Targeted Help for the Hard-to-Employ: Outcomes of Two Philadelphia Welfare-to-Work Programs

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Overview of Presentation

- Background for the study
- Methodology
- Outcomes of participants
- Factors associated with outcomes
- Study conclusions
WtW Grants Program in Philadelphia

- Philadelphia’s WtW initiative targeted services based on need:
  - Job search program provided 1 month of services to the broad WtW-eligible population
  - Transitional work program provided up to 6 months of services to those with little or no work experience.

- Programs were designed to operate in sequence, but design was eventually modified.
Philadelphia Study: Part of National WtW Evaluation

- Main evaluation includes process and outcomes study of 11 WtW programs across the U.S.

- Special study in Philadelphia captured WtW efforts in more depth
  - Main evaluation includes only transitional work program
  - Special study includes both programs
Sample enrollment began in fall 1999 and continued until early 2001.

Data sources include:
- Baseline information forms
- Follow-up survey
- State administrative data
- Management information system data
Research Questions

- What were the outcomes of enrollees?
  - Employment
  - Earnings
  - TANF receipt

- What was associated with enrollees’ outcomes?
  - Background characteristics
  - Economic conditions
  - Program participation
Methodology

- Examine mean outcomes over time
- Focus on outcomes 6 quarters after program entry
- Use multiple regression techniques to control for influence of observable factors on outcomes
  - Background characteristics
  - Economic conditions
  - Programs involvement
Employment Rates Increased for Both Programs

Source: Administrative data from state of Pennsylvania.
Employment Unstable in Year After Program Entry

- Most had at least one spell of unemployment.
- One-quarter never worked.
- Of those who worked, many did not work for full year.
- Employment instability is typical of similar groups.
Earnings Increased

Source: Administrative data from state of Pennsylvania.
Rates of TANF Receipt Declined

Source: Administrative data from state of Pennsylvania.
Observable Factors Explain Some Outcomes

- Most of the difference in employment rates between programs was explained by observable factors.

- About half of the difference in earnings and TANF receipt was explained by observable factors.

- Factors associated with outcomes included:
  - Educational attainment
  - Prior earnings
  - Prior TANF receipt

- Observed factors do not explain all of the difference in the outcomes of participants.
The More Disadvantaged Fare Comparably

![Graph showing employment rates over time for different groups.](image)

**Source:** Administrative data from state of Pennsylvania.
Helping the Most Disadvantaged Remains a Challenge

Percent Employed

Program Entry

Quarter

-4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Job Search Completers
Job Search Noncompleters
Transitional Work Completers
Transitional Work Noncompleters

Source: Administrative data from state of Pennsylvania.
Conclusions

- Programs can target intensive services at the most disadvantaged.

- Services related to retention and advancement may help participants build on their employment experiences and achieve further gains.

- Further study is needed to determine effects of transitional work on participants’ outcomes.
For More Information

● Philadelphia outcomes report will be available at:

● For more on the national WtW evaluation, contact:
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