-month survey and employed at the time of the 36-month survey. Job retainment rates were also similar across groups (65 percent of the RISE group was employed at both points in time compared to 66 percent of the control group). Taken together, these findings suggest that the similar rates of employment across research groups observed in each year reflect similar dynamics of employment experiences across research groups—both groups had similar likelihoods of experiencing job losses and becoming employed.

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 40 percent of the RISE group had one job at the time

³¹ Because these estimates are based only on individuals who are employed at some point in the period, and are thus at risk of experiencing a job loss, they are not experimental impacts.

of the 12-month survey; 5 percent had two or more jobs. At the time of the 36-month survey, these percentages were 41 and 4 percent, respectively. For the control group, 40 percent had one job and 4 percent had two or more jobs at the time of the 12-month survey. At the time of the 36-month survey, these percentages were 38 and 4 percent, respectively.

Exhibit VII.7 shows that RISE had few impacts on job characteristics around the time of the 36-month survey. There were also relatively few changes in the distributions of these characteristics among employed individuals from the 12-month to the 36-month survey (Appendix Table F.24). The RISE group was more likely than the control group to earn \$500 to \$999 per week at the time of the 12-month interview, but the earnings distributions were more similar across research groups at the time of the 36-month interview. The RISE and control groups had similar likelihoods of receiving employment benefits at the time of the 12-month survey, but the RISE group was more likely than the control group to receive nearly each type of benefit at the time of the 36-month survey.

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.

4. Conclusions

RISE did not lead to an increase in earnings or employment in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) following random assignment or in any year based on UI or survey data.³² There were also no statistically significant differences in average hours worked per week between the RISE and control groups in any year. Although the similar rates of employment across research groups observed in each year reflect similar likelihoods of experiencing job losses and becoming employed over time, the RISE group was more likely to receive employment benefits at the time of the 36-month survey than at the 12-month survey.

B. Impacts of RISE on receipt of public assistance

This section presents findings on the impact of RISE 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

RISE did not affect the likelihood of participating in SNAP in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) following random assignment. About 82 percent of RISE members and 81 percent of control group members participated in SNAP at some point during this period (Exhibit VII.8). The lack of impacts of RISE on SNAP participation reflects similar decreases each year in the rate of SNAP participation for the RISE and control groups. For example, SNAP

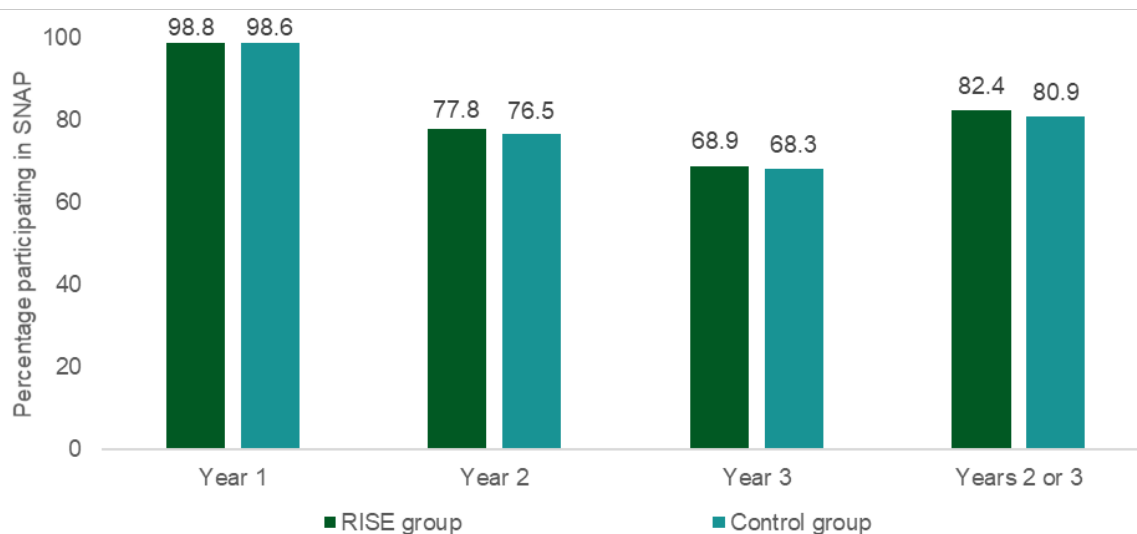
*RISE did not affect
SNAP participation.*

³² 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.

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

participation rates decreased from about 99 percent for both groups in Year 1 to about 69 percent in Year 3. There were several significant differences across groups in SNAP participation rates in Quarters 2, 3, and 4, 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).

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 2,235 RISE group members and 2,231 control group members.

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

There were no impacts of RISE on the average SNAP benefits received (Exhibit VII.9). Looking at SNAP benefit amounts received as a percentage of the maximum possible benefit (based on SNAP unit size), which provides a better comparison across SNAP units of different sizes than the nominal benefit amounts, showed similar findings with one exception: RISE group members received, on average, 2 percent more of the maximum possible benefit compared to the control group in Year 1 (71 versus 69 percent) but differences between RISE and control group members were smaller and not statistically significant in Years 2 and 3 (Exhibit VII.8). 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 RISE group, the percentage of the maximum benefit amount received decreased by about 26 percentage points between Years 1 and 3. During this same period, the percentage of RISE group members participating in SNAP decreased by about 30 percentage points (Appendix Table F.8).

On average, the RISE 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 14 of the 24 months, on average, during this period (Appendix Table F.25) and about 24 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. RISE group members had similar likelihoods of exiting SNAP across the three years relative to control group members—74 percent of the RISE group and 73 percent of the control group exited SNAP at some point during the three years after random assignment. Individuals who exited

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

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 26 percent of the RISE group participated in SNAP for the full three years, SNAP participation in Quarter 12 was higher (58 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 RISE and control groups (58 versus 59 percent, respectively), with about 31 to 33 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 57 percent of the RISE group had a single SNAP spell, 33 percent had two spells, and 10 percent had three or more spells. For the control group, these percentages were 57, 32, and 11.

