

# Reviewing the Evidence: What Works in Disability Employment Services

## Presenters

Priyanka Anand, Heinrich Hock, Gina Livermore  
Mathematica Policy Research

## Discussant

David Stapleton  
Mathematica Policy Research

Webinar  
June 22, 2017

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**STUDYING DISABILITY POLICY**

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# Welcome

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**Moderator**

**Craig Thornton**

**Mathematica**

# About the Center for Studying Disability Policy (CSDP)

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**CSDP was established by Mathematica in 2007 to provide the nation's leaders with the data necessary to shape disability policy and programs to fully meet the needs of all Americans with disabilities.**

# Today's Speakers

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**Priyanka Anand**  
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# Long-Term Outcomes for Transition-Age Youth with Mental Health Conditions Who Receive Postsecondary Education Support

Priyanka Anand and Todd Honeycutt

Presented at the Center for Studying Disability Policy  
forum on *Reviewing the Evidence: What Works in  
Disability Employment Services*

June 22, 2017

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# Disclaimer

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**The research reported herein was pursuant to a grant from the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) and was funded as part of the Disability Research Consortium. The findings and conclusions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not represent the views of SSA or any agency of the federal government.**

# Background

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- **State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies help people with disabilities achieve their employment goals**
- **Support for postsecondary education may improve employment outcomes**
- **Youth with mental health conditions (MHCs) are less likely to receive any VR services or college support than youth with other disabilities (Honeycutt et al. 2017)**

# Objective

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- **Examine the relationship between receiving VR support for postsecondary education and long-term outcomes for youth with MHCs**

# Research Questions

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- **How do long-term employment and earnings outcomes vary by receipt of postsecondary education support for transition-age youth with MHCs?**
- **How do federal disability benefits vary by receipt of postsecondary education support for transition-age youth with MHCs?**

# Past Literature

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- **Literature on how VR supports for postsecondary education affect the outcomes of people with disabilities: results are mixed**
  - Gilmore et al. (2001), Rogers et al. (2005), Berry and Caplan (2010)
- **Dean et al. (2014) found that people with MHCs in a single state (VA) who received postsecondary education support were less likely to be employed two years after the start of VR service provision.**

# Our Contribution

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- **Focus on youth with MHCs**
- **Examine outcomes nine years after VR application**
- **Have three types of outcome measures: employment, earnings, and receipt of SSA disability benefits**
- **Control for national, state, and local factors in the analysis**

# Data Sources

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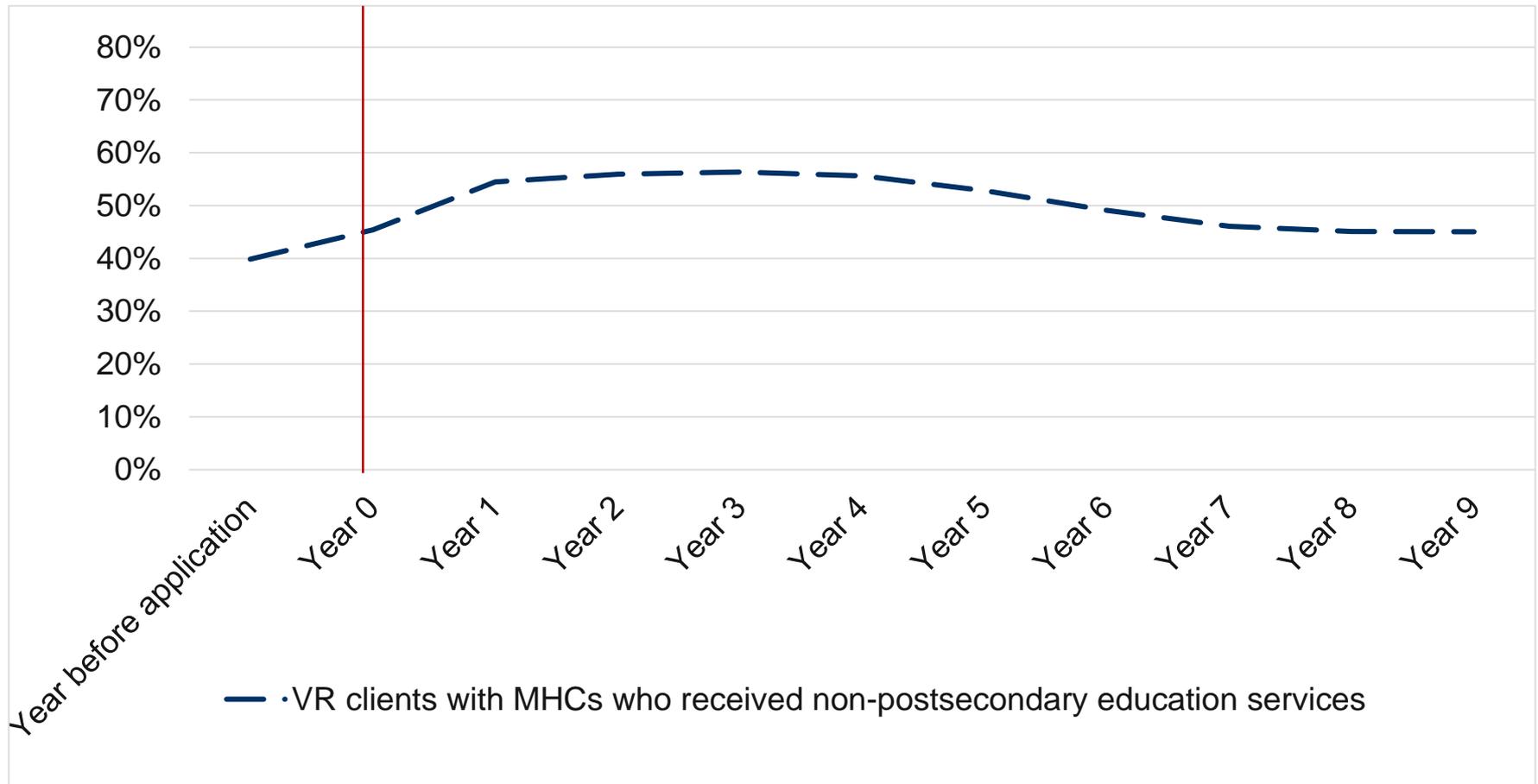
- **Rehabilitation Services Administration case service reports (RSA-911) for VR services information from 2002 to 2013**
- **2013 Disability Analysis File for information on SSA disability benefits**
- **Master Earnings File for earnings information**

