



Expanding Opportunities & Reducing Barriers to Work: Delaware Interim Report

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



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GLOSSARY

ABAWD	Able-bodied adult without dependents. 18- to 49-year-old adult who is not disabled and does not have dependents
APEX	Advancement through Pardons and Expungements
CASAS	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System. A competency-based assessment system used to assess the skills of adult learners
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
CPT	Certified production technician
DelTech	Delaware Technical Community College
DOE	Department of Education
DOL	Department of Labor
DSS	Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services
FBD	The Food Bank of Delaware
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
ICP	Individual career plan
JPS	Job placement specialist
LWIA	Local workforce investment area. A group of one or more counties that provide workforce development services
MIS	Management information system
NCCER	National Center for Construction Education and Research
OS	Outreach specialist
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)

Glossary

SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. A Federal food 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
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
WONDER	Work Opportunity Networks to Develop Employment Readiness. The SNAP Employment and Training pilot implemented in Delaware
Work registrant	SNAP participant who has not met any Federal exemptions from SNAP work requirements and is therefore required to register for work

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OVERVIEW

This report presents interim findings from the evaluation of a SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) pilot—Work Opportunity Networks to Develop Employment Readiness (WONDER)—that was implemented in Delaware from February 2016 to August 2018. This was one of 10 pilots Congress authorized and funded as part of the Agricultural Act of 2014 to offer enhanced SNAP E&T services to assist SNAP participants in obtaining employment. The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services (DSS) enrolled 6,814 SNAP participants into the pilot, with half randomly assigned to be eligible for the enhanced services (the WONDER group) and the other half eligible for existing SNAP E&T services (the control group). DSS mostly targeted new work registrants (individuals who had not received SNAP benefits during the six months before random assignment). WONDER services were voluntary and offered statewide through service providers that offered individuals in WONDER access to industry-specific training programs. Intensive case management, job placement assistance, job readiness assistance, and support services were also provided.

The following are key interim findings for the four evaluation components from the report, which examines the experiences of individuals enrolled in the pilot through December 2017:

- **Implementation.** Delaware successfully developed services, created partnerships, and enrolled individuals within a year of receiving the grant, which was a notable accomplishment. The pilot model was generally implemented as intended, but most of the industry-specific training programs were slow to start and served a smaller number of individuals during the first year than planned. Although many activities were offered, staff found it challenging to keep individuals engaged, and ultimately most did not start any activities or focused on job placement and readiness assistance instead of starting an industry-specific training program.
- **Participation.** Almost all individuals in the WONDER group met with an outreach specialist, started an assessment, or received a support service. However, less than half of the WONDER group started an employment or training-related activity, such as job placement assistance, occupational skills training, or work-based learning. Few individuals received a credential, certification, or degree. Almost three quarters of individuals left the pilot within six months after enrollment and generally before completing services.
- **Impact.** Although the WONDER group was more likely than the control group to start and complete job search training activities and education and occupational skills training activities, WONDER generally 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. These findings do not imply that WONDER ultimately will not be effective in achieving its goal of increasing employment and reducing the need for public assistance, as longer-term results are needed to fully assess the impacts of WONDER.
- **Cost.** DSS and its partners and providers reported spending a total of about \$8 million from April 2015 to December 2017 on the planning and early implementation of WONDER. Less than a quarter of the costs were for direct services, with case management being the largest of

these costs. Direct service costs likely will represent a larger share of total costs when 2018 expenditures are analyzed and reported.

This report presents an early assessment of the effects of WONDER. A final report will examine the experiences of all individuals enrolled in the WONDER pilot, present their outcomes over a longer follow-up period, and examine the benefits of the pilot's new services relative to their costs. In doing so, the final report will provide more conclusive evidence about the effectiveness of WONDER.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the primary source of nutrition assistance for many low-income people. By providing a monthly benefit to spend on food, the program aims to ensure that SNAP participants have adequate access to enough food to lead healthy, active lives. For some in the program, it also provides work supports to help them become economically self-sufficient. SNAP's Employment and Training (E&T) program 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.

Despite the importance of SNAP E&T, information about approaches that most effectively connect SNAP participants to gainful employment is limited. For this reason, as part of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Congress authorized and funded pilots to test innovative strategies in the SNAP E&T program. In 2015, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), awarded grants to 10 States—California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington—which represented diverse service areas and populations. Pilots varied in whether they operated statewide, versus in select areas of a State, and whether they focused on urban communities, rural communities, or both. The majority of individuals the pilots targeted were work registrants¹ who were unemployed or underemployed and had significant barriers to employment, such as being homeless or having a criminal history or substance use disorder. Pilots also varied in the services they offered, but services typically included a skills and/or clinical assessment that determined individuals' work readiness, skills, and barriers to employment; case-management services that developed and supported a detailed and individualized work and barrier-reduction plan for individuals; and support services, such as transportation, housing, and training and work supplies that supported individuals' involvement in activities designed to reduce barriers to employment. Offered services also included a range of E&T activities, such as job readiness training, basic education, occupational skills training, and subsidized employment, although not every pilot offered all of these services. Each pilot enrolled 3,000 to 7,000 individuals for a total of 44,359 individuals across the 10 pilots. Funding for the pilots included a rigorous, longitudinal evaluation to assess whether the services offered through the pilots connected SNAP participants with jobs that would increase their incomes and reduce their need for public assistance benefits.

This interim report focuses on one State—Delaware. It provides a detailed description of the pilot's design and implementation and, using data for a one-year follow-up period, examines the services individuals received and presents findings about the short-term effectiveness of the pilot's services. A final report will provide more comprehensive and conclusive evidence about

¹ 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.

the effectiveness of Delaware’s pilot services, by examining individuals’ experiences over a longer (three-year) follow-up period and examining the benefits of the pilot’s new services relative to their costs.

Delaware pilot background

In February 2016, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services (DSS), which administers SNAP, began enrollment in its pilot, Work Opportunity Networks to Develop Employment Readiness (WONDER), statewide. From February 2016 to August 2018, DSS enrolled 6,814 SNAP participants into the pilot, mostly targeting new work registrants (those who had not received SNAP benefits during the six months before enrollment into the pilot). This interim report focuses on the 5,348 individuals who enrolled in the pilot through December 2017.

WONDER services were voluntary and consisted of industry-specific training programs, subsidized employment, job placement assistance, job readiness assistance, and support services. Individuals were placed into one of four tracks based on location, interest, and readiness: construction, culinary arts, manufacturing, and broad-based job placement. In addition, individuals in any track could be referred to Advancement through Pardons and Expungements (APEX), which offered assistance in expunging criminal records, or Stand By Me, which offered financial literacy education.

Evaluation overview

The evaluation includes the following four components:

1. An **implementation analysis** that documents the context and operations of each pilot;
2. A **participation analysis** that examines the characteristics, participation levels, and service paths of individuals in the pilots;
3. An **impact analysis** that identifies 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; and
4. A **cost analysis** that describes the total and component costs of each pilot.²

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 WONDER group or a control group in roughly equivalent numbers. Individuals assigned to the WONDER group were eligible for the enhanced set of services described above, whereas control group members were eligible for services available through the existing SNAP E&T program in the State. Through random assignment, the groups were similar when they enrolled into the pilot, on average, in all

² The final reports will include additional analyses for two of the study components. The participation analysis will also assess whether the presence of the pilots affected people’s decisions to apply for SNAP or to continue to receive SNAP benefits. The cost analysis will also include a cost-benefit analysis which estimates the return on each dollar invested in the pilots.

aspects. They differed only in the services they subsequently were eligible to receive. This design allows the evaluation to confidently attribute differences in outcomes between the groups to the enhanced SNAP E&T services rather than to other potential causes.

Data sources used in the evaluation include administrative service use data to describe engagement and participation in services; 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; and 12-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. The evaluation also used implementation data collected from interviews with WONDER staff and WONDER group members and grantee-provided cost data and time-use data to estimate the cost of services and service components.

WONDER overview, service receipt, and costs

DSS developed WONDER to provide more robust services and supports than were offered under its existing SNAP E&T program. DSS wanted to provide these services to the broadest group possible, so it offered WONDER statewide (to any eligible SNAP participant in the State's three counties—Kent, New Castle, and Sussex) and to all new work registrants. DSS administered the pilot and contracted with five key providers—Eastside Rising, the Food Bank of Delaware (FBD), Delaware Technical Community College (DelTech), KraftHeinz, and Career TEAM—to offer four service tracks that provided individuals with access to industry-specific training programs, subsidized employment, job placement assistance, job readiness assistance, and support services.

After random assignment, individuals assigned to the WONDER group met with an outreach specialist (OS) who conducted an intensive intake and assessment process that generally took place over multiple visits. After completing all assessments and developing an individualized career plan, individuals selected one of four tracks based on location, interest, and readiness. Also, OSs offered individuals intensive case management and support services while in a track.

The following provides details about the planned services, receipt of specific services, and costs of providing services during the interim period:

Track 1: Construction. Track 1 provided construction pre-apprenticeship training services through Eastside Rising (in New Castle County). Individuals first completed a two- to three-week classroom training focused on basic construction lessons and soft skills development, then entered a two- to three-week field training that provided hands-on construction training. Following training, individuals worked with an Eastside Rising job developer to enter employment or an apprenticeship (the training was developed to qualify as a pre-apprenticeship program). While enrolled in the track, individuals also received intensive case management provided by the Eastside Rising case manager (in addition to case management provided by the OS). Initially, the field training was provided by a local union, which allowed individuals to join the local union (obtaining a union card) and conferred the benefits and employment opportunities

of union membership. However, due to a low number of referrals, the union stopped offering classes, and Eastside Rising developed an in-house training for hard skills, based on a nationally credentialed curriculum (National Center for Construction Education and Research), but this training did not provide union membership.

Track 2: Culinary arts. In Track 2, the FBD provided culinary arts training to WONDER group members (in New Castle and Sussex Counties). The training consisted of 12 weeks of classroom training and hands-on training in an on-site kitchen. The training included basic and advanced cooking skills, kitchen roles, food safety, and life and soft skills. Individuals attended training every day for the 12-week period; this track also included a paid two-week internship in the food industry. A FBD case manager also provided day-to-day support to those in Track 2, in coordination with the OS. Each individual who completed the track received a nationally recognized ServSafe certification, job placement support from the FBD, and 25 weeks of post-graduation wraparound services that included job coaching, mentoring, and access to an alumni network, staff, and the kitchen to improve skills.

Track 3: Manufacturing. Track 3 consisted of an online training provided by DelTech community college, followed by a 90-day subsidized job at a local manufacturing plant, KraftHeinz (in Kent County). The self-directed Certified Production Technician (CPT) training included four modules; individuals received a certificate for completing each module, but they had to pass all four modules to receive the nationally recognized certification. Upon receiving CPT certification, individuals were placed in a full-time, entry-level production position at the KraftHeinz manufacturing plant in Dover for a 90-day trial period. If individuals successfully completed their trial period, KraftHeinz retained them as full-time employees. Due to delays in implementing the activities and the difficulty of the curriculum, only two WONDER group members completed the training and started their 90-day trial period at KraftHeinz by mid-2017.

Track 4: Job placement services. Individuals who were ineligible for or uninterested in Tracks 1 through 3 received services through Track 4, which was the largest track. Those who were deemed work ready (those who placed at or above an 8th grade level on the CASAS) worked with job placement specialists (JPSs) who provided job placement support and job skills building assistance (such as help with resumes, soft skills training, mock interviews, and rides to interviews). Those who were deemed not work ready (those who placed below an 8th grade level on the CASAS or needed additional soft skills training or help reducing barriers) could enroll in courses to improve math, reading skills, and soft skills offered by staff at Career TEAM, a community employment and training provider, who were co-located at the WONDER offices. Few individuals were interested in engaging in these courses, but those who did could become work ready and continue in Track 4 to find employment or enter another track. Although WONDER did not pay for education and training under Track 4, JPSs made referrals to adult basic education for General Education Development (GED) classes and helped a small number of people find and enroll in short-term training, such as certifications for medical assistants and commercial driving licenses.

Intensive case management and support services. WONDER offered intensive case management, including identifying and helping individuals reduce barriers to employment. OSs

were required to contact individuals at least once a week and meet face to face at least once a month. Through case management, OSs discussed what barriers individuals faced and what supports might help them. WONDER offered child care, transportation assistance, and other supports to reduce barriers, such as books, uniforms, tools, equipment, or background check fees for employers that required one. However, as part of the case management approach, WONDER group members were asked if they had a way to mitigate the barrier before receiving assistance (such as getting a ride from a friend to get to training). Consequently, direct supports were a last resort in most cases. WONDER also provided direct referrals to financial literacy coaching through Stand By Me and expungement and pardon assistance through APEX.

Extent of WONDER service receipt. According to administrative service use data, virtually all of the individuals randomly assigned to the WONDER group engaged in some type of service, meaning that they at least had a meeting with an OS, started an assessment, or received a support service; however, only 69 percent returned after random assignment to continue their assessments. Overall, 40 percent of the WONDER group members ultimately started an employment or training-related activity within one of the tracks, such as job placement assistance, occupational skills training, or work-based learning. Among those who started a track, the completion rates for Tracks 1 through 4 ranged from 23 to 31 percent, and among those who started an activity, completion rates for individual activities ranged from 35 to 89 percent, with completion of work-based learning (89 percent), job placement assistance (68 percent), and basic education (68 percent) being the highest. Few individuals received a credential, certification, or degree.

Most WONDER group members had at least one contact with an OS during the pilot period, and each had a high number of contacts (34 on average). In addition, almost 60 percent of individuals received a support service. Among those who received a support, most received assistance with transportation, but a small percentage received other types of supports, such as assistance with the costs of drug testing fees, child care, or training supplies.

Individuals spent an average of about five months in WONDER. Almost all individuals exited WONDER within their first year, and the majority of exits happened within about six months after enrollment. Exits often resulted from individuals electing to leave the pilot before completing services. As shown below, a sizable percentage of individuals who enrolled in the pilot also exited SNAP in the first 12 months after random assignment. Because WONDER services were available only to SNAP participants, many exits from WONDER may have reflected exits from SNAP.

Pilot costs. DSS and its partners and providers reported spending \$8,090,000 from April 2015 to December 2017 on the planning and implementation of WONDER (\$971,000 during the planning period and \$7,118,000 on service delivery). The FNS grant funded 83 percent of these costs, and partners and providers leveraged other funding sources for the remaining 17 percent. Most of the costs (83 percent) during the planning period and first 23 months of operations were related to administration, including planning and development, management and oversight, and recruitment and enrollment (\$6,721,000). The remaining 17 percent of costs were for direct services, with case management and other direct service contracts being the largest costs. The

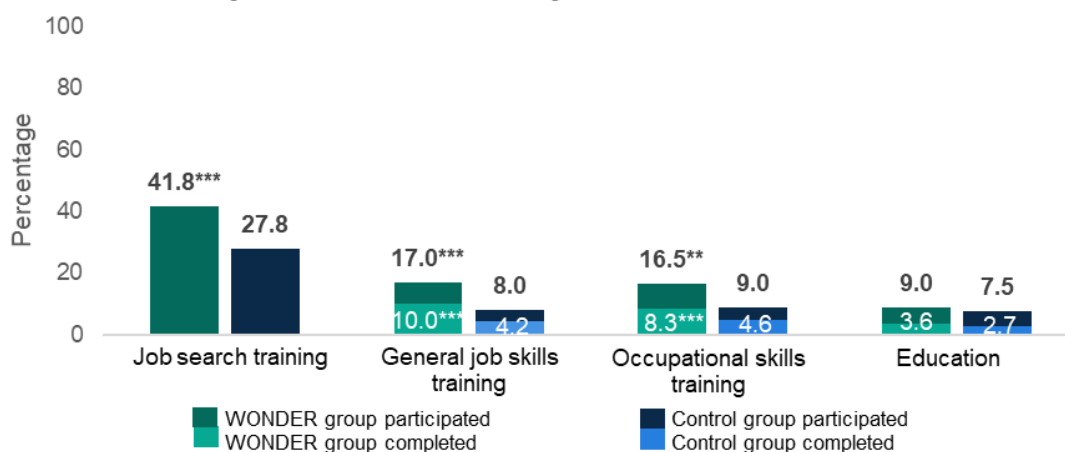
proportion of the total budget that is represented by direct service costs will likely increase over time.

Differences in service receipt for the WONDER and control groups

To provide context for the impacts of WONDER, we examined differences in service receipt between the research groups based on survey data. These data capture any type of service received, regardless of whether it was provided through WONDER or existing SNAP E&T, or whether it was generally available in the community, through programs such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or through community colleges, nonprofits, or other organizations. Without a meaningful service differential between the WONDER and control groups, impacts on labor market and public assistance outcomes are unlikely to result.

According to the survey data, service receipt rates were generally higher for individuals in WONDER, relative to the control group. During the 12-month follow-up period considered in this interim report, the WONDER group was more likely than the control group to participate in job search assistance or training activities and in education and occupational skills training. About 49 percent of the WONDER group participated in one of these activities compared with 36 percent of the control group. The WONDER group also had higher rates of participation than the control group in several types of education and occupational skills training activities. The magnitude of the differences varied for the WONDER group, relative to the control group (Exhibit ES.1), but were largest for general job skills training (9 percentage point difference) and occupational skills training (8 percentage point difference). There was a small difference in participation in work-based learning between the WONDER and control groups and no statistical difference in participation between groups in education (data not shown in exhibit).

Exhibit ES.1. Rates of participation in and completion of services were generally higher for the WONDER group than the control group



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation 12-month follow-up survey, weighted data.

Note: The full length of each bar represents the participation rate and the lower portion of each bar represents the completion rate. There is no completion rate available for job search training or assistance.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

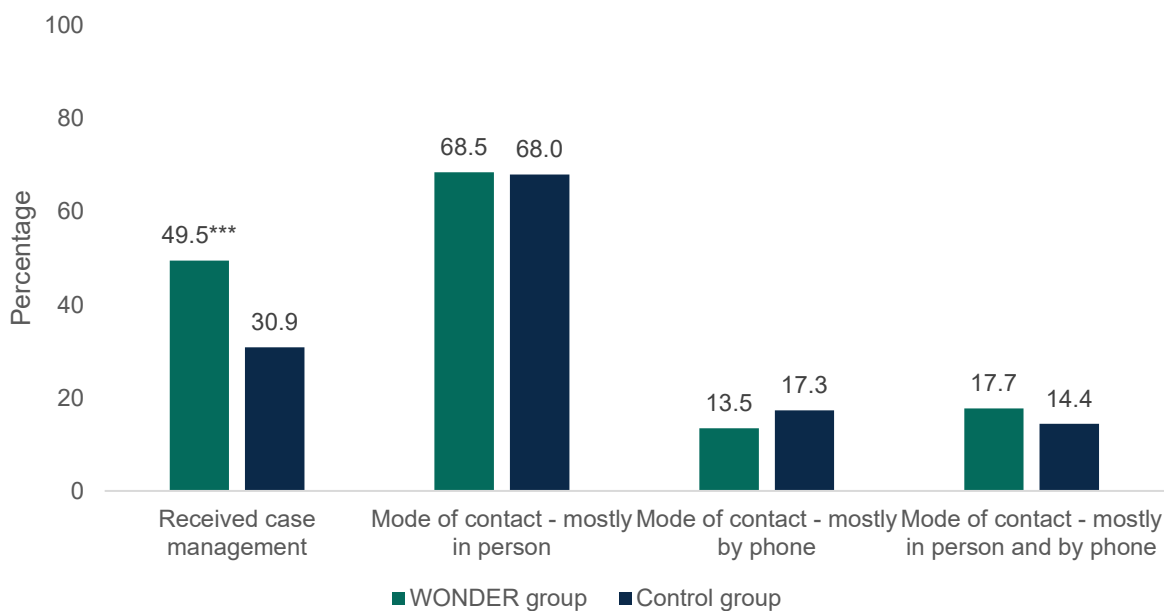
*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

WONDER group members also were more likely than those in the control group to complete activities and to receive an occupational certificate or license. Compared with individuals in the control group, individuals in WONDER group were 7 percentage points more likely to complete an activity and were 4 percentage points more likely to receive an occupational certificate or license (not shown in exhibit).

For some activities, the differences in completion rates between research groups reflect the fact that individuals in the WONDER group were more likely to start services than those in the control group. Among those who started an activity, there was no statistical difference in completion rates for the WONDER and control groups. WONDER group members who started an activity were only more likely to complete the activity if they participated in general job skills training.

WONDER group members were more likely than those in the control group to receive case management services (50 versus 31 percent; Exhibit ES.2). On average, the WONDER group also had almost twice as many contacts with an employment professional or case manager (10 versus 6 contacts; not shown in exhibit).

Exhibit ES.2. WONDER group members were more likely than control group members to receive case management, with modes of contact similar for the two groups



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

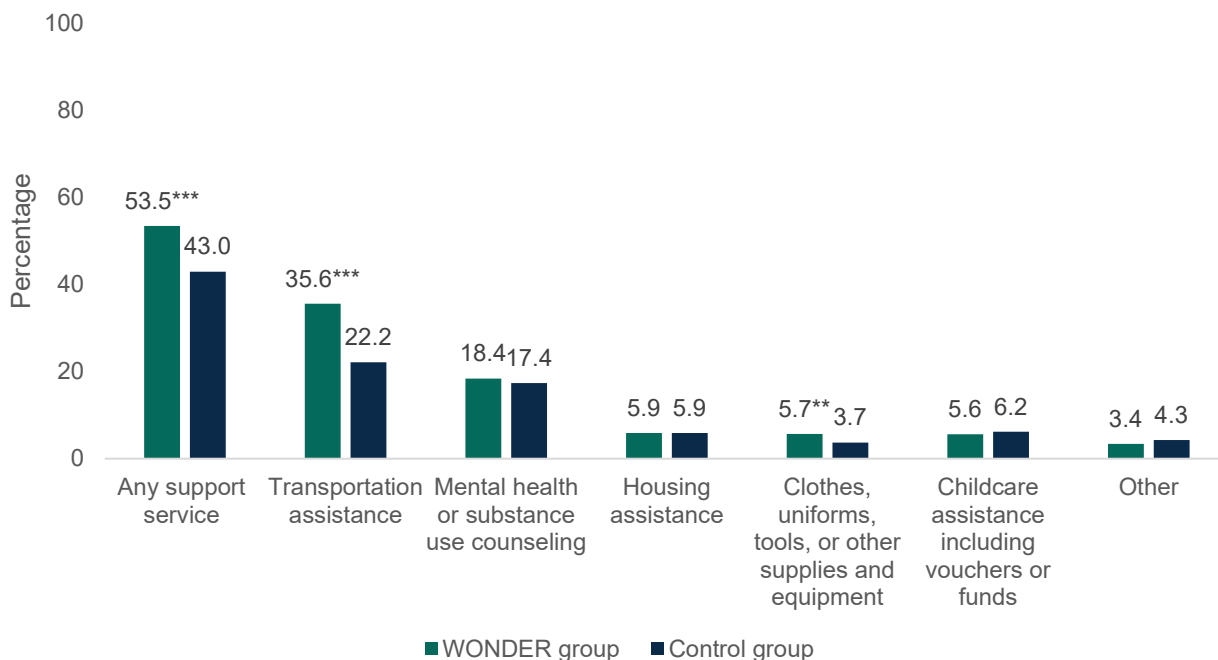
***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

WONDER group members also were more likely than those in the control group to receive support services (54 versus 43 percent; Exhibit ES.3). The largest differences were for the receipt of transportation assistance.

Exhibit ES.3. WONDER group members were more likely than control group members to receive support services



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

Note: Transportation assistance includes supports such as gas cards or bus passes. “Other” included assistance with payment of utilities such as electricity, phone, heat, or gas; food assistance; and assistance with medical care.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Impacts of WONDER on employment and SNAP participation

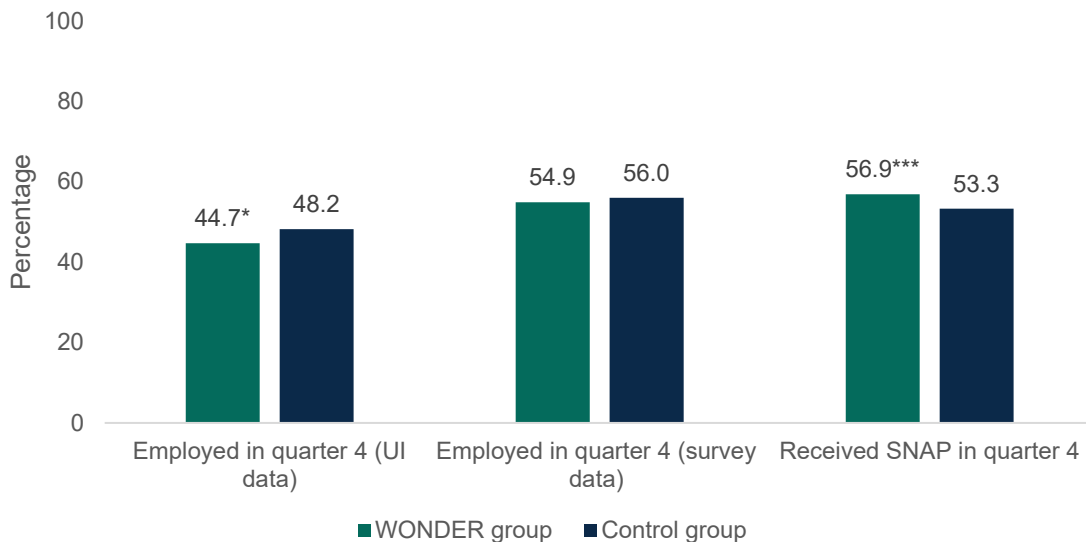
We estimated the impacts of WONDER on individual outcomes over the 12 months following random assignment. Before analyzing the data, we selected two primary (confirmatory) outcomes: employment (based on both the UI and survey data) and SNAP participation—both in the fourth quarter after random assignment, which is the most recent observed quarter. The primary outcomes were defined over the final quarter of available data because many WONDER group members were expected to be engaged in education and training shortly after random assignment, thus possibly reducing their opportunity to be employed during those early quarters.³

³ Although the level of earnings was an important outcome in the evaluation, we excluded it from the set of primary outcomes due to the generally greater variation in earnings as opposed to employment, which results in lower statistical power when identifying an impact on earnings relative to employment. Effects on earnings are important to assess because they can affect both SNAP participation status and food security.

The estimated impacts on other outcomes are considered exploratory and are used to support findings for the Quarter 4 employment and SNAP participation outcomes by examining whether they have similar impacts.

Employment. WONDER did not lead to a statistically significant increase in employment in Quarter 4 using either the UI wage records or the survey data (Exhibit ES.4). Based on the UI data, about 45 percent of WONDER group members were employed compared to about 48 percent of control group members—a statistically significant difference. Based on the survey data, 55 to 56 percent of individuals in each research group were employed during this time. WONDER led to a statistically greater likelihood of participating in SNAP in Quarter 4: 57 percent of WONDER group members participated in SNAP in Quarter 4 compared to 53 percent of control group members.

Exhibit ES.4. WONDER generally decreased Quarter 4 employment and increased the likelihood of participating in SNAP in Quarter 4



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data, SNAP employment and training evaluation 12-month survey, weighted data, SNAP employment and training evaluation SNAP administrative data, weighted data.

Note: Complete UI data were not available for the initial analysis conducted in the interim report. This difference was smaller (46.5 percent of the WONDER group versus 48.3 percent of the control group) and no longer statistically significant after UI data through December 2018 had been received and analyzed.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

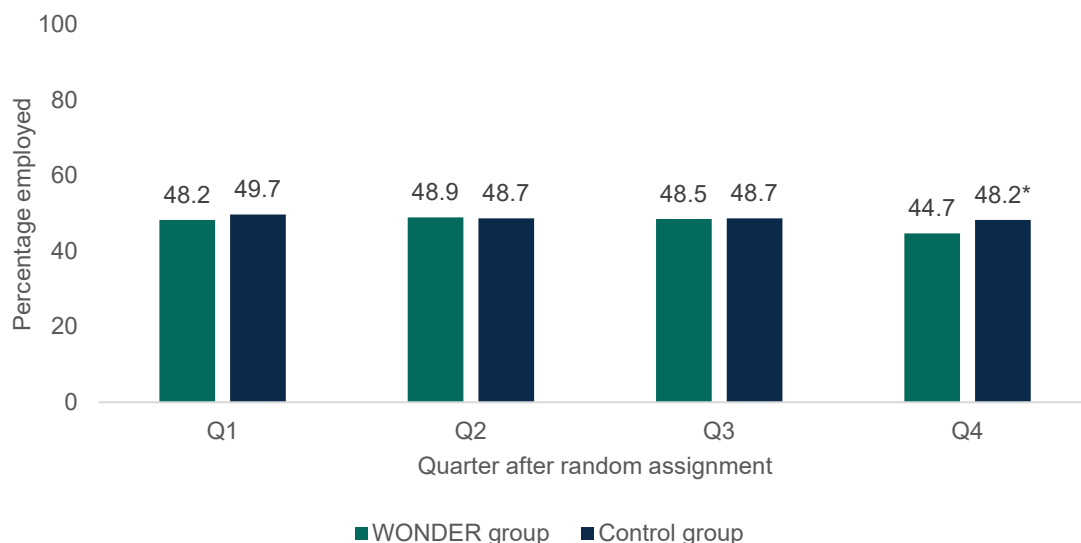
**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Analyses of employment in Quarters 1, 2, and 3 provided information about changes in these measures throughout the year following random assignment. Based on UI and survey data, there

were no statistically significant differences in employment between the WONDER and control groups in these quarters, including in Quarters 1 and 2, when WONDER group members were likely to have been participating in education and training services (Exhibit ES.5 and Exhibit ES.6).