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

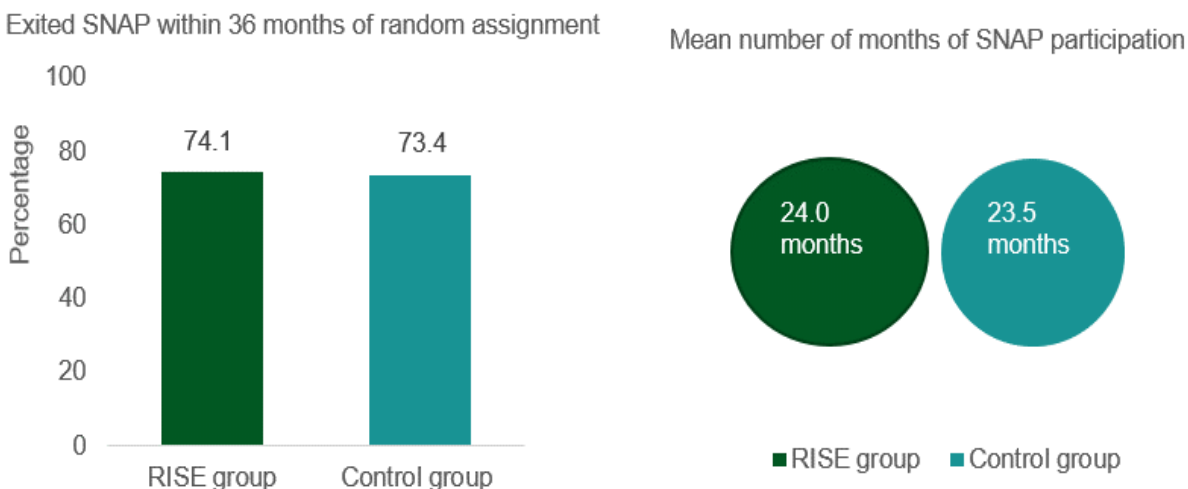
Average SNAP benefits	RISE group	Control group	Difference
Average SNAP benefits received (\$)			
Year 1	2,247	2,205	42
Year 2	1,638	1,692	-53
Year 3	1,494	1,517	-23
Years 2 and 3	3,133	3,208	-76
Average monthly SNAP benefits received as a percentage of maximum benefit amount ^a			
Year 1	71.4	69.2	2.2
Year 2	51.0	51.4	-0.4
Year 3	45.7	45.5	0.2
Years 2 and 3	48.3	48.4	-0.1
Sample size	2,235	2,231	

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

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

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

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 1,262 RISE group members and 1,274 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the RISE 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). RISE led to decreased participation in TANF, relative to the control group, across the three-year period by 2 percentage points and in each of the three years by about 1 to 2 percentage points. The same was true for TANF benefit amounts which were \$43 to \$48 less for the RISE group in each year (Appendix Table F.10).

Using the survey data, we also estimated impacts 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).³³ There were generally few 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). Individuals in the RISE group were about 5 percentage points less likely than those in the control group to receive unemployment insurance in the three-year period (20 versus 25 percent). The most commonly received benefit among both research groups was Medicaid (88 to 89 percent during the three-year period).

3. Conclusions

RISE did not affect SNAP participation and generally did not affect average SNAP benefit amounts—both nominally and as a percentage of the maximum benefit amount. In contrast, there was a 2 percentage point decrease in the rate of TANF participation over the three-year period and a 5 percentage point

³³ 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.

decrease in receipt of unemployment insurance over this period for individuals in the RISE group relative to control group members, but few impacts on the receipt of other forms of public assistance.

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

This section presents findings on RISE's impacts on food security, health, well-being, and housing status, as reported in the survey data. Most of these outcomes reflect 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.³⁴

The RISE and control groups had similar rates of food insecurity. About 47 percent of RISE group members were food insecure compared to 53 percent of control group members (Exhibit VII.11). There were also no statistical differences in the rates of very low food security (a severe form of food insecurity; 30 versus 33 percent). RISE decreased food insecurity by 9 percentage points for individuals who were randomly assigned later in the pilot (44 versus 53 percent), but did not have an impact for those randomly assigned earlier in the pilot (Appendix Table F.19). However, the difference in impacts by timing of enrollment was not statistically significant.

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 510 RISE group members and 481 control group members.

***/**/* Difference between the RISE 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 RISE group were 8 percentage points more likely than those in the control group to be food secure at the time of the 36-month interview (37 versus 29 percent; Appendix Table F.27). In contrast, individuals who were food

³⁴ 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 of 10 questions were classified as food insecure; those who affirmed at least 6 were classified as having very low food security.

secure at the time of the 12-month survey largely remained food secure at the time of the 36-month survey (71 versus 72 percent). These findings were similar for individuals who had very low food security at the time of the 12-month survey. Overall, relative to the control group, the RISE group experienced greater improvements in food security status over time. Although this resulted in lower percentages of the RISE group being food insecure or having very low food security than the control group at the time of the 36-month survey (Exhibit VII.11), these differences were not statistically significant.

Among the other outcome measures related to health, well-being, and housing status, there generally were no statistically significant differences between the RISE group and the control group (Appendix Table F.12). Thirty percent of each research group screened positively for depression. Both research groups had similar levels of health (25 percent of the RISE 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 (60 versus 61 percent), and similar percentages of each group were homeless (7 versus 8 percent). Individuals in the RISE group were more likely to live with parents, a relative, or friend and less likely to live in group quarters.

D. Impacts of RISE 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 is often 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 actually participated may have fared. In this section, we present results of analyses that differentiate individuals in the RISE group who did and did not engage in RISE and participate 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.³⁵

We assessed engagement in activities 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 an activity.³⁶

³⁵ Because individuals in RISE 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 RISE on outcomes.

³⁶ 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.

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

Employment and earnings. Based on UI data, there was a positive impact on earnings in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) for individuals who started an activity, but no impact for those who did not start one (Exhibit VII.12; Appendix Table F.13). RISE led to a \$1,901 increase in earnings for individuals who started an activity and a statically insignificant decrease of \$1,409 for those who did not start an activity. The difference in impacts was statistically significant. In addition, based on UI data, there was a positive impact on employment (7 percentage points) for individuals who started an activity and a negative impact (-4 percentage points) for those who did not start one (Exhibit VII.12; Appendix Table F.13). These findings were not corroborated by the survey data, which showed no impacts on earnings or employment for individuals who started or did not start an activity (Exhibit VII.12; Appendix Table F.15).

RISE increased employment in Years 2 and 3 for individuals who started an activity but not for those who did not start one.

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		
	RISE group	Control group	Difference	RISE group	Control group	Difference
Total earnings (\$)						
Based on UI data	18,185	16,284	1,901 ^{***}	15,985	17,394	-1,409
Based on survey data	30,635	26,520	4,115	29,278	32,054	-2,776
Employment rate (%)						
Based on UI data	66.6	59.2	7.4 ^{***}	61.8	65.4	-3.5 ^{**}
Based on survey data	73.1	67.8		74.8	74.1	0.7

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 survey data are from 263 RISE group members and 256 control group members who started an activity; and 247 RISE group members and 225 control group members who did not start an activity. Estimates based on UI data are from 949 RISE group members and 973 control group members who started an activity; and 1,286 RISE group members and 1,258 control group members who did not start one.

