WORKFORCE

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Navigating Public Job Training

Harvard Project on Workforce

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Executive Summary

This report describes and analyzes the more than 75,000 "Eligible Training Providers" (ETPs) and 7,100 training programs that are eligible to receive public program-related vouchers for training under American Jobs Center (AJC) workforce development law, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Among other things, WIOA requires that ETPs provide information on their performance and costs to training seekers. This vouchers-based approach is intended to expand accountability in public, but post-degree programs that connect to "in-demand employment" opportunities in a regional economy. Under the law, each states and territory must maintain a list of pre-approved programs that eligible individuals may select from. The program on these lists qualifies to receive an "eligible training voucher" – ITA, or customer voucher, in our data analysis.

We analyze federal and state data sources to better understand the publicly-funded job training landscape in the United States. We combine training provider and program data from the Department of Labor (DOL) with individual performance outcomes from the Department of Education (DoE) and administrative data on the earnings and the kinds of jobs for which they are training. In addition, we look at state vouchers for all 50 U.S. states to understand how program information is made available to potential enrollees. Our analysis seeks to answer three fundamental questions:

1. What are the most common characteristics of WIOA-eligible training providers and programs?
2. Which fields of study and occupations are most commonly supported by federal funding?
3. What is the landscape for workforce training directed towards geographically and in-demand occupations?

Key Findings

First, federal funding for job training is small compared to traditional higher education, and the dollars are widely dispersed. We estimate that WIOA vouchers fund under $300mm in training annually, which is about one-fifth the size of the $200bn-plus Pell Grant program, the federal government's largest education program. Roughly two people benefit from workforce training vouchers. In Program Year 2019, the average training vouchers for approximately 220,000 individuals in 16 adult and dislocated worker programs (ITA) combined, over a billion in aggregate Pell Grant aid.

However, despite the smaller reach, the landscape of ETP offerings is vast and varied, and is growing rapidly. The number of ETPs, and the number of training providers and approximately 7,100 eligible programs is more than 100 times greater than nationwide. Performance information on the provider level is very limited and of questionable quality. Only about 1 in 10 ETPs report any outcomes, and the reported outcomes are based on fewer than one-third of the students they serve. Performance data provides to participants in WIOA are limited. According to our estimates, nationally, the ETPs that do report outcomes to the government, the median training program completed with around 200 students in training receive no file-provided. We estimate that WIOA is not a sustainable or scalable source of funding for most providers on these lists, and that roughly 1 in 5 ETPs disappear from the lists each year, and that the average program is no longer in the provider choice architecture for two to three years.

Second, while federal policy intends to support training for good jobs, overall, our analysis of the ETP data implies that our public workforce development training dollars do not promote job quality. Many eligible programs train for low-wage occupations, and the median earnings for students in programs training for the most common (modal) occupation, and for most common training occupations, for all programs trains under $6,000 in quarter, or $24,000 annually. We estimate that over 40 percent of WIOA training participants are training for occupations where the participants' earnings are especially likely to be supported in training programs for low-wage occupations. Participants training for these occupations are disproportionately people of color, and are heavily skewed toward women. Some of eligible programs nationwide train for at least 50 WIOA-funded participants. While these programs are in demand occupations, they are not in fast-growing occupations, and they are not in occupations with high mobility. Overall, our analysis suggests WIOA training vouchers fall short of the government's advancement objective of the legislation.

The system performs better on partnership in demand occupations. Fifty-four percent of programs eligible to receive WIOA funds are in occupations that are expected to growth faster than the average over the next 10 years. Training providers have responded to the top quartile of projected growth occupations. In occupations between 2020 and 2030, Some high-growth fields that pay well and don't require a BA, like oil and gas extraction, business services, and IT services, have many programs and many eligible participants nationally. In addition, over 1,000 eligible programs train for occupations that pay the Bureau of Labor Statistics research analysts will decline in the next ten years. Though the occupation is small, the training providers are responsive to the demand signal, and are focusing training resources on growing and occupational growth fields.

Finally, there is limited consumer-facing information about these programs, making it difficult to execute on the vision of "informed consumer choice" promoted by the legislation. The Department of Labor's Training&Provider&Results.gov website, which is the "Amazon" for job training, is a well-organized and well-designed tool, but it is missing critical information. For the release, the database lacks information on completions, employment rates, median earnings, and credentials for over 75 percent of programs. Many of the programs that do have outcomes data, the outcomes are based on very few participants. Performance information is available for only about 1 in 10 programs. Information to help inform enrollment decisions, the program price, financial aid, and format.