Exhibit ES.5. WONDER did not affect employment in Quarters 1, 2, and 3 but decreased employment in Quarter 4, based on UI data



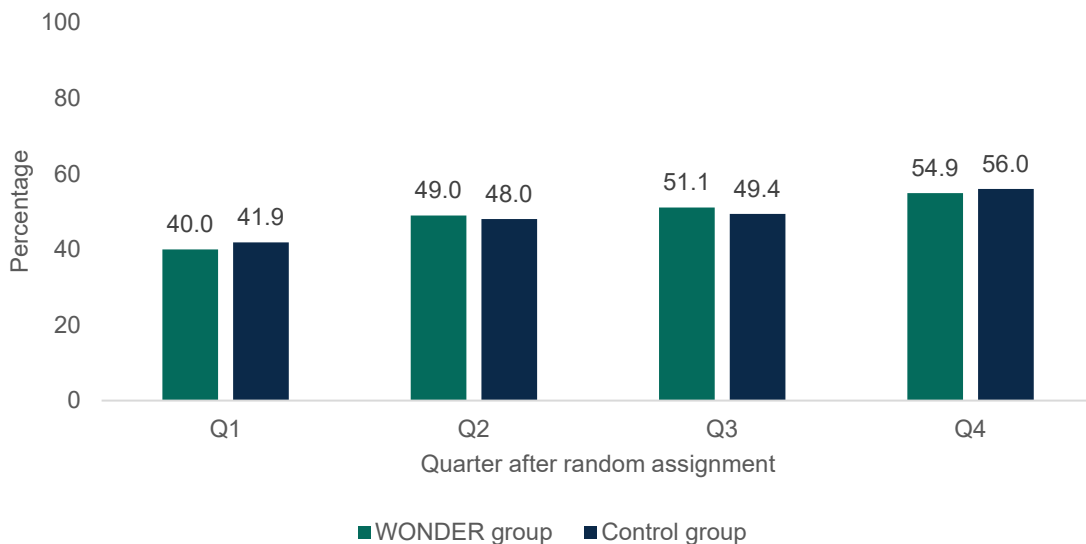
Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data.

Complete UI data were not available for the initial analysis conducted in the interim report. This difference was smaller (46.5 percent of the WONDER group versus 48.3 percent of the control group) and no longer statistically significant after UI data through December 2018 had been received and analyzed.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Exhibit ES.6. WONDER did not affect employment in any follow-up quarter, based on survey data

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

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

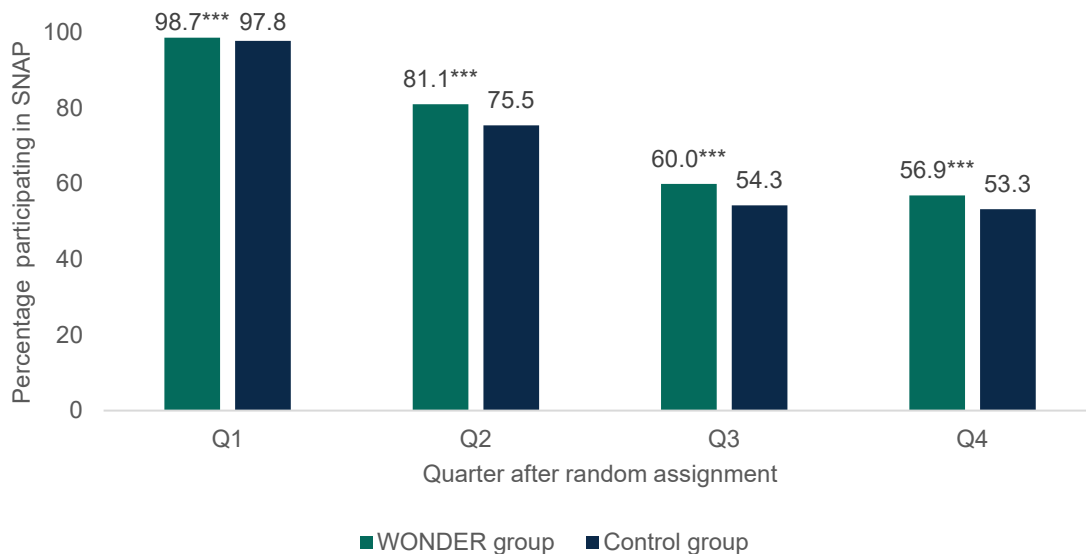
**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Earnings, hours worked, and other job characteristics. WONDER group members earned less than control group members, particularly in Quarter 1 while they were more likely to be receiving WONDER services. Based on UI records, earnings in Quarter 1 were \$242 lower for the WONDER group than for the control group, respectively. Quarter 1 earnings based on survey data were \$374 lower for the WONDER group. Earnings based on either data source increased in both groups during the first 12 months after random assignment, and by Quarters 3 and 4, none of the differences in earnings between research groups was statistically significant. There also were generally few significant impacts of WONDER on hours worked or on the characteristics of jobs among the employed.

SNAP participation, benefits, and exit. WONDER group members were more likely than control group members to participate in SNAP in Quarter 4 (57 versus 53 percent—a 4 percentage point difference). This finding does not reflect an increase in SNAP participation over time. Rather, it reflects smaller decreases over time in the rate of SNAP participation for the WONDER group than for the control group (Exhibit ES.7). Between Quarters 1 and 4, SNAP participation rates decreased from 99 to 57 percent among WONDER group members—a 42 percentage point change—and from 98 to 53 percent among control group members—a 45 percentage point change. WONDER group members were 1 to 6 percentage points more likely than control group members to participate in SNAP in each quarter.

Exhibit ES.7. Quarterly SNAP participation rates were higher for the WONDER group than for the control group in all follow-up quarters



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

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

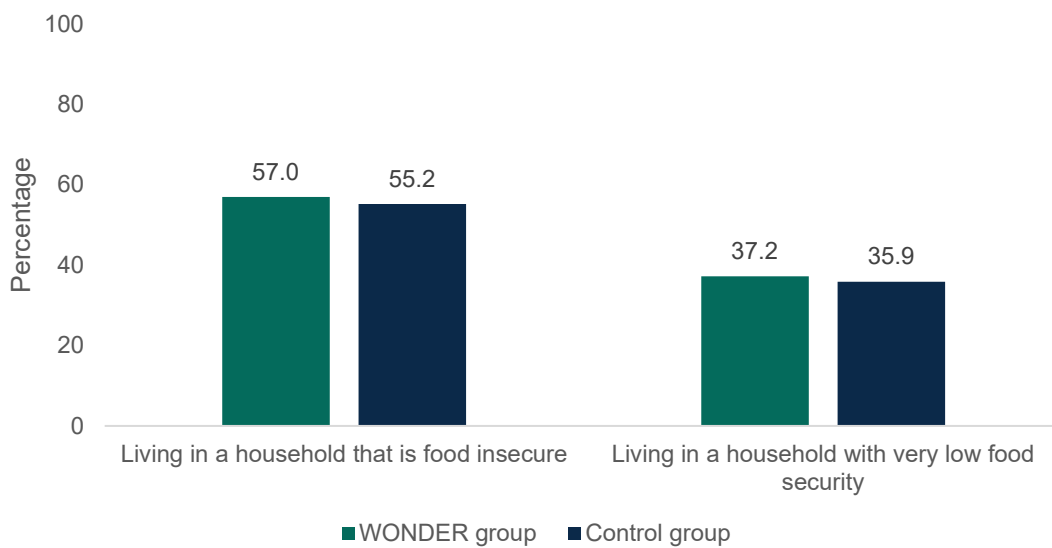
The majority of individuals in each research group exited SNAP within 12 months of random assignment (72 percent of WONDER group members exited SNAP compared with 75 percent of control group members). The percentage of individuals who exited SNAP within the 12 months after random assignment include those who left and did not re-enter SNAP in the 12-month follow-up period, as well as those who left and re-entered before the end of the period. Thus, even though 28 percent of the WONDER group participated in SNAP for the full year, SNAP participation in Quarter 4 was higher (57 percent), reflecting that individuals left and re-entered SNAP by Quarter 4.

Consistent with the findings for SNAP participation rates, average SNAP benefit amounts were significantly higher for WONDER group members than for control group members in all four quarters. Average SNAP benefit amounts were highest in Quarter 1 and decreased in each subsequent quarter, reflecting exits from SNAP over time.

Impacts on other outcomes

WONDER group members and control group members had similar rates of food insecurity. About 57 percent of WONDER group members were food insecure compared to 55 percent of control group members (Exhibit ES.8). There were also no statistical differences in the rates of very low food security (a severe form of food insecurity; 37 versus 36 percent).

Exhibit ES.8. WONDER did not affect food insecurity



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

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Among other outcomes, there generally were no statistically significant differences between the WONDER group and control group members in levels of health, likelihoods of screening positively for depression, and self-esteem and self-efficacy scores. However, the two groups did differ in terms of housing status. WONDER group members were more likely than control group members to be homeless (5 versus 3 percent). WONDER group members were also more likely than control group members to own or rent a home or apartment at the time of the interview (43 versus 39 percent). There generally were no impacts on other types of public assistance benefits, including participation in TANF and Medicaid coverage, throughout the follow-up period.

Main conclusions and next steps

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. Although there was a meaningful contrast between the WONDER and control groups in take-up of services, WONDER did not lead to an increase in employment and led to higher participation in SNAP for WONDER group members relative to control group members during the 12-month follow-up period.

The findings related to SNAP participation make sense given the pattern of changes in earnings and employment for WONDER and control group members over the first year of the pilot. Conceptually, SNAP E&T services are designed to increase employment and earnings and thus reduce the need for receiving SNAP or other public assistance. However, employment rates based on UI data did not increase for either research group between Quarters 1 and 4, and employment rates based on survey data increased at roughly the same rate for each group. In

addition, WONDER group members earned less than control group members, particularly in Quarters 1 and 2 while they were more likely to be receiving WONDER services. This increased the likelihood that WONDER group members would continue to be eligible for and participate in SNAP—or conversely, decreased the likelihood that they would exit SNAP. This also increased the likelihood that SNAP benefit amounts for the WONDER group would be higher than those for the control group.

These overall findings do not imply that WONDER will not be effective in achieving its goal of increasing employment and reducing the need for public assistance in the longer term. In fact, past studies of workforce programs have shown that it can take more than a year before economic impacts emerge (Card et al. 2010, 2018; D’Amico et al. 2015). Indeed, WONDER group members’ participation in education and training was highest in early quarters, likely displacing employment during this period. Results from the longer-term follow-up period to appear in the final evaluation report, which will extend up to three years from random assignment and include information from all individuals enrolled in the pilot, are needed to assess the full effects of WONDER.

Whether WONDER will have a longer-term impact on employment and SNAP participation depends, in part, on the degree to which there is a difference between WONDER and control group members in the services available to them, their take-up of services, and in their completion of programs. This is especially true for occupational skills training and education, particularly if individuals acquire a credential or certificate. The findings in this report suggest there was a contrast in service participation between individuals in the WONDER and control groups. Relative to the control group, the WONDER group was more likely to participate in job search training activities and in education and occupational skills training during the 12-month follow-up period. WONDER group members also were more likely than control group members to complete activities or programs.

In conclusion, this interim report presents a preliminary assessment of the effects of WONDER. The findings are based on follow-up data from only a portion of all individuals enrolled in the pilot—those who enrolled through December 2017—and cover only the first year following random assignment for each individual. Furthermore, the report’s cost findings cover only the pilot planning and early implementation periods. For these reasons, the short-term outcomes presented in this report do not capture the full potential effects of WONDER on individuals’ outcomes, or the pilot’s full costs. Notably, some individuals (8 percent of WONDER group members) were still receiving services through WONDER or other programs when the 12-month survey outcomes were measured. In addition, WONDER continued to enroll and provide services to individuals in 2018. A final report will examine the experiences of all individuals enrolled in the pilot, present their outcomes over a period of up to 36 months after random assignment, and examine the benefits of the pilots’ new services relative to their full costs, thereby providing comprehensive and conclusive evidence about the effectiveness of WONDER.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the primary source of nutrition assistance for many low-income people. By providing a monthly benefit to spend on food, the program aims to ensure that SNAP participants have adequate access to enough nutritious food to lead healthy, active lives. For some in the program, it also provides work supports to help them become economically self-sufficient. SNAP's Employment and Training (E&T) program 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.

Despite the importance of SNAP E&T, information about approaches that most effectively connect SNAP participants to gainful employment is limited. For this reason, as part of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Congress authorized and funded the SNAP E&T pilots. These pilots enable the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and 10 States to test innovative strategies to connect SNAP participants with jobs that increase their incomes and reduce their need for public assistance benefits. This legislation also funded a rigorous, longitudinal evaluation of these pilots.

This report focuses on one State—Delaware—and provides a detailed description of the pilot's design and implementation, the services individuals received, and findings about the short-term effectiveness of the pilot's services. In the remainder of this chapter, we provide an overview of all 10 pilots (Section A) and the evaluation (Section B), describe the strategies Delaware sought to implement and the characteristics of individuals enrolled in the pilot (Section C), and summarizes the data sources and analytic approach used in conducting the evaluation (Sections D and E). We conclude the chapter by presenting a road map to the subsequent chapters of this report (Section F).

A. Background of all 10 pilots

In 2015, FNS awarded grants to California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington, which represented diverse areas and populations (Appendix Table A.1). The service areas varied across pilots, some operated statewide and others operated in select areas of a State, such as counties, community college districts, or local workforce investment areas (LWIAs). They also varied in the geography in which they operated, with some focusing just on rural communities, some just on urban communities, and some serving both. Each pilot enrolled 3,000 to 7,000 individuals for a total of 44,359 individuals across the 10 pilots.

The majority of individuals the pilot targeted were work registrants⁴ who were unemployed or underemployed, but most pilots targeted subsets of this population. Some pilots focused on able-

⁴ 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

bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs)—18- to 49-year-old adults who are not disabled and do not have dependents. Other pilots focused on groups with significant barriers to employment, such as individuals who experience homelessness, have a criminal history, or have a substance use disorder.

The services available varied across pilots, but they typically included (1) a comprehensive skills and/or clinical assessment that determines individuals' work readiness, skills, and barriers to employment; (2) case-management services that develop and support a detailed individualized work and barrier-reduction plan for the individual; and (3) support services, such as transportation housing, and training or work supplies (for example, uniforms, books, clothes, or tools) that support individuals' involvement in activities designed to reduce barriers to employment. Offered services also included a range of E&T activities, such as job readiness training, basic education, occupational skills training, and subsidized employment. Under current statutes, existing SNAP E&T programs are not permitted to fund some of the activities and services the pilots provided, such as subsidized employment, substance use disorder counseling, and mental health counseling. Appendix B provides additional details about SNAP E&T and SNAP work requirements.

B. Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation includes the following four components:

1. An **implementation analysis** that documents the context and operations of each pilot;
2. A **participation analysis** that examines the characteristics, participation levels, and service paths of individuals in the pilots;
3. An **impact analysis** that identifies 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; and
4. A **cost analysis** that estimates the costs of pilot services.⁵

A challenge for any impact analysis is that individuals who receive services might differ from those who do not receive services. This makes it difficult to determine whether differences in outcomes are a result of the services or are driven by the pre-existing differences between individuals who did and did not receive services. To overcome this challenge, 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. Treatment group members were eligible for the

for another program; caretakers 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.

⁵ The final reports will include additional analyses for two of the study components. The participation analysis will also assesses whether the presence of the pilots affected people's decisions to apply for SNAP or to continue to receive SNAP benefits. The cost analysis will also include a cost-benefit analysis which estimates the return on each dollar invested in the pilots.

I. Introduction

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. Through random assignment, the groups were, on average, similar in all aspects when they enrolled into the pilot. They differed only in terms of the services they subsequently were eligible to receive. This design allowed the evaluation to confidently attribute differences in outcomes between the two groups to the enhanced services rather than to other potential causes.

The reports being issued at this time present interim findings for each evaluation component. The implementation and cost analyses describe the planning and early implementation periods of the pilots, but do not cover the full period in which services were offered and costs were incurred. Similarly, the findings in the participation and impact analyses are based on services received and outcomes measured during the approximate 12 months after each individual entered the pilot, from the start of enrollment (which ranged from January to April 2016 across the pilots) through the end of 2017. In addition, these findings are reported for most of the individuals (87 percent) eventually enrolled in the pilots. The full effects of the new services may not have materialized during this short-term, 12-month follow-up period, especially for some individuals who were still receiving services at the 12-month point. In addition, some pilots continued to enroll individuals in 2018 and provided services in 2018 and 2019. The pilots' final reports will provide more conclusive evidence about the ultimate effectiveness of the pilots' services. These reports will examine the experiences of all individuals enrolled in the pilots and will follow their outcomes over a period of up to 36 months after random assignment. The final reports will also examine the benefits of the pilots' services relative to their costs.

C. Overview of Delaware WONDER

Delaware began enrollment in Work Opportunity Networks to Develop Employment Readiness (WONDER) statewide on February 1, 2016 (Exhibit I.1). The State is made up of just three counties: New Castle, Kent, and Sussex. Delaware is primarily urban, with more than 80 percent of the population located in urban or suburban areas. New Castle County is the largest and most urban of the counties, and Sussex includes the most rural areas. In the year before Delaware began WONDER enrollment, the average unemployment rate in the state was 4.9 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019).

Exhibit I.1. Pilot locations



The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services (DSS), administers SNAP. Its SNAP E&T program is voluntary. At the time of the evaluation, SNAP E&T was offered to all SNAP participants in the State's three counties, but those who participated were generally ABAWDs. Individuals who were interested in the program were referred to Career TEAM, a statewide service provider, which provided all SNAP E&T services. Because of limited funding, the program primarily focused on employment, mainly offering job search assistance and workfare for ABAWDs. Take-up of the SNAP E&T program had traditionally been relatively low, and few participants were subsequently placed into long-term employment.

I. Introduction

DSS developed WONDER to provide more robust services and supports than were offered under its existing SNAP E&T program. The voluntary pilot targeted new work registrants (those who had not received SNAP benefits during the six months before random assignment). DSS administered the pilot and contracted with five key providers—Eastside Rising, the Food Bank of Delaware (FBD), Delaware Technical Community College (DelTech), KraftHeinz, and Career TEAM—to offer four service tracks that provided individuals in WONDER with access to industry-specific training programs, subsidized employment, job placement assistance, job readiness assistance, and support services (Exhibit I.2). All individuals selected one of four tracks based on location, interest, and readiness:

- Track 1: Construction (New Castle County; offered by Eastside Rising)
- Track 2: Culinary arts (New Castle and Sussex Counties serving all counties; offered by FBD)
- Track 3: Manufacturing (Kent County serving Kent and Sussex Counties; offered by DelTech and KraftHeinz)
- Track 4: Job placement services (New Castle and Sussex Counties serving all counties; offered by pilot staff and Career TEAM)

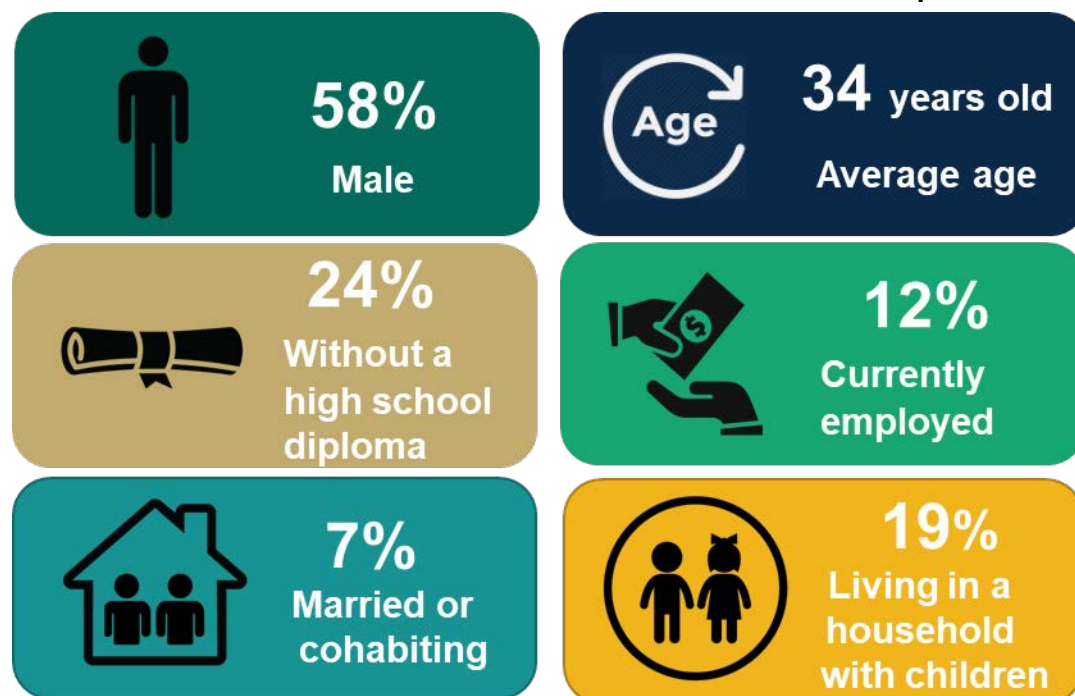
In addition, individuals in any track could be referred to Advancement through Pardons and Expungements (APEX), which offered assistance in expunging criminal records, and Stand By Me, which offered financial literacy education.

Exhibit I.2. Pilot characteristics

Characteristic	
Pilot operation period	February 2016 to December 2018
Location	Statewide (the three counties in Delaware—Kent, New Castle, and Sussex)
Grantee agency	Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services
Key partners and providers	Eastside Rising, Food Bank of Delaware, Delaware Technical Community College, KraftHeinz, and Career TEAM
Target population	New work registrants
Number enrolled from February 2016 through December 2017	5,348
Program type	Voluntary
Existing SNAP E&T program	Delaware offered limited services through its voluntary SNAP E&T program; the control group received Career TEAM services, which included basic case management, job search assistance, workfare for ABAWDs, job placement assistance, and small transportation stipends.
Key WONDER services	WONDER included four tracks. Three tracks included industry-specific training and employment (construction, culinary, and manufacturing with subsidized employment at KraftHeinz); the fourth track offered primarily job placement. Job readiness assistance, financial literacy counseling, criminal background remediation, and support services were available.

From February 2016 to December 2017, Delaware enrolled 5,348 SNAP participants into the pilot. Interested individuals were randomly assigned in roughly equivalent numbers into a treatment group (referred to as the WONDER group) and a control group. Exhibit I.3 displays the key characteristics of all individuals who enrolled in the pilot from February 1, 2016, to December 31, 2017 (see Appendix Table C.1). The characteristics represent individuals' statuses at the point of random assignment. More individuals in the pilot were African American than other races (50 percent), and a majority were male (58 percent). Individuals were age 34, on average. Less than 1 in 10 individuals (7 percent) were married or cohabiting, and 19 percent lived in households with children. Almost one quarter (24 percent) did not have a high school diploma. Most individuals had been employed at some point (97 percent), but only 12 percent were employed at the time of random assignment.

Exhibit I.3. Baseline characteristics of individuals enrolled in the pilot



Source: SNAP E&T baseline information registration form (February 2016 through December 2017 data).

Note: All values are percentages unless otherwise noted. Individuals in the pilot consist of all WONDER and control group members who completed a baseline enrollment registration and did not subsequently choose to revoke their consent to participate in the evaluation. (n=5,348).

This report focuses on individuals who enrolled in the pilot through December 2017. DSS completed pilot enrollment in August 2018 with a final size of 6,814 individuals and continued providing services until December 2018. The final report will include analysis of data on all individuals enrolled in the pilot from the beginning to the end of pilot operations.

D. Data sources

Data to support the evaluation were collected from multiple sources:

1. **Baseline registration form.** After obtaining study consent, pilot intake staff collected baseline information about individuals in the pilot. This included their demographic characteristics, employment histories, and receipt of public assistance. Baseline data were collected for all WONDER and control group members.
2. **Implementation data.** The implementation data analyzed for this report were collected during two rounds of site visits in July 2016 and June 2017. The site visits included interviews with DSS, WONDER supervisors, frontline and WONDER service provider staff; structured observations of service provider operations; in-depth interviews with WONDER group members; and focus groups with individuals enrolled in WONDER. We also used information obtained during technical assistance and monitoring site visits and telephone calls conducted during the planning period and throughout the interim analysis period.
3. **Administrative service use data.** DSS and their partners and providers collected and shared administrative data that documented the types of training, education, and services they provided to WONDER group members and, where applicable, to control group members. The administrative data analyzed for this report included information on service receipt from the date of random assignment for each individual through either the last known date of engagement or December 2018.
4. **Unemployment insurance wage records.** Data on employment status and earnings were obtained from State unemployment insurance (UI) wage records. We obtained data for each individual in the pilot with earnings for eight quarters (two years) before the date of random assignment and for four quarters after random assignment (through March 2018) – for individuals randomly assigned through March 2017. The data contain earnings amounts for each quarter, which we also used to construct indicators of quarterly employment status.
5. **SNAP administrative data.** DSS provided SNAP administrative caseload data. These were used to construct measures of receipt of public assistance (SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], and Medicaid), SNAP and TANF benefit amounts, and income, and to characterize individuals' recent history of SNAP participation. Monthly data were provided for all individuals in the pilot from one year before random assignment through December 2018.
6. **12-month follow-up survey.** The 12-month follow-up survey provided information on service receipt and outcomes. We conducted telephone surveys with individuals enrolled in the pilot through December 2017 (2,091 WONDER and control group members in Delaware). The survey asked for information about individuals' service receipt, employment, and earnings in the 12 months after random assignment. It also asked for information on food security, health, well-being, and housing status.
7. **Cost data.** To estimate WONDER costs, we collected data from cost workbooks completed by DSS and partners and providers and from time-use surveys. The workbooks were the basis for calculating total costs and describing the categories of costs for the WONDER

group, including costs for staff, direct services, supplies and equipment, and overhead and operations. A staff time-use survey helped estimate the costs of service components by accounting for how staff responsible for providing direct WONDER group services spent their time.

For the final evaluation analysis, we will collect additional follow-up data from several of these sources. These include a second follow-up survey administered about 36 months after random assignment for the same set of individuals who responded to the 12-month survey, and UI wage records and SNAP administrative data through mid- to late 2020 for all individuals enrolled in the pilot. We will present findings from the analyses of these data and describe any changes to each pilot's service model in the final report. The final report also will include implementation data from a third round of site visits conducted in fall 2018 and administrative service use data and cost data obtained through the end of WONDER's service period (December 2018). The final report also will present a benefit-cost analysis that will compare final costs for WONDER and control group services (including estimates of costs per person) with final WONDER benefits, from the perspectives of individuals, government, and society.

E. Analysis approach

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

- 1. Implementation analysis.** The implementation analysis summarizes and synthesizes the data collected through site visits as well as technical assistance and monitoring telephone calls to describe pilot planning and operations that occurred from the start of the pilot through June 2017. We organized the data by topic, interviewee, and pilot office, to facilitate analysis by type of respondent (for example, grantee or partner).
- 2. Participation analysis.** The participation analysis uses administrative service use data to summarize engagement and participation in services over the 12 months following random assignment for all WONDER group members randomly assigned through December 2017. We created timelines for each WONDER group member to describe when they started to receive services, start dates and, if services were completed, the end dates. This allowed us to estimate the order in which individuals typically proceeded through activities and the overall length of time they spent in WONDER.
- 3. Analysis of differences in service use between WONDER and control groups.** This analysis statistically compares receipt of services among WONDER and control group members over the 12 months following random assignment. Understanding the differences in service use between treatment and control groups provides context for understanding the impacts on employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance. The analysis is primarily based on data from the 12-month follow-up survey, which are available for both WONDER and control group members. It also uses administrative data when information on the use of specific services is available for both WONDER and control group members.
- 4. Analysis of impacts on employment and well-being outcomes.** We estimated impacts of WONDER on individual outcomes over the 12 months following random assignment using UI wage records, SNAP administrative data, and 12-month survey data. Examined outcomes

include employment, SNAP participation, and earnings, as well as receipt of public assistance other than SNAP, food security, health, well-being, and housing status. With the exception of the analysis of earnings and employment based on UI wage record data, impacts are estimated for individuals randomly assigned through December 2017. Due to differences in data availability, analyses for Delaware that use UI wage records assess impacts for individuals randomly assigned through March 2017. With an experimental design, unbiased impact estimates are attainable from the differences between average outcomes of the treatment and control groups. However, we used regression procedures that controlled for individual characteristics that were highly predictive of the outcomes. We chose these procedures to improve the precision of estimates and adjust for small baseline differences between groups that may have arisen by chance, for survey nonresponse, or for missing administrative records data.⁶

- 5. Cost analysis.** Using data on costs provided by DSS and service providers, we used the “ingredient” approach to build up total WONDER cost estimates from all reported direct and in-kind costs. We also collected and used data on the percentage of time direct service staff spent on key activities and services to estimate the cost of specific services.

For many of these analyses, we examined subgroups that may have been affected differently by the services offered to the WONDER group. We analyzed impacts and service use for 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 the presence of severe barriers to employment. The findings for the subgroup analysis are included in the appendices.