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

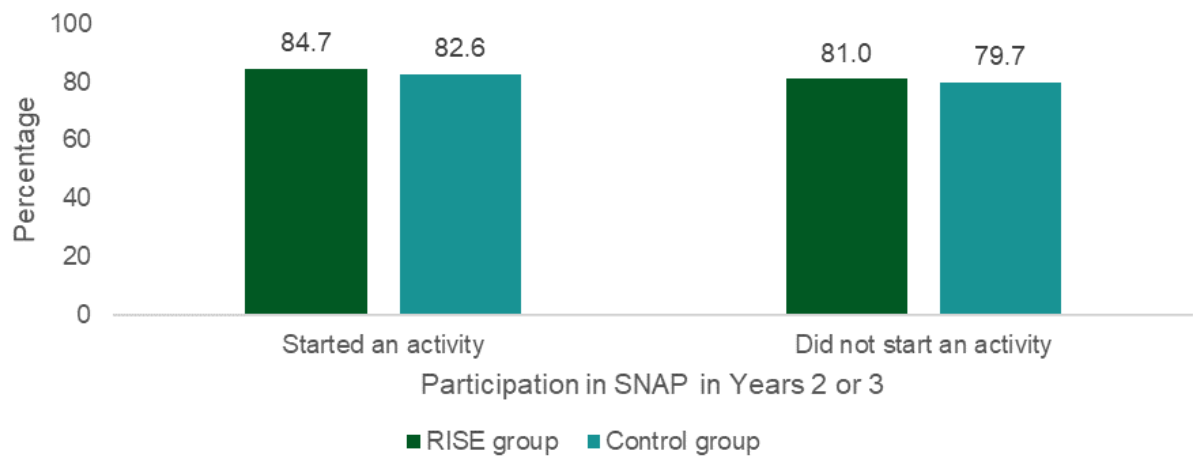
^^^/^^/^ Significantly different from individuals who did not start an activity at the 0.01/0.05/0.10 level, two-tailed test

Based on UI data, there were impacts on earnings and employment in the two-year period for individuals who completed an education or training activity and no impact for those who started but did not complete one (Appendix Table F.14). The same was true for employment in the two-year period based on survey data (Appendix Table F.16). However, in each of these cases, the differences in impacts by completion status were not statistically significant. Although the difference between the estimates for each of these groups of individuals was not statistically significant, the pattern of findings suggests that completion of an education or training activity may have played a role in connecting individuals to meaningful employment and higher earnings.

SNAP participation. There were no impacts on SNAP participation in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) among individuals who started an activity or among those who did not start one (Exhibit VII.13 and

Appendix Table F.17). The same was true according to whether an individual completed an activity (Appendix Table F.18). Outcomes were also similar for SNAP benefits as a percentage of the maximum benefit amount and the length of time spent on SNAP.

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 949 RISE group members and 973 control group members who started an activity; and 1,286 RISE group members and 1,258 control group members who did not start one.

***/**/* 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 RISE 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 RISE 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 RISE group outcomes (benefits) offset the costs of administering the services. We calculate the net benefits from the perspectives of the individuals enrolled in RISE 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 RISE, including those for planning, recruiting, and delivering services. We then present the estimated costs of all services provided to RISE group members through RISE, existing SNAP E&T (BFET), 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 RISE. We then present the findings from the cost-benefit analysis and estimate the net benefit of services provided to the RISE 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 RISE started providing services and individuals started accruing benefits.

A. Description of the costs of RISE

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

1. Total costs of RISE

FNS awarded DSHS a grant of \$22,000,000 to develop and provide RISE services. DSHS and its partners and providers reported spending \$23,362,819 on planning, recruiting, and delivering RISE services (Exhibit VIII.1).³⁷ These costs included \$2,282,258 for planning (10 percent of total costs) and \$4,154,067 for recruitment (18 percent). RISE service costs—for ongoing administration and delivering direct services—were \$16,926,494, which was 73 percent of total costs.³⁸ Ongoing administration, which

RISE cost a total of \$23,362,819, with service costs accounting for 73 percent of this amount.

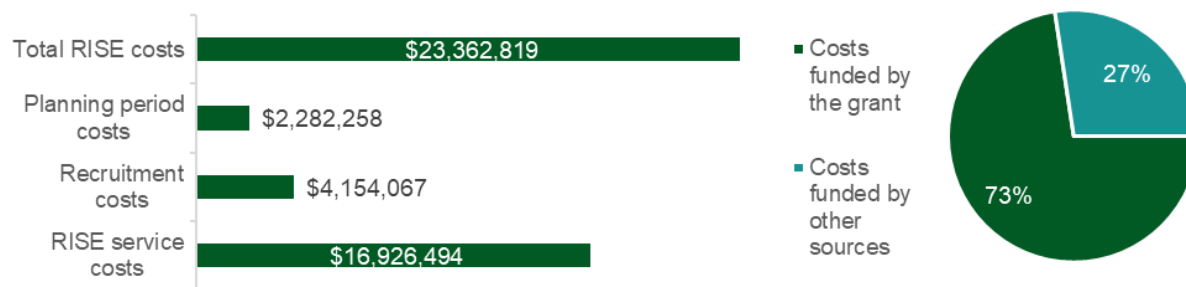
³⁷ The costs for planning and recruiting affected both RISE and control group members, whereas the costs for operating RISE services affected the RISE group only.

³⁸ 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 RISE group and control group services

included time for staff meetings, supervision, and other activities, cost \$10,763,356 (46 percent of total costs). Direct service costs represented the remaining \$6,163,139 (26 percent, not shown). The FNS grant funded 73 percent of total costs (or \$16,958,075) and 27 percent were leveraged from other sources (\$6,404,745). The large amount of funding provided by non-grant sources (\$6,404,745) results in the total costs of RISE services exceeding the awarded grant amount.

Exhibit VIII.1. Summary of RISE costs



Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by RISE grantee, partners, and providers, 2015–2018; 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 DCBS and their partners began designing RISE (after grant award) and RISE started enrolling individuals (April 2015 to January 2016). Quarterly workbooks reported the costs of the planning period, and of recruitment and RISE services following the start of RISE. We estimated the breakdown of recruitment, RISE 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 December 2018 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. About half of all costs covered staff costs (\$12,797,095). DSHS and RISE partners and providers reported spending \$2,526,229 on direct services for partners and providers and \$1,902,184 on overhead and operating costs. The remaining costs (\$192,493) covered supply and equipment costs. The FNS grant covered most costs (73 percent). Funding from other sources was used primarily for overhead and operating costs, accounting for 58 percent of the total overhead and operating costs (\$4,527,886). The majority of these non-grant overhead and operating costs went toward facilities and utilities (\$3,732,471).

2. Costs of RISE services, by type of service

Service costs accounted for the majority of RISE expenditures. We estimated the costs of specific types of services offered through RISE, including those of ongoing administration and direct services. The two largest service expenditures for RISE services were for case management, which accounted for \$7,409,647 or 32 percent of total RISE costs, and support services, which accounted for \$3,955,855 or 17

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.

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

percent of total RISE costs (Exhibit VIII.2). Job readiness or life skills workshops and assessments accounted for smaller shares of total RISE costs—10 and 6 percent of total RISE costs, respectively.

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

	Total service costs	Percentage of total
Total costs	\$23,362,819	100.0
Recruitment costs	\$4,154,067	17.8
Planning period costs	\$2,282,258	9.8
RISE service costs ^a	\$16,926,494	72.5
Assessments	\$1,442,327	6.2
Case management ^b	\$7,409,647	31.7
Job readiness or life skills workshop	\$2,273,234	9.7
Education	\$376,105	1.6
Occupational skills training	\$152,936	0.7
Support services	\$3,955,855	16.9
Work-based learning	\$1,312,090	5.6
Other direct service contracts ^c	\$4,301	0.0

Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by RISE grantee, partners, and providers, 2015–2018; 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 using the average percentage of time spent on these activities in the time-use survey. We assumed 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 collection of case management and participation data. We assumed these costs were either built into those payments or the associated staff time and costs fell under case management. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars.

