



**BOLD
THINKERS
DRIVING
REAL-WORLD
IMPACT**

Helping Workers Connect with Jobs and Employers



Some under- or unemployed individuals lack the basic or technical skills to qualify for available jobs, and for them, additional training may be a solution. Others may have the skills to compete for jobs but limited knowledge of the labor market, how to identify appropriate work opportunities or how to apply for and gain employment. Still others may have years of successful job experience. But if they are out of work due to incarceration, disability or military service, they may need help making and retaining connections with jobs and employers. For more than 30 years Abt has evaluated policies and programs designed to improve job seekers' connections to employers and made important contributions to the evidence about them.

Abt's current work identifies more effective and efficient ways to design and operate programs that assist people in finding jobs and connecting with employers, especially for low-income individuals, veterans and the disabled.

Selected/Featured Projects:

Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs typically provide job search assistance (JSA) in addition to their income-support role. JSA strategies can include group, one-on-one, or self-directed activities. While there is evidence JSA strategies increase employment, the impacts are modest. Many recipients struggle to find and keep jobs despite the assistance. Moreover, there is little evidence about what type of JSA strategies are more effective in improving employment and earnings outcomes for cash-assistance recipients.

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services sponsored the JSA Strategies Evaluation to examine the relative effectiveness of different job search approaches for transitioning TANF and other cash assistance recipients to work. The evaluation's impact study uses a random assignment research design to compare

Selected Expertise

- Experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation approaches, including multi-arm experimental studies
- Implementation studies that provide lessons for policy and practice by examining program design and operations, organizational capacity and scale and partnership experiences
- Cost-benefit studies
- Collaboration and coordination with practitioners and policymakers to ensure results are relevant and used in the field

employment and public assistance outcomes of different JSA approaches. The evaluation's implementation study examines service delivery and operations.

Impact Evaluation of Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA)

The REA program provides funds for states to help Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants speed their return to work and shorten the length of time they are receiving UI benefits. The program brings UI claimants into American Job Centers for an assessment and referrals to reemployment services. Abt is conducting a four-state study that assigns claimants to one of several treatment groups, each group emphasizing different components of the REA program. Funded by the Department of Labor, this study design enables Abt to assess the overall effectiveness of REA, as well as which components have the greatest impacts and for whom. The study team also conducted an implementation study to understand how states carry out the REA program and program variation.

Stay at Work (SAW)/Return to Work (RTW) Models and Strategy Study

Abt is conducting a design project to evaluate SAW/RTW models and strategies for workers experiencing disability or injury. Workers with these conditions have been exiting the labor force at increasing rates, resulting in increased applications to Social Security disability benefit programs. Abt is developing five options for testing SAW and RTW strategies to learn which interventions can keep workers at their jobs after an injury or illness. Sponsored by the Department of Labor, Abt is conducting a scan of the field for existing SAW/RTW programs, reviewing the evidence base behind SAW/RTW programs, and consulting with a Technical Working Group to gather diverse input on promising strategies. Abt is analyzing administrative data to understand the pathways for applying for disability insurance and to profile the population of potential SAW/RTW program participants.

Evaluation of the American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI)

Apprenticeship combines job-related technical instruction with additional on-the-job learning in a structured, paid, work setting, is a longstanding but generally underutilized approach to job training in the U.S. In an effort to expand apprenticeship use and scope, the Department of Labor launched the AAI and provided five-year grants to 46 grantees develop and expand apprenticeship programs in both traditional and new sectors and occupations. The Employment and Training Administration has contracted with Abt to build evidence about grantee activities and about the effectiveness of apprenticeship for participants and employers. The AAI evaluation includes four sub-studies:

- The Implementation Study will describe how grantee programs develop and perform and will develop lessons about effective practices and challenges in developing new apprenticeships
- The Outcomes Study will document in-program and post-program participant outcomes, particularly around employment, wages and earnings, as well as in-program and post-program credentialing
- The Return on Investment Study will estimate the costs and benefits of apprenticeship to employers
- The Demonstration Study will examine which recruitment methods are most effective in engaging employers to offer apprenticeships.

Evaluation of Round 4 Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training Grants (TAACCCT)

Community colleges are major providers of occupational training in the U.S. Funded by the Department of Labor, the TAACCCT grants program aims to enhance the capacity of community colleges to develop innovative programs to train unemployed and under-employed individuals for high-wage, high-skill jobs. Abt Associates is conducting an evaluation of Round 4 of TAACCCT that: 1) documents and assesses training and employment outcomes for students; 2) provides grantees with technical assistance and peer-learning opportunities; and, 3) includes a study of employers' attitudes and assessments of TAACCCT.

Contact Us

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Bold Ideas. Real Results.

Abt Associates is an engine for social impact, dedicated to moving people from vulnerability to security. Harnessing the power of data and our experts' grounded insights, we provide research, consulting, and technical services globally in the areas of health, environmental and social policy, technology, and international development.



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