F. Organization of this report

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

1. Chapter II describes the planning and implementation of the pilot, the ways in which its implementation differed from the original design, challenges experienced, and responses to these challenges.
2. Chapter III presents findings from the participation analysis, describing the services that individuals in the WONDER group received during their first year after random assignment.
3. Chapter IV describes differences between WONDER and control groups in the receipt of services.

⁶Analyses in this report test for statistical significance at the 0.01, 0.05, and 0.10 levels. The 0.10 level was used because the evaluation is assessing the effectiveness of new interventions for which there is no prior evidence of effectiveness for SNAP participants. A more stringent statistical significance threshold is often used when evaluating ongoing programs for which there is an established literature on program effects based on prior studies. Using a more stringent statistical significance threshold in the current evaluation would have reduced statistical power and limited our ability to identify and highlight promising sets of services offered through the pilots. By using a 0.10 statistical significance level, the evaluation aims to build knowledge in the field of workforce development for SNAP participants, on which future SNAP E&T evaluations can expand and eventually apply more stringent tests of effectiveness once programs and service models have been established for a longer period of time.

I. Introduction

4. Chapter V presents findings from the analysis of the impact of WONDER on employment, earnings, benefit receipt, and other outcomes.
5. Chapter VI describes the costs of services that individuals in the WONDER group received from DSS and the partner and provider organizations.
6. Chapter VII offers conclusions and more fully describes what the final evaluation report will include.

Appendices C to G present findings from auxiliary analyses and for subgroups. A technical supplement in a separate volume includes appendices that describe the data and methodology in more detail.⁷

⁷ The supplement provides additional information about the analysis approach. Specifically, we describe our analytical approach, including additional details on the study design, analytic weights, approach to addressing missing data due to survey-item nonresponse, and impact estimation approach.

II. IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS

This chapter describes the planning and implementation of the pilot. Findings are based on qualitative analysis of data collected through telephone calls and in-person interviews with staff from DSS, partners, and providers; a focus group conducted in 2017 with individuals participating in tracks available in New Castle County—Tracks 1 (construction), 2 (culinary arts), and 4 (job placement services); and case studies with one individual in Track 1 and one individual in Track 4 to better understand their experiences (including interviews with the individuals, observation of activities, and interviews with WONDER staff working directly with the individual). Information from the focus groups and case studies is included to provide context. However, these data were collected from a small number of individuals, so their experiences and opinions are not necessarily representative of the entire WONDER group. Data presented in this report were collected during the planning and early implementation periods of the pilot, from March 2015 through June 2017 (Exhibit II.1 provides a pilot timeline). DSS made changes to its services and contracted with additional providers between June 2017 and December 2018. These changes occurred after the second round of implementation interviews and will be discussed in the final report.

Exhibit II.1. Pilot timeline

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

In Section A of this chapter, we provide information about the pilot background. In Section B, we describe the planning and early implementation process. In Section C, we detail pilot services and operations, including the recruitment and enrollment process; control group services and pathways; and WONDER group services and pathways, management and collaborations, service receipt patterns, barriers among WONDER group members, staffing, and performance reporting. Finally, in Section D, we summarize the key findings discussed in this chapter.

A. Pilot background

DSS has administered a voluntary SNAP E&T program since 1987. It contracts with Career TEAM to provide SNAP E&T services statewide, mainly offering job search assistance and workfare for ABAWDs. DSS staff felt the program has been “highly underutilized and yields low success rates for employment placement.” According to DSS, data showed that approximately 28 percent of those referred to the program engaged with the provider, and 4 percent obtained employment. However, the agency found much higher rates of participation and employment with its TANF work program (about 30 percent obtained employment), which offered more robust services, including job-specific training opportunities, on-the-job training, and work experience.

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Based on these outcomes and feedback from focus groups conducted in 2014 with SNAP frontline staff and individuals who participated in SNAP E&T, DSS leadership identified several factors that prevented the SNAP E&T program from meeting its goals. First, the program lacked wraparound support services to assist clients in addressing basic needs that act as barriers to participating in services or to acquiring and retaining employment. Second, the program included non-individualized cookie-cutter services that did not engage individuals with varying needs. Third, the program lacked education and training offerings that would prepare individuals for high-demand/higher-wage job placements and incentivize them to participate. Finally, the program did not provide effective outreach and engagement. DSS saw the pilot as an opportunity to develop a program that provided intensive case management, included needed support services, allowed for individualized services, and provided education and training opportunities in growth industries. DSS wanted to provide these services to the broadest group possible, so it offered WONDER statewide and to all new work registrants.

For the pilot, DSS continued to offer existing SNAP E&T services to the control group, but it developed four tracks (three were industry-based) with wraparound services for the WONDER group. Of the five key providers offering the track services, DSS had worked previously with the FBD and Career TEAM, but it sought out new relationships with Eastside Rising, DelTech, and KraftHeinz to provide occupational skills training in growth industries with high-wage potential. The majority of the provider costs associated with offering services was paid for with grant funds, but each organization offered some in-kind resources, including time from leadership and some materials. In addition, DSS provided funding to APEX and Stand By Me to offset staff costs and payments for APEX fees (expungement and court filing fees) associated with referrals to these services. Early in the process, DSS also contracted with the Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Labor (DOL) to accept referrals for adult basic education and workforce classes, but few individuals were referred to or participated in these services.

In addition to expanded employment and training services, WONDER group members received intensive case management and support services. Although the control group members had access to case managers, support services, and referrals, DSS provided the WONDER group with staff who worked closely with them, contacting them weekly to remediate barriers and help them navigate services. WONDER group members also had access to a broader range and higher amounts of support services than were available to control group members.

B. Pilot planning and implementation

DSS and WONDER management staff led the overall planning and implementation process, with little direct involvement from service providers. Two full-time DSS staff members (a project director and a policy administrator) oversaw the planning and implementation, but they also hired a management team over the course of the planning and early implementation period. The team, which was hired through Goodwill as temporary employees but supervised by DSS, initially included a clinical supervisor, a program manager, data managers, and a contracts manager to help develop materials and systems, hire and train frontline staff, and work with providers.

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Although DSS and the WONDER management team developed policies and processes for the pilot overall, each provider was responsible for developing the WONDER service tracks and flow through the tracks. DSS had little involvement in development of the service tracks before WONDER began enrollment. This was partly because most providers had existing services in place before the pilot began. Eastside Rising had offered a small construction program in the community for a few years, but they expanded the model for WONDER; the FBD had an existing culinary arts program that was not altered significantly for WONDER; and DelTech obtained and used a standardized national exam and tailored it slightly for KraftHeinz's needs. Career TEAM was responsible for offering standard assessments that it traditionally offered and for overseeing a set of established computer programs to help individuals who were not job ready improve their math and reading skills, but it did not develop new curricula for WONDER. All providers needed to adjust their processes slightly to coordinate with WONDER staff, and most providers hired additional staff in anticipation of serving more individuals. However, in general, their existing models did not change significantly.

DSS encountered several challenges during the planning period. The most significant challenge was the loss of a major proposed provider, which significantly changed the initial model for WONDER. The Delaware DOL was to provide services, office space, and staff for Track 4, as well as office space for WONDER staff. However, by summer 2015, DOL determined that the level of funding was not sufficient to provide services and chose not to participate. Consequently, DSS had to restructure its approach to providing Track 4 services and identify alternative office space for Track 4 services and WONDER staff. DOL's decision to leave the pilot also created unanticipated challenges and delays. As a result, DSS led the development and delivery of Track 4 services in house. They enacted the following:

- Hired job placement specialists (JPSs) to provide job search and job placement services, including resume assistance and interviewing support
- Combined the intensive case management (which DOL was going to contract to a vendor) and recruitment roles into one position (an outreach specialist [OS]) and hired these temporary staff under DSS oversight
- Rented office space for WONDER that housed the OSs and JPSs, and offered a location for conducting assessments, providing training, and supplying Track 4 services
- Negotiated with Career TEAM to provide remedial education and soft skills training at the WONDER locations for Track 4
- Hired a much larger management team to supervise the OSs, JPSs, and WONDER offices

In addition, DSS did not have a system that tracked existing SNAP E&T data, so staff had to develop a database to track service receipt data for WONDER group members. DSS hired staff to develop a worksheet-based data system that was developed over the course of a year. After the database was developed, the data managers sent WONDER staff and providers a workbook each month, which they populated and then sent back to the data managers to be consolidated into an Access database. The workbook had few data checks, did not provide for real-time access to

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data, and was time-consuming to use. (Eventually, DSS created a new database; see Section II.C.7.)

DSS also encountered delays in hiring and retaining management staff to assist with the planning and implementation process. Identifying and hiring qualified staff took longer than anticipated, and most staff were not hired until late summer or early fall 2015. In addition, several WONDER staff (about six staff members) left their positions during the planning period. These staffing challenges delayed the development of systems and training materials, and put additional burden on DSS staff, who had to focus on hiring and take on the responsibilities of these staff until they were hired. Not having all of the managers hired before the beginning of enrollment also affected staff training and development; most of the managers and supervisors were trained with the frontline staff, so they were not a resource to frontline staff during training and implementation.

Frontline staff (and some management staff) were hired and trained from November 2015 to January 2016. DSS conducted in-person training over a six-week period. The daylong training focused on several topics, with most centered on the pilot process and services. At the time of the training, staff noted that not all of the forms and processes were developed, and DSS shared information as these items were refined. DSS also conducted refresher trainings as needed, such as how to write proper case notes or identify work registrants for recruitment.

At the same time DSS was developing procedures and training staff, providers were finalizing their services for the tracks. These efforts were fairly segregated, as providers were not directly involved in conversations about WONDER policies and processes, and DSS was not directly involved in how the services were developed or refined. Providers reported that they did not meet with DSS or WONDER management staff frequently during the planning period; most said they participated in two or three meetings before January 2016, when the first substantive meeting with all providers took place. At this meeting, providers were introduced to the data collection process and metrics. DSS staff noted that most of their planning “focused on launching things within DSS and we tried not to burden partners until we felt confident about forms [and] processes.” However, several of the provider staff suggested they would have welcomed more early communication between the two, and they would have encouraged DSS to rely on the providers’ experiences serving the population to understand the challenges that might arise. In retrospect, DSS staff also recognized that engaging more closely with providers before starting services could have helped them identify and address potential drop-off points (places in the flow of services that create obstacles or opportunities for individuals to stop participating or not move to the next step in the process) and service delivery issues that they were not anticipating.

At the time the pilot began enrollment on February 1, 2016, Delaware had not completed all of its preparations. Specifically, DSS had not finished hiring or training its staff, it was still developing and finalizing some of the documentation and procedures for the frontline staff, only one of the office locations was fully operational, and it had not finished developing its service receipt data system for tracking WONDER group members. Therefore, it implemented a soft start for about five months while it resolved these issues and fully rolled out services in July 2016. Because of the slow start, DSS did not employ the full range of outreach efforts planned

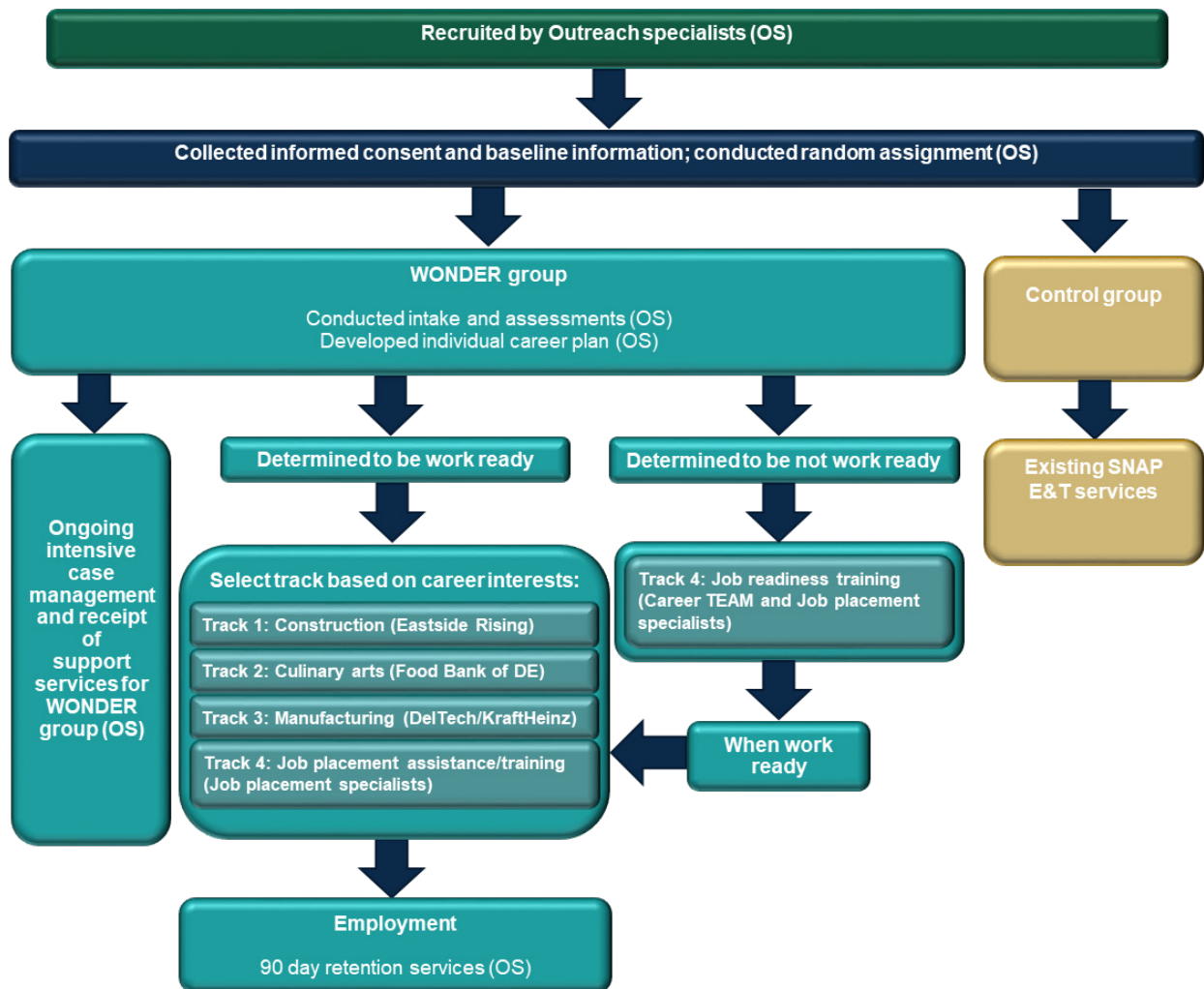
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(including mass mailings, media campaigns, and informing community organizations about the pilot) to keep its enrollment manageable while it was finalizing staffing, processes, and systems. Therefore, outreach initially consisted of only three main activities: (1) performing outreach at local SNAP offices at the time of SNAP enrollment; (2) presenting at group SNAP orientations, where available; and (3) contacting new SNAP work registrants by telephone or through home visits.

C. Pilot services and operations

When the pilot began enrollment statewide in 2016, DSS targeted SNAP participants who eligibility staff determined were new work registrants during certification interviews (work registrants who had not received SNAP benefits in the past six months). As described in Exhibit II.2, OS staff reached out to work registrants to discuss the benefits of the pilot, and those who were interested went through the enrollment process. Individuals were randomly assigned to the WONDER group or the control group. Those assigned to the control group received existing SNAP E&T services, and those assigned to the WONDER group were assessed. Those who were assessed to be work ready selected a service track, and those who were not work ready were placed in Track 4 to increase skills. (After they improved their skills, these individuals could move into another track.) WONDER group members also received intensive case management and support services, and received job placement support within each track.

Exhibit II.2. Client flow and pilot pathways



1. Recruitment and enrollment

During the SNAP application process, eligibility staff identified new work registrants using an E&T screener in the eligibility system. Those who did not meet a Federal exemption from registering for work were marked in the system as work registrants. WONDER staff had access to indicators in the eligibility system, and supervisors distributed lists of new work registrants to the OSs for recruitment. OSs called, sent letters, or visited the homes of work registrants to describe WONDER services and encourage participation. OSs also were located in the local SNAP offices, so eligibility workers could send clients directly to the OSs for enrollment while the client was at the SNAP office.

Individuals who were interested in the pilot met with an OS in person to enroll. Staff obtained consent, collected baseline information, and randomly assigned individuals to the WONDER or control group. Those assigned to the control group were referred to Career TEAM for services. Depending on their availability, those assigned to the WONDER group either began the intake process with the OS who enrolled them or set up an appointment to do this later.

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During the first year of the pilot operations, enrollment lagged below monthly targets. This was due to the delay in fully beginning services for the pilot, staff turnover, and large caseloads that made balancing recruitment and case management difficult. In response, DSS made significant changes to its recruitment process in 2017. DSS designated a group of OSs to focus on recruiting and enrolling work registrants, and another group to focus on case management. Enrollment rates increased dramatically in the second year of the pilot, after this new process was fully implemented, and WONDER staff then exceeded their enrollment target of 5,292 individuals. DSS continued to enroll individuals into 2018 to ensure it had enough WONDER group members for the remaining occupational skills training classes.

2. Control group services and pathways

Career TEAM provided existing SNAP E&T program services statewide. The program is voluntary, so it generally served ABAWDs who would be time limited if they did not meet work requirements. Career TEAM received a list of new referrals each month (including the control group members and other individuals who did not enroll in the pilot) and sent a letter to each individual inviting them to an orientation that explained the available services, their responsibilities, and employment opportunities. Several orientations were scheduled each week.

After the orientation, staff held one-on-one meetings with interested clients to conduct a general intake and assessment, and to assign services. Career TEAM offered the Do What You Are personality inventory and the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) education level assessment to its clients. It also provided basic case management (employment focused), job search assistance and soft skills training, job placement assistance at a network of employers, work experience, and support services (\$20–\$24 in transportation assistance per month, clothing assistance, and work-related supplies). All control group members developed a resume and uploaded it to JobLink. Career TEAM staff also made referrals to other agencies if individuals had barriers that it could not resolve, such as unstable housing. Some individuals were referred to DOL for occupational skills training services or other assistance, but this was uncommon.

3. WONDER group services and pathways

Individuals assigned to the WONDER group engaged in an intensive intake and assessment process that included several steps. This process generally took place over multiple visits during the first month after enrollment. The OS began by completing a one- to two-hour comprehensive assessment of the individual's core life functioning, covering his or her housing situation, household demographics, employment history, criminal background, educational background, transportation situation, mental and physical health, substance use, child care needs, and additional barriers to training or work. After completing the core life assessment, the OS determined whether the individual needed any immediate supports or community referrals and addressed those before he or she left the office.

Next, individuals were referred to Career TEAM staff, who were co-located at the WONDER offices, to conduct a job skills assessment. They completed both the Do What You Are and CASAS assessments. The results determined whether individuals were work ready (those who

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placed at or above an 8th grade level on the CASAS) or not work ready (those who placed below an 8th grade level on the CASAS or needed additional soft skills training or help reducing barriers) and guided assignment to a track. The results also informed the development of an individualized career plan that described individuals' strengths, areas needing improvement, necessary referrals (such as for housing, APEX, Stand By Me, or child care services), short- and long-term goals, and steps needed to reach those goals. Those who were determined to be work ready selected which of the four tracks they would like to begin (assuming they met the other eligibility criteria for the track). Those who were not work ready were placed into Track 4 and offered job readiness training, and were referred for services to build basic skills. After individuals' skills improved and they tested at an 8th grade level, they could move into another track.

Three of the four tracks focused on occupational skills training for in-demand industries. Track 1 focused on pre-apprenticeship training in construction; Track 2 focused on training and work experience in culinary arts; and Track 3 focused on obtaining a manufacturing certificate followed by a 90-day subsidized placement at a local manufacturer (KraftHeinz). Track 4 focused on remedial education, soft skills, and help obtaining employment; the track also allowed individuals to seek occupational skills training in other industries, though the pilot did not pay for the cost of the training. WONDER group members could choose their preferred track, but Tracks 1, 2, and 3 had additional, specific entry criteria such as testing at a certain education level, passing a background check, or passing a drug test, and these tracks were not offered in all locations. Individuals primarily selected one of the four tracks, but they could participate in multiple tracks. For instance, some started in Track 4 to build their skills or while they waited for a class to open and then moved to another track.

Track 1: Construction. Track 1 provided construction pre-apprenticeship training services through Eastside Rising. To be eligible, individuals needed to test at a 5th grade reading level and pass a drug test. Through this track, individuals first completed a two- to three-week classroom training focused on basic construction lessons and soft skills development. After completing the classroom training, they entered a two- to three-week field training. Initially, this hands-on training was provided by the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), which allowed individuals to obtain a union card (membership) with Local Union 55. The track was developed to offer a minimum of 216 hours of classroom and field work that qualified as a pre-apprenticeship program. Following that training, individuals worked with an Eastside Rising job developer to enter employment or an apprenticeship. While enrolled in the track, individuals also received intensive case management provided by the Eastside Rising case manager (in addition to case management that their OS provided).

LIUNA and Eastside Rising expected that each class would have about 10 WONDER group members and that the cohort generally would complete the classroom training in one month and the fieldwork in the next. However, enrollment in Track 1 was extremely limited (one to five individuals a month) during the first year, and LIUNA could not continue to offer classes every month for so few people. Initially, LIUNA indicated it would offer field training every other month, but training was sometimes delayed further if there was not a cohort of at least five individuals for the training every two months. This caused a delay in hard skills training for

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many WONDER group members. In late 2016, LIUNA stopped training individuals participating in Track 1. Eastside Rising developed an in-house training for hard skills based on a nationally credentialed curriculum (National Center for Construction Education and Research [NCCER]), but this training did not provide union membership. Although the new approach helped provide continuous services, it made job placement challenging because individuals lacked a union card. OSs and those participating in Track 1 reported that delays in conducting hard skills training frustrated some individuals, and they left the track before completing it. Because of the delays and concerns from those who had participated in the track previously, OSs were reluctant to send new individuals to the track, which compounded the low enrollment issues.

Low enrollment in Track 1 also limited Eastside Rising's resources to fully staff the track as intended, including not having resources to employ full-time mentors or a dedicated job developer (though, one was hired in the second year), who could reach out to employers and develop a pipeline of jobs and apprenticeships for individuals who completed the classroom and field work. Ultimately, a very small number of individuals began apprenticeships, and many of the job placements for those in Track 1 were not in the construction field.

An individual's experiences in Track 1

This individual had two children, and his girlfriend was pregnant with his third. He worked about 10 hours per week in a restaurant and had worked in the restaurant industry since leaving the Army several years ago. He had earned his high school equivalency while in the Army and began school at DelTech for electrical engineering after leaving the military, but he did not finish because "life started to get in the way." He was looking for a job but did not want to "just do anything."

When he heard about WONDER, he was excited about the construction track because he could obtain a union membership. When he initially entered Track 1, he had to wait more than a month to start because the training date was pushed back several times. He said he had "a hard month" while waiting for the training because he did not have consistent income.

He eventually completed the track and found the training helpful, particularly for building his math and interviewing skills, although he suggested that offering evening training would allow people to work while they are in training. He also suggested that additional support services, such as help regaining a driver's license or obtaining clothes and personal items would have been helpful. (He lost everything he owned in a home fire.) He spoke daily with the case manager at Eastside Rising, who provided support, but he did not have much contact with his OS and at that time was not sure who it was as turnover was high.

He enrolled just after LIUNA stopped providing training, so he was not able to obtain a union card. He was disappointed about this as his goal was to obtain the union card. He did receive a commercial construction certification, which he was pleased with, but he did not think it would help him as much as the union card would have. At the time of the interview, he was looking for full-time employment, but given the seasonal and temporary nature of construction, and because he had a criminal record, he was finding it challenging. Provider staff suggested that this individual's barriers were fairly consistent with those they served; many had criminal or drug histories and lacked driver's licenses, which made finding employment challenging.

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Track 2: Culinary arts. The FBD provided culinary arts training to WONDER group members who tested at or above an 8th grade reading and math level, passed a drug test, and had no violent or sexual criminal history. The FBD offered a class in New Castle County and in Sussex County every 15 weeks. The training consisted of 12 weeks of classroom training and hands-on training in an on-site kitchen. The training included basic and advanced cooking skills (knife skills, developing sauces, cooking meats, baking, interpreting and developing recipes); kitchen roles (commercial kitchen functions, dishwashing, inventorying, pricing and budgeting, developing front-of-the-house skills); and food safety. The curriculum also included training in life skills and soft skills, which focused on anger management, industry-relevant reading and math, time management, interviewing, computer training, and ethics. Individuals attended training from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for the 12-week period. Toward the end of the training period, individuals also completed a paid two-week internship identified by the FBD based on each student's skill level and interests. Internships took place in various settings, including corporate cafeterias, restaurants, nursing homes, and child care facilities. A FBD case manager also provided day-to-day support to those in Track 2, in coordination with the OS. Each individual who completed the track received a nationally recognized ServSafe certification, job placement support from the FBD, and 25 weeks of post-graduation wraparound services that included job coaching, mentoring, and access to an alumni network, staff, and the kitchen to improve skills.

The FBD anticipated enrolling 10 to 15 individuals per class, but it, too, encountered lower enrollment than anticipated throughout the first year and a half of services. Despite low enrollment, the FBD did conduct classes because staff had been hired specifically for WONDER, but it determined that having only one to three people in a class was not effective for the students. As a result, after initially requiring that the FBD include only WONDER group members in its classes, DSS allowed the FBD to co-enroll other students from the community in the WONDER-only classes to help fill them. In late 2016, the number of referrals in Sussex County was closer to capacity, although the referrals in New Castle County never reached those levels.

Track 3: Manufacturing. Track 3 consisted of an online training provided by DelTech community college, followed by a 90-day subsidized job at a local manufacturing plant, KraftHeinz. Individuals interested in Track 3 had to pass an extensive background check and meet educational requirements (10th grade reading level and 9th grade math level). In addition, individuals could only attend DelTech if they had not been convicted of a sexual offense. The self-directed Certified Production Technician (CPT) training consisted of 160 hours of curriculum split into four individual certificate modules: (1) Safety, (2) Quality Practices and Measurement, (3) Manufacturing Processes and Production, and (4) Maintenance Awareness. Individuals received a certificate for completing each module, but they had to pass all four modules to receive the nationally recognized CPT certification. The online training could be completed at home or in a resource room at the DelTech campus. Upon receiving CPT certification, individuals in the track were placed in a full-time, entry-level production position at the KraftHeinz manufacturing plant in Dover for a 90-day trial period. Individuals received \$15.00 per hour, and DSS offset the salary by paying KraftHeinz a \$2.00-per-hour subsidy up to

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40 hours per week for each person during the 90-day period. If individuals successfully completed their trial period, KraftHeinz retained them as full-time employees.

Track 3 had significant challenges, resulting in only two WONDER group members starting their 90-day trial period at KraftHeinz by mid-2017. One of the most significant challenges resulted from miscommunication about background checks. DSS knew KraftHeinz required a background check, but DSS did not realize until after the pilot started that KraftHeinz required that the check be done by a specific company it used for all potential employees. DSS had to negotiate and develop a contract with the company to do background checks before anyone could be assigned to the track, which took several months. DSS planned to conduct the background checks before individuals enrolled in the CPT course; however, the checks were taking several weeks (sometimes months) to complete, leaving individuals in the track unable to start services. The background check company indicated that background checks of WONDER group members were taking longer than anticipated, as they were more complex because of individuals' criminal histories. The company also required confirmation of high school completion and struggled to obtain high school diplomas or verification from high schools for many individuals. After a few months, DSS revised the process with the company to expedite the reviews, but after individuals began the CPT training, WONDER staff realized that almost no one was completing it. (The training could be completed in about four to six weeks.) After investigating, WONDER staff determined that individuals were dropping out because they found the training modules to be overly complex and generally were not passing the tests for each module. In spring 2017, KraftHeinz, DelTech, and DSS jointly revised the training to align with KraftHeinz's needs, which meant that those in the track needed to complete only two of the four modules before moving to KraftHeinz. (Individuals could only receive the CPT certification if they finished all of the modules, which they could choose to do after starting at KraftHeinz.) In addition, DSS later allowed individuals to begin the CPT training while they waited for their background checks to be completed. DSS also felt that the self-directed training was not conducive to helping people finish, so it later required individuals to go to DelTech each day to focus on the training.

Track 4: Job placement services. Individuals who were ineligible for or uninterested in Tracks 1 through 3 received services through Track 4, which was the largest track. Those who were deemed work ready worked with JPSs who provided job placement support and job skills building assistance (such as help with resumes, soft skills training, mock interviews, and rides to interviews). Those who were deemed not work ready could enroll in Boost-Up courses (to improve math and reading skills) and CareerAchieve (a soft skills training), offered by Career TEAM staff who were co-located at the WONDER offices. Few individuals were interested in engaging in the Boost-Up courses, but those who did could become work ready and continue in Track 4 to find employment or enter another track. Career TEAM had intended to offer the Boost-Up and CareerAchieve courses regularly, but because so few individuals participated in the courses, they were offered as needed, generally one on one. JPSs also were responsible for reaching out to employers to develop job leads for individuals in Track 4.

JPSs also worked with individuals to make appropriate education and occupational skills training referrals, but few requested them. DOL offered training workshops for additional soft skills and job assistance services; however, during the first two years of the pilot, no one chose to visit

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DOL and participate in these workshops. Although WONDER did not pay for education and occupational skills training under Track 4, JPSs did make referrals to adult basic education to help with General Education Development (GED) support and helped a small number of people find and enroll in short-term training, such as certifications for medical assistants and commercial driving licenses.

