

# ETA Research and Evaluation Projects Organized by Priorities as Determined by the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan

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## Priority 1 - Understanding Changing Labor Markets

- *Green Jobs and Health Care Impact Study*

This random assignment evaluation examines the impacts of participant's post-program employment and training/education outcomes provided under grants awarded with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009 (ARRA) funds. Specifically, the evaluation examines four grants awarded as a result of two ARRA Solicitations for Grant Applications (SGA): *Green Jobs, High Growth, and Health Care* and *Pathways out of Poverty*. For more info contact: [ennis.michelle@dol.gov](mailto:ennis.michelle@dol.gov)

- *Random Assignment Evaluation of the Self-Employment Training (SET) Demonstration*

People who have been dislocated from their jobs may be interested in starting their own businesses as a way to earn a living. Starting a small business is difficult, especially for people who lack experience operating a business or access to credit. It can also be especially challenging for workers whose prior work experience is strongly tied to wage or salary employment. The SET demonstration provides assistance to dislocated workers interested in creating businesses in their fields of expertise. The SET demonstration is designed to test a model in which dislocated workers interested in self-employment have access to dedicated self-employment advisors who assess their needs on an ongoing basis and provide tailored support to guide their way through self-employment. The intervention also includes the availability of seed funds of up to \$1,000 to assist participants with their immediate business capital needs while they wait for micro-loan applications or other funding sources to be approved. The seed capital is intended to help participants pay for start-up equipment and supplies, or help defray business establishment costs that could otherwise prevent them from establishing their businesses and becoming reemployed. Prior research has indicated that access to seed capital may increase the likelihood of success, especially among individuals entering into self-employment from unemployment. The demonstration will be rigorously tested through an experimental design to determine the impacts of the SET intervention on employment outcomes for dislocated workers. For more info contact: [javar.janet@dol.gov](mailto:javar.janet@dol.gov)

## Priority 2 - Identifying Effective Strategies

- *Random Assignment Evaluation of the Enhanced Transition Jobs (ETJD) Demonstration*

The ETJD is a comprehensive program providing transitional jobs to non-custodial parents and ex-offenders, all of whom face barriers to long-term, self-sustaining employment. The goal of the demonstration program is to improve engagement with the workforce and also to improve relationships with family members. This project is part of the Administration's Fatherhood Initiative. Through this evaluation, ETA hopes to determine the impact of comprehensive transitional jobs programs on these populations with respect to their employment and earnings, criminal behavior, and also their family engagement. In addition, the evaluation will inform ETA, policy makers and service providers of ways that agencies and organizations working with the public workforce system can better connect employers with populations facing numerous barriers to long-term employment. For more info contact: [pederson.eileen@dol.gov](mailto:pederson.eileen@dol.gov) for more information, please click [here](#).

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- New Concepts
  - *Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) – National Evaluation Coordination*

WIF “the fund” is one of several new Federal grant programs in which grantor agencies support projects that seek to design evidence-based program strategies. WIF grants are expected to develop service delivery and/or systemic innovations that would positively affect the workforce system. This study coordinates evaluation activities of the 26 WIF grantees and provides a common evaluation data set, synthesis of findings from all evaluations and meta-analysis and report if the strategy is feasible. For more info contact: [Schiffes.charlotte@dol.gov](mailto:Schiffes.charlotte@dol.gov)

- Youth
  - *Young Parents Demonstration Impact Study*

This study examines the impact of enhancements to workforce development programs on the employment and education outcomes of Young Parent Demonstration grantees. The Young Parent Demonstration is designed so that participants are randomly assigned to receive the program’s regular services or the regular services plus additional services, thus allowing estimation of the impacts of the additional services. Specifically, this evaluation will examine key issues regarding implementation and operation of programs to address the employment and training needs of young parents and measure the impact of various grantees "bump-up" treatments on immediate outcomes, such as mentoring. For more info contact: [ennis.michelle@dol.gov](mailto:ennis.michelle@dol.gov)