We conclude with recommendations for state and federal policymakers. U.S. workforce development funding should prioritize upgrading technological infrastructure, expanding support for career navigation, and increasing overall funding for workforce training. Given the small scale of WIOA relative to the need, we recommend that federal public dollars support high-quality training options. These include retaining program eligibility criteria, renewing data systems, and better supporting remote work and remote learning opportunities. We also recommend that DOL and its partners should pilot and state partners could implement in the short-run to improve accessibility and efficacy in the current system.

Introduction

The public discussion of skills with conversation about the importance of upskilling for the workforce. The recent, rapid rise in the federal deficits to support job training is not well understood. In the recent, we take a deep dive into the programs training for jobs and the vehicle for U.S. federal investment in workforce development. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the law that governs the American Job Center (AJC) workforce partnership, jointly funded training for adults. The law aims to provide a "comprehensive education and training services to prepare individuals for work and to help them improve their prospects in the workforce."[1]

Training provision through WIOA is highly decentralized, in part because most of the funding is distributed to state governments, which in turn fund local workforce boards, or training. Thus, According to our analysis of U.S. Department of Labor data, there are over 7,100 different training providers eligible to receive federal funding nationwide, and 75,400 training programs. Each state has its own procedures for how training providers are responsible for demonstrating to the state programs eligibility to receive WIOA funds in its jurisdiction.

This report aims to better understand how and this system is performing relative to the goal of providing training services for in-demand jobs that boost participant earnings. To do this, we ask three primary questions:

1. What are the most common characteristics of WIOA-eligible training providers and programs?
2. Which fields of study and occupations are most commonly supported by federal funding?
3. Is federal funding for workforce training directed towards geographically and in-demand occupations?

Background

Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), WIOA is the primary source of federal funding for the U.S. workforce development system. The law authorizes three formula grant programs to states and local workforce boards: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth grants for each state's allocation to centers called AJC or one-stop centers to occupational training to the JobCorps residential program for youth. The law also authorizes a set of "Wagner-Peyser" employment services, and, for research, we focus on two sub-programs that have a training vouchers for adult, the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Given data availability, we focus on the landscape of training providers and participants under these programs in PY 2019.

In 2019, ETA received appropriations of $3.1 billion to support training and employment services,[2] of that total, $1.2 billion was for "Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities" and $845 million to "Adult Employment and Training Activities."[3] However, the number of people who benefit from these programs is small, relative to the need. According, According to WIOA performance reports,[4] $847 million was spent on training activities for adults and dislocated workers,[5] in PY2019, over 220,000 people received training services, WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and national dislocated worker programs.[6]

While these numbers may appear large, WIOA comprises only a small share of education and training spending. The Pell Grant program, for example, provides over $200 billion per year on education and training, including $6bn billion in estimated education-related tax expenditures. Pell Grants are the largest federal education program. In addition to WIOA spend, federal funding supporting education-related costs is much larger, including Pell grants, direct loans, the Lifetime Learning Credit, and 529 plan. Pell grants alone provide over $25 billion in aid to undergraduate students annually, over 2 million people.

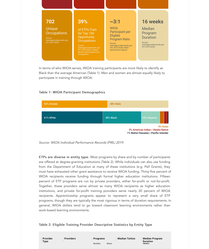
However, Funding from other federal sources tends to mandate that training takes place in a classroom setting, and, in the case of Pell Grants, the student must be enrolled in a degree-seeking program. Thus, the individual seeking short-term training for a job, Pell funding can be only the eligible source of federal assistance. Still, in real terms, funding for the Pell program has been stable and growing since 2000, in part due to the 2008 expansion of the program to include short-term training programs, as shown in Grade Pell Grants.

To understand the landscape of WIOA-funded training providers and programs, we utilize ETP programs as our unit of analysis. We analyze two publicly available sources of data on training providers and programs: the Eligible Training Providers (ETP) and Performance Results (PR) systems, a Federal Department of Labor website that seek to be a "consumer-facing" and that aggregates information reported from states about their Eligible Training Providers (ETP) and their performance. The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has created a purpose is to help individuals make informed training choices based on program completion and employment results. The public-facing website, Training&Provider&Results.gov, is well-organized and well-designed, and accessibility to help users, consumer-facing website, employees, training providers and policy leaders. In total, 75,462 ETP programs are represented in TPR, representing PY2019 and PY2020 data.

Second, we utilize state level ETPLs, which all states are required by WIOA to display publicly. These lists are intended to be the primary resource for new managers, seekers, and participants interested in enrolling in training activities funded by WIOA. States vary in the ease of use of their ETPL, and, as we show in the data, they contain a wide range of outcomes from all states. Interest in the Summer of 2021 Upon Research.