In addition, JPSs, in coordination with OSs, followed-up with individuals who became employed for up to 90 days after starting their job. The JPS would check to see how individuals were doing and if they needed any counseling or short-term supports (such as a bus pass). The JPSs also reached out to employers to determine if the WONDER group member was meeting expectation or could use more training or counseling in certain areas.

Intensive case management. WONDER offered intensive case management, including identifying and helping individuals reduce barriers to employment. OSs were required to contact individuals at least once a week and meet face to face at least once a month. Approaches for making contact varied depending on the OS, the individual's preferences, and the individual's location. Common methods included telephone calls, text messages, and home visits.

Support services. WONDER offered child care, transportation assistance, and other supports to reduce barriers, such as books, uniforms, tools, equipment, or background check fees for employers that required one. However, as part of the case management approach, WONDER group members were always asked if they had a way to mitigate the barrier before receiving assistance (such as getting a ride from a friend to get to training, moving in with a family member if housing was unstable, or having a parent babysit a child). OSs noted that they mostly provided bus passes or gas cards, as access to other supports were much more limited. Many OSs reported that the policies and procedures for which supports they could provide were unclear, and the approval process to get a clothing voucher or payment for a background check, for example, could take weeks or months. Because the process was often not timely, some OSs stopped requesting these supports, and others indicated they had never requested one. A small number of interviewed WONDER group members also reported difficulty accessing support services, including transportation assistance. Most were unaware of the support services available through WONDER and suggested that when they had asked for help with specific needs, such as housing assistance or clothes to wear to a job or an interview, they generally were told that these supports were not available and did not receive referrals to supports in the community.

WONDER also provided direct referrals to financial literacy coaching through Stand By Me and expungement and pardon assistance through APEX. The number of referrals to these organizations was lower than anticipated, in part because of the slow start-up of the pilot, but also because of problems with the overall referral process. For example, the referral process to Stand By Me was not initially well defined, and OSs were asked not to directly refer an individual to the coach (who may have been in the same office); instead, a manager had to approve the referral before the coach could provide services. Consequently, WONDER group members faced delays in accessing services and sometimes did not follow through on meeting the coach when the referral was approved. In addition, some providers and staff suggested that

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individuals may not have understood the value of these services and therefore did not take up the services; this was supported by some OSs reporting that many individuals did not think financial counseling could help them if they did not have a job, so the OSs did not refer them to Stand By Me.

4. Management, collaboration, and communication for WONDER service provision

After the first year of the pilot, DSS reorganized the WONDER management team to better distribute work and to improve coordination with staff and providers. As part of the reorganization, DSS also began to more actively monitor provider performance. It more thoroughly reviewed the data submitted by providers and conducted unannounced visits to their locations to monitor service provision to WONDER group members.

In January 2016, the WONDER management team began conducting monthly steering committee meetings with provider leadership, as well frontline staff meetings with WONDER and provider staff. The meetings were generally well attended, but the steering committee meetings became more sporadic after the first year. Providers noted that turnover at the management and OS levels sometimes made it difficult for their staff to maintain communication with WONDER staff on behalf of those in their tracks. The WONDER management team addressed the communication challenges between WONDER staff and providers in early 2017 by holding weekly meetings with staff from Eastside Rising and the FBD to discuss service-related issues, including issues with individuals in the tracks, referrals to the tracks, and messaging for the tracks. According to the providers, increased coordination and communication with WONDER management was helpful, but some noted that the lines of communication could still be improved through closer coordination with the OSs.

DSS, WONDER management staff, and provider staff agreed that if they had established strong communication channels early on, coordinating and communicating during the pilot period would have been easier. Similarly, many service delivery challenges that WONDER and provider staff encountered were the result of changing policies and procedures after the pilot started. Some of these changes were to be expected with the development of a new program, but hiring a management team earlier in the planning phase would have provided more time and capacity to finalize and communicate policies and procedures before the beginning of enrollment. In addition, DSS and the management team recognized that many policies and procedures were communicated verbally, which increased the likelihood that they could be misinterpreted, forgotten, or not circulated to everyone. Consequently, DSS began providing both verbal and written guidance toward the end of the first year of the pilot.

The results of the collaboration between DSS and the providers were based in large part on the maturity of the provider's program, or how long the program had operated. Providers that had more established programs and processes were able to more easily make adjustments to their procedures to align with pilot requirements. For example, because the FBD had a well-established program, WONDER management staff, frontline staff, and WONDER group members agreed that the services provided in Track 2 were implemented well. OSs reported having strong working relationships with the provider, and provider staff indicated they

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successfully placed many individuals into culinary arts-related employment, including those with high barriers to employment. WONDER group members who were interviewed and were in Track 2 all agreed that after they began working with the FBD, they had a great experience and found the occupational skills training useful.

Experiences with the providers in Tracks 1 and 3 were more mixed. Eastside Rising's program was relatively new, and working with a new partner (DSS) and a population with substantial barriers to employment was more challenging than they anticipated. They were facing normal issues that arise when new programs are developing such as scaling up, refining services, and dealing with challenges of a hard-to-serve population, and these start-up issues were compounded by the need to comply with the pilot's policies and procedures. Similarly, the partnerships between KraftHeinz, DelTech, and DSS did not exist before the pilot, so there were challenges in developing and starting Track 3. Most of the challenges related to communication. DSS had little communication with KraftHeinz; calls and emails often went unanswered, partly because of staff turnover, which caused challenges in understanding requirements for employment and Track 3 services. In addition, the key staff person at DelTech was unavailable for several months due to a medical emergency, which stalled progress and communication among the college, KraftHeinz, and WONDER staff. This also limited WONDER group members' access to services, and few individuals progressed through this track. More communication and coordination between DSS and providers for Tracks 1 and 3 during the planning period could have identified and addressed some of the issues that emerged only after the pilot began enrollment.

5. WONDER group services and participation trends

Despite the pilot starting slowly and having low enrollment in the first year, enrollment swelled in the second year and the pilot exceeded its enrollment target. However, as described previously, the number of individuals assigned to Tracks 1, 2 and 3 were lower than anticipated. Most individuals enrolled in Track 4. There were several reasons for this. First, not everyone was interested in the three industry-related tracks. Second, the other tracks had a small number of slots available based on capacity of the providers (Track 1 had 400, Track 2 had 270, and Track 3 had 180), whereas Track 4 had an unlimited number of slots). Third, Track 4 did not have any eligibility criteria to enter. Finally, individuals could enter Track 4 to improve their skills and resolve barriers before moving into one of the other tracks.

In addition, WONDER staff suggested that the availability and length of Tracks 1, 2, and 3 affected enrollment. Only Track 2 was available to individuals living in all three counties, whereas Track 1 was offered only in New Castle and Track 3 was offered to those living in Kent and Sussex. Track 2 also sometimes had long wait times between classes; individuals who enrolled shortly after a class began occasionally had to wait up to three months for the next class to start. Additionally, staff suggested that although individuals may have wanted to participate in Track 2, the culinary arts training took too much time to complete (two to four months) and took too large a toll on their ability to earn needed income.

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Drop-off points and exits. The pilot had several drop-off points in its model. Staff generally struggled to keep individuals engaged in services, but key drop-off points were between enrollment and assessment, and right before or early in the training period. A number of individuals never showed up for or never completed their assessments after random assignment. This issue reportedly increased after DSS changed the recruitment model. Staff suggested that introducing two people into the intake process in 2017 (a recruiter who enrolls and an OS who assesses and works with the individual) created another potential drop-off point—during the handoff from the recruiter to the OS. Some staff suggested that after individuals built a rapport with the recruiter, they were reluctant to be “passed off” to a new person. Also, as enrollment surged due to the new recruitment model, caseloads grew, making it difficult for OSs to serve individuals and keep them engaged in services. Providers also reported that only a portion of those referred to their services showed up for the first day of classes, and among those who started occupational skills training but dropped out, they reported that most left shortly after training began—often due to personal issues, such as substance use or the need for employment, or they were removed for not complying with rules (such as missing too many classes or causing a disturbance). Individuals who exited or did not complete a track because it was not a good fit could return to WONDER at any point or select a different track. Those who completed occupational skills training generally moved on to find employment and completed WONDER.

Completion rates were relatively low during the first two years, as most exits were due to dropping out of the pilot or losing contact with staff. If WONDER group members explicitly told staff that they no longer wanted to participate, the OS would close the case. However, more often, cases were closed because individuals did not continue to participate in services and did not respond to the OS when contacted. OSs were required to contact individuals every week for four weeks before closing a case. They also had to conduct a home visit if they could not reach the individual by phone or email. Any individual who exited the pilot could come back and continue services at any time, if they chose to reengage.

Participation trends. WONDER and provider staff reported that many individuals faced challenges with transportation, housing, and criminal history. Staff indicated that WONDER group members had difficulty accessing reliable transportation. However, this issue was more challenging in the southern part of the State, which has some very rural areas that were two hours away from service providers or employers. Buses were available in the cities (Wilmington, Dover, and Milford), but they did not go to some locations where large employers were located and were not available for those working late night shifts. Generally, there were no buses outside of the cities. Staff also reported that lack of driver’s licenses was a frequent barrier.

Many individuals also experienced unstable housing or had no housing when they entered services. Housing and shelters were very limited in Delaware, so the OSs had few options for individuals. During the first two years of WONDER, no direct support services were available for housing assistance, so OSs tried to work with individuals to identify friends or family who could help or to make referrals to local shelters or churches that provided emergency housing (although space was very limited and there were many restrictions to accessing assistance). In addition, OSs and providers frequently mentioned that a number of individuals had criminal convictions, which often made finding employment or enrolling in occupational skills training a

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challenge. Certain tracks would not accept people with certain types of felonies, and employers had similar policies. OSs referred individuals to APEX, which could help them obtain expungements or pardons, but this process took months or even years.

Some staff and WONDER group members who were interviewed also mentioned a few additional barriers. Several reported that many individuals chose Track 4 because they needed employment immediately and they were not really interested in building their skills. Some also had a substance use disorder and were not able to pass a drug test for occupational skills training or employment, and some were resistant to going to treatment. Several staff noted that some individuals did not have the right attitude for success—they were not ready to commit to the work, needed more soft skills training, or were not prepared to leave SNAP. WONDER group members who were interviewed, as well as some OSs, also mentioned that the service options were limited and did not seem well targeted to the labor market or individuals' interests, which led some individuals to disengage. Respondents pointed out that the tracks were focused on more male-oriented industries and suggested that tracks focused on careers such as banking, customer service, and medical assisting would have been more attractive to some individuals and were in high demand in Delaware.

6. Staffing

DSS struggled to retain WONDER staff during the first two years. Throughout the planning period and the first 18 months of WONDER, staff were leaving almost every month, creating a consistent cycle of vacancies and hiring. In early 2017, DSS decided to hire more OSs and JPSs than it had vacancies, to ensure it would have the necessary staff as others left. By mid-2017, WONDER was close to fully staffed for the first time, but many staff had not yet been trained.

This level of turnover not only created inefficiency for management (given the time needed to interview and train new staff), it also created large caseloads for trained OSs (averaging about 50 individuals each) and JPSs (80 to 100 individuals each), disruptions for individuals in WONDER who were frequently changing OSs, and low morale among WONDER staff. Providers also found the turnover to be disruptive, as they rarely were informed when an OS left and did not know whom to contact about individuals they were serving.

DSS staff stressed the importance of thinking strategically about how frontline staff positions are structured. It noted that using temporary positions with limited benefits made it difficult to find and retain qualified staff. Frontline staff also stressed that this kind of work requires people who can be flexible and adjust to frequent changes.

7. Performance management and reporting

At the beginning of enrollment, DSS had not finalized the service receipt data system and documentation needed to monitor and evaluate the pilot. This created multiple challenges for OSs and providers. Because the worksheet-based data system and documentation were not available, staff were not fully trained on data collection procedures and were tracking data inconsistently. Once the system was completed, staff spent a significant amount of time entering data for those enrolled before the system was in place, and staff quickly identified numerous

limitations with the system. Therefore, in 2017, DSS developed and launched a new cloud-based management system, which simplified data tracking for WONDER staff and providers. The new system included numerous checks to ensure data quality and allowed managers to view data in real time. The database also allowed staff and managers to see individuals' statuses in the service flow, which helped staff monitor the pilot and ensure no one fell through the cracks. This was especially important given the high staff turnover rates, which led managers to redistribute caseloads frequently.

D. Key implementation analysis findings

Key findings from the planning and early implementation period for WONDER are summarized below.

- **Beginning enrollment and services before all systems and processes were in place had a negative effect on enrollment, services, and staffing.** Beginning enrollment before all policies and procedures, data systems, coordination with providers, and WONDER staff training were complete slowed implementation and enrollment over the first six months of the pilot. The slower enrollment also affected the number of referrals to providers and required them to modify their cohort training models often by training smaller cohorts than anticipated, which did not provide for the ideal learning environment for individuals. The evolving policies and procedures and tracking requirements also created staff dissatisfaction. In some cases, this led to staff turnover, which resulted in inconsistent service delivery.
- **Establishing clear communication among DSS, WONDER management, frontline, and provider staff early and continuously could have improved coordination and service delivery.** Many of the service delivery challenges that WONDER and provider staff encountered were the result of limited coordination between organizations and changing policies and procedures that were not always clearly communicated. In addition, early in the implementation period, management often communicated policies verbally to staff and providers, potentially causing them to be miscommunicated, forgotten, or not circulated to everyone.
- **Enrolling individuals was initially challenging, but DSS changed its recruitment model after the first year, and enrollment surged.** In response to lower-than-anticipated enrollment during the first year of the pilot, DSS quickly changed its staffing approach to recruitment and was able to exceed its enrollment target of 5,292 individuals by the end of 2017.
- **Engaging individuals after enrollment and assessment was challenging.** After random assignment, WONDER group members often did not attend appointments for intake and assessments (the first step in the process), or those who were assessed and referred to a track sometimes did not attend the first appointment or day of classes. As providers noted, a referral does not equate to participation; they indicated that seldom did all of the people referred to them for services show up. Because of this, many individuals exited the pilot without receiving a meaningful level of services. Staff also found it difficult to reengage these individuals after exit.

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- **Engaging WONDER group members in Tracks 1 through 3 did not progress as expected.** Despite the large number of individuals enrolled in the pilot overall, the numbers enrolled in Tracks 1 through 3 remained low and below expectations. Most WONDER group members were enrolled in Track 4 for several reasons including challenges with explaining the benefits and opportunities available in Tracks 1 through 3, lack of interest in the three industry-related tracks, the small number of slots available in Tracks 1 through 3 (from 180 to 400), and Track 4 not requiring any eligibility criteria.

III. PARTICIPATION ANALYSIS

Chapter II described the potential services available to the WONDER group, and this chapter presents findings on the services individuals in the WONDER group actually received. The chapter examines overall engagement in services, as well as the types of activities in which individuals engaged, the order in which they typically proceeded through activities, and how long they spent in activities and in the pilot overall. The chapter also provides details about the level and type of support services WONDER group members received, the intensity of case management, and the level and timing of exits from WONDER.

All of the findings presented in this chapter are based on administrative service use data recorded by WONDER staff and providers. For this report, we analyzed engagement in services over a 12-month period for each individual randomly assigned to the WONDER group between February 2016 (when pilot enrollment began) and December 2017. The final report will examine the services received by all individuals enrolled into WONDER (through August 2018) and will include analysis of the entire period in which individuals could have been engaged in services (through December 2018).

After presenting key findings, we provide information about overall engagement and activities for WONDER group members in Section A of this chapter. In Section B, we discuss participation in occupational skills training, education, and work-based learning. We provide information about the support services individuals received in Section C, discuss the case management services received in Section D, and describe exits from WONDER and the timing of those exits in Section E. Additional data on the characteristics of those who completed or did not complete activities and on engagement and service receipt by subgroup are included in Appendix D.

Key findings:

- After random assignment, virtually all individuals engaged in some type of WONDER service such as meeting with a case manager, starting an assessment, or receiving a support service. However, only 40 percent of WONDER group members participated in an employment and training-related activity within one of the tracks, such as job placement assistance, occupational skills training, or work-based learning.
- With the exception of job placement assistance (21 percent), less than 15 percent of WONDER group members completed each type of activity or track. Few individuals (4 percent) earned a credential or certification from occupational skills training.
- Nearly 60 percent of individuals received a support service, and the majority of those obtained transportation assistance. A small percentage of WONDER group members (less than 8 percent) received other supports, such as assistance with the costs of drug testing fees, child care, or training supplies.

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- Almost all WONDER group members were in contact with a case manager during the pilot period, and each had a high number of contacts with case managers (34 contacts, on average). Most contacts were conducted by telephone.
- Most WONDER group members exited the pilot within their first year, and generally within the first six months of enrollment; this was often due to discontinuing services.

A. Engagement in WONDER

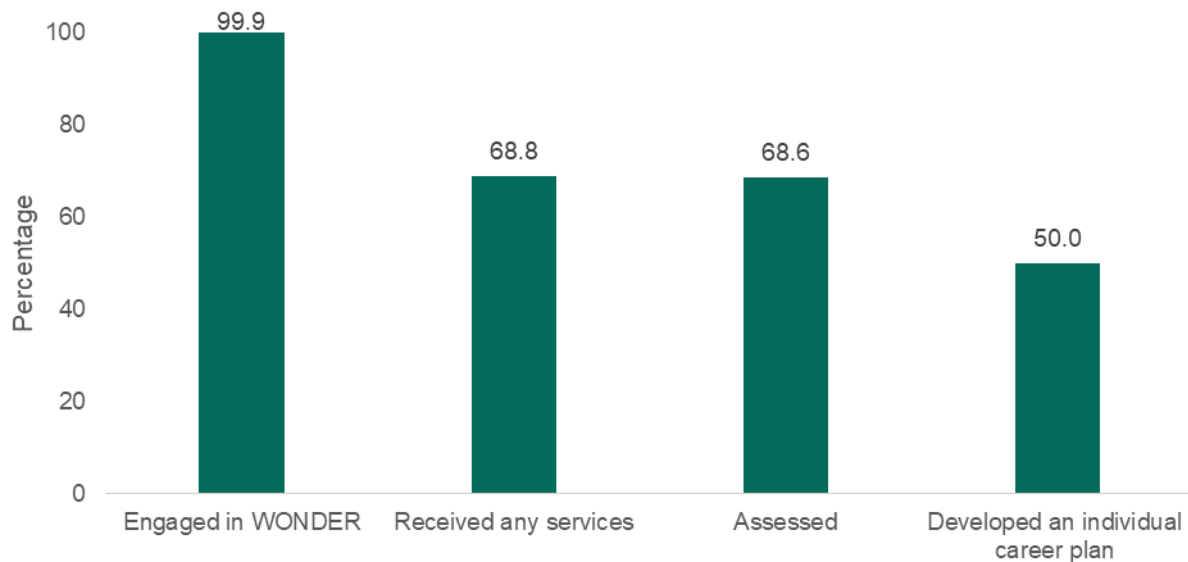
After random assignment, WONDER group members either immediately began an intensive intake process with the OS who enrolled them or set up an appointment to do so at a later date. The intake process included multiple steps and generally took place over multiple visits during the first month after enrollment. The OS began by completing a comprehensive assessment of each individual's core life functioning to identify and provide urgently needed supports or community referrals. Following assessment, WONDER group members were referred to Career TEAM staff to conduct a job skills assessment. The results of the job skills assessment determined whether the individual was work ready and guided the development of an individual career plan (ICP). Work ready individuals selected one of four service tracks described in Chapter II. Individuals who were not work ready were placed in Track 4 and offered skills building and soft skills assistance to build basic skills.

This section describes engagement among the WONDER group in the pilot overall, as well as participation in the specific activities offered.

1. Overall engagement in WONDER

Almost all individuals in the WONDER group initially engaged in WONDER services, meaning they received a service after random assignment, including a support service, case management, an assessment, an ICP, or any of the activities offered by WONDER (Exhibit III.1). This high rate of engagement was driven by most individuals starting their intake interview with the OS right after random assignment. However, many of these individuals did not come back after their first meeting with the OS. When excluding case management meetings and support services from the engagement estimate, only 69 percent of WONDER group members received any services, meaning they were assessed, completed their ICP, or engaged in a track. A similar percentage of individuals completed at least one of the assessments; however, only 50 percent of the WONDER group subsequently developed an ICP after completing assessments. To understand whether there were any differences in the types of individuals who did and did not engage in services or complete assessments or an ICP, we compared the characteristics of these two groups (age, gender, race and ethnicity, education, employment status, and presence of children in the household) at the time of random assignment. Findings are presented in Appendix Table D.7.

Exhibit III.1. Percentage of individuals in the WONDER group who engaged in WONDER and intake services

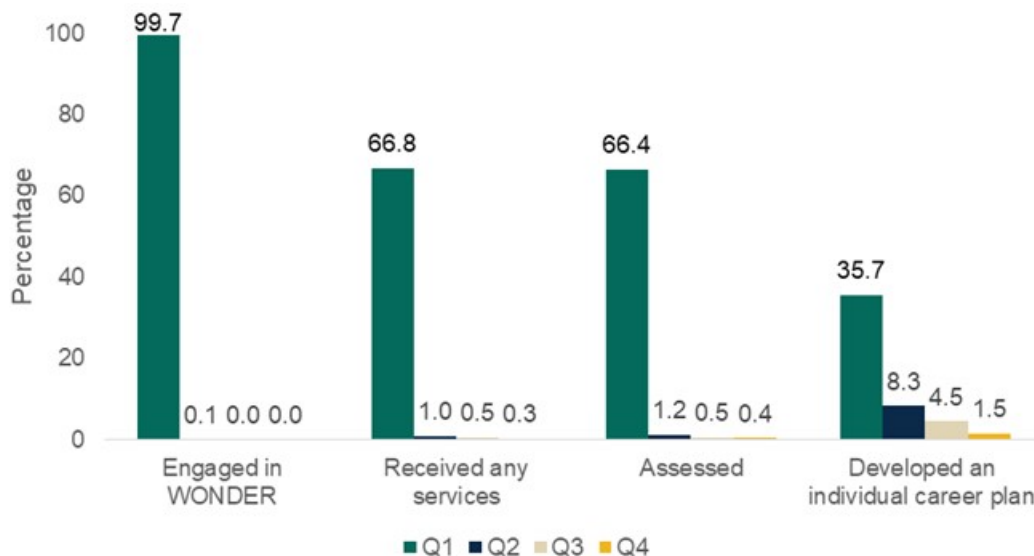


Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: “Engaged in WONDER” measures any drop off between random assignment and first contact with WONDER staff related to services, including meetings with case managers, receipt of support services, receipt of skills or needs assessments, or participation in an education, training, or employment activity. “Received any services” measures engagement in activities, including assessments, ICP, and education, training, or employment activities; 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 then did not return for more meaningful activities and services. Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

Length and timing of engagement. Most WONDER group members engaged in services within the first quarter after random assignment (Exhibit III.2). This timing is expected, as WONDER group members met with an OS either immediately or very soon after random assignment and the intake process was typically conducted within a month. Similarly, of WONDER group members who developed ICPs, most did so within the first quarter after random assignment, although almost 15 percent developed their ICP between 4 and 12 months after random assignment. The average length of time WONDER group members spent in WONDER was about 5 months (138 days; Appendix Table D.2).

Exhibit III.2. Percentage of WONDER group members who started engagement by quarter after random assignment



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

Note: “Engaged in WONDER” measures any drop off between random assignment and first contact with WONDER staff related to services, including meetings with case managers, receipt of support services, receipt of skills or needs assessments, or participation in an education, training, or employment activity. “Received any services” measures engagement in activities, including assessments, ICP, and education, training, or employment activities; 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 then did not return for more meaningful activities and services. Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

2. Engagement in activities

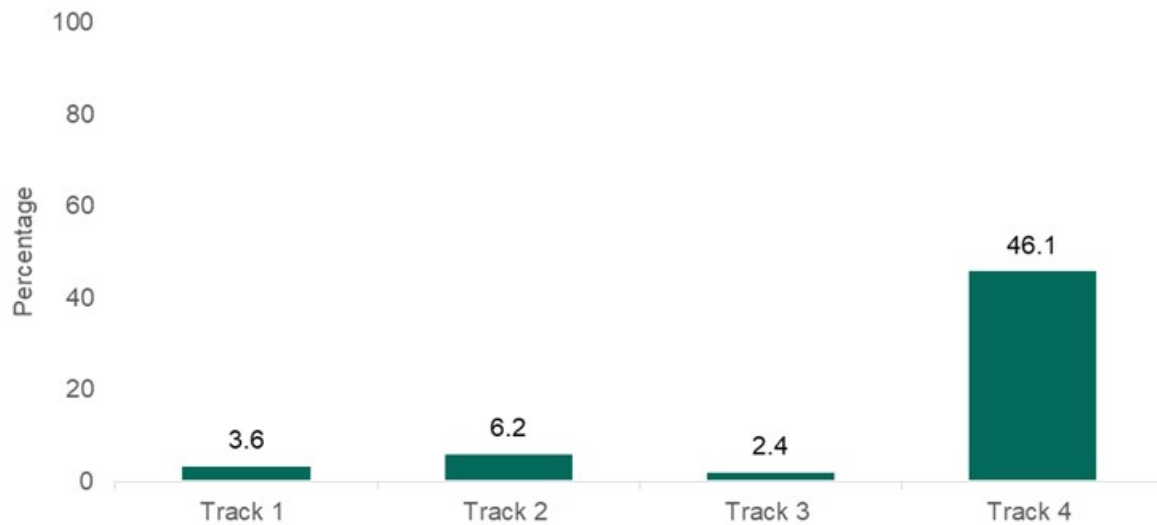
Despite high rates of overall engagement, only 40 percent of WONDER group members ultimately started an employment or training-related activity after they completed intake and assessments (this does not include receiving a support service or case management; Exhibit III.3). Because WONDER services were received through tracks, this section describes both overall participation in a track and participation in the types of activities that were offered across the tracks.⁸ The activities and tracks should be viewed as separate sets of measures, as the same individuals are represented in each set. The majority of WONDER group members who started a track started Track 4 (46 percent). Much smaller percentages started Track 1 (4 percent), Track 2 (6 percent), or Track 3 (2 percent). Although DSS and providers had anticipated higher rates of participation in Tracks 1 through 3, the model always intended for most WONDER group members to enroll in Track 4. Among the activities available through the tracks, most individuals participated in job placement assistance (31 percent), occupational skills training (11 percent),

⁸ For example, all tracks offered some type of occupational skills training, so anyone participating in a training under one of the four tracks would be included in the occupational skills training measure. Tracks 2 and 3 offered work-based learning (internships and subsidized employment), so individuals from those two tracks who participated in work-based learning would also be represented in the work-based learning activity.

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skills building assistance (10 percent), and financial literacy counseling (9 percent; Exhibit III.4). WONDER group members participated in other activities, such as basic education, soft skills training, and work-based learning, at much lower rates.

