



Evaluation of Strategies Used in the TechHire and Strengthening Working Families Initiative Grant Programs – Short Paper and Issue Briefs Summaries

SUMMARY

In 2016, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the [Employment and Training Administration](#) (ETA) and funded contractor Westat and its partner, MDRC, to conduct the *Evaluation of Strategies Used in the TechHire and Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) Grant Programs*. The evaluation includes three distinct components. (1) The implementation evaluation examined how grantees implemented the programs, challenges and successes, and best practices for future programs. (2) The outcomes evaluation is painting a rich descriptive picture of participants' training program outcomes, such as training completion and credential receipt, and employment and earnings after the program. (3) The impact study (randomized controlled trial or RCT) examines, for a subset of 5 grantees, the impacts on participation in and completion of training, receipt of credentials, use of services, employment and earnings, job quality, and financial status and other life outcomes.

This document summarizes findings from four publications from the outcomes and impact studies on program outcomes, predictors of training completion, post-training employment pathways, and the effectiveness of the programs in generating impacts on outcomes such as employment and earnings at three years following random assignment.

In 2016, the H-1B TechHire and SWFI grants were created as part of a broad agenda to reduce employers' need to hire temporary workers from outside the United States through the H-1B visa program. These grant programs aimed to achieve this by funding local organizations to offer accessible training and supports to unemployed and underemployed potential U.S. workers who had barriers to training, creating a pipeline of workers able to fill jobs in the high-tech fields such as IT, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare that employ large numbers of H-1B workers. The opportunity to develop such programs and apply for TechHire and SWFI grants was open to partnerships consisting of workforce agencies, education and training providers, and business-related nonprofit organizations. In June 2016, DOL's ETA awarded \$150 million to 39 TechHire grants to provide services in 25 states, and \$54 million to 14 SWFI grants to provide services in 13 states. Programs were expected to operate for 4 years, roughly from July 2016 to June 2020.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the learning agenda process. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [community college](#) and [employment and training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.



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KEY TAKEAWAYS

Three-Year Impacts of the TechHire and Strengthening Working Families Initiative Grant Programs (impact study report)

- **Through three years of follow up, the TechHire and SWFI programs did not have an effect on participants' employment or earnings.** In Year 3, around 76 percent of participants in the TechHire/SWFI group and 80 percent of participants in the control group were employed at some point. Participants in both groups earned around \$22,000, on average, in Year 3. There were no statistically significant differences among subgroups examined (level of attachment to labor market at enrollment, grant program, or grantee).

Employment and Earnings Outcomes of TechHire and Strengthening Working Families Initiative Grant Program Participants (outcomes study report)

- **Employment levels increased modestly from the quarters before program entry to eight quarters after entry (64% to 69%).** Ninety percent of participants were employed at some point during the 2 years after program entry; however, about 20 percent of participants worked only 1 or 2 or no quarters.
- **On average, participants earned \$24,845 per year in the 2 years after entry, with median annual earnings of \$18,233.** Only 32 percent of participants had average annual earnings of \$30,000 or more. Characteristics associated with earnings of \$30,000 or more included: age 25+; some college or technical education at program entry; employed at program entry; training in IT or advanced manufacturing; and racial identity of White, non-Hispanic or Other.
- **Fifty-nine percent of participants experienced an increase in earnings from the year before program entry to the second year after program entry.** The average increase was \$8,087 (adjusted for inflation). Earnings increases were larger for men; White, non-Hispanic participants; participants under age 25; and participants with at least some college or technical education. Participants who trained in IT and advanced manufacturing had greater earnings gains than those who trained in health care.

Identifying Participant Characteristics Associated with Completion of Training for High-Tech Jobs Using Classification and Regression Trees (CART) (issue brief)

- **Highest level of education achieved was the most important variable predicting training completion.** The subgroup of participants with some college or technical education had the highest training completion rate of all of the nodes. This suggests that bridge programs may be needed to help participants with only a high school diploma gain the skills needed to transition to training.



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- **Other participant characteristics related to training completion** were race/ethnicity, age, income, employment at program entry, and duration of unemployment.
- **The lowest training completion rates** were observed among youth ages 16 to 24 who had a high school diploma or less, were non-Hispanic, low income, and unemployed for less than 27 weeks at program entry.

Common Employment and Earnings Pathways for Individuals Eligible for Short-Term Training Programs: Findings from the TechHire/SWFI Evaluation (issue brief)

- **Approximately one-third of people in the impact study (TechHire/SWFI participants and the control group) followed a pathway defined by having stable employment with relatively high earnings** (i.e., having earnings above the quarterly median earnings amount among those with earnings). Slightly smaller proportions of people in the impact study followed a pathway of mostly employed with low earnings (27%) and mostly not employed (27%). Twelve percent were employed with low earnings then not employed.
- **Average characteristics of the people in each pathway** are consistent with what is already known about trends in labor market outcomes over time. For example, those in the mostly employed with high earnings pathway were more likely to be employed at the time of study entry and had the highest average earnings in the year prior to enrollment. Similar rates of people in the TechHire/SWFI and control groups followed each of the identified pathways.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

TIMEFRAME: 2016-2024

SUBMITTED BY: Westat and MDRC

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