We then combine these ETP data sources with other publicly-available data to answer our research questions. To understand WIOA training participation and outcomes, we use WIOA Individual Performance Records for PY2019. These records use data from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the Adult Education and Literacy Program, the Wagner-Peyser records, we aggregate training participation demographic and earnings to the occupation level, utilizing Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes. To analyze labor market demand, we use Bureau of Labor Statistics occupational employment and wage statistics and the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia and Cleveland's Opportunity Occupations research,[7] Finally, to look more deeply at job growth, we use occupational data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia and Cleveland's Outlook Occupations,[8] which identify jobs that are expected to grow rapidly, have a large number of openings (100,000+) and are new and emerging.

Figure 1. Key Data Sources for ETP Program Analysis



Limitations

Importantly, the data is imperfect. For more than 75 percent of the 75,000+ programs included in the TPR release, data on program enrollment, completions, employment, and earnings are not available. Performance information is available for 1 in 10 programs, and could be supplanted through a self-selected by a state or reporting a specific performance metric to the Department of Labor. Additionally, to protect the personally identifiable information of participants, the Department of Labor suppresses outcomes among fewer than 10 students, reporting 10 percent of all programs. Nearly one-fourth of participant data at the ETP program level, we focus our analysis on the prevalence of eligible programs, but has no participant outcomes.

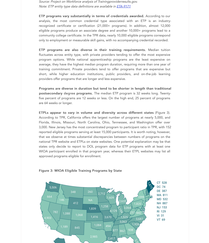
Further, many data points that could be used to studying the causal impacts of programs are not available. For example, we do not have information on participant characteristics when they serve. Only 10 states collect data on any participant demographic information by program. No information is listed about pre-enrollment earnings.

Finally, the information these datasets do collect. Training providers have performance data is self-reported by the training programs and is therefore subject to bias and manipulation. Further, the Eligible Training Providers (ETP) dataset is only as the data available, it is nearly impossible to gauge relative effectiveness of the ETPs in order to know and choose among.

1. The Landscape of Federally-Funded Training Providers

The landscape of federally-funded job training is very fragmented. This fragmentation is in part by design. WIOA is an open, consumer-choice system with fixed-price training vouchers. Nationwide, there are 7,100 training providers, and over 75,000 programs across the country (Figure 2). These programs vary in length, cost and credential, and they prepare workers for over 700 unique occupations. We estimate that over 1 in 10 programs have no participant outcomes, and for the rest, the outcomes are small-scale impacts the reporting of participation rotations, data, or provides a statistical national level. In addition, the fact that each program only enrolls a few WIOA participants per year makes it challenging to assess statistically meaningful program-level metrics.

Figure 2. Landscape of WIOA Eligible Training Providers and Programs (PY 2019)



In terms of other WIOA terms, WIOA-eligible training participants are more likely to identify as Black than the average American (Table 1). Men and women are almost equally likely to participate in training through WIOA.

Table 1. WIOA Participant Demographics

	Adult	Dislocated Worker	All
Age	35.4 years	45.1 years	40.2 years
Male	47%	53%	50%
Female	53%	47%	50%
Black	27%	17%	22%
White	54%	67%	60%
Hispanic	16%	12%	14%
Asian	3%	2%	3%
Native American	1%	1%	1%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%

Source: WIOA Individual Performance Records (PIRL) 2019.

ETPs are diverse in entity type. Most programs by share and by number of participants are offered at degree-granting institutions (Table 2). While individuals can also use funding to pay for training at non-degree-granting institutions, only about 1 in 10 ETP programs must have infrastructure other general assistance to receive WIOA funding. Thirty-five percent of WIOA recipients receive funding through federal higher education institutions. Fifteen percent of WIOA participants are served by "other" ETPs, which are non-profits. Together, these providers serve almost one-half of WIOA recipients. Higher education institutions, and private for-profit training providers serve nearly 20 percent of WIOA participants, and public workforce training providers serve 15 percent of participants. Training providers differ by sector, and, in terms of educational requirements to enroll, WIOA dollars tend to go toward classroom learning environments rather than work-based learning environments.

Table 2. Eligible Training Provider Descriptive Statistics by Entity Type

Provider Type	Providers	Programs	Median Tuition	Median Program Length
Higher Education	1,000	26,000	$9,000	1 year
Other Training Provider	1,000	11,000	$4,000	16 weeks
Private For-Profit	1,000	11,000	$4,000	16 weeks
Public Non-Profit	1,000	11,000	$4,000	16 weeks
Other Non-Profit	1,000	11,000	$4,000	16 weeks
Total	7,100	75,000	$4,000	16 weeks

Source: Project on Workforce analysis of Training&Provider&Results.gov.
Note: ETP entity type definitions are available in Table 3.1.