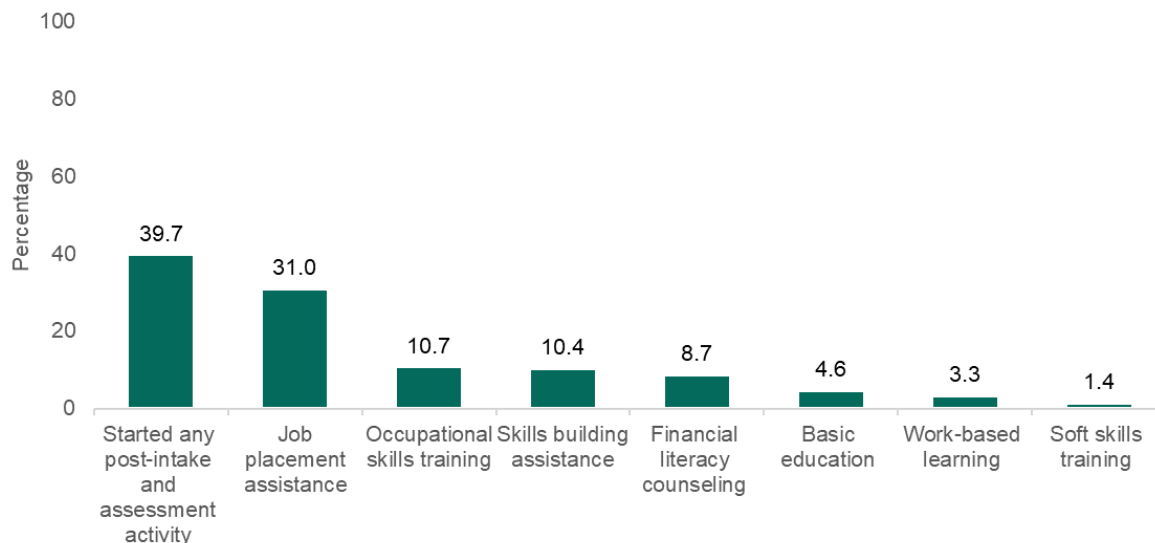
Exhibit III.3. Percentage of individuals in the WONDER group who started tracks



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

Exhibit III.4. Percentage of individuals in the WONDER group who started activities



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

Note: Job placement assistance includes data for only Track 4. Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

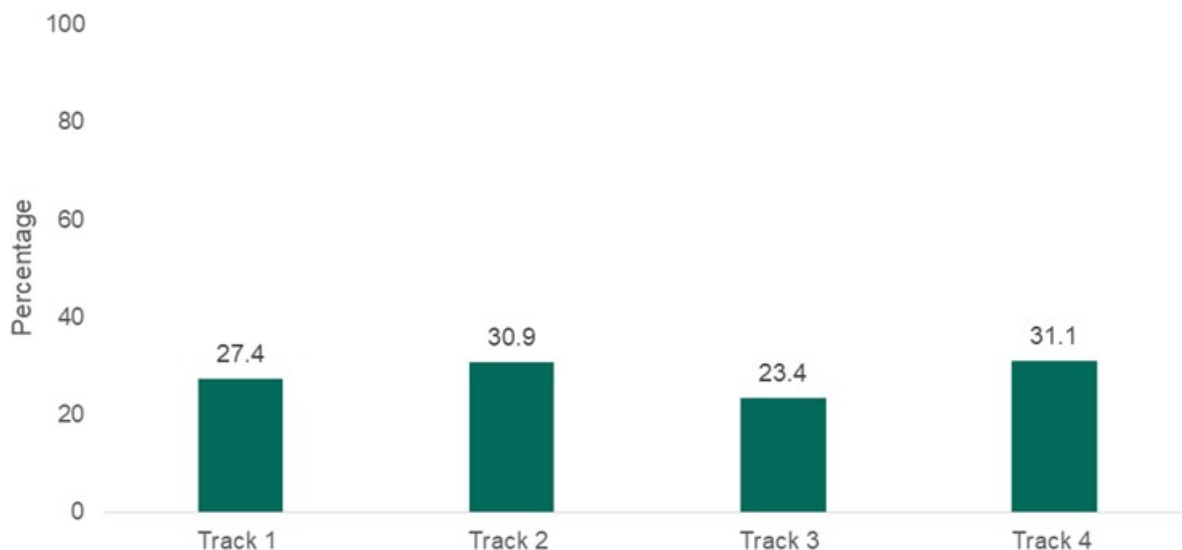
Completion rates for most activities were 5 percent or less, although 21 percent of the WONDER group completed job placement assistance (Appendix Table D.1). However, among those who

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started a track, the completion rates for the various tracks ranged from 23 to 31 percent, and among those who started an activity, completion rates for individual activities ranged from 35 to 89 percent. There are several individual activities that are part of each track, so it is not surprising that WONDER group members completed a given activity at a higher rate than they completed the entire track. Among the tracks, Track 2 and Track 4 had the highest completion rates at 31 percent; Track 1 was close behind with a 27 percent completion rate, and Track 3 had a 23 percent completion rate (Exhibit III.5). Across the activities, almost 90 percent of those who started a work-based learning opportunity completed it, and between 57 and 68 percent of those who started job placement assistance, basic education, or soft skills training completed the activity (Exhibit III.6). These rates provide a snapshot of completion at the end of the 12-month follow-up period; however, some individuals who started these activities may still have been participating and had not yet completed it by the end of the 12 months.

To understand whether there were differences in the types of individuals who completed and did not complete activities, we compare the characteristics of these two groups in Appendix Table D.8.

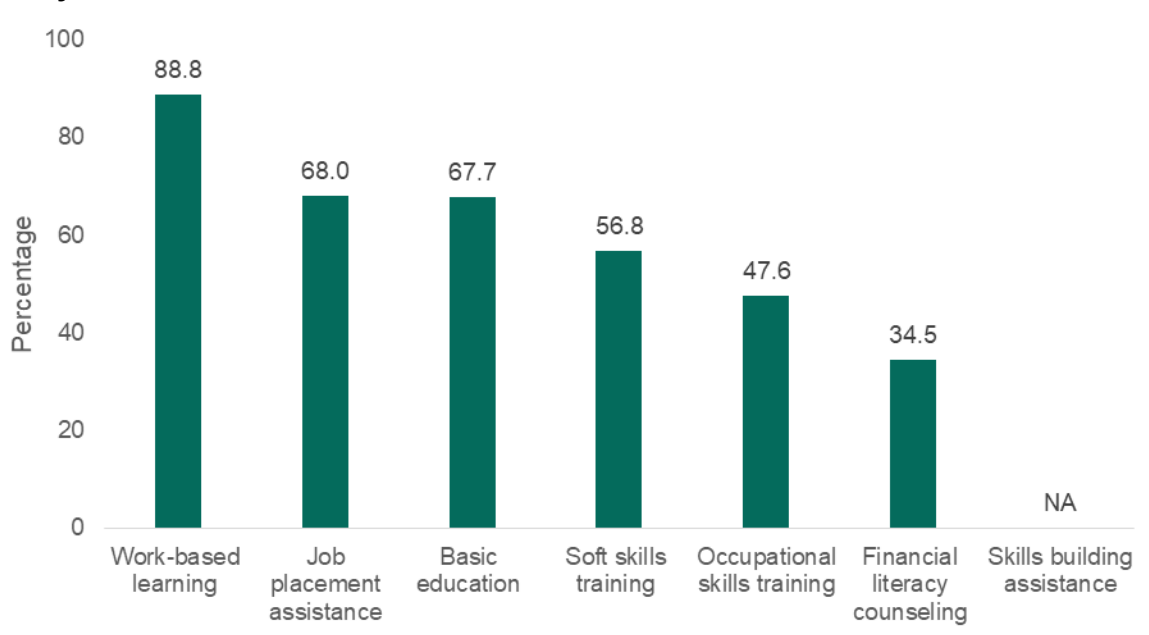
Exhibit III.5. Completion rates for WONDER tracks, among individuals who started a track



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,331 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

Exhibit III.6. Completion rates for WONDER activities, among individuals who started an activity



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

Note: NA indicates the grantee or provider were not able to provide the data. Job placement assistance includes data for only Track 4. Estimates are based on data from 1,061 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

Length and timing of engagement in activities. On average, individuals in the WONDER group who started a track spent about four to five months (106–160 days) participating in it (Appendix Table D.2). Individuals who started an activity generally spent a shorter amount of time in specific activities—usually one to two months, but those who received financial literacy counseling spent about six months in the activity, on average.

Individuals in the WONDER group started most activities in the first quarter after random assignment. As shown in Exhibit III.7, most individuals started the tracks in the first quarter, but about 6 percent of individuals started Track 4 more than three months after random assignment. Unlike other activities that primarily were started in the first quarter, a higher percentage of WONDER group members started work-based learning in the second quarter (2.2 percent) as opposed to the first quarter (0.3 percent), which reflects the placement of internships in Track 2 (at the end of the training period) and potential delays in Track 3 to obtain occupational skills training (Exhibit III.8).

Exhibit III.7. Percentage of WONDER group members starting tracks, by quarter

Started track (%)	Quarter in which individuals started to participate				Cumulative
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Track 1	2.7	0.5	0.2	0.1	3.6
Track 2	5.2	0.8	0.1	0.1	6.2
Track 3	1.9	0.3	0.1	0.0	2.4
Track 4	40.2	4.3	1.0	0.7	46.1
Sample size					2,672

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

Note: Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment.

Exhibit III.8. Percentage of WONDER group members starting activities, by quarter

Started activity (%)	Quarter in which individuals started to participate				Cumulative
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Job placement assistance ^a	22.8	6.1	1.6	0.4	30.9
Occupational skills training	7.5	1.9	0.9	0.4	10.7
Skills building assistance (Track 4 only)	6.9	2.2	0.8	0.5	10.4
Financial literacy counseling	7.1	1.0	0.4	0.1	8.7
Basic education	3.4	0.8	0.3	0.2	4.6
Work-based learning	0.3	2.2	0.6	0.2	3.3
Soft skills training	0.8	0.4	0.0	0.1	1.4
Sample size					2,672

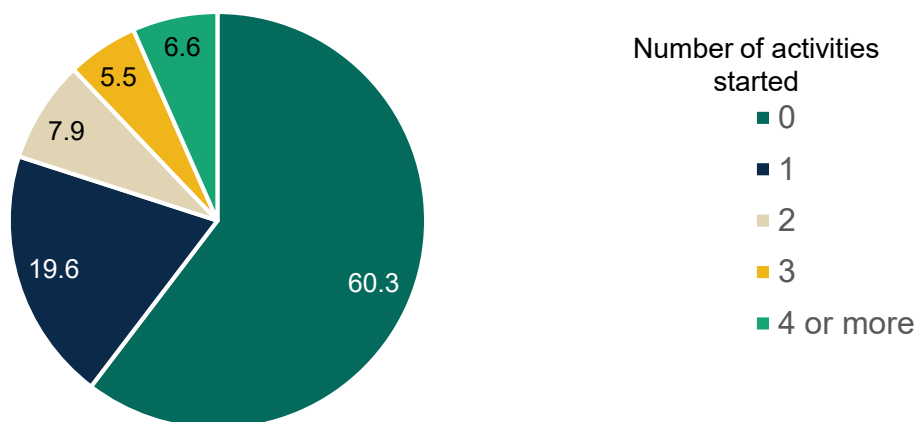
Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment.

^aIncludes data for only Track 4 in the WONDER group.

Number and order of activities. Identifying the number of activities individuals started and the sequence of those activities is important for understanding if the service flow discussed in Chapter II worked as intended. Exhibit III.9 shows that most of the individuals assigned to WONDER either did not start any employment and training-related activities (60 percent) or engaged in just one activity (20 percent). The majority of those individuals who started just one activity participated in job placement assistance (77 percent), approximately 9 percent started financial counseling, 8 percent started occupational skills training, and less than 5 percent started other activities, such as basic education, skills building assistance, or work-based learning (Appendix Table D.2).

Exhibit III.9. Number of activities started by WONDER group members (percentage)



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

The majority of WONDER group members who started an activity started the job placement assistance first (56 percent) (Appendix Table D.2).⁹ Similar percentages of WONDER group members first started financial literacy counseling (13 percent), skills building assistance (11 percent), or occupational skills training (15 percent), while fewer WONDER group members first started soft skills training (1 percent) or basic education (4 percent).

Among individuals who started more than one activity, similar percentages engaged in two, three, or four or more activities (Appendix Table D.2). Among those who started more than one activity, the most common combination was job placement assistance first, followed by skills building assistance, and ending with additional job placement assistance (12 percent). Individuals who completed this sequence of activities spent, on average, 65 days in initial job placement assistance before moving to skills building assistance, where they spent approximately 23 days before returning to job placement assistance. This suggests that WONDER group members invested time into searching for jobs before deciding to bolster their skills and return to the job search with the additional training.

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

This section explores education, occupational skills training, and work-based learning activities in more detail, and describes the types of education and training obtained by individuals in WONDER, as well as any degrees or certifications earned through WONDER. The section also describes the types of work-based learning individuals started and completed, and the average value of subsidies employers received.

⁹ This activity was offered to individuals participating in Track 4.

1. Education and occupational skills training

Because few WONDER group members engaged in education and occupational skills training programs, only a small number of individuals ultimately earned a degree or certification. About 5 percent of WONDER group members started basic education, and 3 percent of individuals completed it (Appendix Table D.5). Of those in basic education one individual obtained their GED during this period.

One in 10 WONDER group members started some type of occupational skills training (Exhibit III.10). Most individuals started one of the five most common types of training, including training in culinary arts (Track 2) (5 percent), construction training (Track 1) (3 percent), and certified production technician/operator (Track 3) and training associated with Track 4 both at 2 percent (Exhibit III.10)¹⁰. Among those who started occupational skills training, approximately half (48 percent) completed it (Exhibit III.11). Among those who started each type of training, the completion rate was highest for those starting a construction training (80 percent), followed by culinary arts training (53 percent), and certified production technician/operator training (43 percent). Approximately a third of WONDER group members who started trainings under Track 4 completed them.

Exhibit III.10. Percentage of WONDER group members who started any occupational skills training and the five most commonly started types of training



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

¹⁰ WONDER staff did not document the types of occupational skills training that individuals in Track 4 started or completed, but they monitored whether an individual started or completed a training program. Certifications were documented, and most of these trainings resulted in a CDL or CNA.

Exhibit III.11. Among those who started occupational skills training, percentage of WONDER group members who completed any training and who completed the five most commonly completed types of training started

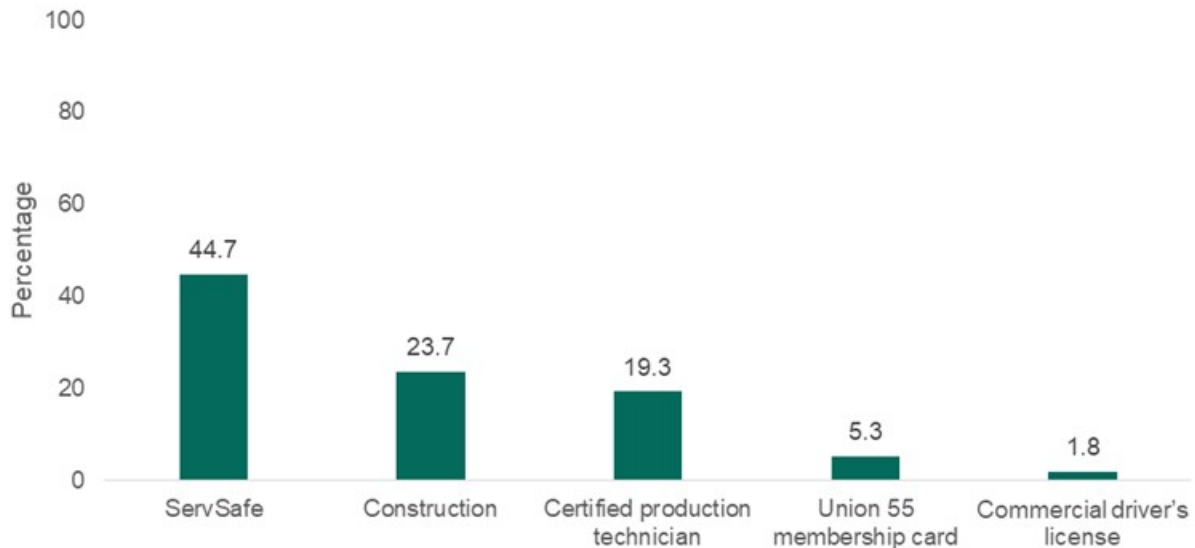


Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation administrative service use data.

Note: Estimates are based on data from 286 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

Most of the individuals who completed an occupational skills training program received a certification or credential (4 percent of all WONDER group members). Certificates were most commonly earned for food safety (ServSafe) (as part of culinary arts in Track 2), construction (NCCER), and manufacturing (certified production technician; Exhibit III.12). Most certifications and credentials were earned in the second quarter after random assignment (2 percent; Appendix Table D.9).

Exhibit III.12. Percentage of individuals who earned the five most common credentials, among those who received a credential



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 115 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

2. Work-based learning

Relatively few individuals in WONDER engaged in work-based learning, which consisted of culinary arts internships and subsidized employment at KraftHeinz. As shown in Exhibit III.13, three percent of all individuals in WONDER started work-based learning. Among those who started, three-quarters obtained a culinary internship.

Three percent of all individuals in WONDER completed work-based learning. However, among the small group of individuals who started work-based learning, the vast majority (89 percent) completed it. KraftHeinz received an average of \$901 in subsidies per person for those in subsidized employment. Individuals in the culinary program who had internships received an average of \$416 for the approximately two-week internship.

Exhibit III.13. Percentage of individuals in WONDER group who engaged in work-based learning, and average amount of subsidy

Type of service	WONDER group
Started work-based learning (%)	3.3
Type of work-based learning, among those who started (%)	
Internship (culinary)	75.3
Subsidized employment (KraftHeinz)	24.7
Completed work-based learning (%)	3.0
Completed work-based learning, among those who started (%)	88.8
Average amount of subsidy per person, by type of work-based learning (\$)	
Internship (culinary)	416
Subsidized employment (KraftHeinz)	901
Average number of hours per week spent in work-based learning, by type of work-based learning	
Internship (culinary)	NA
Subsidized employment (KraftHeinz)	40.5
Average number of weeks spent in work-based learning, by type of work-based learning	
Internship (culinary)	2.0 ^a
Subsidized employment (KraftHeinz)	11.3
Sample size	2,672

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

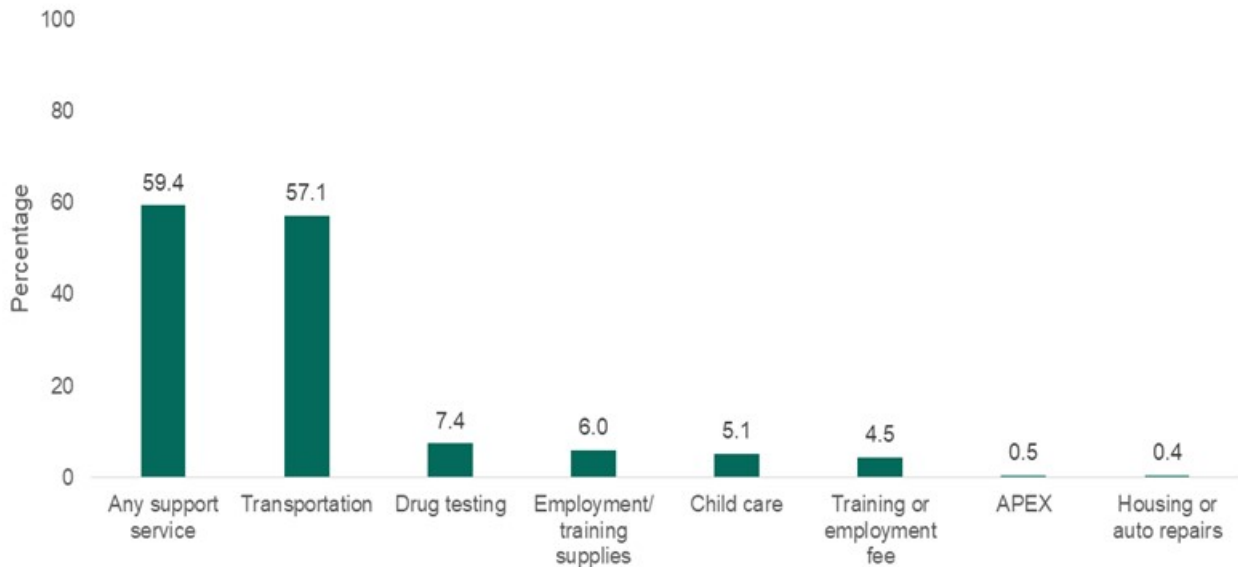
Note: NA indicates the grantee or provider were not able to provide the data. Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment.

^aThe data provided did not include the average time in an internship for the culinary arts track, but generally the internships were offered for two weeks. In the data, no one was paid for longer internships, but about 25 percent of the individuals were paid less than the \$450 offered for a two-week internship.

C. Support services

More than half (59 percent) of WONDER group members received at least one support service (Exhibit III.14). Transportation was the most common service provided; 57 percent of WONDER group members received it. Few individuals (less than 8 percent) received other types of supports such as assistance with the costs of drug testing fees, child care, or training or work supplies including uniforms, boots, and tools.

Exhibit III.14. Percentage of individuals in the WONDER group who received any support service and received each type of available support service



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

APEX = Advancement through Pardons and Expungements.

Among those who received a support service, almost all (96 percent) received transportation assistance (Exhibit III.15). Less than 13 percent received the other supports. On average, the total value of support services provided to individuals who received one or more support services during their time in WONDER was \$344. The average support payment for transportation among those who received a transportation support was \$63, similarly the average payment for training or employment fees was \$61. The average support was higher for those receiving training or work supplies (\$165) and those receiving a child care support (\$2,997).

Exhibit III.15. Among individuals in the WONDER group who received a support service, percentage received by type and amount of support

Type of service	WONDER group
Received support service, by type (%)	
Transportation	96.2
Drug testing	12.5
Employment/training supplies (uniform/boots/clothes/tools)	10.2
Child care	8.6
Training or employment fee	7.6
APEX (expungement and court filing fees)	0.9
Housing or auto repairs	0.6
Total amounts of support services paid per person (\$)	
Mean	344
25th percentile	12
50th percentile (median)	33
75th percentile	130
Average amounts of support services paid per person, by type (\$)	
Transportation	63
Drug testing	33
Employment/training supplies (uniform/boots/clothes/tools)	165
Child care	2,997
Training or employment fee	61
APEX	43
Housing or auto repairs	15
Sample Size	1,587

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

Note: Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment.

APEX = Advancement through Pardons and Expungements.

D. Case management

The WONDER model was designed to provide intensive case management by assigning an OS to all individuals enrolled in the WONDER group. OSs were required to contact individuals at least once a week and meet face to face at least once a month. In addition to the support they received from OSs, those in Tracks 1 and 2 received case management from track-specific case managers, and those in Track 4 received employment support from JPSs. The data show that nearly all WONDER group members were contacted by their case managers and that they were contacted an average of 34 times (Exhibit III.16). Contacts were highest during the first quarter after random assignment and decreased steadily in subsequent quarters (Appendix Table D.9). On average, across individuals with contacts, WONDER group members spent almost five hours

III. Participation analysis

(279 minutes) in contact with a case manager. Most contacts were made over the phone or electronically, rather than in person.

Exhibit III.16. Description of contacts with outreach and job placement specialists, among WONDER group members

Type of service	WONDER group
Any contact (%)	99.9
Average number of contacts per person	34.0
Average number of contacts per person, among those with contact	34.0
Average number of contacts per person per month, among those with contact	7.5
Average total time in case management contact among those with contact (minutes) ^a	278.6
Among contacts, type of contact (%)	
In person	17.6
Telephone	43.8
Electronic (email, text, social media)	25.6
Mailed documents	13.0
Sample Size	2,672

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

Note: Data in this table represents all contacts that case managers documented between themselves and individuals in WONDER. In some cases, this could include contact that was not direct communication (such as sending an email with appointment information or mailing documents to an individual). We excluded contacts which consisted of leaving a phone message or sending mass mailings, where applicable. Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment.

^aThe number of minutes represents the total amount of time each individual was in contact with their case manager during all contacts, averaged across all individuals who had a contact.

E. Exits

The vast majority of individuals randomly assigned to WONDER (95 percent) exited during their first 12 months (Exhibit III.17). Almost three-quarters (74 percent) exited during the first six months after random assignment (Exhibit III.18). Among those who exited WONDER, most discontinued services (62 percent), meaning they did not complete services before leaving. Almost a third of the individuals who exited WONDER did so because they completed services.

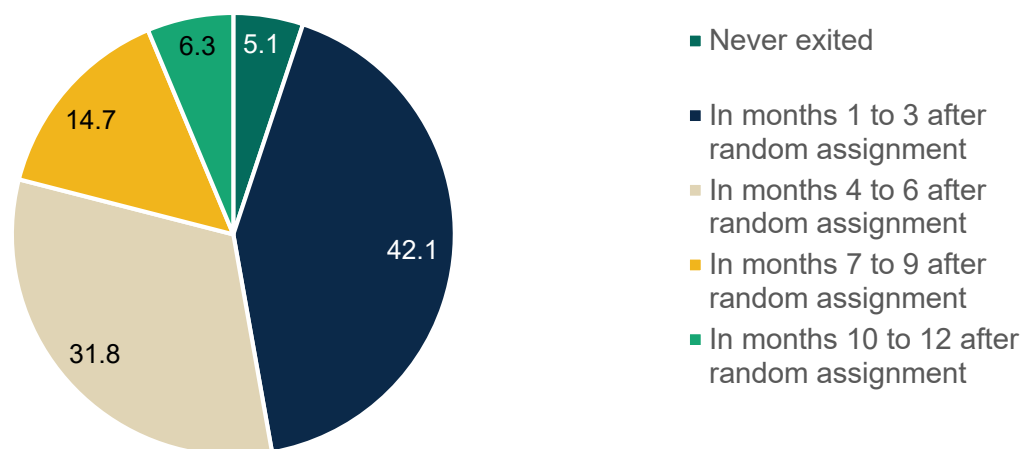
Exhibit III.17. Percentage of WONDER group members who exited, by reason

	WONDER group
Exited WONDER for any reason (%)	94.9
Reason for WONDER exit, among those who exited (%)	
Discontinued services	62.4
Completed the program	30.3
Other	4.3
Moved out of State	1.8
Lost SNAP or started receiving TANF	1.1
Death	0.2
Sample Size	2,672

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

Note: Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment.

Exhibit III.18. Percentage of WONDER group members who exited over time



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and cover the 12 months following random assignment.

IV. DIFFERENCES IN SERVICE RECEIPT FOR THE WONDER AND CONTROL GROUPS

This chapter describes how engagement and service use differed between WONDER and control group members, considering participation in WONDER, existing SNAP E&T, or other services and programs available in communities. These differences provide important context for interpreting the impacts on employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance (discussed in Chapter V). Without a meaningful difference in services between the WONDER and control groups, impacts on labor market and public assistance outcomes are unlikely to result.

The data discussed in this chapter come primarily from 12-month follow-up survey data collected from WONDER and control group members. These data describe the employment-related services and education and training activities in which respondents participated during the previous year, including type and duration.¹¹ The survey data capture any type of service received, regardless of whether it was provided through WONDER, existing SNAP E&T, or through providers in the community such as WIOA, community colleges, nonprofits, or other organizations.¹²

The analysis compared the receipt of services over the 12 months following random assignment across research groups. We estimated differences in service receipt by comparing regression-adjusted averages of measures across research groups. To improve the precision of the estimates, regressions controlled for the characteristics of individuals as measured at the time of random assignment. The control variables included demographic characteristics such as age, educational attainment, and number of children in the household, and economic characteristics such as employment status and earnings.¹³ We used t-tests to determine whether service receipt differences across research groups were statistically significant. Statistical significance is a measure of how confident we are that an estimate represents a true difference in service receipt

¹¹ The activities measured in the survey included (1) job search assistance or job search training and (2) education and occupational skills training. Job search assistance or job search training activities included those that helped individuals with resume writing, interviewing, and networking. Education and occupational skills training activities included education in the form of adult basic education or GED courses, ESL classes, or college courses; occupational skills training programs that prepared individuals for specific occupations; general job skills training programs that help individuals learn widely-applicable job skills and ready them for work; and work-based learning activities, such as paid or unpaid internships and apprenticeships.

¹² Supplementary tables based on the administrative service use data tracked by DSS are provided in Appendix E. Because the administrative service use data capture services provided through WONDER and through the existing SNAP E&T program, but do not measure receipt of services provided in the community, these data are less useful than the survey data in assessing the contrast in the service receipt between research groups. In some cases, the administrative service use data were missing or incomplete for control group members, leading to inconsistencies between the WONDER and control groups in the type and quality of data obtained. In contrast, the survey data asked all respondents the same set of questions, fostering consistency in measurement of service receipt across research groups.

¹³ The full set of characteristics and additional information on the selection of these characteristics can be found in the technical supplement.

IV. Differences in service receipt for the WONDER and control groups

between research groups and did not arise purely by chance.¹⁴ We also conducted F-tests to assess research group differences in service receipt across subgroups.

In presenting findings, we begin with a description of differences between the research groups in the receipt of overall services, including job search training, general job skills training,¹⁵ occupational skills training, education, and work-based learning activities (Section A). We then examine differences between research groups in the rates of completion of activities and the typical amount of time spent in them (Section B) and in the receipt of case management and support services (Section C). Additional discussion of variations in these differences across a select number of subgroups is presented in Appendix E.

Key findings:

- Relative to the control group, the WONDER group was more likely to participate in job search training activities and in education and training during the 12-month follow-up period. The rate of participation for the WONDER group was 13 percentage points higher than the control group. This difference was observed despite that approximately one-third of control group members participated in job search assistance and training activities and programs.
- The WONDER group also had higher rates of participation than the control group in almost all types of activities. The magnitudes of the differences varied across activities but were largest for general job skills training activities (9 percentage point difference) and occupational skills training (8 percentage point difference). WONDER group members also were more likely than control group members to complete an activity or program (7 percentage points higher) and to earn an occupational certificate or license (4 percentage points higher).
- WONDER group members were more likely than control group members to receive case management services. They also had almost twice as many contacts with a case manager compared to control group members. WONDER group members were also more likely to receive support services. The largest difference was observed for transportation assistance.

A. Differences between research groups in the receipt of services overall

As described in Chapter II, WONDER group members chose to participate in one of four training tracks, each of which offered a unique set of services. Track 1 focused on pre-apprenticeship training in construction, Track 2 focused on training and work experience in culinary arts, Track 3 focused on obtaining an industry-recognized certificate and subsidized employment in manufacturing, and Track 4 focused on remedial education, soft skills, and obtaining employment. In addition to these employment and training services, WONDER group members in all tracks received support from DSS case managers who contacted them on a

¹⁴ When we calculated differences in the distributions and averages for research groups, observations were weighted to ensure that the differences were representative of all individuals enrolled in the pilot in Delaware before the end of 2017. The weights were constructed to reflect the random assignment process, the survey administration design, and survey nonresponse in survey data.

¹⁵ Such training includes job readiness training.