- *Evaluations of ETA Grants Serving Young Offenders*

For those leaving incarceration, overcoming the barriers to successful reentry may mean the difference between living a healthy and fulfilling life in a community and facing instability and potential homelessness. Understanding the ways federal programs and systems interact with the formerly incarcerated is critical to helping individuals overcome these barriers. Because one in three Americans has a criminal record, it is important that employers and job seekers understand the facts around the role of a criminal record in making hiring decisions. The Young Offenders Evaluation will examine all recent ETA grants serving Young Offenders and Ex-Offenders with the purpose of designing and implementing a rigorous random assignment impact evaluation. The grants to be considered include: Serving Juvenile Offenders in High-Poverty, High-Crime Communities; and Face Forward Serving Juvenile Offenders Grants; and Serving Young Adult Ex-Offenders through Training and Service-Learning. For more info contact: [nieves-cartegena@dol.gov](mailto:nieves-cartegena@dol.gov)

- *Random Assignment Evaluation of National YouthBuild Program*

YouthBuild is a youth and community development program that simultaneously addresses several core issues facing low-income communities: disengaged youth, low education achievement, weak links to the workplace, crime, and the need for leadership development as well as low-income housing. It is principally focused on providing disadvantaged youth the education and employment skills, and personal development, necessary to achieve economic self-sufficiency in construction-related occupations in high demand while increasing the supply of permanent affordable housing for homeless and low-income individuals and families. This randomized control trial evaluation of the YouthBuild program will examine the impacts of different program models and delivery systems on participants (such as degree attainment,

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earnings, and incarceration) and differences in these impacts across different sub-populations. For more info contact: [pederson.eileen@dol.gov](mailto:pederson.eileen@dol.gov)

- Adults
  - *Random Assignment Evaluation of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs*

The WIA authorizes funding for several programs, including the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs. These programs are designed to assist individuals gain and retain employment and advance along a career path. The evaluation will provide net impacts on employment, job retention and earnings, and an analysis of the costs vs. the benefits of services, according to funding stream (Adult and Dislocated Worker programs). Within the funding streams, the evaluation will examine net impacts by service level (core, intensive, and training) and by population subgroups. At a minimum, subgroups will include age groups (minimum of three per funding stream), race/ethnicity, and gender. This evaluation involves comparing the outcomes of WIA participants who are eligible to receive core, intensive and training services to the outcomes of similar individuals randomly assigned to one of two groups allowed limited services: either core-only services or core and intensive-only services. For more info contact: [pederson.eileen@dol.gov](mailto:pederson.eileen@dol.gov)

- *Random Assignment Evaluation of the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders (RExO) Initiative*

The RExO Initiative consists of a portfolio of grant projects providing pre- and post-release services to youth and adult offenders. These demonstration projects are designed to replicate successful models and practices found in community and faith-based environments and other government systems, but that have not been tested for their adaptability in the public workforce system. A total of 23 faith-based grantees are participating in this random assignment evaluation of the RExO Initiative. Each of the grantees seeks to reduce recidivism by helping reentering, non-violent prisoners find work and stable housing after they return to their communities, thereby strengthening their communities. Through employment-centered programs, they have provided mentoring and employability development as well as a variety of related services, including workforce development, basic skills remediation, mentoring, counseling and case management, legal aid, job training, subsidized jobs, referral to transitional housing and mental and substance abuse services. This randomized control trial evaluation of the RExO Initiative will examine the impacts of different program models and delivery systems on participants (such as job attainment, earnings, educational attainment, skills development, and subsequent incarceration) and differences in these impacts across different sub-populations. For more info contact: [pederson.eileen@dol.gov](mailto:pederson.eileen@dol.gov)

### Priority 3 - Improving Workforce System Infrastructure

- *Short-Time Compensation (STC) – Employer Survey*

In February 2012, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, was signed into law. Section 2164 requires the Secretary of Labor to survey employers in all States to determine their level of

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interest in participating in the STC Program. The STC Program, also known as "work sharing" or "shared work", provides an opportunity for employers to reduce layoffs by temporarily reducing work hours of some employees. STC provides pro-rated unemployment insurance (UI) benefits for workers whose hours of work have been temporarily reduced. For more info contact [nieves-cartagena@dol.gov](mailto:nieves-cartagena@dol.gov)