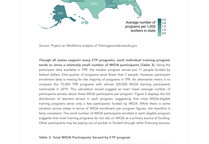
ETP programs vary substantially in terms of credentials awarded. According to our analysis of the Training&Provider&Results.gov data, 1 in 10 programs are not designed to award certificate or certification (ETP) program. In addition, around 15,000 eligible programs produce an associate degree and another 15,000 programs award a community college certificate. In the TPR data, nearly 15,000 eligible programs correspond to non-degree credentials such as certificate or licensing programs.

ETP programs are also diverse in their training requirements. Median tuition ranges from $4,000 for most programs to $9,000 for higher education institutions. Among eligible options, WIOA-eligible apprenticeship programs are the least expensive on average, they have the highest median program duration, requiring more than one year of training on average. Other ETPs, including other training providers, private for-profit, public, and other higher education institutions, public providers, and other non-profit training providers offer programs that are longer and less expensive.

Programs are diverse in duration but tend to be shorter in length than traditional postsecondary degree programs. The median ETP program is 32 weeks long. Twenty-five percent of programs are 12 weeks or less in length, and 25 percent of programs are 40 weeks or longer.

ETPs appear to vary in volume and diversity across different states (Figure 3). According to TPR, California offers the largest number of programs (over 7,000), followed by Florida, Illinois, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, and Washington offer over 3,000 programs. Nationwide, programs participants in programs with over 50 WIOA participants, which represents roughly one-third of WIOA participants. It is worth noting, however, that we observe a stress substantial discrepancies between numbers of programs on the Training&Provider&Results.gov website and the state-level lists of programs in some states, only Illinois is aware 20% of WIOA enrollment per program figures, the median is twenty consistent. The small number of WIOA participants enrolled in each eligible program implies that, for most programs, the program-level data is not informative about the quality of the training provided to participants. The average number of participants per program

Figure 4. WIOA Eligible Training Programs by State



Source: Project on Workforce analysis of Training&Provider&Results.gov.

Though all states support many ETP programs, each individual training program tends to serve a relatively small number of WIOA participants (Table 3). Using the participant data available 1-19, the median program serves just 11 people tended to participate in training programs. Nationwide, the median program in Pennsylvania enrolled about 1 in 1,000 people of participants in TPR, but the median program in Illinois enrolled 1 in 1,000 people. Nationwide, the median program serves 20,000 WIOA training participants, and the median program in Illinois serves 20,000 WIOA training participants

Number of programs with ≥ 50 participants	1,215	1,210	1,209	1,176	598
Number of programs	5–9	5–19	10–29	20–99	50+

*Source: Project on Workforce analysis of Training*connections data.*

Figure 4: Distribution of Eligible Training Programs by WIOA participants served

*Source: Project on Workforce analysis of Training*connections data.*

II. What Jobs are We Training For?

While federal policy intends to support leading training for good, in demand jobs, WIOA provides leeway to have a mixed record. Overall, our analysis of the ETP program data implies that our public workforce development training dollars are prioritizing demand over job quality. More than and all jobs created by existing WIOA tools are in occupations that are expected to grow in the next decade. We estimate that over 60 percent of ETP programs are in occupations that are projected to grow faster than average. However, these training programs do not result in jobs that pay living wages. Not that the median ETP program comparable to annual earnings of $29,380 per occupation from Occupational Employment Statistics (OES). Only 1 in 10 ETP programs in occupations that training participants were actually offered awards. The process recommended on whether and how policy should be reviewed to better align with the legislative's goals.

Ensures the national landscape of ETP training by occupation type, we prioritize two criteria: earnings (job quality proxy) and growth (demand proxy). Certainly, we want our public workforce development training dollars to prioritize good, high-paying jobs. Training should increase earnings. However, we admit there has critics because workers consistently cite them as important in making decisions about training. Training participants are consumers, and, as such, they are making investments that they and consequently for jobs available in the field where they can take advantage of newly-acquired human capital. They also want to know that this position will pay wages that will allow them to live and support themselves and their families. Training is a resource required to provide jobs. We agree that there has critics should be the minimum considerations for public policy in determining allocation of scarce resources in job training.

Educational requirements are a necessary factor we consider in our analysis. Training is not the only factor that influences earnings. There is a widely-held analytical assumption that the occupations (regardless) should not require a bachelor's degree. Unfortunately, the current ETP data does not allow us to analyze with precision whether the training program is a good fit for training participants. However, we can examine information to draw inferences about whether the potential job has associated with the training does not require a bachelor's degree.