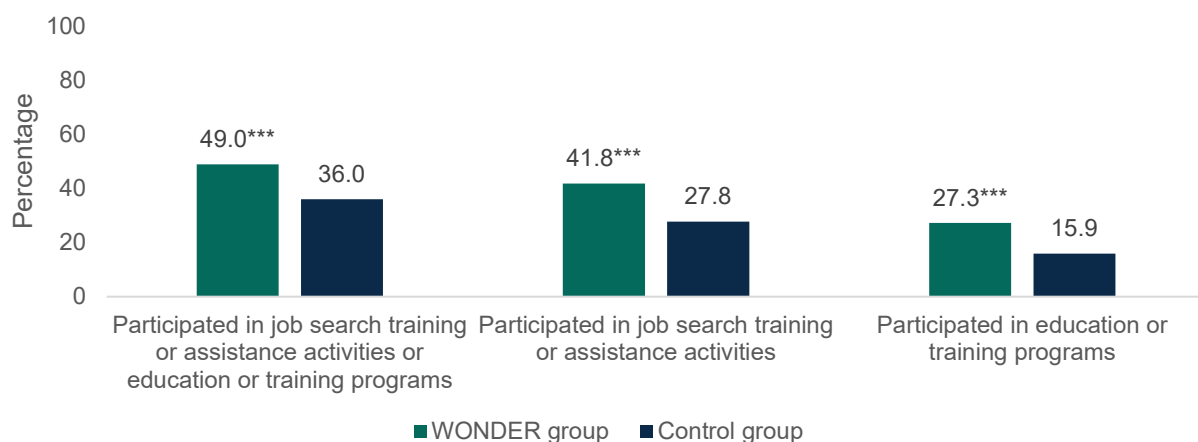
IV. Differences in service receipt for the WONDER and control groups

weekly basis to remediate barriers and help them navigate services. All WONDER group members also had access to an array of support services such as work clothes and transportation assistance, and referrals to agencies that help expunge criminal records or offer financial literacy.

DHS operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program that primarily serves ABAWDs seeking to meet their work requirements (see Chapter I). Many of the services available to control group members through the existing SNAP E&T program were more limited than those available to WONDER group members. In addition, WONDER group members received intensive case management, while control group members received basic, employment-focused case management. Control group members also had access to fewer support services than WONDER group members, and they generally were offered lower amounts of those supports. Control group members could be referred to APEX or Stand By Me for additional support, but they would be responsible for related expenses. Both the WONDER group and the control group received job search assistance and soft skills training, job placement assistance, and work experience.

Service receipt rates were generally higher for individuals in WONDER, relative to the control group. WONDER group members were more likely than control group members to complete a career assessment test (34 versus 18 percent; Appendix Table E.2). Individuals in the WONDER group also participated in job search training or education activities at higher rates than individuals in the control group. Overall, 49 percent of the WONDER group participated in some type of job search training or education activity compared to 36 percent of the control group (Exhibit IV.1). Relative to individuals in the control group, individuals in the WONDER group were more likely to participate in job search training or assistance activities (14 percentage point difference) and education or training activities (11 percentage point difference).

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



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

Note: Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 1,042 WONDERgroup members and 1,049 control group members who were surveyed.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

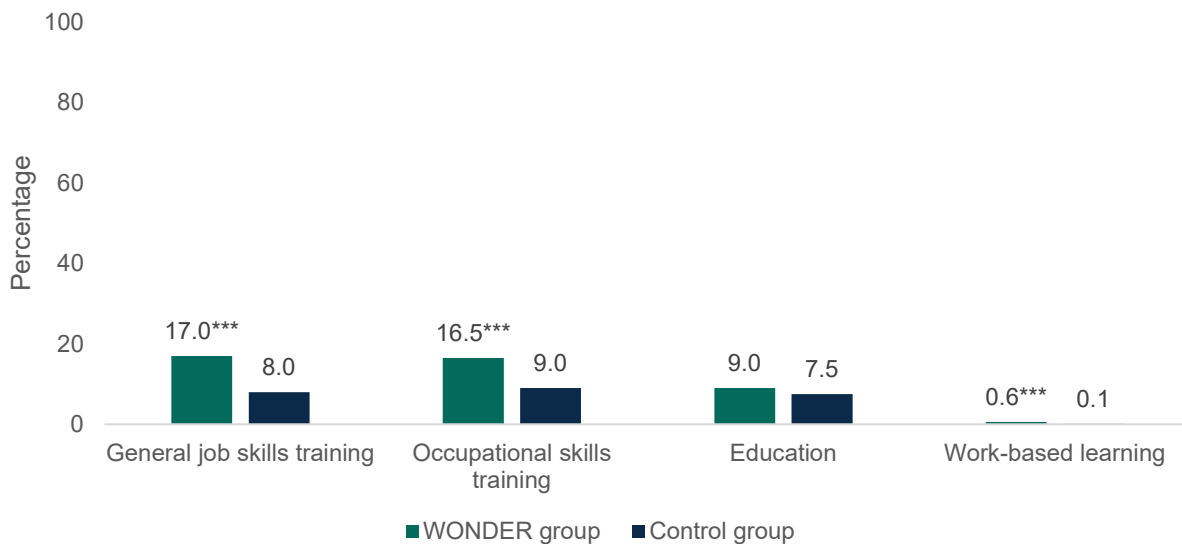
**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

IV. Differences in service receipt for the WONDER and control groups

Individuals in the WONDER group were more likely than those in the control group to start specific components of education or training activities or programs (Exhibit IV.2). The largest differences between WONDER and control groups were for general job skills training (9 percentage point difference) and occupational skills training (8 percentage point difference). In addition, there was a small but statistically significant difference between participation rates of WONDER and control group members in work-based learning programs (0.5 percentage point difference).

Exhibit IV.2. Participation in specific WONDER, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered services



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

Note: Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 1,042 WONDER group members and 1,049 control group members who were surveyed.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

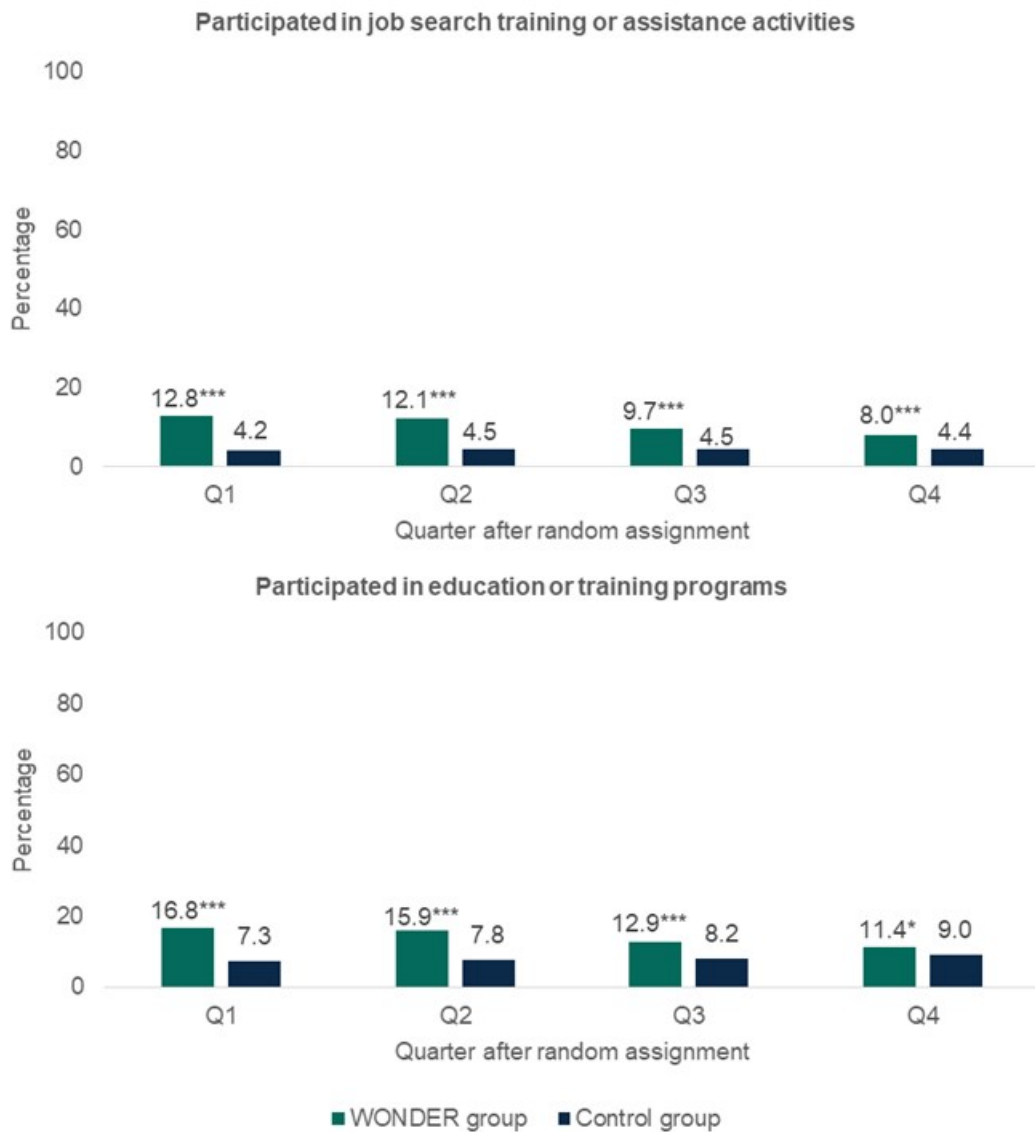
**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

The differences in service receipt between the WONDER and control groups were largest in the first quarter after random assignment and decreased in size over time (Exhibit IV.3). For example, the difference between the WONDER and control groups in the percentage of individuals who participated in education or training programs was 10 percentage points in Quarter 1 and 2 percentage points in Quarter 4.

IV. Differences in service receipt for the WONDER and control groups

Exhibit IV.3. Time trends in participation in WONDER, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered services



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

Note: Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 1,042 WONDER group members and 1,049 control group members who were surveyed.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

B. Differences between research groups in program and activity completion

In addition to the WONDER group having a higher likelihood of starting education and training, relative to the control group, the WONDER group also had higher completion rates for education and training programs or activities.

IV. Differences in service receipt for the WONDER and control groups

Individuals in the WONDER group spent, on average, half a month longer in activities and programs than individuals in the control group (1.4 versus 0.8 months) (Exhibit IV.4). WONDER group members also spent more hours per week in activities and programs than control group members (5 versus 2 hours). A similar percentage of WONDER and control group members (8 percent) reported that they were still in an education or training program at the time the 12-month follow-up survey was conducted.

Exhibit IV.4. Length of stay, completion, and credential receipt in WONDER, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered services

	WONDER Group	Control Group	Difference
Mean length of time spent in all activities and programs (months)	1.4	0.8	0.6***
Mean number of hours per week spent in program	5.0	2.3	2.7***
Percentage of individuals that are still in the program as of the survey interview date (%)			
All activities	7.7	7.5	0.3
Programs with general job skills training	4.6	3.2	1.4
Programs with occupational skills training	5.0	3.8	1.3
Programs with education	3.1	3.9	-0.8
Programs with work-based learning	0.1	0.1	0.1
Percentage that completed the program (%)			
All activities	14.5	7.7	6.8***
Programs with general job skills training	10.0	4.2	5.7***
Programs with occupational skills training	8.3	4.6	3.7***
Programs with education	3.6	2.7	0.8
Programs with work-based learning	0.3	0.0	0.3**
Type of certificate or degree/diploma received (%)			
Participation/attendance	1.1	0.8	0.3
Adult basic education	0.0	0.0	0.0
High school diploma / GED	0.7	0.6	0.1
Associate's degree	0.0	0.2	-0.2*
Bachelor's degree	0.5	0.0	0.4**
English proficiency certification or TOEFL	0.0	0.0	0.0
Occupational certificate or license	7.2	3.3	3.9***
Other	1.1	0.8	0.3
Sample size	1,042	1,049	

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

Note: Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment.

***Significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

IV. Differences in service receipt for the WONDER and control groups

Individuals in the WONDER group were almost twice as likely as those in the control group to complete an activity—15 versus 8 percent (Exhibit IV.4). Individuals in the WONDER group also were more likely than those in the control group to complete a number of specific activities, such as general job skills training (6 percentage point difference) and occupational skills training (4 percentage point difference), and to receive an occupational certificate or license (4 percentage point difference).

For some activities, the differences in completion rates between research groups reflect the fact that individuals in the WONDER group were more likely to start these services than those in the control group. Among those who started any activity, completion rates for individuals in the WONDER group were not statistically different from those in the control group (Appendix Table E.6).¹⁶ There were also no statistical differences between the WONDER group and the control group in completion rates among individuals who started programs with occupational skills training or education. In contrast, among those who started programs with general job skills training, individuals in the WONDER group were 12 percentage points more likely than individuals in the control group to complete the training program. These individuals were also more likely to receive a diploma, degree, certification, or license after completing programs with general job skills training and work-based learning.

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

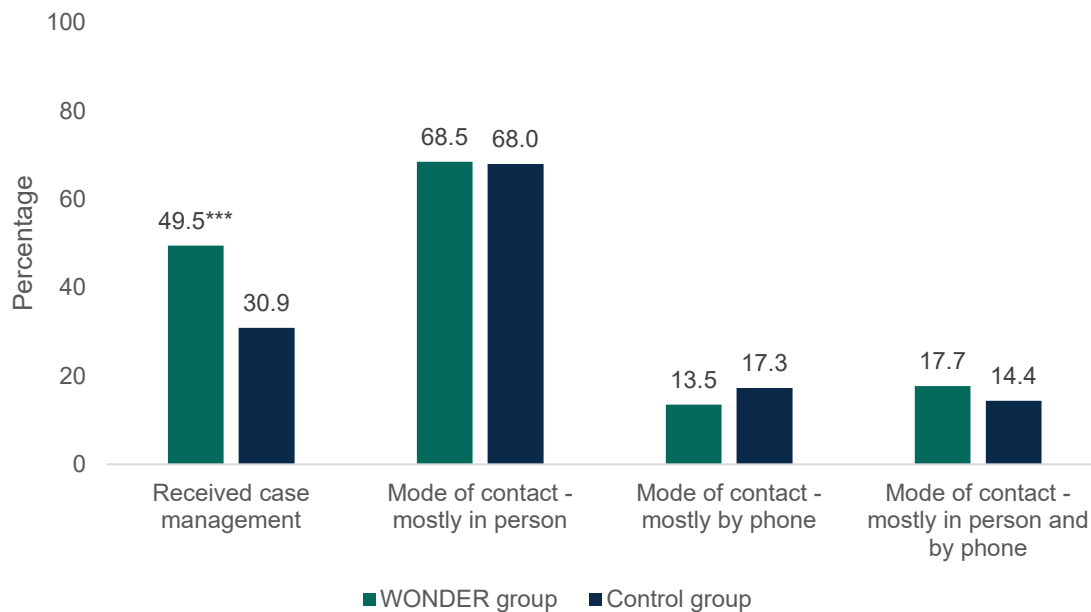
WONDER group members were more likely than those in the control group to receive case management services and support services.

Exhibit IV.5 presents findings on differences between research groups in the average number of contacts with case managers and the receipt of support services through any type of program. The WONDER group was more likely than the control group to receive career counseling or one-on-one assistance from an employment professional or case manager (50 versus 31 percent). On average, the WONDER group also had almost twice as many contacts with an employment professional or case manager (10 versus 6 contacts; Appendix Table E.8). There were no statistical differences between research groups in mode of contact—either by phone or in person.

¹⁶ Appendix Table E.6 shows non-experimental comparisons because the characteristics of participants and activity completers likely differ across the research groups.

IV. Differences in service receipt for the WONDER and control groups

Exhibit IV.5. Receipt of case management through WONDER existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered programs



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

Note: Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 1,042 WONDER group members and 1,049 control group members who were surveyed.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

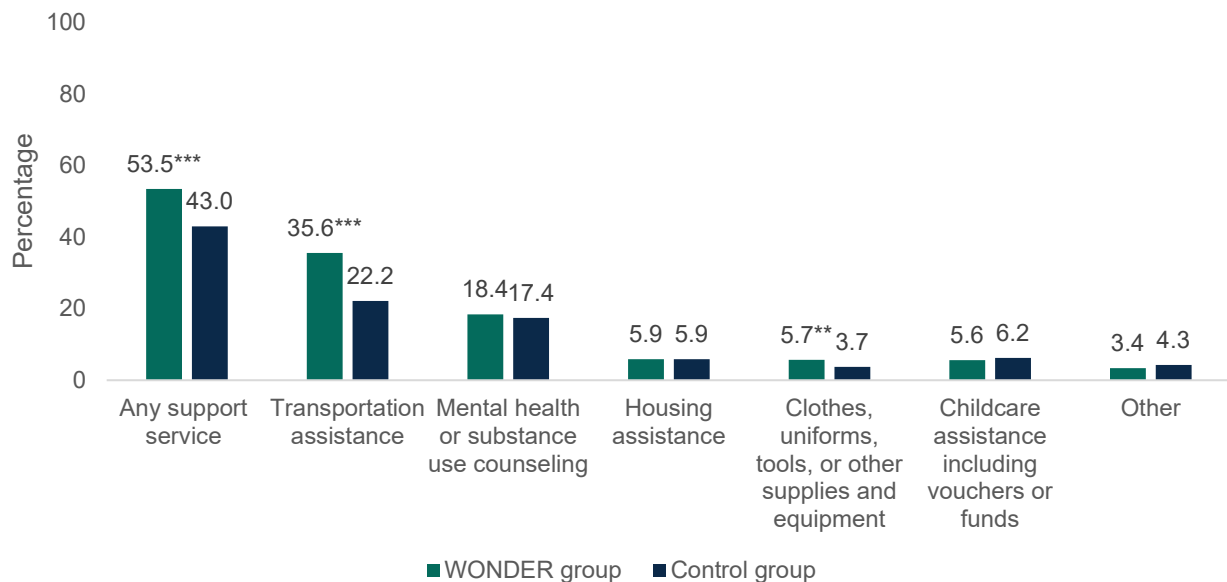
**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Individuals in the WONDER group were also more likely than individuals in the control group to receive support services. About 54 percent of individuals in the WONDER group received a support service compared to 43 percent in the control group (Exhibit IV.6). The largest difference was observed for receipt of transportation assistance; about 36 percent of individuals in the WONDER group received transportation assistance compared to 22 percent of individuals in the control group.

IV. Differences in service receipt for the WONDER and control groups

Exhibit IV.6. Receipt of support services through WONDER, existing SNAP E&T, or community-offered programs



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

Note: Transportation assistance includes supports such as gas cards or bus passes. Estimates cover the 12 months following random assignment. Estimates are based on data from 1,042 WONDER group members and 1,049 control group members who were surveyed. "Other" included assistance with payment of utilities such as electricity, phone, heat, or gas; food assistance; and assistance with medical care.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

V. IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT, EARNINGS, RECEIPT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, AND WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

This chapter focuses on whether WONDER was able to increase the likelihood that SNAP participants would obtain jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency through increasing their income levels and reducing their need for public assistance benefits compared to what would have happened in the absence of WONDER. Specifically, this chapter examines whether the generally higher rates of engagement and service receipt among individuals in WONDER, as described in Chapter IV, translated into impacts on employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance, as well as job characteristics, food security, health, well-being, and housing.

To estimate how WONDER affected individuals' outcomes, we compared the average outcomes of the WONDER group and the control group over the 12 months following random assignment. Because, on average, WONDER and control group members' baseline characteristics were the same at the time of random assignment (see 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 sources of data to measure outcomes: (1) State UI wage records, (2) SNAP administrative data, and (3) 12-month follow-up survey data. UI wage records provided information on quarterly earnings, which were also used to construct measures of quarterly employment status. The SNAP administrative data obtained from DSS were used to measure whether individuals participated in SNAP or TANF, the amount of SNAP and TANF benefits they received, and whether they were covered by Medicaid. The survey data were used to complement the UI wage records and provide more detail on individuals' employment and earnings. The survey asked respondents whether they were employed in the time between random assignment and the survey interview date and, if so, the number of jobs they held over that period and their employment status at the time of the interview. For each job reported, the survey captured the job start date, end date (if applicable), and characteristics of the job, such as hours worked per week, weekly earnings, job type, fringe benefits, and occupation. The survey was also the sole source of information on other outcomes such as self-assessed levels of food insecurity, health, well-being, and housing status.

Outcomes related to earnings and employment were analyzed using both UI wage records and survey data. Findings for these parallel analyses may differ because of differences in data coverage or quality, or differences in analysis samples and time periods covered by the follow-up period. For example, UI data are not subject to the recall error that is a potential problem in surveys. However, UI data do not cover all types of jobs, exclude jobs in certain industries, contain less detailed information on jobs, and are subject to other reporting errors.¹⁷ The omissions are nontrivial, and workers in sectors with no or partial coverage in UI data comprise

¹⁷ In particular, UI data 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).

about 10 percent of U.S. employment (Kornfeld and Bloom 1999; Hotz and Scholz 2002). Additionally, the UI data do not cover workers who are casually employed, such as day laborers or part-time helpers, and exclude most 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. The characteristics and experiences of individuals who responded to the survey may differ from those who did not respond.¹⁸

Further, the time periods for which data are available differ for the UI and survey data, which means that analysis samples for 12 months of follow-up are different for the two data sources. Analyzed survey data include individuals who were randomly assigned from February 2016 through December 2017, whereas analyzed UI wage records for WONDER include individuals who were randomly assigned from February 2016 through March 2017. The shorter time frame for the UI data reflects a typical lag in the availability of these administrative data that is associated with employer reporting schedules and the need for State agencies to process data after the data have been reported. As a result, the specific months included in the 12-month follow-up period covered by the two data sets also differ, with the survey-based results including individuals who were randomly assigned later in the pilot’s enrollment period compared with the UI-based results.¹⁹ Differences in UI-based and survey-based results also could reflect changes that occurred over time in the implementation of WONDER activities. Finally, we note that even though there are differences between the data sources, each should provide unbiased estimates of the impacts of WONDER on the outcomes they measure because the research groups were balanced along individual characteristics at the time of random assignment.

We estimated impacts on outcomes by comparing regression-adjusted averages for each research group. To improve the precision of the estimates, regressions controlled for the characteristics of individuals as measured at the time of random assignment. The control variables included demographic characteristics such as age, educational attainment, and number of children, and economic characteristics such as employment status and earnings at baseline.²⁰ We used t-tests to determine whether there were significant differences between the contrasted research groups that were unlikely to have occurred purely by chance. We also conducted F-tests to assess differences in impacts across subgroups.

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

¹⁸ An analysis of differences between survey responders and nonresponders, as well as differences between research groups, in terms of individual characteristics is presented in the technical supplement.

¹⁹ For example, an individual who was randomly assigned in October 2017 and responded to the survey supplied information about their activities over the period of November 2017 through October 2018. Because UI data were not available after September 2018, this individual was included in the survey-based analysis, but not the UI-based analysis.

²⁰ The full set of characteristics and additional information on the selection of these characteristics can be found in the technical supplement.

nonresponse bias. (We describe weight construction in greater detail in the technical supplement.)

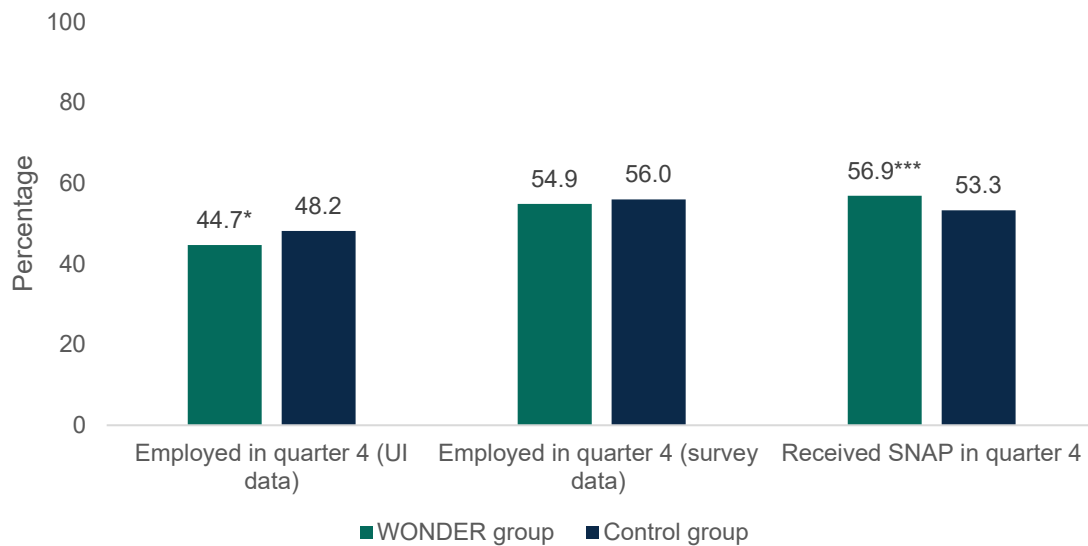
We estimated the impact of WONDER on many outcomes and across several subgroups, performing statistical tests for each. However, the likelihood that some estimates are found to be statistically significant simply by chance increases with the number of estimates tested, leading to false discovery of impacts not actually caused by WONDER. To help guard against this problem, known as multiple comparisons bias, we selected two primary (confirmatory) outcomes before analyzing the data. The primary outcomes were employment (based on both the UI and survey data) and SNAP participation—both in the fourth quarter after random assignment, the most recent observed period. The primary outcomes were defined over the final quarter of available data because many WONDER group members were expected to be engaged in education and training in the early quarters, which could reduce their opportunity to be employed during those early quarters. Although WONDER’s effect on earnings was an important outcome in the evaluation, we excluded it from the set of primary outcomes due to the lower statistical power of identifying an impact on earnings relative to employment. This reflects the large standard deviation of earnings for individuals enrolled in the pilot (and for the SNAP E&T population more broadly), which reduces the precision of the impact estimates. The estimated impacts on earnings and other outcomes and for subgroups are used 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 program effects. This information can be valuable for continuous program improvement and for identifying potential hypotheses for more rigorous examination in the future.

Following a summary of key findings for this chapter, we present the impacts of WONDER on labor market outcomes (Section A) and on receipt of public assistance (Section B). We then present impacts on other outcomes, including food security, health, well-being, and housing status (Section C). Additional discussion of variations in the impacts on labor market outcomes, public assistance receipt, and food security across subgroups is presented in Appendix F. The technical supplement to this report includes detailed descriptions of the data and methodology used to estimate impacts of WONDER.

Key findings:

- In Quarter 4, WONDER did not lead to an increase in employment, based on both the UI and survey data, and led to a statistically greater likelihood of participating in SNAP (Exhibit V.1). In Quarter 4, about 45 percent of WONDER group members were employed, based on the UI data compared to about 48 percent of control group members—a statistically significant difference ($p\text{-value} = 0.09$). Based on the survey data, Quarter 4 employment rates were not statistically different between the two groups (55 and 56 percent, respectively). WONDER group members were more likely than control group members to participate in SNAP in Quarter 4 (57 versus 53 percent).

Exhibit V.1. Employment and SNAP participation rates in Quarter 4



Source: SNAP employment and training evaluation UI wage records, weighted data, SNAP employment and training evaluation 12-month survey, weighted data, SNAP employment and training evaluation SNAP administrative data, weighted data.

Note: Estimates are based on UI data from 1,057 WONDER group members and 1,066 control group members; on survey data from 1,042 WONDER group members and 1,049 control group members; and on SNAP administrative data from 2,672 WONDER group members and 2,672 control group members. Complete UI data were not available for the initial analysis conducted in the interim report. This difference was smaller (46.5 percent of the WONDER group versus 48.3 percent of the control group) and no longer statistically significant after UI data through December 2018 had been received and analyzed.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

- WONDER did not lead to an increase in earnings in Quarter 4, when using UI records or survey data. Based on UI records, earnings in Quarter 1 were \$242 lower for the WONDER group than for the control group, respectively. Quarter 1 earnings based on survey data were \$374 lower for the WONDER group. Earnings based on either data source increased in both groups during the first 12 months after random assignment, and by Quarters 3 and 4, none of the differences in earnings between research groups were statistically significant. Findings from past studies of workforce programs have shown that it can take more than a year before economic impacts begin to emerge (Card et al. 2018). Thus, a longer-term follow-up period will be analyzed in the final evaluation report to fully assess the effects of WONDER on labor market outcomes.
- As in Quarter 4, WONDER led to a statistically greater likelihood of participating in SNAP in all other quarters. Consistent with these findings, average SNAP benefit amounts were significantly higher for WONDER group members than for control group members in all four quarters. There were no impacts on TANF participation, TANF benefit amounts, or Medicaid coverage.

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

- Although there were no statistically significant differences between the WONDER group and the control group in rates of food insecurity or self-reported health and well-being, the WONDER group was slightly more likely than the control group to be homeless.