- *Feasibility Study on the Effective Use of Technical Assistance (TA)*

TA is a succinct term for the array of services provided by ETA national and regional office staff to state and local grantees (formula and discretionary) for the long-term purpose of maximizing positive outcomes for workforce system customers. ETA devotes a significant amount of resources to TA activities. However, evidence of the effectiveness of the TA provided to states and other grantees, and what specific TA strategies or approaches are the most effective, is sparse. Having a better understanding of TA's effectiveness and the costs associated with it can inform ETA's strategic decision making and management of TA provision. The proposed evaluation approach envisions several phases with each phase building toward an evaluation of TA's impact on participant outcomes. This statement of work is for only the first phase of the approach to further define technical assistance, understand who initiates and receives TA, how TA is provided, and how TA can be further evaluated. For more info contact; [salas-kos.gloria@dol.gov](mailto:salas-kos.gloria@dol.gov)

- *Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) for Consumer*

The USDOL Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) and ETA are collaborating to assess the feasibility of establishing scorecards for post-secondary training programs that will provide consumers with information that can be used to make informed choices about education and training options.

ETA provides WDQI grants to states to encourage the development of and enhancements to longitudinal administrative databases that integrate workforce and education data. Along with State Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grants issued by the U.S. Department of Education, the WDQI grants provide states with the opportunity to operationalize and use linked administrative data for performance management and other analytic purposes. Ideally the linked administrative data systems include information from pre-kindergarten, through elementary and secondary school, into post-secondary education, and then into the labor force. A second source of results-oriented information on training programs is state ETPL. WIA requires states to maintain a list of education and training providers eligible to receive Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) under Title I-B of WIA, therefore, every state has an ETPL.

This project will involve: 1) surveying all state workforce agency ETPL coordinators to obtain updated details about the ETPL, how it is updated, and how it is used and received by customers and community colleges; 2) contacting state WDQI leads in states that are already moving to develop scorecards to document their scorecard system details and relationship to ETPL, and identify lessons that may be useful for other states; and 3) engaging 2 or 3 additional states with mature WDQI-SDLS systems to develop prototype training program scorecards (e.g., collaboratively develop a technological plan for scorecards, provide additional IT resources if necessary, design the graphical dimensions of a scorecard and beta test it (internet accessibility), including possibly testing the system using student data from Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grantees that have agreed to do so. For more info contact: [muller.richard@dol.gov](mailto:muller.richard@dol.gov)

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- *Unemployment Insurance (UI) Connectivity Project*

The connectivity project will assess the implementation of pilots to realize the national vision for connecting the UI, WIA and Employment Services (ES) systems and innovate around that vision. There are two components of the study: evaluation of pilots around the first three transformational elements (common front door, real-time triage, and skill transferability) and the fourth pilot (use of social media). For more info contact: [muller.richard@dol.gov](mailto:muller.richard@dol.gov)

- *Unemployment Insurance Exhaustee Study*

The study of UI Exhaustees will focus on those who exhausted all benefits under all programs during the period from January 2010 through December 2012. The purpose of the study is to examine the characteristics and behavior of UI exhaustees. For more info contact: [muller.richard@dol.gov](mailto:muller.richard@dol.gov)

### Priority 4 - Addressing the Needs of Special Populations

- *Technology Based Learning(TBL)/Disabled Vets*

The project will focus primarily on training (not on access to employment services) and the goal is to create and conduct a demonstration project with a rigorous design (involving randomly selected treatment and control groups). The demonstration will focus on a population of interest to USDOL (such as youth, dislocated workers, and disadvantaged adults) and may involve testing different components of an intervention. It will include an analysis of different subgroups, including a subgroup of disabled veterans who have a common type of disability (if enough individuals can be found to have sufficient sample size). The project will build on research being conducted in other USDOL projects (such as in the larger TBL Initiative, TAA community college grants, and WIF grants) as well as in projects undertaken by other federal agencies and the broader research community. A critical element of this project will involve understanding services available to disabled veterans in the workforce investment system. For more info contact: [muller.richard@dol.gov](mailto:muller.richard@dol.gov) or [schifferes.charlotte@dol.gov](mailto:schifferes.charlotte@dol.gov)