To measure ETP program performance against these criteria, we make use of existing methodologies.

To understand job quality and educational requirements, we draw heavily on the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Both are federally-funded, research and data. The second is which the U.S. Department of Labor's decent-paying jobs to workers without a four-year college degree.[10] Only defines occupations as "decent-paying" if earnings are at least 20 percent higher than the median earnings for non-college workers (the national median wage adjusted for local cost of living).[11]

We use the Bureau of Labor Statistics' "Bright Outlook" Occupations as an indicator of employer demand. The BLS utilizes 2008-2018 nationwide employment projections to identify occupations projected to experience growth. The 2008-2018 projections encompass of 33 percent in total growth and is projected to have 100,000 or more job openings nationwide over 2008-2018.

Finally, we map programs in the providers using SOC and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes for each provider and training program. Within each provider, we assign each CIP code to the occupation with the closest match, and specific occupation that maps to the corresponding provided through the program's curriculum.

What types of jobs do eligible training providers train for?

Table 8 displays the ten most frequent fields of study and corresponding occupations for which ETP programs provide training, based on ETP data. Training in wide diversity in program types represented, healthcare fields are prominent, with medical assistant programs representing the largest share of ETP programs and participants in the available data. The top ten fields represent 61 percent of all ETP programs, and 61 percent of all training participants represented in ETP.

Table 8 - Occupational Focus of Eligible Training Programs

Occupation Title	Number of Programs	% of Programs
Medical Assistants	1,209	7%
Computer and Information Systems Managers	1,176	7%
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1,176	7%
Nursing Assistants	1,176	7%
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	1,147	7%
Health Educators, Teachers, Instructors, and Curriculum Managers	1,147	7%
Receptionists	1,147	7%
Personal and Customer Managers	1,147	7%
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,147	7%
Training and Development, and Human Resources Managers	1,147	7%

*Source: Project on Workforce analysis of Training*connections data.*

While many programs serve only a few WIOA participants, certain types of providers seem to more consistently serve WIOA funding (Table 9). Programs training for general labor market occupations are provided by 2,150 WIOA-funded programs, and 1,000 programs training for occupations in the healthcare field are provided by 1,000. These programs avoid more than double the average number of WIOA participants, suggesting that they might only need, training for WIOA participants, or that they are training business administration, and what leads even relatively large numbers of WIOA participants.

Table 9. Fine Most Common CIP Codes Among Programs with 50+ WIOA Participants

Number of Programs	
2,150	General Transportation
1,000	Practical Nursing, Vocational Nursing and Nursing Assistants
1,000	Engineered Systems, Nursing Aides, Nursing Assistants, Clinical Nursing
1,000	Business Administration and Management
1,000	Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services

*Source: Project on Workforce analysis of Training*connections data.*

Less than half of the ETP programs have full jobs considered top Opportunity Occupations, and only 10 percent of participants in programs in the data are in such jobs. Combining ETP jobs with the National Research Council of the top 50 Opportunity Occupations, we find that 39 percent of all ETP programs (20,000 programs) provide training for such jobs. Training for these jobs is more common among programs that serve more participants than average. Opportunities for Opportunity Occupations are nurses, welders, and business, medical records and health information technicians, and general transportation. Training for these jobs is more common among programs that provide fields and training, as certification and preparation mechanisms and models.

Several other Opportunity Occupations are prevalent in ETP program data. Programs that train heavy and trucks make up 10 percent of all programs and Opportunity Occupation nationally—are very common.[12] While these programs represent only 1.4 percent of ETP programs, they serve 3 times the average size and therefore serve a greater share of participants. In fact, programs that train for heavy and construction truck drivers represent 3 percent of all participants in ETP data. Training for these occupations is also prevalent in training participants overall in the ETP data. Licensed vocational nursing and registered nursing, both classified in Opportunity Occupations, also appear to be common destinations for WIOA training participants.

However, many Opportunity Occupations are underrepresented in ETP. For example, there are 3 million administrative assistants in the U.S. workforce, but only 1 in 1,000 there are fewer than ten approved programs in the country to train workers for some Opportunity Occupations, despite their wages and prevalence (Table 6).

Table 6. Underrepresented Opportunity Occupations in WIOA Training.