A. Impacts of WONDER on labor market outcomes

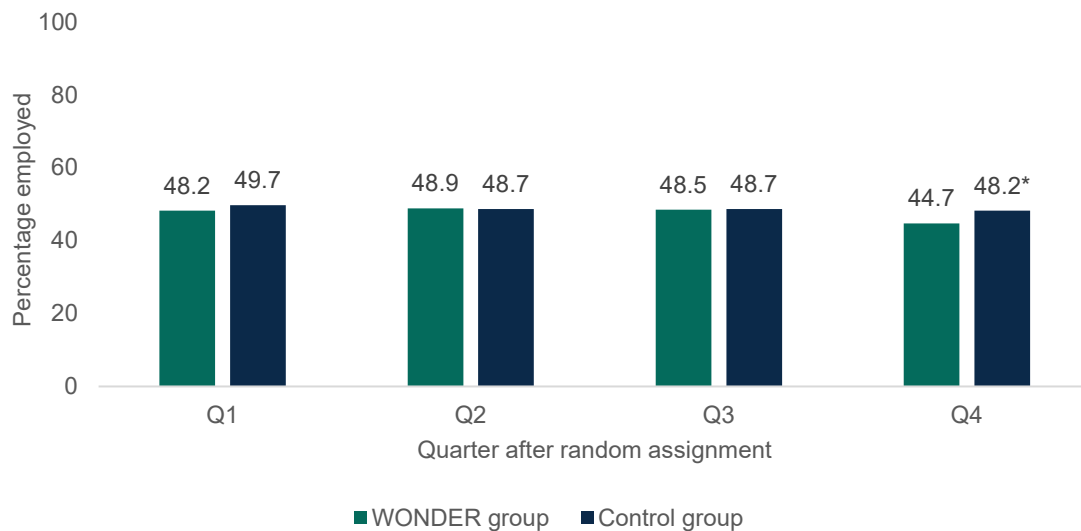
This section presents impacts on key labor market outcomes for the WONDER group relative to the control group. Outcomes from both the UI wage records and survey are measured by quarter after random assignment and over the full first year after random assignment, starting with the quarter after the one in which random assignment occurred. Some outcomes based on the survey data are measured at the time of the survey interview, approximately 12 months after random assignment.²¹

1. Impacts on employment, earnings, and hours worked

Employment. WONDER did not lead to an increase in employment in Quarter 4 when using either the UI wage records or the survey data (Exhibits V.2 and V.3). Based on the UI data, about 45 percent of WONDER group members were employed in Quarter 4 compared to 48 percent of the control group. Based on the survey data, Quarter 4 employment rates were roughly similar between the two research groups—55 and 56 percent, respectively. The Quarter 4 difference was statistically significant according to the UI data (p -value = 0.09), but it was not statistically significant when using the survey data. Employment rates based on UI data were nearly identical between research groups and similar across quarters until Quarter 4, when the WONDER group's employment rate fell by roughly 4 percent. Employment rates based on survey data increased between Quarters 1 and 4 but remained similar for both research groups. The corresponding differences were not statistically significant for any quarter.

²¹ For survey-based outcomes, the quarter after random assignment is defined as the first three months after the month of random assignment. We note that the months in this quarter sometimes differ from the calendar quarter, which is used to define the first quarter after random assignment for outcomes based on UI wage records.

Exhibit V.2. Quarterly employment rates based on UI wage records



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and 2,672 control group members.

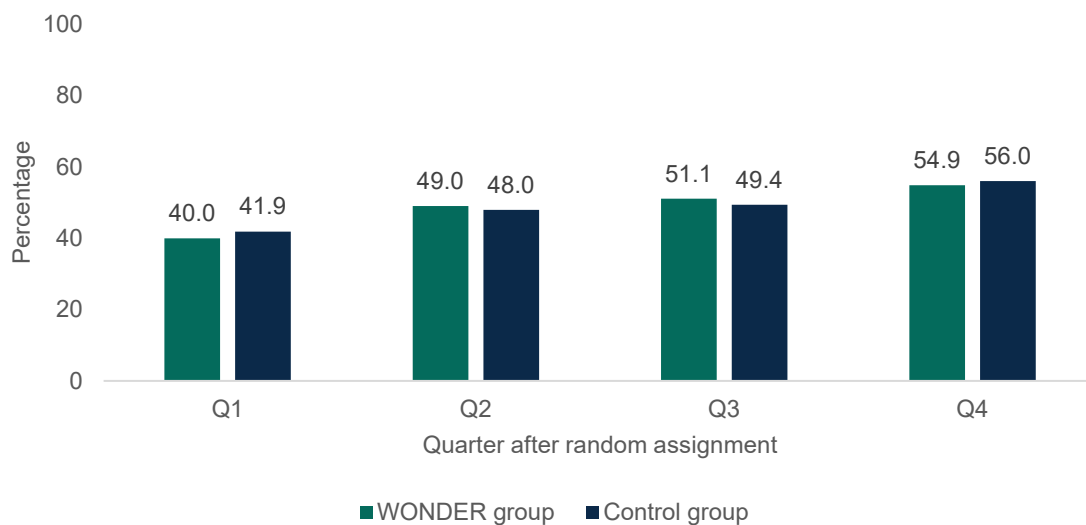
Complete UI data were not available for the initial analysis conducted in the interim report. This difference was smaller (46.5 percent of the WONDER group versus 48.3 percent of the control group) and no longer statistically significant after UI data through December 2018 had been received and analyzed.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Exhibit V.3. Quarterly employment rates based on survey data



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,042 WONDER group members and 1,049 control group members.

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

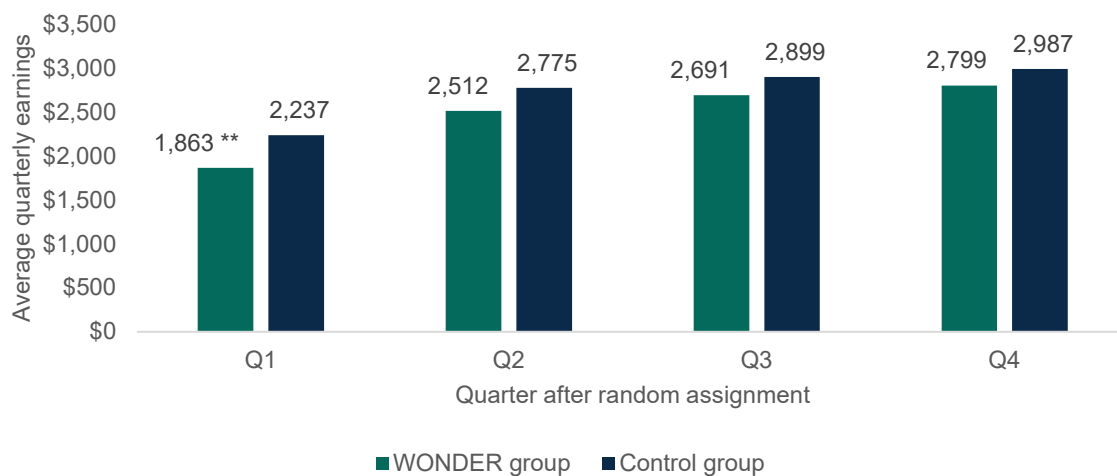
***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Earnings. There were small, negative differences in average earnings between the WONDER group and the control group in Quarter 1. In Quarter 1, on average, the WONDER group earned \$374 less than the control group, based on the survey data (Exhibit V.4) and \$242 less than the control group, based on the UI data (Exhibit V.5). Earnings based on either data source increased for both research groups during the first three quarters after random assignment, with a larger increase among WONDER group members. By Quarter 4, none of the differences in earnings between research groups were statistically significant. Average earnings as reported in the survey were somewhat smaller than the average earnings reported in the UI wage records, although the pattern of findings is similar across the two data sources.

Exhibit V.4. Quarterly earnings based on survey data



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

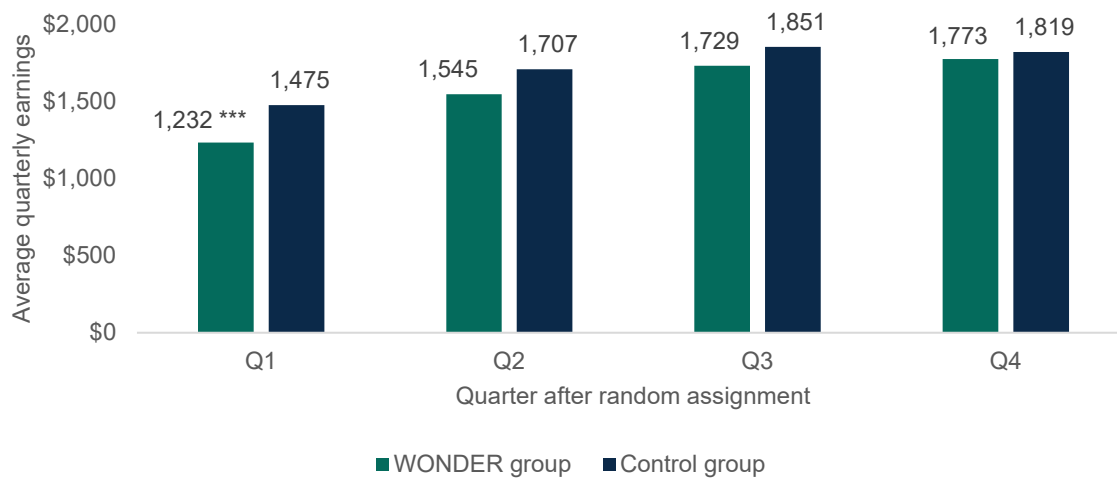
Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,042 WONDER group members and 1,049 control group members who were surveyed.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Exhibit V.5. Quarterly earnings based on UI wage records



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and 2,672 control group members.

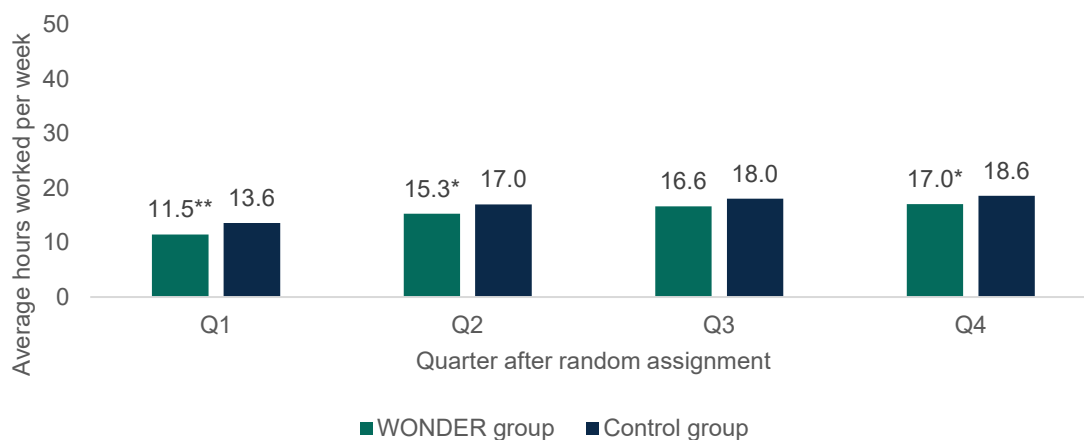
***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Hours worked. In Quarters 1, 2, and 4, WONDER group members worked about 2 hours less per week than control group members (Exhibit V.6). Hours worked per week increased for both research groups between Quarters 1 and 4, with a statistical difference between groups in Quarter 4 (p-value = 0.10).

Exhibit V.6. Average hours worked per week based on survey data



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,042 WONDER group members and 1,049 control group members who were surveyed.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

2. Impacts on characteristics of current jobs

Exhibit V.7 presents characteristics of jobs at the time of the 12-month survey interview.²² This information was collected in the 12-month follow-up survey and was available only for individuals who were employed at the time of the interview (46 percent of the WONDER group and 48 percent of the control group). For this reason, the measures in Exhibit V.7 are nonexperimental, and the results do not represent the causal effects of WONDER.

Exhibit V.7. Characteristics of current jobs, among individuals employed at the time of the interview and based on 12-month survey data

Characteristic	WONDER Group	Control Group	Difference
Hours worked per week (%)			
Less than 20	17.7	16.7	1.1
21 to 34	29.7	24.8	5.0
35 or more (employed full time)	52.5	58.6	-6.0*
Average	32.8	34.6	-1.7**
Weekly earnings (%)			
\$1 to \$499	70.4	66.7	3.7
\$500 to \$999	26.6	30.3	-3.7
\$1,000 to \$1,499	2.5	1.4	1.1
\$1,500 to \$2,000	0.4	1.1	-0.8*
\$2,000 and above	0.2	0.5	-0.3
Benefits available at job (%)			
Any benefit	64.6	65.3	-0.7
Health insurance or HMO/PPO plan membership	50.3	49.3	0.9
Dental insurance	42.5	40.4	2.1
Paid vacation	45.9	44.8	1.1
Paid holidays	47.5	45.9	1.6
Paid sick leave	35.8	34.9	0.9
Any paid time off	55.5	55.1	0.4
Pension or retirement benefits	45.5	41.6	3.9
Tuition assistance or reimbursement	21.4	20.7	0.7
Type of employment (%)			
Regular full- or part-time	80.9	81.0	-0.1
Temporary or on-call	10.4	10.6	-0.2

²² For individuals who were employed at the time of the survey interview, these measures capture the job in which they were working at that time (their “current job”). If sample members were working two or more jobs at the time of the survey interview, the job where they worked the most hours was considered their “current job.”

Exhibit V.7. Characteristics of current jobs, among individuals employed at the time of the interview and based on 12-month survey data *(continued)*

Characteristic	WONDER Group	Control Group	Difference
Self-employed or independent contractor or consultant	5.3	4.9	0.4
Day laborer	3.5	3.5	-0.1
Occupation			
Retail Sales Workers	5.5	5.2	0.4
Material Moving Workers	5.0	3.5	1.4
Food and Beverage Serving Workers	2.6	4.8	-2.2*
Cooks and Food Preparation Workers	4.4	4.2	0.1
Material Recording, Scheduling, Dispatching, and Distributing Workers	3.5	4.4	-0.9
Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	3.3	3.6	-0.2
Food Processing Workers	3.5	2.2	1.3
Information and Record Clerks	3.4	3.0	0.4
Motor Vehicle Operators	3.1	2.7	0.4
Other Personal Care and Service Workers	2.9	2.8	0.1
Sample size	504	508	

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

***Significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Among individuals who were employed at the time of the 12-month follow-up survey, WONDER group members and control group members held jobs with similar characteristics. There generally were no statistically significant differences in weekly earnings or receipt of employer-offered benefits, but some differences were apparent in hours worked per week between research groups. The majority of currently employed individuals in each research group worked full time. Compared to the control group, a greater percentage of WONDER group members worked 21 to 34 hours per week and a smaller percentage worked full-time (35 or more hours per week, $p\text{-value} = 0.07$), resulting in lower average hours worked per week (33 versus 35 hours). More than two-thirds of individuals in both research groups earned less than \$500 per week. Close to two-thirds of individuals received an employer-offered benefit, with the most common benefits being paid time off and health insurance.

Most employed individuals in each research group were regular status employees working full-time or part-time. There were no statistically significant differences in the percentages of individuals in other types of employment across research groups. Common occupations included retail sales, moving services, cooking and food preparation, and food and beverage services.

3. Conclusion

WONDER group members earned less than control group members, particularly in Quarter 1 while they were more likely to be receiving WONDER services. These earnings differences began to diminish and were no longer statistically significant in Quarter 4, as individuals in the WONDER group completed services. However, employment rates based on UI data did not increase for either research group between Quarters 1 and 4, and employment rates based on survey data increased at roughly the same rate for each group. As noted previously, prior studies of workforce programs have shown that it can take more than a year before economic impacts emerge (Card et al. 2010, 2018; D’Amico et al. 2015). Results from the longer-term follow-up period—which will extend up to three years—are needed to fully assess the effects of WONDER on employment and earnings.

B. Impacts of WONDER on receipt of public assistance

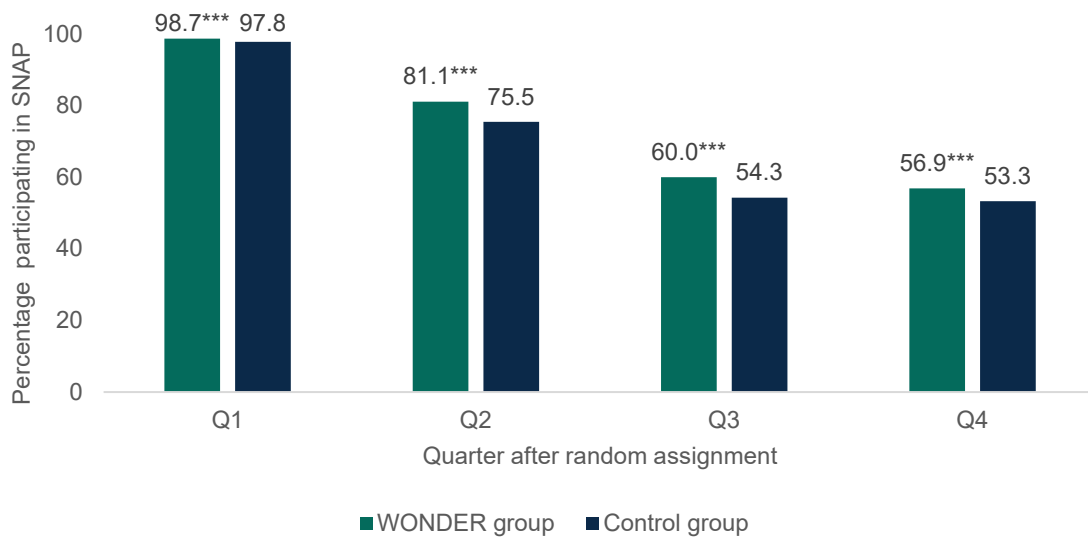
This section presents impacts on the receipt of public assistance, as measured by SNAP administrative records and survey data. Most of the outcomes measuring receipt of SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid are based on the administrative data and are measured for each quarter after random assignment and over the first year after random assignment. Receipt of other forms of public assistance is based on the survey data and captures receipt during the first year after random assignment.

1. Impacts on SNAP participation

WONDER led to a statistically greater likelihood of participating in SNAP in Quarter 4 after random assignment. About 57 percent of WONDER group members participated in SNAP in Quarter 4 compared to 53 percent of control group members (Exhibit V.8). Impacts of WONDER on SNAP participation reflect a smaller decrease between Quarters 1 and 4 in the rate of SNAP participation for the WONDER group than for the control group. Between Quarters 1 and 4, SNAP participation rates decreased from 99 to 57 percent among WONDER group members (42 percentage point change) and from 98 to 53 percent among control group members (45 percentage point change). WONDER group members were between 1 and 6 percentage points more likely than control group members to participate in SNAP in each quarter.

WONDER group members participated in SNAP for an average of 8 of the 12 months following random assignment compared to 7.4 months for control group members (Exhibit V.9). The majority of individuals in each research group exited SNAP within 12 months of random assignment, although SNAP exit rates were lower for WONDER group members than for control group members (72 percent of WONDER group members exited SNAP compared with 75 percent of control group members). The percentage of individuals who exited SNAP within the 12 months after random assignment include those who left and did not re-enter SNAP in the 12-month follow-up period, as well as those who left and re-entered before the end of the period. Thus, even though 28 percent of the WONDER group participated in SNAP for the full year, SNAP participation in Quarter 4 was higher (57 percent), reflecting that individuals left and re-entered SNAP by Quarter 4.

Exhibit V.8. Quarterly SNAP participation rates based on SNAP administrative data



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

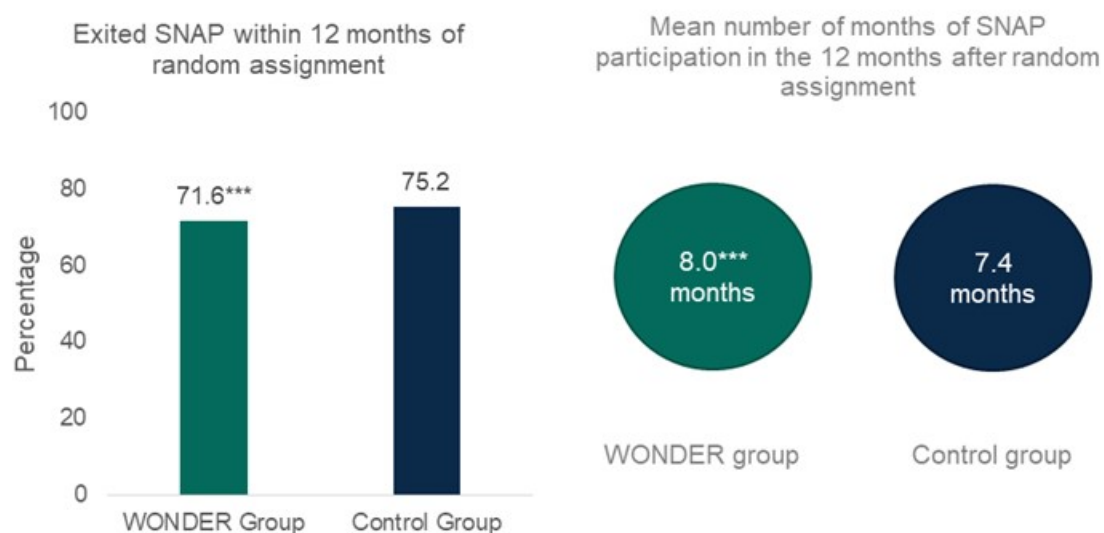
Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and 2,672 control group members.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Exhibit V.9. Participation in SNAP based on SNAP administrative data



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and 2,672 control group members.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

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

Consistent with the findings for SNAP participation rates, average SNAP benefit amounts were higher for WONDER group members than for control group members in all four quarters (Exhibit V.10). Average SNAP benefit amounts were highest in Quarter 1 and decreased in each subsequent quarter, mostly reflecting people leaving SNAP over time. However, the difference between research groups remained roughly the same. During Quarter 1, the difference in benefit amounts relative to the control group was \$20, and by Quarter 4 the difference was roughly equivalent (\$18, p-value = 0.06).

Exhibit V.10. Impacts on average monthly SNAP benefit amount per Quarter and in Year 1, based on SNAP administrative data

	WONDER Group	Control Group	Difference
Average SNAP benefits received (\$)			
Quarter 1	611	591	20***
Quarter 2	446	395	51***
Quarter 3	353	324	29***
Quarter 4	306	288	18*
Year 1	1,716	1,598	119***
Average monthly SNAP benefits received as a percentage of maximum benefit amount ^a			
Quarter 1	82.5	79.0	3.5***
Quarter 2	57.0	49.2	7.8***
Quarter 3	42.3	37.2	5.1***
Quarter 4	36.5	33.3	3.1***
Year 1	54.5	49.7	4.8***
Sample size	2,672	2,672	

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

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

***Significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

Looking at SNAP benefit amounts received as a percentage of the maximum possible benefit amount (based on SNAP unit size) provides a better comparison across SNAP units of different sizes than the nominal benefit amounts. In Quarter 1, WONDER group members received, on average, about 83 percent of the maximum possible benefit. This is only a slightly higher percentage than is seen for the control group: 79 percent (Exhibit V.10). Benefit amounts for both research groups decreased over time, to 37 and 33 percent of the maximum, respectively, in Quarter 4. Thus, in Quarter 4, the average benefit received as a percentage of the maximum possible benefit was 3 percentage points higher (with rounding) for the WONDER group than for the control group. For all 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 WONDER group, the percentage of the maximum benefit amount received

decreased by about 46 percentage points between Quarters 1 and 4. During this same period, the percentage of WONDER group members participating in SNAP decreased by about 42 percent.

2. Impacts on TANF and other forms of public assistance

Impacts on TANF participation and Medicaid coverage were estimated using SNAP administrative data. Although WONDER led to a statistically greater likelihood of participating in SNAP in all four quarters, there were no impacts on participation in TANF or Medicaid coverage throughout the follow-up period (Appendix Table F.7). Very few (or no) individuals in either research group participated in TANF in each quarter (Exhibit V.11).

Exhibit V.11. Quarterly TANF participation rates, based on SNAP administrative data

TANF participation (%)	WONDER group	Control group	Difference
Quarter 1	0.8	0.9	-0.1
Quarter 2	0.9	0.6	0.2
Quarter 3	0.8	1.0	-0.1
Quarter 4	1.2	0.9	0.2
Sample size	2,672	2,672	

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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 2,672 WONDER group members and 2,672 control group members.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

We estimated impacts on receipt of other forms of public assistance using the survey data. The survey measured 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). With the exception of slightly higher rates of receipt of SSI for WONDER group members relative to control group members (10 versus 8 percent, p -value = 0.07), individuals in each research group were equally likely to receive public assistance benefits (Exhibit V.12). The most commonly received benefit was Medicaid (about 82 percent).

Exhibit V.12. Impacts on participation in other public assistance programs in the 12 months since random assignment, based on 12-month survey data

Program	WONDER Group	Control Group	Difference
Public assistance receipt in the 12 months since random assignment (%)			
General assistance	5.8	5.5	0.3
Unemployment insurance	9.6	11.1	-1.5
Supplemental Security Income	10.3	8.0	2.3*
Section 8, Housing Choice Vouchers, or Public Housing Assistance	4.7	4.0	0.6
Medicaid	81.6	80.2	1.4
Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	9.4	8.1	1.3
Sample size	1,042	1,049	

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

***Significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

3. Conclusion

WONDER led to a statistically greater likelihood of participating in SNAP. About 57 percent of WONDER group members participated in SNAP in Quarter 4 compared with 53 percent of the control group—a 4 percentage point difference. These impacts reflect smaller decreases over time in the rate of SNAP participation for the WONDER group than for the control group between Quarters 1 and 4.

Conceptually, SNAP E&T services are designed to increase employment and earnings and, thus, reduce the need for receiving SNAP or other public assistance. However, WONDER group members had lower earnings than the control group, based on UI and survey data, in the first two quarters after random assignment. This increased the likelihood that WONDER group members would continue to be eligible for and participate in SNAP—or, conversely, it decreased the likelihood that they would exit SNAP. This also increased the likelihood that WONDER group members' SNAP benefit amounts would be higher than those for the control group. WONDER group members also may have been more likely to continue to participate in SNAP because of the WONDER-provided education and training activities and, for some individuals, because the WONDER-provided services addressing barriers to employment would be discontinued if they no longer participated in SNAP.

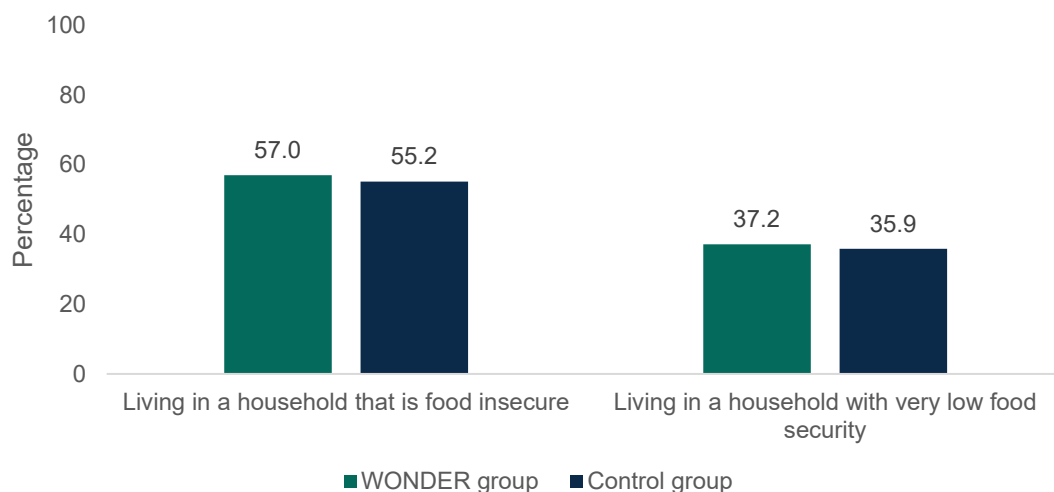
Because it can take more than a year before economic impacts emerge, we cannot yet observe the full impact on SNAP participation. The analysis based on data from the longer-term follow-up period will fully assess the effects of WONDER on SNAP participation in the final evaluation report.

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

This section presents WONDER’s effects on food security, health, well-being, and housing status, as reported in survey data. Most of these outcomes reflect individuals’ circumstances at the time of the 12-month follow-up survey. An exception was food security status, which was reported based on the 30 days before the survey.²³

There were no statistically significant differences between the WONDER group and the control group in rates of food insecurity or self-reported health and well-being (Exhibit V.13; Appendix Table F.24). However, the two groups did differ in terms of housing status. WONDER group members were more likely than control group members to be homeless (5 versus 3 percent) and to own or rent a home or apartment at the time of the interview (43 versus 39 percent); WONDER group members were less likely than control group members to share housing with roommates, friends, or a partner (6 versus 10 percent).

Exhibit V.13. Impacts on food security, based on 12-month survey data



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

Note: Estimates are based on data from 1,042 WONDER group members and 1,049 control group members who were surveyed. Food security measured over the 30 days prior to the survey interview.

***Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

**Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

*Difference between research groups is significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test.

²³ Food security is 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. Those who cannot afford enough to eat experience a particularly severe form of food insecurity 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.

VI. ANALYSIS OF WONDER COSTS

This chapter describes the total cost of the planning and implementation of WONDER through calendar year 2017. It builds on the description of services received by WONDER group members by providing additional information about the cost of WONDER overall and for specific services. This chapter presents information about the costs incurred by DSS and the partners and providers with whom it contracted to set up WONDER before the beginning of enrollment, to recruit people into the pilot, and to provide services to WONDER group members. It presents data on the total costs of services; costs covered by the FNS grant versus other funding sources; costs by category, such as staff costs and overhead costs; and the costs of key services, including occupational skills training and case management. The costs presented in this chapter exclude costs associated with the time pilot staff spent supporting the evaluation—including activities such as random assignment.²⁴

The analyses were based on cost data provided by DSS and by partners and providers with direct subcontracts through the FNS grant. Cost data were reported through standardized cost workbooks submitted for the planning period and on a quarterly schedule during service delivery. The workbooks captured data on a set of four core cost categories, or cost ingredients, including staff, direct service, supplies and equipment, and overhead and operating costs (Exhibit VI.1). These costs included costs that were paid for with FNS grant funds as well as costs that were paid for with funds leveraged from other sources. The cost ingredients were used to build an estimate of the total costs incurred in planning for and operating WONDER by summing the costs across the four cost categories.²⁵

Exhibit VI.1. Ingredients of cost estimates

Staff costs	Direct service costs	Supply and equipment costs	Overhead and operating costs
• Salaries and fringe benefits • Volunteer time	• Service contracts • Support services • Partner and provider service costs	• Supplies • Leases or purchases of equipment	• Overhead • Facilities • Utilities • Indirect costs

Note: Cost workbooks asked for the total costs of the services provided to individuals receiving WONDER. For all costs reported in the workbooks, respondents were asked to report the percentage of the cost that was funded by the FNS grant. Remaining costs were assumed to be covered by other sources.