- *Army Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Military Members (UCX) Claimants Initiative Evaluation*

The purpose of this study is to conduct an evaluation of the grants awarded under the Army UCX Claimants Initiative. Four state agencies (Illinois Department of Employment Security, Georgia Department of Labor, North Carolina Department of Commerce/Division of Workforce Solutions, and Texas Workforce Commission) each received a grant in the amount of \$750,000 to participate in the initiative. The evaluation will examine the extent to which both individual projects and the overall objectives of the initiative were achieved. It will also document the project activities undertaken for possible replication in other states. The evaluation will answer specific questions related to how veterans receive services through the Army UCX Claimants Initiative, as well as broader questions related to how veterans receive services in American Job Centers, their characteristics, service receipt, and employment outcomes. For more info contact: [javar.janet@dol.gov](mailto:javar.janet@dol.gov)

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- *JOBs Innovation Accelerator (JIAC) and Advanced Manufacturing (AM-JIAC)*

Both of the Jobs Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing-Jobs Innovation and Accelerator (JIAC and AM-JIAC) initiatives support the development and implementation of locally driven economic development strategies. Department of Commerce, Small Business Administration and ETA coordinate resources to support the development of self-identified, high-growth clusters and accelerate the benefits of regional cluster-based economic development, including business formation and expansion, high-wage job growth, increased exports, and higher incomes for all residents. The study being conducted for the JIAC and AM-JIAC is a process evaluation that focuses on the implementation plans, processes and strategies used to develop and accelerate regional economic development that translates into new jobs and increased wages through these regional partnerships. For more info contact: [salas-kos.gloria@dol.gov](mailto:salas-kos.gloria@dol.gov)

- *Temporary Employment of Foreign Workers in Specialty Occupations Visa (H-1B) Technical Skills Training (TST) Grants Evaluation*

A portion of funds collected when foreign workers obtain visas to work in the US are provided to ETA for grants to prepare US citizens for those positions. The TST evaluation aims to learn about the implementation and impacts of promising job-training programs that are operating with grants from ETA. An impact study will measure the effect of the grant-funded training programs on participants' employment, earnings, wages and job progression, as well as certification and credential attainment. An implementation study will examine program operations, including participant recruitment and enrollment practices, program services, and key partner roles and responsibilities. For more info contact: [salas-kos.gloria@dol.gov](mailto:salas-kos.gloria@dol.gov)

- *Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Licensing and Certification Demo*

The VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-76) directs the USDOL, Veterans Employment and Training Service, with support from the ETA, to carry out a credentialing demonstration project that facilitates the seamless transition of members of the Armed Forces from service on active duty to civilian credentialed employment. The Veterans' Licensing and Certification Occupations Demonstration Project builds on the current efforts of the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and USDOL by creating a framework that identifies and implements solutions and strategies required for reducing or eliminating licensing and certification barriers for veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce. Military service members on active duty are the beneficiaries of extensive high-quality training which prepares them to successfully perform in a wide range of occupational specialties. Some of these occupational specialties have direct equivalents in the civilian workforce. However, transitioning service members may not be able to attain the equivalent civilian positions when they leave the service because they lack the occupational credentials (i.e. licenses and certifications) that are required either by federal or state law or by a civilian employer to attain employment. For more info contact: [salas-kos.gloria@dol.gov](mailto:salas-kos.gloria@dol.gov)

- *Evaluation of Non-Traditional Occupations*

The Evaluation of Non-Traditional Occupations aims to better understand the strategies implemented to move women and minorities into non-traditional occupations. For more info contact: [javar.janet@dol.gov](mailto:javar.janet@dol.gov)

### **Priority 5 – Building Research Infrastructure and Support - (No Projects at this time)**

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