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

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

^c Other direct service contracts for the RISE 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 RISE group services only).

3. Costs of RISE services, per individual

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

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

based learning; and support services provided to offset the costs of participation in RISE, such as transportation or training supplies.³⁹

The total estimated costs of RISE services per individual ranged from \$63 to \$94,311 but were \$6,706 per RISE group member, on average. Most of the costs per individual came from operating RISE (\$5,954), whereas \$565 was allocated to support services provided to individuals while in RISE and \$187 was allocated to the costs of subsidized earnings provided to individuals while they were in RISE.

RISE services cost an average of \$6,706 per individual.

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

Per individual costs of services	Mean
Total RISE service costs	\$6,706
RISE operating costs ^a	\$5,954
Subsidized earnings while in RISE	\$187
Support services while in RISE	\$565
Sample size	2,548

Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by RISE grantee, partners, and providers, 2015–2018; and SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Notes: The cost of services per RISE group member are the means of the individual-level estimates of the costs of services for each RISE group member based on the services they received and the per individual costs by service type. The estimated mean costs per RISE group member include all individuals who enrolled in RISE, 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.

^a RISE 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 RISE group members once service delivery began. No other planning period or recruitment costs are included.

Cost of RISE services per RISE group member: standard error \$141; range \$63–\$94,311; confidence interval \$5,677–\$6,230.

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

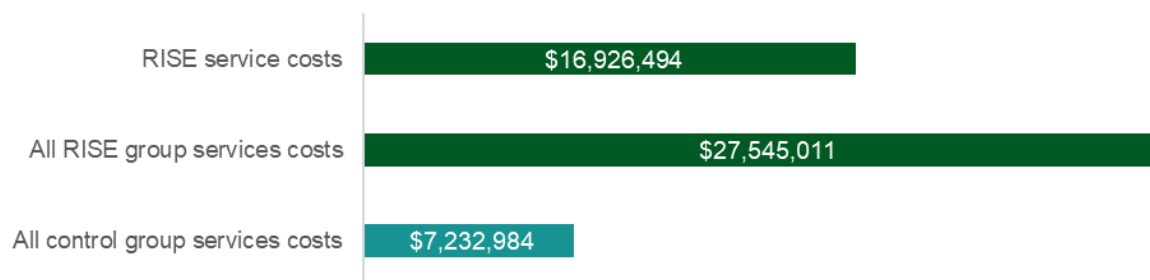
Whereas Section A describes the costs to DSHS and their partners and providers for developing RISE and providing services to RISE group members, this section describes the costs of *all* services the RISE group members received through RISE, existing SNAP E&T, and the community during the RISE service period. In the cost-benefit analysis, we use the difference in the average costs of all services RISE and control group members received per individual through RISE, existing SNAP E&T, and the community and compare these costs to benefits. We use these differences in costs because impacts of RISE 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 RISE group through RISE. In this section, we present estimates of the total costs of all services RISE and control group members received and examine service cost differentials overall, by service type, and per individual.

³⁹ 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.

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

Based on data from the 12- and 36-month follow-up survey, the estimated total cost of all RISE group services was \$27,545,011, including costs for both direct services and ongoing administration (Exhibit VIII.4). This estimate is about 63 percent higher than the cost of RISE services alone (\$16,926,494) which suggests that RISE group members likely received some services from existing SNAP E&T and community-offered sources while they were enrolled in RISE.⁴⁰

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



Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by RISE grantee, partners, and providers, 2015–2018; 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: The estimates were calculated as the product of the costs per RISE group member for each type of direct service and the number of RISE 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 RISE services were effective enough to offset the difference in costs between the services received by the RISE and control groups. The services received by the control group measure what services would have been available to the RISE group members if RISE were not in place. The control group only had access to services available through the existing SNAP E&T program or within the community. The estimated cost of all control group services received was \$7,232,984, including costs for direct services and ongoing administration (Exhibit VIII.4). This was about one-quarter of the cost of all RISE group services.

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

The difference between RISE and control group costs of all services could reflect multiple 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.

⁴⁰ The difference between the costs of the RISE services in Section A and the costs presented for RISE group members in this section could reflect services that RISE group members received outside of RISE, but 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, but the overall costs of services for the RISE group are similar and do not change the results of the cost-benefit analysis.

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

Exhibit VIII.5 presents estimated costs of key RISE and control group services, by type of service. These costs are shown separately by type for RISE and control group services.

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

	All RISE group services		All control group services	
	Total service costs	Percentage of total	Total service costs	Percentage of total
Total service costs ^a	\$27,545,011	100.0	\$7,232,984	100.0
Assessments	\$360,289	1.3	\$9,784	0.1
Case management ^b	\$3,382,420	12.3	\$3,554,928	49.1
Job readiness or life skills workshop	\$1,789,358	6.5	\$77,825	1.1
Education	\$413,712	1.5	\$1,369,360	18.9
Occupational skills training	\$13,147	0.0	\$471,723	6.5
Support services	\$2,973,627	10.8	\$308,256	4.3
Work-based learning ^c	\$18,608,158	67.6	\$1,441,107	19.9
Other direct service contracts ^d	\$4,301	0.0	--	--

Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by RISE grantee, partners, and providers, 2015–2018; 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 RISE 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 RISE or control group members and time spent on case notes or referrals.

^c We calculated this estimate by taking the total reported cost of work-based learning in the cost workbooks and dividing it by the number of participants reported in the pilot service receipt data. Service receipt through the pilot was lower than expected but costs were relatively high, resulting in a high per individual cost of work-based learning. We applied the per individual cost of work-based learning to individual-level data on work-based learning receipt in the survey, which was higher than in the pilot service receipt data. The estimated cost of work-based learning does not affect the overall estimated cost per individual of all RISE group services used in the cost-benefit analysis because that estimate is the mean of all individual estimates.

^d Other direct service contracts for the RISE 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 RISE group services only).

All RISE group services. Work-based learning was the largest expenditure among all of the services that RISE group members received through RISE, existing SNAP E&T, and the community, which accounted for \$18,608,158 or 68 percent of total service costs. Case management and support services represented smaller shares of total service costs—12 and 11 percent, respectively.

All control group services. Case management was the largest expenditure among all of the services that control group members received through existing SNAP E&T and the community, which accounted for \$3,554,928 or 49 percent of total service costs. Work-based learning and education represented smaller shares of total service costs—20 and 19 percent, respectively.

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

The cost of case management was similar for the RISE and control groups (\$3,382,420 and \$3,554,928, respectively). Costs of education and occupational skills training were much higher for the control group compared to the RISE group (\$1,369,360 compared to \$413,712 for education; \$471,723 compared to \$13,147 for occupational skills training). However, the costs of work-based learning, support services, and job readiness or life skills workshops were much higher for the RISE group compared to the control group (\$18,608,158 compared to \$1,441,107 for work-based learning; \$2,973,627 compared to \$308,256 for support services; and \$1,789,358 compared to \$77,825 for job readiness or life skills workshops).