²⁴ The cost workbooks asked for the percentage of time each staff member spent on evaluation activities. To exclude evaluation activities from the cost analyses presented in this chapter, we reduced the number of hours each staff member reported spending on WONDER by the percentage of hours they reported spending on evaluation activities. Information about the percentage of time spent on evaluation activities was collected for every staff member listed in the planning period and quarterly workbooks, and varied over time.

²⁵ 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.*

DSS, partners, and providers each submitted workbooks with their own cost information (Exhibit VI.2). In addition, a web survey collected data on the percentage of time provider staff spent on key services for WONDER group members, such as case management, assessments, and job readiness training or life skills workshops. Information about the average percentage of time staff spent on key services was used to allocate the costs of staff, supplies and equipment, and overhead and operating costs to the direct services reported in the workbooks. These allocated costs were added to the costs of direct services to estimate the total cost of each service. The estimated costs of support services, other direct service contracts, work-based learning, occupational skills training, and education do not include allocated costs for staff, supplies and equipment, or overhead and operating costs. We assumed the staff time and associated costs for these types of services are represented in the estimated cost of case management.

Exhibit VI.2. WONDER cost data collection snapshot

- DSS, NCRC, Eastside Rising, and nine other partners and providers each submitted workbooks.
- Workbooks were submitted for the planning period (April 2015–January 2016) and eight quarterly service delivery periods (February 2016–December 2017).

This chapter summarizes costs from the planning period (April 2015 through January 2016) and service delivery (February 2016 through December 2017). Costs presented in the tables and figures have been adjusted to 2016 dollars, as this was the year DSS started incurring costs for providing WONDER services. The final report will present the final costs for both the WONDER and control group services, as well as a benefit-cost analysis, which will compare costs and benefits for the WONDER and control group members from the perspectives of individuals, government, and society. The final report also will include estimates of costs per person for WONDER and control group services. The methodologies used in the cost data collection and in the analyses presented in this chapter are provided in the technical supplement. The following is a summary of key findings.

Key findings:

- DSS and its partners and providers reported spending a total of \$8,090,000 between April 2015 and September 2017 on WONDER services, including \$971,000 on the planning period and \$7,118,000 on service delivery.
- The FNS grant funded 83 percent of WONDER costs, and DSS, partners, and providers leveraged other funding sources for the remaining 17 percent.
- The largest estimated cost was for case management service costs (\$478,000 [6 percent of total costs]), followed by other direct service contracts (\$261,000 [3 percent]).

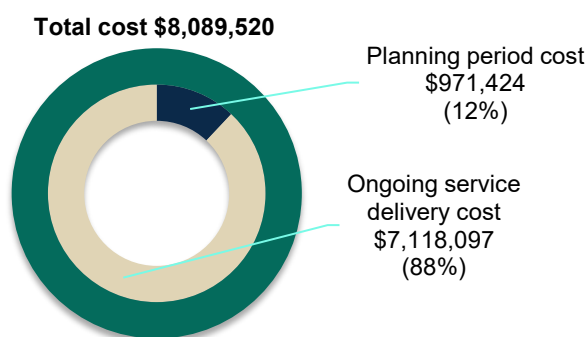
A. Analysis of total and service-specific costs

This section describes total costs as well as costs by funding source and by category (staff, direct services, supplies and equipment, and overhead and operating costs). It also presents estimates of the costs of specific services.

1. Total costs

The FNS grant awarded DSS \$18,765,000 for the planning and implementation of WONDER through December 2018. As shown in Exhibit VI.3, DSS and its partners and providers reported spending a total of \$8,090,000 through December 2017 on the planning and implementation of WONDER (numbers in the text are rounded to the nearest thousand, whereas exhibits show actual costs). These costs included \$971,000 for planning (12 percent of total costs) and \$7,118,000 for service delivery (88 percent). The quarterly costs of service delivery were relatively stable in the first four quarters. Costs increased from the fifth quarter through the eighth quarter (Appendix Table G.2).

Exhibit VI.3. Summary of total costs

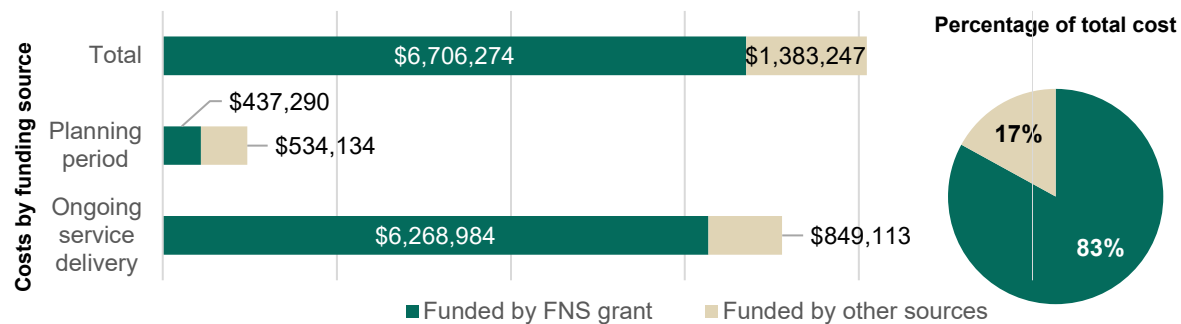


Source: WONDER cost workbooks 2015-2017.

Note: The planning period was considered to encompass the time between the award of the FNS grant and WONDER start (April 2015 to January 2016). Service delivery costs represent the total reported in quarterly workbooks following the start of WONDER. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars.

Through December 2017, WONDER providers reported spending \$6,706,000 of the FNS grant funding (representing 83 percent of total expenditures) and leveraged \$1,383,000 in funding from other sources (representing 17 percent of total expenditures, Exhibit VI.4). Funding from other sources came from DSS, NCRC, and other partners and providers, such as KraftHeinz. During the planning period, about half of the resources (\$535,000, 57 percent) were provided by other sources, while the remaining funds were contributed by the FNS grant (\$437,000, 43 percent). During ongoing service delivery, WONDER administration and services were primarily funded by the FNS grant (\$6,269,000). DSS, partners, and providers leveraged an additional \$849,000 in funding from other sources. The largest source of additional funding—\$696,000—was contributed by DSS, which primarily provided staff and overhead and operating resources as well as direct service and supplies and equipment resources. Five other WONDER partners and providers each contributed \$50,000 or more in funding from other sources, including NCRC, Eastside Rising, KraftHeinz, Stand By Me, and FBD. The costs of service delivery that were covered by funding from sources other than the FNS grant were stable over the service delivery period (Appendix Table G.2).

Exhibit VI.4. WONDER funding from FNS grant and other sources



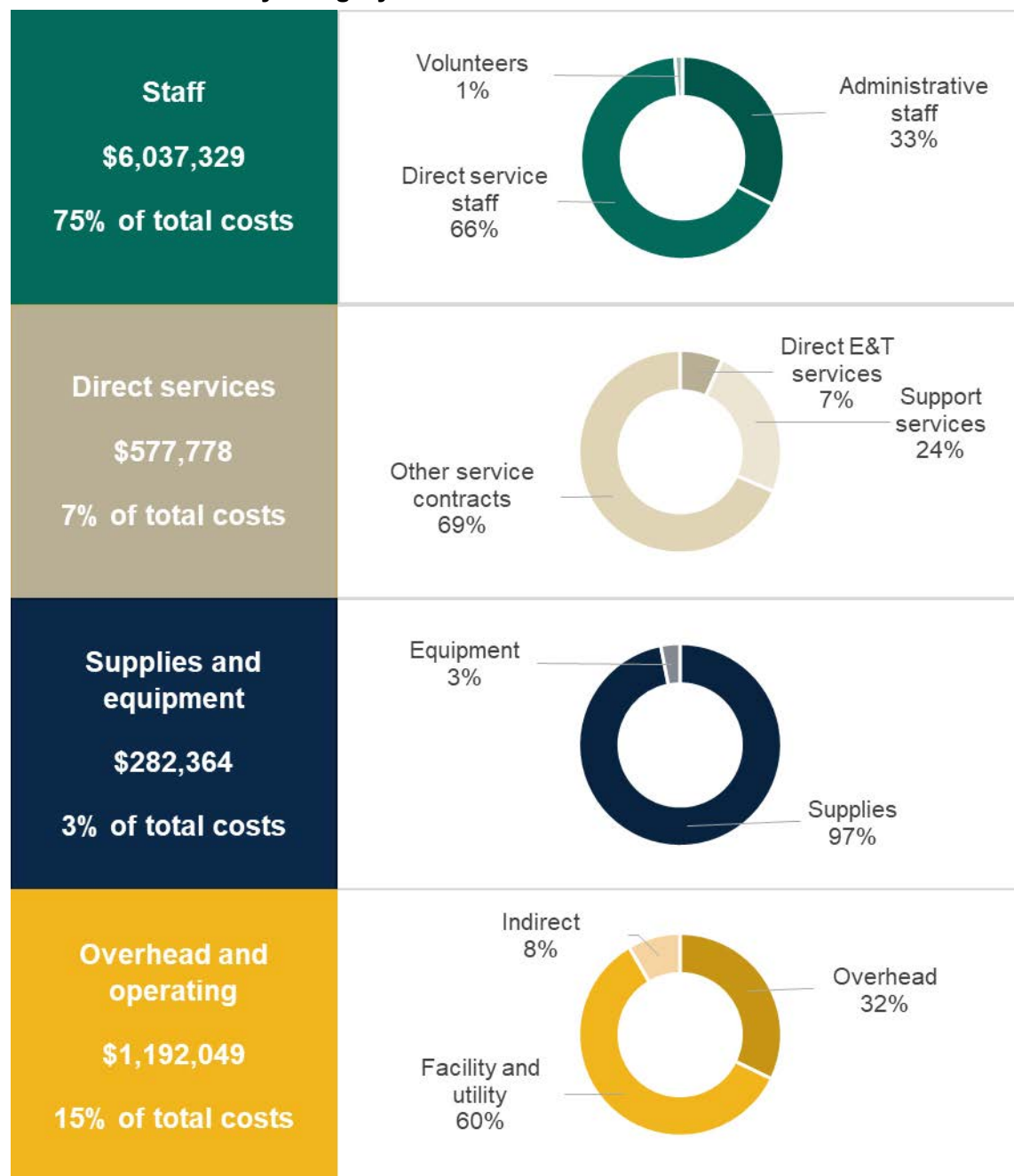
Source: WONDER cost workbooks 2015-2017.

Note: Cost workbooks asked for the total costs of the services provided to individuals in the WONDER group. For all costs reported in the workbooks, respondents were asked to report the percentage of the cost that was funded by the FNS grant. Remaining costs are assumed to be covered by other sources. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars.

Exhibit VI.5 summarizes costs through December 2017 by category, including (1) staff and volunteers' time, which represented 75 percent of total costs; (2) partner and provider direct service costs (7 percent of total costs); (3) supplies and equipment (3 percent of total costs); and (4) overhead and operating costs (15 percent of total costs). Almost two-thirds (66 percent) of the \$6,037,000 devoted to staff costs covered direct service staff, and one-third covered administrative staff. The remaining 1 percent of staff costs was contributed by volunteers. DSS and WONDER partners and providers reported spending \$1,192,000 on overhead and operating costs. Sixty percent of these funds covered facility and utility costs, 32 percent covered overhead costs, and 8 percent covered indirect costs. DSS and WONDER partners and providers also allocated \$578,000 to direct service costs and \$282,000 to supplies and equipment costs.

Exhibit VI.6 provides additional detail on total costs by category and costs funded by the FNS grant and by other sources. In all cost categories, the vast majority of costs were covered by the FNS grant. However, in all cost categories, funding from other sources was also used to cover costs. Funding from other sources covered 30 percent of total overhead and operating costs, which suggests that DSS and providers did not pass on many of their overhead costs. Funding from other sources also covered 16 percent of total staff costs, which indicates that DSS and providers were able to leverage other staffing resources available in the community. Other funding sources made more modest contributions in other categories, providing 8 percent of direct services costs and 5 percent of supplies and equipment costs.

Exhibit VI.5. Costs by category



Source: WONDER cost workbooks 2015-2017.

Note: One provider – Polytech – reported that all of their facilities and utilities costs were included in reported indirect costs. One provider – NCRC – used donated facilities to provide direct services. We used the square footage of the space used for services and the zip code to estimate a cost for these facilities. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars.

Exhibit VI.6. Costs by category and funding source

Cost category	Total cost	FNS grant		Other sources	
		Costs funded (\$)	Percentage of total category cost	Costs funded (\$)	Percentage of total category cost
Total cost	\$8,089,520	\$6,706,274	83%	\$1,383,247	17%
Staff costs	\$6,037,329	\$5,072,237	84%	\$965,092	16%
Staff	\$5,965,075	\$5,072,237		\$892,837	
Administrative staff ^a	\$1,970,269	\$1,274,120		\$696,149	
Direct service staff	\$3,994,806	\$3,798,117		\$196,688	
Volunteers	\$72,254	\$0		\$72,254	
Direct service costs	\$577,778	\$533,723	92%	\$44,055	8%
Direct E&T services	\$39,531	\$28,160		\$11,371	
Support services	\$141,973	\$109,288		\$32,684	
Other service contracts ^b	\$396,274	\$396,274		\$0	
Supplies and equipment costs	\$282,364	\$267,152	94%	\$15,212	6%
Supplies	\$273,687	\$258,474		\$15,212	
Equipment	\$8,678	\$8,678		\$0	
Other overhead-operating costs	\$1,192,049	\$833,162	70%	\$358,887	30%
Overhead	\$383,498	\$119,482		\$264,016	
Facilities and utilities	\$708,506	\$613,634		\$94,871	
Indirect costs	\$100,045	\$100,045		\$0	

Source: WONDER cost workbooks 2015-2017.

Note: Cost workbooks asked for the total costs of the services provided to individuals in the WONDER group. For all costs reported in the workbooks, respondents were asked to report the percentage of the cost that was funded by the FNS grant. Remaining costs were assumed to be covered by other sources. One provider—Polytech—reported that all of their facilities and utilities costs were included in reported indirect costs. One provider—NCRC—used donated facilities to provide direct services. We used the square footage of the space used for services and the zip code to estimate a cost for these facilities. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars.

^aWe used staff titles and primary responsibilities reported in the cost workbooks to categorize staff and their associated costs as administrative- or direct service-related.

^bOther service contracts represent costs paid by a partner or provider to another organization for a direct service. We assumed service contracts included all the costs of service, including staff, direct costs, supplies and equipment, and other overhead and operating costs. For example, Eastside Rising had a direct service contract with Worthey Solutions in Delaware.

2. Costs by service

This section describes estimates of the costs of key WONDER services, including case management (this includes one-on-one meetings with individuals, or time spent on case notes or referrals), other direct service contracts, formal assessments, structured group activities, occupational skills training, support services, work-based learning, and education. To build these

VI. Analysis of WONDER costs

estimates, we used data from the staff time-use survey to estimate the average time spent on each service or activity. We then used these estimates to attribute a percentage of the total costs of staff, supplies and equipment, and other overhead and operating costs to the direct service cost reported for that service in the cost workbooks.

Exhibit VI.7 presents estimated total costs of each type of service and the percentage of the total cost that the service represents. The largest WONDER direct service expenditure was for case management, which accounted for \$478,000 or 6 percent of total costs through December 2017. Other direct service contracts accounted for \$261,000 or 3 percent of total costs.

Exhibit VI.7. Costs by service type

Service type	Total cost	Percentage of total cost
Case management	\$478,217	6
Other direct service contracts	\$260,509	3
Assessments	\$165,040	2
Job readiness or life skills workshop	\$161,439	2
Occupational skills training	\$150,854	2
Support services	\$146,335	2
Work-based learning	\$3,420	<1
Education	\$2,365	<1
Other non-direct service costs ^a	\$6,721,343	83
Total costs	\$8,089,520	100

Source: WONDER cost workbooks 2015-2017 and time use survey data 2016-2017.

Note: The estimated costs of case management, structured group activities, and formal 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. The estimated costs of support services, other direct service contracts, work-based learning, occupational skills training, and education do not include costs for staff, supplies and equipment, or overhead and operating costs. We assumed these costs were either built into those payments or the associated staff time and costs were represented as case management. All costs are presented in 2016 dollars.

^aOther non-direct service costs include service contracts that cannot be assigned to one of the defined direct services, such as a subcontract for recruiting services. Other non-direct service costs also include the costs of other WONDER-related activities that are not direct services—including planning period costs, administration, recruitment and enrollment, and staff meetings and supervision.

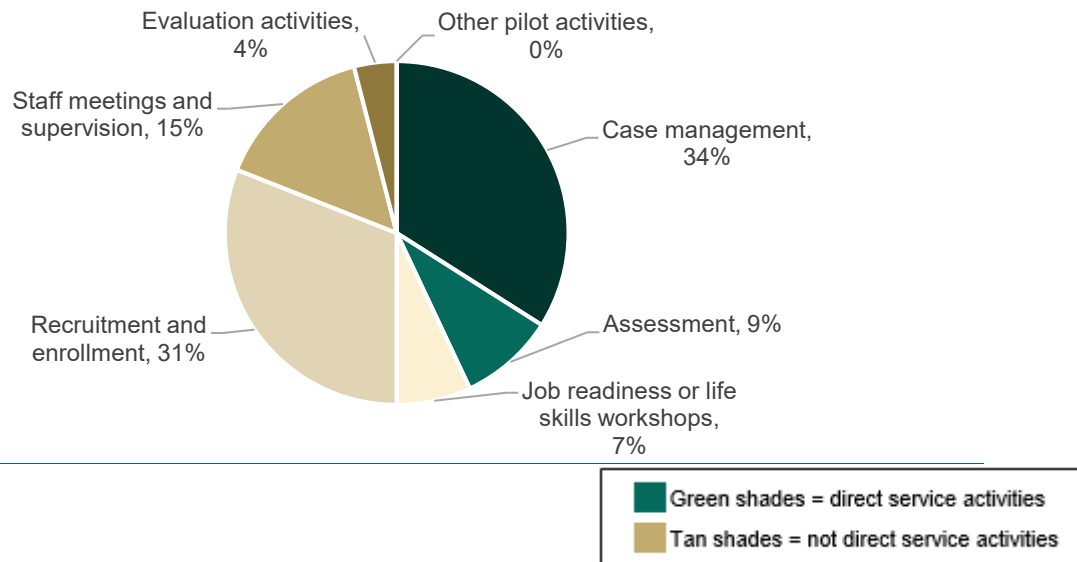
Exhibit VI.8 shows the average percentage of time that direct service provider staff reported spending on key activities.²⁶ The two activities that accounted for the largest shares of direct

²⁶ Direct service provider staff from the following three providers are included in the estimates of the average time spent on key activities: DSS, Eastside Rising, and Food Bank of Delaware. We requested contact information for all frontline staff and supervisors working to deliver treatment group services in order to randomly select 25 for each round of the time use survey. The listed organizations are the only organizations for which contact information was provided in the first two rounds of the time use survey.

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service staff time were case management (34 percent of time, on average) and recruitment and enrollment (31 percent). Case management includes time for administering payments and making referrals for services such as work-based learning, occupational skills training, and education. The two other activities that accounted for large shares of WONDER direct service staff time were staff meetings and supervision accounted for 15 percent of direct service staff time. Other activities such as formal assessment and structured group activities accounted for less than 10 percent of time.

Exhibit VI.8. Average percentage of time direct service provider staff spent on key activities



Source: Time-use survey 2016-2017.

Note: This graphic shows the average percentage of time direct service staff spent on key activities during the first and second rounds of the time use survey (fall 2016 and summer 2017). Twenty-five direct service staff were randomly selected to respond in each round. Costs for staff time associated with non-direct service activities are not attributed to the above service estimates; rather, they are included in the other non-direct service cost estimate row in Exhibit VI.7. Evaluation costs are excluded from all cost estimates but this figure includes time staff spent on the evaluation.

VII. 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 WONDER—the innovative E&T program Delaware designed and implemented statewide targeting new work registrants—was effective in achieving these outcomes. This interim report presents preliminary findings from the implementation and cost analyses that describe the planning and early implementation periods of the pilot and from the participation and impact analyses that cover one year of follow-up for individuals. This chapter summarizes the report's main findings. It also describes the additional questions that will be answered in the final report, which will present implementation and cost analysis findings covering the full period in which services were offered and costs were incurred and participation and impact findings covering up to three years of follow-up for individuals.

A. Summary of main findings

This section summarizes the main findings from the analysis of implementation data, WONDER group members' service receipt, costs, and differences between research groups in service receipt. It also discusses findings from the impact analyses and considerations regarding whether longer-term impacts may be expected.

1. WONDER implementation

As described in Chapter II, despite some early challenges with recruitment and enrollment, DSS made changes to its recruitment model after the first year and enrollment surged. After dedicating staff to recruitment only, DSS was able to meet and exceed its enrollment target of 5,292 individuals by the end of 2017. However, once enrolled, staff found it challenging to engage individuals. After random assignment, WONDER group members often did not attend appointments for intake and assessments (the first step in the process), or those who were assessed and referred to a track sometimes did not attend the first appointment or day of classes. In addition, individuals participated in Tracks 1 through 3 at lower rates than planned. Most WONDER group members were enrolled in Track 4, for several reasons, including challenges with messaging the services available in Tracks 1 through 3, lack of interest in the three industry-related tracks, the small number of slots available in Tracks 1 through 3, and Track 4 not requiring any eligibility criteria and prioritizing engagement in employment instead of several weeks of training.

2. WONDER group members' service receipt

As described in Chapter III, virtually all of the individuals randomly assigned to the WONDER group engaged in some type of service, meaning that they at least had a meeting with an OS, started an assessment, or received a support service; however, only 69 percent returned after random assignment to continue their assessments. Overall, 40 percent of the WONDER group members started an employment or training-related activity within one of the tracks, such as job placement assistance, occupational skills training, or work-based learning. Among individuals

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who started an activity, the completion rates for Tracks 1 through 4 ranged from 23 to 31 percent, and completion rates for individual activities ranged from 35 to 89 percent, with completion of work-based learning, job placement assistance, and basic education being the highest. Few individuals received a credential, certification, or degree.

Most WONDER group members had at least one contact with an OS during the pilot period and each had a high number of contacts (34 contacts, on average). In addition, almost 60 percent of individuals received a support service. Among those who received a support, most received assistance with transportation, but a small percentage received other types of supports, such as assistance with the costs of drug testing fees, child care, or training supplies.

Individuals spent an average of five months in WONDER. Most exited WONDER within their first year, however, and the majority of exits happened within about six months after enrollment. Exits often resulted from individuals electing to leave the pilot before completing services.

3. Differences between WONDER and control groups in service receipt

Whether WONDER impacts employment, earnings, and SNAP participation depends, in part, on differences between the WONDER and control groups in the services offered to individuals, their receipt of services, and their completion rates. The findings reported in Chapter IV suggest that there were differences between the WONDER and control groups in service participation. Relative to the control group, the WONDER group was more likely to participate in job search training activities or in education and training during the 12-month follow-up period. According to the survey data, the rate of participation in these activities in the WONDER group was 13 percentage points higher than in the control group. This difference existed despite the finding that more than one-third of control group members participated in job search training activities or in education and training activities.

WONDER group members also were more likely than control group members to complete an activity. This difference largely reflected differences in the likelihood of starting activities, although WONDER group members who started general job skills training were more likely to complete it than control group members who started such training. The WONDER group was more likely than the control group to receive an occupational certificate or license (7 versus 3 percent).

Some individuals were still in activities at the end of the 12-month follow-up period, so some of the differences between research groups in rates of participation in services and activities could change with longer follow-up. In addition, these findings could change when data on all individuals enrolled in the pilot are available.

4. Short-term impacts of WONDER on individuals' outcomes

As described in Chapter V, the findings from the analyses of the two primary outcomes in the fourth quarter show that WONDER generally did not lead to an increase in employment and that it increased the likelihood of participating in SNAP. The percentage of individuals who were employed in Quarter 4 was lower for the WONDER group relative to the control group based on

VII. Conclusion

UI data (45 versus 48 percent), but there was no statistical difference between research groups in employment based on survey data (55 versus 56 percent). WONDER group members earned less than control group members, particularly in Quarter 1 while they were more likely to be receiving WONDER services. These earnings differences began to diminish and were no longer statistically significant in Quarter 4, as individuals in the WONDER group completed services. However, employment rates based on UI data did not increase for either research group between Quarters 1 and 4, and employment rates based on survey data increased at roughly the same rate for each group. At the same time, WONDER led to a statistically greater likelihood of participating in SNAP in all four quarters. These impacts reflect smaller decreases over time in the rate of SNAP participation for the WONDER group than for the control group, resulting in participation rates of 57 and 53 percent, respectively, in Quarter 4.

The findings related to SNAP participation make sense given the patterns of changes in earnings and employment over the first year for WONDER and control group members. Conceptually, SNAP E&T services are designed to increase individuals' employment and earnings and, thus, reduce their need for SNAP or other public assistance. However, based on survey data, the WONDER group had lower earnings than the control group in the first two quarters after random assignment. This increased the likelihood that WONDER group members would continue to be eligible for and participate in SNAP—or conversely, decreased the likelihood that they would exit SNAP. This also increased the likelihood that SNAP benefit amounts for the WONDER group would be higher than those for the control group. WONDER group members also may have been more likely to continue to participate in SNAP because of the WONDER-provided education and training activities and, for some individuals, because the WONDER-provided services addressing barriers to employment would be discontinued if they no longer participated in SNAP.

These findings do not imply that WONDER will not be effective in achieving its goal of increasing employment and reducing the need for public assistance in the longer-term. In fact, past studies of workforce programs have shown that it can take more than a year before economic impacts emerge (Card, Kluve, and Weber (2010, 2018); D'Amico et al. (2015)). Indeed, WONDER group members' participation in education and training was highest in early quarters, likely displacing employment during this period. Results from the longer-term follow-up period, which will extend up to three years, are needed to fully assess the impacts of WONDER.

5. WONDER costs

As described in Chapter VI, DSS and its partners and providers reported spending a total of \$8,090,000 from April 2015 to December 2017 on the planning and implementation of WONDER (\$971,000 during the planning period and \$7,118,000 on service delivery). The FNS grant funded 83 percent of these costs, and partners and providers leveraged other funding sources for the remaining 17 percent. Most of the costs during the planning period and first 23 months of operations were related to administration, including planning and development, management and oversight, and recruitment and enrollment (\$6,721,000; 83 percent of total costs). The remaining 17 percent of costs were for direct services, with case management and

other direct service contracts being the largest costs. The proportion of the total budget that is represented by direct service costs will likely increase over time.

B. Final report and other products

This report presents a preliminary assessment of the effects of WONDER. The participation and impact analysis findings are based on information from only a portion of all individuals enrolled in the pilot—those who enrolled through December 2017 and cover only the first year following random assignment for each individual. For these reasons, the short-term outcomes presented in this report do not fully capture the potential effects of WONDER on labor market and public assistance outcomes. Notably, some individuals (8 percent of WONDER group members) were still receiving services at the 12-month point. In addition, WONDER continued to enroll and provide services to individuals in 2018. A final report will examine the experiences of all individuals enrolled in the WONDER pilot, present their outcomes over a period of up to 36 months after random assignment, and examine the benefits of the pilot’s new services relative to their costs. In doing so, the final report will provide more conclusive evidence about the effectiveness of WONDER.

The final report will address the following research questions.

- **Did WONDER continue to evolve over time?** What implementation changes occurred in the last one to two years of operations? Was WONDER or parts of WONDER sustained after the end of the pilot?
- **Including all individuals enrolled in WONDER, what were the participation patterns? Did participation patterns change over time, as the programs matured?** The final report will present information for all enrolled individuals. It will also analyze updated administrative data on service use through the end of pilot operations (December 2018).
- **What effects did WONDER have on employment and SNAP participation over a three-year follow-up period?** The final report will present findings based on longer-term follow-up data. Impact analyses will use UI wage records extending through early to mid-2020, SNAP administrative records extending through December 2020, and 36-month survey data also extending through December 2020. These additional data will allow us to examine impacts on outcomes over longer periods of time—for up to three years after random assignment—for most individuals enrolled in the pilot.
- **What was the total cost of pilot operations?** The final report will include costs through the end of pilot operations, and per-person cost estimates will be presented for both WONDER and control group services.
- **How did total WONDER costs compare with three-year WONDER benefits?** The final report will present a benefit-cost analysis, which will use information from both the cost analyses and the impact analyses to compare costs with benefits for WONDER and control group members, from the perspectives of individuals, government, and society.

Several additional reports will address research questions focused on specific aspects of the services offered. These reports will complement the main evaluation analyses by delving more

VII. Conclusion

deeply into support services, the relationship between the amount of services received and individuals' outcomes, and the potential benefits of work-based learning.

Together with the final report, these additional reports will provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of specific services and the role that service receipt plays in affecting individuals' outcomes. Additionally, these findings will be informative not only for SNAP E&T administrators and policymakers seeking to understand the impact of particular services but also for administrators of other workforce programs and State SNAP E&T agencies considering changes to their existing programs.

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