



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Research Portfolio Project

SUMMARY

In 2020, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with [the Employment and Training Administration \(ETA\)](#) to fund contractor Mathematica to conduct a knowledge development study to generate short- and long-term research options for the Department of Labor as it seeks to build an evidence base for continuous improvement of ETA programs and services.

Between November 2020 and April 2021, researchers consulted stakeholders representing state and local workforce systems, business and industry, workforce advocates, organized labor, postsecondary education, and federal agencies through group discussions and an expert panel. In total, researchers engaged 105 individuals from 53 organizations and 11 subject matter experts in one April 2021 meeting.

Researchers organized conversations around two topics: workforce service strategies and the changing nature of work. The goal of each discussion was to understand what research topics stakeholders needed to know more about to facilitate their work and what additional evidence on workforce development would be useful to them. Participants in the expert panel provided additional knowledge on evidence gaps and testable strategies in priority topic areas.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the Department's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [employment and training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Stakeholders' **five priority workforce service strategy topics** included work-based learning and apprenticeship; career pathways, advancement, and stackable credentials; integrated service and co-enrollment; employer service and engagement; and career planning and navigation.
- The **five priority topics regarding the changing world of work** included job changes related to COVID-19; changes in the value of credentials; remote services; data infrastructure; and remote work.
- **Two cross-cutting themes emerged during discussions on many topics: the need to consider diversity, equity, and inclusion, and tradeoffs between short- and long-term research needs.** Stakeholders discussed the development of diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces, and suggested using data from the public workforce system to determine whether certain groups are more or less likely to receive services and whether career pathways support





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or restrict equitable career access. Separately, DOL must weigh the need to perform rigorous, long-term impact studies against the need to address time-sensitive evidence gaps with shorter-term but possibly less rigorous studies.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

TIMEFRAME: 2020-2024

SUBMITTED BY: Mathematica

DATE PREPARED: December 2021

PARTNER AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

SPONSOR: Chief Evaluation Office

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