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

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

All services RISE group members received through RISE, existing SNAP E&T services, and the community cost \$7,884 per individual, on average.

Using data from the survey, Exhibit VIII.6 describes the cost of all services RISE and control group members received during the RISE service period, per individual. We present operating costs separately from the costs of the resources provided directly to RISE 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.

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

	All RISE group services	All control group services
Total service costs	\$7,884	\$2,566
Operating costs ^a	\$6,338	\$1,877
Subsidized earnings while in services	\$834	\$568
Support services while in services	\$711	\$121
Sample size	2,548	2,539

Sources: SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by RISE grantee, partners, and providers, 2015–2018; 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 costs of services per RISE and control group member are the means of the individual-level estimates of the costs of services for each RISE 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.

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

Cost of all RISE services per RISE group member: standard error \$290; range \$63–\$36,071; confidence interval \$5,777–\$6,916.

Cost of all control group services per control group member: standard error \$165; range \$0–\$33,685; confidence interval \$1,564–\$2,213.

The costs of all services received by RISE group members (from both RISE, existing SNAP E&T, and the community) ranged from \$63 to \$36,071 but was about \$7,884 per RISE group member, on average. The largest component of this cost was operating costs, which were \$6,338. The costs of subsidized earnings and support services accounted for a smaller share of the overall cost—\$834 and \$711 respectively.

The costs of all services control group members received ranged from \$0 to \$33,685 but were about \$2,566 per control group member on average. Operating costs accounted for the largest share of this cost (\$1,877) and subsidized earnings and support services represented smaller shares (\$568 and \$121, respectively). The cost of all services per control group member was one-third of the cost of all services per RISE group member, on average.

All services control group members received through existing SNAP E&T services and the community cost \$2,566 per individual, on average.

C. Cost-benefit analysis of RISE 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.⁴¹ The cost-benefit analysis uses a framework to present a comprehensive listing of RISE group benefits and costs relative to the control group from multiple perspectives, including those of (1) individuals enrolled in RISE, (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 RISE group members, based on UI wage records

The net benefit of services for the RISE group compared to the control group were positive for RISE 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 0.01. These results emerged because there were only small differences in the cumulative earnings of RISE and control group members during the 36-month follow-up period that did not offset the costs of the services, on average. The services benefitted RISE group members through support service payments while they were in services, which resulted in a net benefit to RISE group members, but these services were a cost to government and taxpayers in the same amount.

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

⁴¹ 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 RISE group and control group services

Society. On average, all RISE group services cost society \$4,667 more per individual than control group services per individual. This difference primarily reflects the differential costs of RISE group services, which were not offset by the benefits accrued through earnings and fringe benefits during the 36-month follow-up period.

RISE group members. On average, RISE group members benefitted by \$485, compared with the control group. Support services accounted for most of the benefits to RISE group members, who received about \$590 more than control group members did while they were engaged in services. The RISE group also benefitted from higher cumulative earnings and fringe benefits compared to the control group (by \$42 and \$9, respectively). The difference in earnings was not statistically significant, however. We assumed any subsidized earnings received while participating in work-based learning activities were included in the \$42 difference in earnings. RISE group members paid \$8 more in taxes on their cumulative earnings than the control group, on average. RISE group members received fewer SNAP and TANF benefits (by \$27 and \$120, respectively), compared to the control group.

Government and taxpayers. Providing RISE group services cost government and taxpayers \$5,152 more per individual, on average, than providing control group services. This difference was due mostly to the costs of providing services (including RISE and community services), which cost more than control group services by an average of \$5,318, including \$4,462 in operating costs, \$267 in subsidized earnings, and \$590 in support services. Government and taxpayers benefitted from providing fewer SNAP and TANF benefits to RISE group members, relative to control group members, which was a savings in benefit allotments (by \$27 and \$120, on average) and administration costs (\$11).

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 RISE group members received were primarily through RISE and not from existing SNAP E&T and the community. These results were robust to changes in all of our key assumptions about benefits and costs from all perspectives (Appendix Tables G.10–G.12). The costs to the government and taxpayers always outweighed the benefits to the RISE group members, so there was a negative net benefit to society regardless of changes in assumptions, ranging from \$3,636 to \$4,835 per individual. The RISE 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 \$339 to \$492. Assuming that subsidized earnings were *not* included in UI wage records resulted in a net benefit of \$751 per individual, compared to \$485 under our main assumptions. RISE group services resulted in a negative net benefit to government and taxpayers regardless of changes to key assumptions, ranging from \$3,974 to \$5,327 per individual.

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

	Perspective		
	RISE group members	Government and taxpayers	Society
Benefits (\$)			
Employment and earnings			
Earnings (UI wage records)	42	0	42

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

	Perspective		
	RISE group members	Government and taxpayers	Society
Fringe benefits	9	0	9
Tax payments	-8	8	0
Use of public benefits			
SNAP benefits	-27	27	0
TANF benefits	-120***	120	0
Reduced administration costs	0	11	11
Total benefits	-105	166	61
Costs (\$)			
Net operating costs ^a	0	-4,462	-4,462
Net subsidized earnings while in services ^b	0	-267	-267
Net support services while in services ^b	590	-590	0
Total costs	590	-5,318	-4,728
Net benefit (\$)	485	-5,152	-4,667
Benefit-cost ratio			0.01

Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data; SNAP administrative data; SNAP employment and training evaluation actual reported costs by RISE 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; 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 RISE group member is \$141 and of the cost per control group member is \$163.

^a This estimate is the difference between RISE and control group costs per individual. This value excluded planning period costs but included 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 assumed 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 table 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.

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

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

The findings based on 36-month follow-up survey data were different from those based on UI wage records—there was a negative net benefit of all RISE group services from all perspectives, including RISE group members, government and taxpayers, and society during the follow-up period (Exhibit VIII.8). The benefit-cost ratio, or return on investment to society, was -0.23. According to survey data, cumulative earnings for the RISE group were less than those for the control group. This difference in earnings offset the benefits individuals received through support service payments.

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

Society. RISE group services cost society \$5,804 more than control group services per individual. This estimated negative net benefit according to survey data was less than that according to UI wage records data primarily because of the difference in reported earnings for RISE group members (control group members earned \$899 more than RISE group members, according to survey data, while RISE group members earned \$42 more according to UI wage records). This difference in earnings according to survey data was a cost to RISE group members and society during the 36-month follow-up period.

RISE group members. According to survey data, RISE group members received a negative net benefit of \$457, relative to the control group. The RISE group had lower cumulative earnings and fringe benefits compared to the control group (by \$899 and \$188, respectively). We assumed any subsidized earnings received while participating in work-based learning activities were included in the difference in earnings. RISE group members received a tax *refund* of \$187 more than control group members, on average. Other benefits and costs to individuals were the same as those in the findings based on UI wage records, with support services benefitting RISE group members (by \$590 more than control group members); RISE group members received fewer SNAP and TANF benefits, compared to the control group.