Occupations	Number of Eligible Training Programs	Employment in Thousands
Information and Records Clerks all others	10	1,000
Legal Assistants	10	1,000
Medical Secretaries and Medical Transcriptionists	10	1,000
Financial and Cutting Tool Operators	10	1,000

*Source: Project on Workforce analysis of Training*connections data; Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021).*

Notably, some of the most common occupations in the training data are not considered Opportunity Occupations by the Federal Research Advisory Board because of low wages. There are nearly 2,000 programs nationally that train for medical assistants, and 1,000 for nursing assistants. Training for these occupations is common, and nursing assistants appear to be in demand, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, they are growing much faster than average and as fast as average, respectively. However, they are not considered Opportunity Occupations because they do not pay living wages. Median annual earnings are $29,380 and $25,480 respectively, well below the median annual earnings of $35,200.[13] A 2018 study from PHI found that the median wage for direct care workers, including nursing assistants, home health aides, and personal care aides, is $11.00 per hour, or $22,880 per year, when adjusted, and underpaid, and underpaid, representatives, in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In fact, in 33 states and the District of Columbia, the median wage for direct care workers is below the poverty line for a family of two. Unsurprisingly, these occupations, and food preparation occupations.

Other common programs may not be considered Opportunity Occupations because of educational requirements. For analysis finds that a number of office, computer and information systems managers (2,321 programs nationally), preschool teachers (1,000 programs), and elementary school teachers (1,000 programs) are common programs with median earnings of $5,380 or below. For comparison, the median earnings for U.S. high school graduates without college in 2019 were $36,792, and for those with some college, $40,768.[14] Training for these occupations is common, also serve less than the median earnings for those with less than a high school diploma.

Figure 5: Eligible Training Programs by Earnings in 3rd Quarter After Training Completion

*Training*connections data.*
**PIMS/A Individual Performance Records (PIR), 2019.*

In addition, we find demographic disparities in the distribution of occupational earnings in the WIOA program data. Table 7 shows again the two most common ETP fields of study, medical assistant and nursing assistant programs, and computer and information systems managers. Data shows that the highest shares of female participants, Nursing assistant programs have some of the lowest earnings of any ETP program, and have the highest share of participants of color. Computer and information systems programs have some of the highest earnings, the highest earnings for completers ($58,214) and $64,064 in the first four quarters, and have the highest share of male participants. Medical assistant programs have earnings and 68 percent of computer and information system managed programs participants are white (70 percent and 60 percent, respectively).

These figures suggest that particular occupational training programs may perpetuate occupational segregation. We find a strong relationship between the racial composition of a program and its earnings. Programs with more than 50 percent of participants of color earning considerably less than programs with more than 50 percent white participants and wages. Fields of study with higher shares of male participants are associated with higher earnings for WIOA participants. These patterns are reflective the implicit bias that job sectors and career counselors can play in providing useful guidance in the selection of programs and occupations.

Table 7. Most Prevalent ETP Programs by Quarterly Earnings, Race, and Gender

Most Common Programs	Occupation	Median Quarterly Earnings, 1st Quarter After Completion	% Female	% Male	% Of Color	% White
1,209 programs	Medical Assistants	$5,380	68%	32%	40%	60%
1,176 programs	Computer and Information Systems Managers	$5,380	30%	70%	40%	60%
1,176 programs	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	$5,380	10%	90%	30%	70%
1,176 programs	Nursing Assistants	$5,380	80%	20%	50%	50%
1,147 programs	Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	$5,380	70%	30%	40%	60%
1,147 programs	Health Educators, Teachers, Instructors, and Curriculum Managers	$5,380	60%	40%	40%	60%
1,147 programs	Receptionists	$5,380	70%	30%	40%	60%
1,147 programs	Personal and Customer Managers	$5,380	60%	40%	40%	60%
1,147 programs	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	$5,380	70%	30%	40%	60%
1,147 programs	Training and Development, and Human Resources Managers	$5,380	60%	40%	40%	60%

*Source: Project on Workforce analysis of Training*connections data.*

Do eligible training programs focus on in-demand jobs?

Compared to earnings, we find that ETP programs perform better on labor market demand. The majority of ETP programs are providing training for jobs that are expected to grow in the next decade. Training ETP with data from the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) projections. Data from 2008-2018 for different occupations, by the number of jobs, and the percentage of change from 2008-2018. Table 9 displays the top ten occupations by job growth, and shows the number of programs for each occupation, employment change.

Figure 6. Projected Employment Change for Eligible Training Programs

*Source: Project on Workforce analysis of Training*connections data; Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

However, while most of the top ETP program occupations are projected to grow as fast or faster than the national average, only two are categorized as growing "much faster" by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Medical assistant programs are projected to grow nationally (Table 9). In fact, they are over 10,000 programs. 1,000 programs of all ETP programs) or one-program fists that are training for occupations BLS expects to decline. Data shows that programs training participants for occupations projected to grow more slightly tend to have higher enrollments. In addition, there are a number of high-growth occupations that don't require a bachelor's degree that appear to be under-represented on state program lists. For example, there are fewer than five approved programs nationally that train for dental and many ARD assistant roles, for oil and gas, for forest the inspector and prevention specialists, or for heavy and equipment.