Government and taxpayers. Government and taxpayers experienced a cost of \$5,347 per individual for providing all RISE group services, based on survey data. Government and taxpayers experienced a cost of \$187 more in tax refunds per RISE group member compared with control group members. As presented in the UI wage record findings, providing services cost government and taxpayers an average of \$5,318 more per RISE 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 like inflation and present value, and (3) the services RISE group members received were primarily through RISE and not from existing SNAP E&T and the community. These results were robust to changes in all of our key assumptions about benefits and costs from all perspectives (Appendix Tables G.10–G.12). RISE group services led to a negative net benefit for society regardless of changes in assumptions, ranging from \$4,773 to \$6,003. RISE group members experienced a negative net benefit from RISE group services based on changes to all assumptions related to fringe, taxes, and discount rates. Estimates of negative net benefits to RISE group members ranged from \$412 to \$603. Government and taxpayers faced a negative net benefit for RISE group services regardless of changes to key assumptions, ranging from \$4,170 to \$5,528.

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

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

	Perspective		
	RISE group members	Government and taxpayers	Society
Benefits (\$)			
Employment and earnings			
Earnings (survey data)	-899	0	-899
Fringe benefits	-188	0	-188
Tax payments	187	-187	0
Use of public benefits			
SNAP benefits	-27	27	0
TANF benefits	-120***	120	0
Reduced administration costs	0	11	11
Total benefits	-1,047	-30	-1,076
Costs (\$)			
Net operating costs ^a	0	-4,462	-4,462
Net subsidized earnings while in services ^b	0	-267	-267
Net support services while in services ^b	590	-590	0
Total costs	590	-5,318	-4,728
Net benefit (\$)	-457	-5,347	-5,804
Benefit-cost ratio			-0.23

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 RISE 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 RISE group member is \$141 and of the cost per control group member is \$163.

^a This estimate is the difference between RISE and control group costs per individual. This value excluded planning period costs but included 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 assumed 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.

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

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 RISE—the innovative SNAP E&T program Washington designed and implemented targeting SNAP work registrants with barriers to employment—was effective in achieving these goals.

Several interrelated analyses have been the basis of this final report. 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 them. In this chapter, we summarize and discuss key findings from all of these analyses.

A. Summary of findings

Although Washington had a robust existing SNAP E&T program in place for many years, DSHS teamed with several existing and new partners and providers to design and deliver a package of enhanced services for RISE. DSHS anticipated a high demand for RISE services, but providers struggled to identify and enroll individuals who met the eligibility criteria (RISE targeted individuals with multiple or significant barriers to employment) and faced challenges in retaining individuals in the program. Despite the challenges in getting RISE group members to engage in services, they 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. Because RISE group members did not earn significantly more than control group members, the overall cost of implementing the pilot outweighed its benefits. We report these findings in detail below. Section C provides more context for the findings.

1. RISE implementation

RISE services generally were implemented as planned. RISE group members who engaged in services followed a similar service pathway, first focusing on resolving barriers (through case management and support services), then moving to SfS, and finally selecting an employment or training-related activity that best met their needs. Staff strongly supported the RISE model and thought the comprehensive case management and support services were important for serving the target population. The staff support for RISE came partly from DSHS engaging partners and providers in the planning process. DSHS included several key partners and providers in the planning to reflect different perspectives and bring targeted expertise to discussions of the pilot's design. This approach helped partners and providers see the value of RISE and laid the foundation for strong collaboration moving forward.

Despite the widespread support for RISE, staff faced some challenges in implementing the pilot, including identifying and enrolling individuals; DSHS reduced its enrollment target from 14,000 to 5,088. Those who were enrolled also faced significant barriers, such as homelessness, domestic violence, criminal backgrounds, and mental and physical health issues. Staff found it took more time and resources than anticipated to help individuals resolve these barriers, which also led to slow progression through

services. Finally, individuals struggled to attend the full six weeks of the SfS course and many did not complete the activity, which prevented them from participating in other activities. Although DSHS, provider, and partner staff expressed support for the SfS model, they acknowledged that not every individual needed or could benefit from it, and some may have left activities or RISE before completing them because of their lack of available options. DSHS and provider staff concluded that RISE might have better served the target population if individuals had more control over their own pathways by participating in only those SfS modules and activities that met their specific needs.

2. Service receipt among RISE group members

Almost all (91 percent) of the individuals randomly assigned to the RISE group received at least one service, meaning they were assessed, completed their IEP, or started an employment or training-related activity. However, only slightly more than half of RISE group members (56 percent) ultimately started an employment or training-related activity. Most of those started SfS (46 percent), but only 27 percent of RISE group members (or 60 percent of those who started SfS) completed it and were able to begin other activities. Fewer individuals started each of the other employment or training-related activities, such as occupational skills training (15 percent) or basic education (7 percent). Only about 1 percent of RISE group members started work-based learning, an activity that differentiated RISE from BFET. Of those who completed occupational skills training, only 1 percent obtained a credential or certification.

Almost all RISE group members (94 percent) had at least one contact with a case manager, and 63 percent received a support service. The majority (58 percent) received transportation assistance, and 20 to 30 percent of individuals received other types of supports, such as hygiene assistance, clothing, housing assistance, or assistance with education and training-related materials. On average, RISE group members who received support services each received a total of \$789 in support services payments.

Individuals who engaged in services spent an average of seven months in RISE. Most exited RISE within their first year, and the majority of exits happened within six months after enrollment. Individuals most often exited due to loss of contact with case managers (35 percent) or the individual choosing to leave RISE before completing services (29 percent).

3. Differences between RISE and control groups in service receipt

The ability of RISE to impact employment, earnings, and individuals' receipt of public assistance benefits depended in part on whether there were differences between the RISE and control groups' receipt of services and participation in and completion of employment or training-related activities. Relative to the control group, the RISE 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 12 and 11 percentage points higher, respectively, among the RISE group relative to the control group. These differences existed despite the finding that almost two-thirds of control group members participated in job search training activities or in education and training activities. Relative to the control group, the RISE group was more likely to participate in job search training activities and in education and training activities in Year 1 following random assignment. Rates of participation in job search training activities were similar across research groups in Years 2 and 3. Likewise, the rate of participation in education or training-related activities was slightly higher for the RISE group relative to the control group in Year 2, but the rates were similar between groups in Year 3. The RISE group had higher rates of participation than the control group in

general job skills training but not other types of activities, such as occupational skills training, education, or work-based learning.

RISE group members also were more likely than control group members to complete an activity. Overall, RISE group members were 12 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 and second years after random assignment and grew smaller and were not statistically significant in the third year. Relative to the control group, the RISE group spent, on average, about two months longer and two hours more per week in activities. The RISE group was just as likely as the control group to receive an occupational certificate or license. There was a significant difference between research groups in the percentage of individuals who received one in Year 1 following random assignment (4 percentage points), but not in Years 2 and 3.

The RISE group also was more likely than the control group to receive case management (10 percentage point difference) and support services (10 percentage point difference). The largest difference between the two groups was observed for transportation assistance (14 percentage point difference).

4. Impacts of RISE on individuals' outcomes

Findings from analyses of the two primary outcomes in the second and third years after random assignment show that RISE 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. Although the RISE group had greater average earnings over the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) than the control group, average earnings increased in both groups, and the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant.

Related analyses of employment revealed that RISE did not lead to an increase in employment. Based on UI and survey data, employment rates were similar across research groups in the two-year period and in each year after random assignment. There also were no statistically significant differences in hours worked per week between research groups in any year.

With one exception, there were no impacts on earnings or employment in the two-year period (Years 2 and 3) across subgroups defined by age, barriers to employment, employment history, presence of children in the household, and household income. Among individuals not employed in the 12 months before random assignment, RISE increased employment by 4 percentage points based on the UI data and 9 percentage points based on the survey data relative to the control group. There was no corresponding impact among individuals employed at some point in the 12 months before random assignment.

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 identical participation rates in Year 3 (68 to 69 percent). This pattern of findings is consistent with the fact that RISE did not affect earnings. These findings generally were consistent across subgroups.

Changes to RISE policies or procedures after the pilot began did not affect the likelihood of RISE group members starting or completing activities. Analyses that compared impacts among individuals who were randomly assigned earlier versus later in the enrollment period showed no differences in the two-year period among RISE group members who enrolled before or after changes were made to its policies and procedures. They included the number and type of available providers, flexibility of the SfS course

(allowed individuals to start on any module, created expedited versions of the course, and allowed certain individuals to start work-based learning while completing SfS), the process for providing support services, and the amount and types of support services available.

5. RISE costs and cost-benefit analyses

DSHS and its partners and providers reported spending \$23,362,819 from April 2015 to December 2018 on the planning and implementation of RISE (\$2,282,258 during the planning period, \$4,154,067 for recruitment, and \$16,926,494 for RISE services). The FNS grant funded 73 percent of these costs; partners and providers leveraged other funding sources for the remaining 27 percent. The cost-benefit analysis compares the benefits individuals received through earnings and public assistance with the average costs of *all* services RISE and control group members received per individual. The costs of all services RISE group members received through RISE, existing SNAP E&T services, or the community were about 63 percent higher than the costs of RISE services alone (\$27,545,011, or \$7,884 per individual, on average). The costs of all services control group members received through existing SNAP E&T and the community (\$7,232,984 or \$2,566 per individual, on average) were about a quarter of the costs of all services RISE group members received.

RISE group benefits and costs relative to the control group are presented from multiple perspectives, including those of (1) individuals enrolled in RISE, (2) government and taxpayers, and (3) society as a whole, which represents the sum of the other two perspectives. The net benefits of RISE 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 \$4,667 and \$5,804, respectively). According to UI wage records, RISE group services led to a net benefit of \$485 for individuals due to higher earnings and receipt of support services while in services. However, according to 36-month follow-up survey data, RISE group services led to a negative net benefit of \$457, due primarily to lower reported earnings for the RISE group compared to the control group. For both data sources, the services RISE group members received were a larger cost to government and taxpayers (\$5,152 and \$5,347, 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 RISE 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 RISE. 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 RISE, 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 offered by RISE (such as intensive job readiness and soft skills training and support services) 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 RISE activities and receipt of services, and the lack of earning impacts for RISE 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 RISE did not lead to increased earnings and reduced participation in SNAP, it increased the percentages of individuals who received case management and support services relative to the control group, as well as the percentage of those who participated in employment or training-related activities. This accomplishment is notable, given the prevalence and extent of barriers RISE group members faced—only 9 percent were employed at the time of random assignment, and 28 percent did not have a high school diploma. Many individuals faced other barriers related to homelessness, domestic violence, criminal backgrounds, and mental and physical health issues. The higher rates of receipt of case management and support services among RISE group members, particularly transportation assistance, may have allowed them to overcome barriers associated not only with starting employment or training-

related activities, but also sustaining participation over time and ultimately completing those activities. Indeed, individuals in the RISE group participated for two months longer and two hours more per week than the control group; the RISE group also had higher completion rates. These differences did not translate into impacts on individuals' earnings, however.

The lack of an impact may reflect the small differences in rates of participation and completion of employment or training-related activities between the RISE and control groups. DSHS faced a unique challenge when this pilot started, as it already operated a robust SNAP E&T program (BFET) in the State. DSHS had to ensure it was able to identify, develop, and implement services that were significant enhancements to what the control group could already receive through BFET for RISE to be most likely to have an impact on individuals' outcomes. The primary differences between RISE and BFET were offering the SfS course, work-based learning, and more robust support services. However, less than half of RISE group members started SfS and fewer completed it. Virtually no one started work-based learning, despite DSHS's goal of having 15 percent of RISE group members participate. Also, although the RISE support services were more generous than those offered under BFET, they were offered inconsistently across providers, and some providers stopped offering support services if they exhausted their budgets in a given year. Therefore, many RISE group members did not receive the services or participate in the activities that were the main differentiators between RISE and BFET, which resulted in small differences in overall rates of participation in education or training-related activities between research groups. Although the RISE group had higher rates of participation than the control group in general job skills training (some of what was provided through SfS), there were no significant differences between the two groups for other types of activities, including occupational skills training, education, or work-based learning. All of these findings suggest that having a robust existing SNAP E&T program, created less room for substantial improvement in take-up and completion of activities through RISE and likely contributed to the lack of impacts.

In addition, because only slightly more than half of RISE group members participated in a substantive activity, the overall impacts on outcomes such as earnings could have been diluted by those who did not participate in activities. 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 and earnings for individuals who started an activity, and no impact on employment and earnings for those who did not start one. It also showed a similar pattern of findings for individuals who completed activities versus those who started but did not complete them, although differences across impacts were not statistically significant. Overall, this evidence suggests that the take-up of RISE employment or training-related activities may have played a role in connecting individuals to meaningful employment. Learning more about why some individuals participate and complete activities and some do not, including the barriers they may face, would help administrators and providers identify strategies for promoting greater participation in employment or training-related activities. This information would enhance understanding of challenges faced by RISE group members, allowing providers to adapt their activity content or delivery, case management, or support services to better meet individuals' needs and to achieve a greater impact. These findings also highlight the need to examine why completion of employment or training-related activities did not lead to impacts on earnings. Additional analyses should explore whether receiving certificates, diplomas, degrees, or occupational licenses can affect differentially the prospect of employment for RISE group members.