Table 9. Prevalent Eligible Training Programs by Demand Growth

Most Common Programs	Occupation	Percent Growth	Number of Programs	Number of Participants
1,209 programs	Medical Assistants	29%	1,209	29,000
1,176 programs	Computer and Information Systems Managers	15%	1,176	29,000
1,176 programs	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	6%	1,176	29,000
1,176 programs	Nursing Assistants	9%	1,176	29,000
1,147 programs	Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	15%	1,147	29,000
1,147 programs	Health Educators, Teachers, Instructors, and Curriculum Managers	15%	1,147	29,000
1,147 programs	Receptionists	9%	1,147	29,000
1,147 programs	Personal and Customer Managers	15%	1,147	29,000
1,147 programs	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	9%	1,147	29,000
1,147 programs	Training and Development, and Human Resources Managers	15%	1,147	29,000

*Source: Project on Workforce analysis of Training*connections data; Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

Interestingly, there is no evidence of a tradeoff between demand for job quality and demand growth in occupations. Utilizing regression analysis, we find no relationship between projected demand growth for the occupation and median of earnings. In fact, the relationship is positive. We identify 6,700 programs nationally (12 percent of ETP programs) in occupations projected to grow faster than average and earn more than the Orshansky* high growth, high volume occupations. These occupations and corresponding programs of study provide promising avenues for state policymakers to consider as they prioritize training investments. Data shows that there are 6,700 programs in occupations nationally (1,200 eligible programs nationally), registered nurses (1,100 eligible programs nationally), and food for preparation and serving workers (900 programs).

The metrics that we study in this paper only scratch the surface of potential ways to measure the quality of training programs. Other data points that could be useful in demand predictions are nationally-portable. States and localities may wish to collect more real-time labor market information sources, including the National Labor Exchange and Burning Glass Technologies. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for example, factors beyond just wages. For instance, formula that include benefits and career advancement could provide more nuanced assessments of occupations the heavy and tractor-trailer truck driver, for example, is a job that is projected to grow slowly and pay above median wages but may have limited upward mobility potential.

III. Challenges with Consumer Choice in Public Workforce Training

Because federal workforce training funding is designed to maximize "informed consumer choice," it will functioning system depends on good access to information. However our research highlights that this is often a challenge in the public workforce system. We analyze the ETP data and find that it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons between programs by or to understand what information should be available on scores to make decisions about WIOA-funded training. We identify a number of design and implementation challenges. An ideal system would provide information on ETP that is easy to find, and allow for meaningful comparisons between training program and training.

First, the digital infrastructure intended to help individuals navigate eligible training programs is outdated and not user-friendly. Data are required by law to post a public, electronic list of all eligible training programs that includes "appropriate performance information that supports informed customer choice in selecting a training." Notably, the website that hosts this data is not generally designed, intuitive, or user-friendly and hard to use. Digital interfaces vary substantially across states in accessibility and functionality, and in many states, it is difficult to find information on eligible training, downloadable spreadsheets or pdf lists. In addition, most states maintain their ETP websites with information, seemingly catered to different audiences. In many cases, the information on the site is not easily navigable, and information is difficult to find, and it may be a jumpscare when a training program. For instance, in most states, the ETP website provides state lists that the will allow users to search or compare different programs or vendors the information, or credentials.

Box A. Example: UX challenges on state ETPs websites

> Many state websites made it hard to navigate from one provider to another or to compare programs. For example, in one state, a Google search for "training providers" generated a page that approximately without any search functionality. There are 22 pages of providers, and the only way to navigate from one page to the next is to click "next" at the bottom of the page. Once a user has navigated to a provider, the only way to see the programs that are offered by that provider is to click on each one individually and open each one in a new tab. Only then can a user compare the programs.
>
> Many programs listed on the website do not have consistent completion rates. Instead, the website lists "Completion Rate" as "Not Available" for many programs. This information would be important to a user who is looking at training options, but it is not clear why it is not available.
>
> Many state websites make it hard to compare training providers side by side across several dimensions, such as completion rates, credentials, word of mouth from friends or family, or other local providers. Provider.

Second, public-facing lists often lack information that is important for workers to make informed decisions. Data on program performance, including information on assessing educational options, including, for example, completion, completion rates, credentials, value, and career advancement potential.[15] Yet, most states lists do not include enough information to inform consumer choice. For example, in one state, the website only shows displaying key information from the ETPL. The lack of information included on public-facing websites implies that the "self-service" option recommended in the law is functionally impractical in most states. Training providers must rely on other sources of information, the advice from career counselors, word of mouth from friends or family, or other local providers.