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

- **Earnings impacts might depend on the type of activities in which individuals participated.** Individuals in the RISE group were offered a wide range of services and activities. Earnings impacts may not be apparent for all RISE group members, but that finding does not mean specific activities, such as occupational skills training or work-based learning, were ineffective. Assessing the effectiveness of services and activities separately and in combination would help to identify promising practices for improving outcomes. Because some RISE 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 increase earnings and improve outcomes most effectively.
- **The COVID-19 pandemic began during the 36-month follow-up survey period.** Outcomes measured in Year 3 for participants who were randomly assigned in the pilot between March 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. However, there is no indication that it may have hindered our ability to identify impacts in Year 3. Earnings, employment rates, and SNAP participation rates generally were similar in Year 1 and Year 2. Although it is possible that impacts may have emerged in Year 3 in the absence of the pandemic, the pre-pandemic patterns of changes in outcomes over time do not provide much support for this conclusion. Nevertheless, the pandemic may have affected individuals' ability to participate in employment or training-related activities in Year 3 and also may have affected 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 differences between research groups in participation in activities and impacts on earnings and employment in Year 3 differed based on these factors.
- **RISE costs were higher than the financial benefits of the program, but this primarily reflects the absence of an impact on earnings.** The net benefit was negative for RISE due to the differential costs of RISE group services not being 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 some of the RISE services and activities were newly developed for the pilot and were experimental (such as SfS and work-based learning). The purpose of the SNAP E&T pilot was to test new approaches to services. RISE targeted individuals with high barriers to engaging in services and obtaining employment, and DSHS led the development of new partnerships in one rural county where none had existed previously, also strengthening partnerships in areas in which they did. Even though we excluded the costs of planning and recruitment in considering the cost differential between RISE and control group services, the costs of RISE 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. In addition, it is possible that some individuals realized benefits which do not appear in the cost-benefit analysis results – for example, increases in earnings that individuals earned after the observation period of 36-months, or unmeasured benefits such as changes in food security, health, or well-being.

Despite RISE not leading to impacts on earnings or receipt of public assistance, SNAP E&T program administrators can learn from the implementation of the RISE model. Many programs serve a range of individuals, including some portion facing substantial barriers that limit engagement in employment or program activities. Most SNAP E&T program models are not designed to fully support this population because addressing such barriers may require a substantial amount of time and resources to resolve. For this reason, DSHS chose to develop and test the RISE model specifically for the subset of individuals

who had significant barriers to employment. To work with this population, DSHS designed a model that had upfront comprehensive assessments of potential barriers and developed goal-based IEPs providing steps for overcoming them. It also focused on reducing barriers before referring individuals to employment or training-related activities, giving them the time and flexibility needed to stabilize their lives and set themselves up for success in activities or a job. These kinds of models require that case managers have sufficient time and manageable caseload sizes to offer the coaching and support individuals require to progress. Although providing larger amounts of support services to an individual or hiring more staff for case management may not be feasible for all SNAP E&T programs, administrators could change models to include more upfront assessments and planning for resolving barriers. Also, allowing more flexibility for individuals to move through the program at their own pace could help meet the needs of hard-to-serve populations.

References

- Abraham, Katharine G., John C. Haltiwanger, Kristin Sandusky, and James R. Spletzer. “Measuring the Gig Economy: Current Knowledge and Open Issues.” NBER Working Paper No. 24950. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2018.
- Barnow, B.S., and J. Smith. “Employment and Training Programs.” In *Economics of Means-Tested Transfer Programs in the United States, Vol. II*, edited by R.A. Moffitt. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015, pp. 127–234.
- Card, David, Jochen Kluve, and Andrea Weber. “Active Labour Market Policy Evaluations: A Meta-Analysis.” *Economic Journal*, vol. 120, no. 548, 2010, pp. F452–F477.
- Card, David, Jochen Kluve, and Andrea Weber. “What Works? A Meta Analysis of Recent Active Labor Market Program Evaluations.” *Journal of the European Economic Association*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2018, pp. 894–931.
- Cronquist, Kathryn. “Characteristics of USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2018.” Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 2019. Available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research-analysis>.
- D’Amico, Ronald, Kate Dunham, Verenice Chavoya-Perez, Deborah Kogan, Melissa Mack, Marian Negoita, Anne Paprocki, Sheena McConnell, and Linda Rosenberg. “Providing Public Workforce Services to Job Seekers: Implementation Findings on the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs.” Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, 2015.
- Davis, L.M., R. Bozick, J.L. Steele, J. Saunders, and Jeremy N.V. Miles. “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults.” Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013.
- Dotter, Dallas, Kelley Monzella, James Mabli, Barbara Carlson, Julie Hartnack, Peter Schochet, Mason DeCamillis, Dan Thal, Leah Shiferaw, Amy Defnet, Nora Paxton, and Stephen Freedman. “Expanding Opportunities & Reducing Barriers to Work: Final Report Technical Supplement.” Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 2022. Available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research-analysis>.
- Goger, Annelies, Mikia Manley, Jonah Deutsch, Melissa Mack, Kate Dunham, and Peter Schochet. “The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program: An Evidence Scan of Services and Innovations.” Report submitted to the Chief Evaluation Office, U.S. Department of Labor. Washington, DC: Mathematica, September 2020.
- Gueron, Judith M., and Gayle Hamilton. “The Role of Education and Training in Welfare Reform.” Welfare Reform and Beyond Policy Brief No. 20. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2002.
- Hotz, V. Joseph, and John Karl Scholz. “Measuring Employment and Income Outcomes for Low Income Populations with Administrative and Survey Data.” In *Studies of Welfare Populations: Data Collection and Research Issues*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2002.
- Katz, Lawrence F., and Alan B. Krueger. “The Rise and Nature of Alternative Work Arrangements in the United States, 1995–2015.” NBER Working Paper No. 22667. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2016.

- Katz, Lawrence F., and Alan B. Krueger. “Understanding Trends in Alternative Work Arrangements in the United States.” NBER Working Paper No. 25425. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2019.
- Kornfeld, Robert, and Howard S. Bloom. “Measuring Program Impacts on Earnings and Employment: Do Unemployment Insurance Wage Reports from Employers Agree with Surveys of Individuals?” *Journal of Labor Economics*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1999, pp. 168–197.
- Maguire, S., J. Freely, C. Clymer, M. Conway, and D. Schwartz. “Tuning In to Local Labor Markets: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study.” Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures, 2010.
- McConnell, Sheena, Peter Z. Schochet, Dana Rotz, Ken Fortson, Paul Burkander, and Annalisa Mastri. “The Effects of Assistance from Employment Counselors Provided by the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs: Findings from a Nationally Representative Randomized Controlled Trial.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, April 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22305>.
- Reed, Debbie, Albert Y. Liu, Rebecca Kleinman, Annalisa Mastri, Davin Reed, Samina Sattar, and Jessica Ziegler. “An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship.” Report for the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, July 2012.
- Rowe, Gretchen, James Mabli, Gayle Hamilton, Julia Lyskawa, Julie Hartnack, Dallas Dotter, Peter Schochet, and Kelley Monzella. “Expanding Opportunities & Reducing Barriers to Work: Washington Interim Report.” Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 2021. Available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research-analysis>.
- U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence.” Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014.
- Vollmer, L., A. Mastri, A. Maccarone, and E. Sama-Miller. “The Right Tool for the Job: A Meta-Regression of Employment Strategies’ Effects on Different Outcomes.” Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, 2017.
- Walter, Johanna, David Navarro, Chloe Anderson, and Ada Tso. “Testing Rapid Connections to Subsidized Private Sector Jobs for Low-Income Individuals in San Francisco: Implementation and Early Impacts of the STEP Forward Program.” OPRE Report #2017-103. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017.