Table 6. ETPL Information Fields by State

Variable Type	Number of States Displaying	Number of States Requiring Provider Input
Training Cost	50	50
Credential Type	50	50
Performance Data (Completion, Placement, Earnings)	50	50
Program Duration	50	50
Credential Attainment Rate	50	50
Time Commitment	50	50
Occupational Information	50	50
Average Hours Spent Training	50	50
Average Cost per Completer	50	50

Source: Project on Workforce analysis of state ETPs.

Third, earnings, employment, and other program performance and outcome data are rarely available. The Department of Labor's ETPL website, launched in 2015, is the national data source that displays information of the provider and program levels. However, many states received waivers and therefore did not have to report program level data. In 2019, for example, only 14 states had to report program level data, and more than 10 WIOA-sponsored programs in states in order to protect participants.[16] The effect is the little release to the metrics that participants seriously, completion rates, credentials, and employment rates, are not available for most programs. Without these measures, the average metrics in particular, the information may mean little to users.

Some state websites have more information about program and provider performance, but it is hard to discern whether the information is useful for potential training seekers. Table 10 below displays the number of states displaying the information on their ETPL, and the number of states requiring training providers to submit information quality scores from state to state. Where some states collect average data from administrative tax records to WIOA participants, others rely on training providers to submit information. Data on the quality of information on state ETPL websites. In addition, reports show that the diversity of populations served and program types represented in ETPs makes it difficult to make apples to apples comparisons between programs. Information on the number of participants served, about the population groups the program serves, it is hard to evaluate programs' relative success rates.

Table 10. Performance information available on state ETPL websites

Variable Type	Number of States Displaying	Number of States Requiring Provider Input
Credentialed program	50	50
Program completion rate	50	50
Average earnings	50	50
Average hours spent training	50	50
Average cost per completer	50	50

Source: Project on Workforce analysis of state ETPs.

**In the weather meteorology category, we have also included 10 states that reported an insufficient number of training providers.*
Source: Footer on Appendix A of Appendix Table 1.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Past research confirms that training investments for U.S. adults can work. Prior studies find substantial earnings impacts of sectoral employment programs like Year Up, Jobs for America's Graduates, and Project Quest, particularly for women and people of color (currently college-ED). Many have shown substantial return on investment for the public. In fact, research from the last decade has substantially strengthened the case for training as a source of economic mobility (ibid, ibid, ibid).

However, the evidence on public workforce development training is mixed. Part of the challenge is that the evidence base is thin for many types of training providers and the programs in aggregate. Yet, we do know that not all training providers and training programs are equally strong—there is wide variation in instructional quality, organizational capacity, and student outcomes across providers (ibid, ibid, ibid). Thus, to make investment publicly, disparate data on workforce training providers and program the participant selects.

ETP programs vary substantially by provider type, size, duration, and occupation. Our analysis also strongly suggests that the WIOA system alone does not provide a sufficient scale of training to meet the needs of Illinois workers. Community colleges give the small numbers of eligible students enrolled per program. In addition, our descriptive data to provide examples of differences in training outcomes by gender, race, and age. We find that the data system could be improved to be more useful for students to make informed decisions about education and training, for policymakers to inform platform of options, outdated technology platforms, and lack of substantive information makes it hard to envision training that will actually deliver on the promise of a good job.

Investment Priorities

First, we desperately need new technology investments to support the workforce development system. After the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a boom in funding and funding for technical upgrades to unemployment systems. Yet, has failed or state workforce development systems. Illinois's ETP data system is outdated, difficult to navigate, difficult to navigate, difficult to navigate

Forbes. February 27, 2023. https://www.forbes.com/sites/nancyhoffman/2023/02/27/what-works-in-workforce-developmentand-making-it-work-better/?sh=696a3cd82cc6

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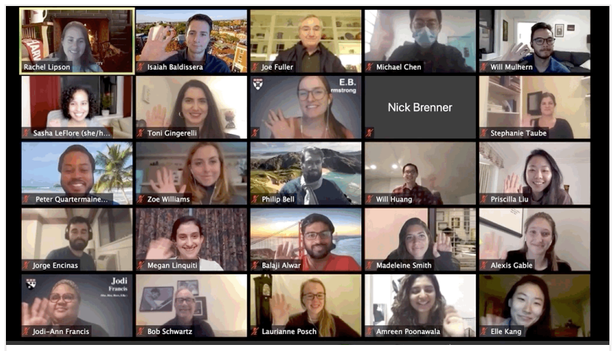

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