# Analysis Sample

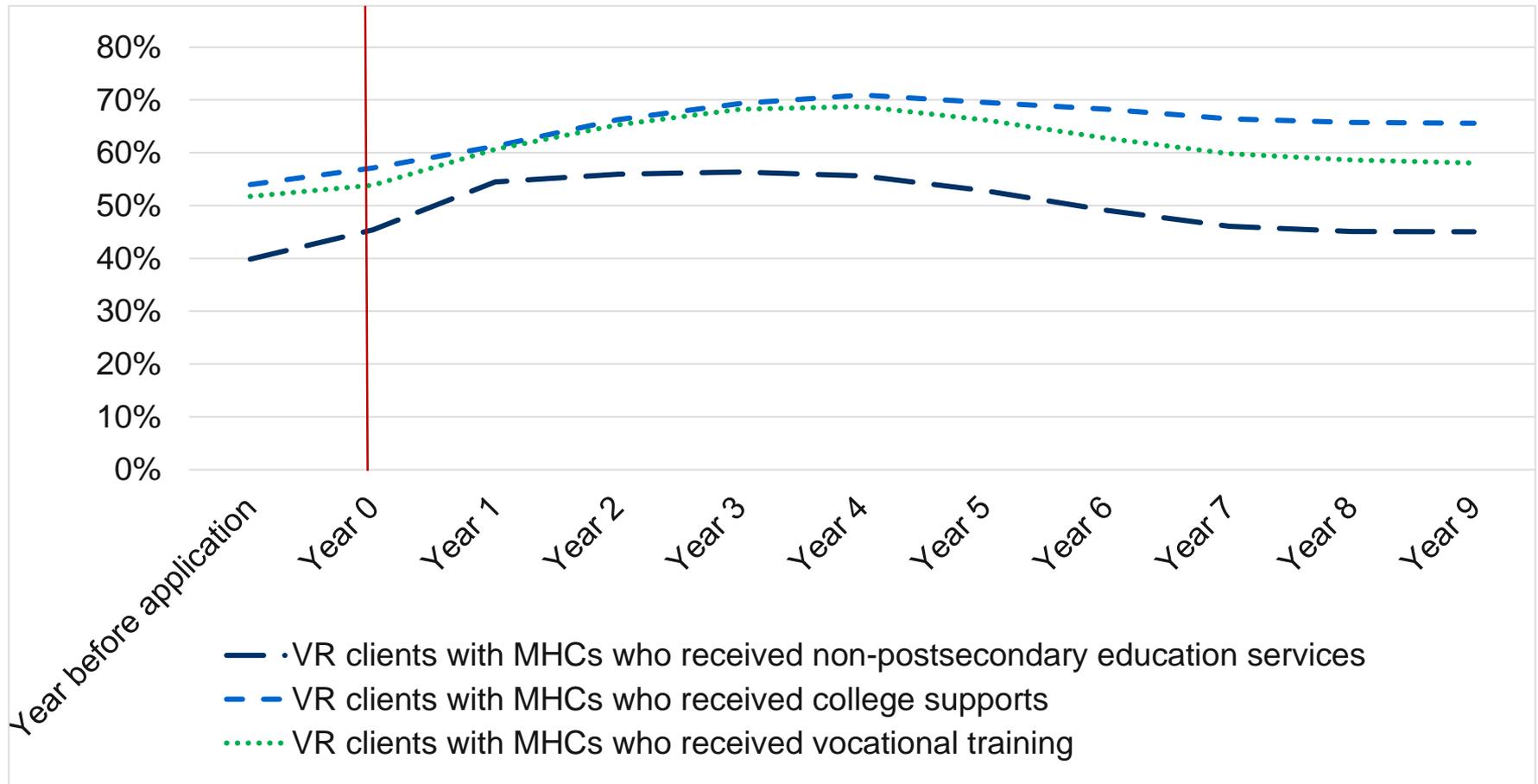
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- **Sample size is 436,883 VR applicants**
  - **First-time VR applicants from 2002 through 2004**
  - **Ages 16 to 24**
  - **Eligible for VR support**

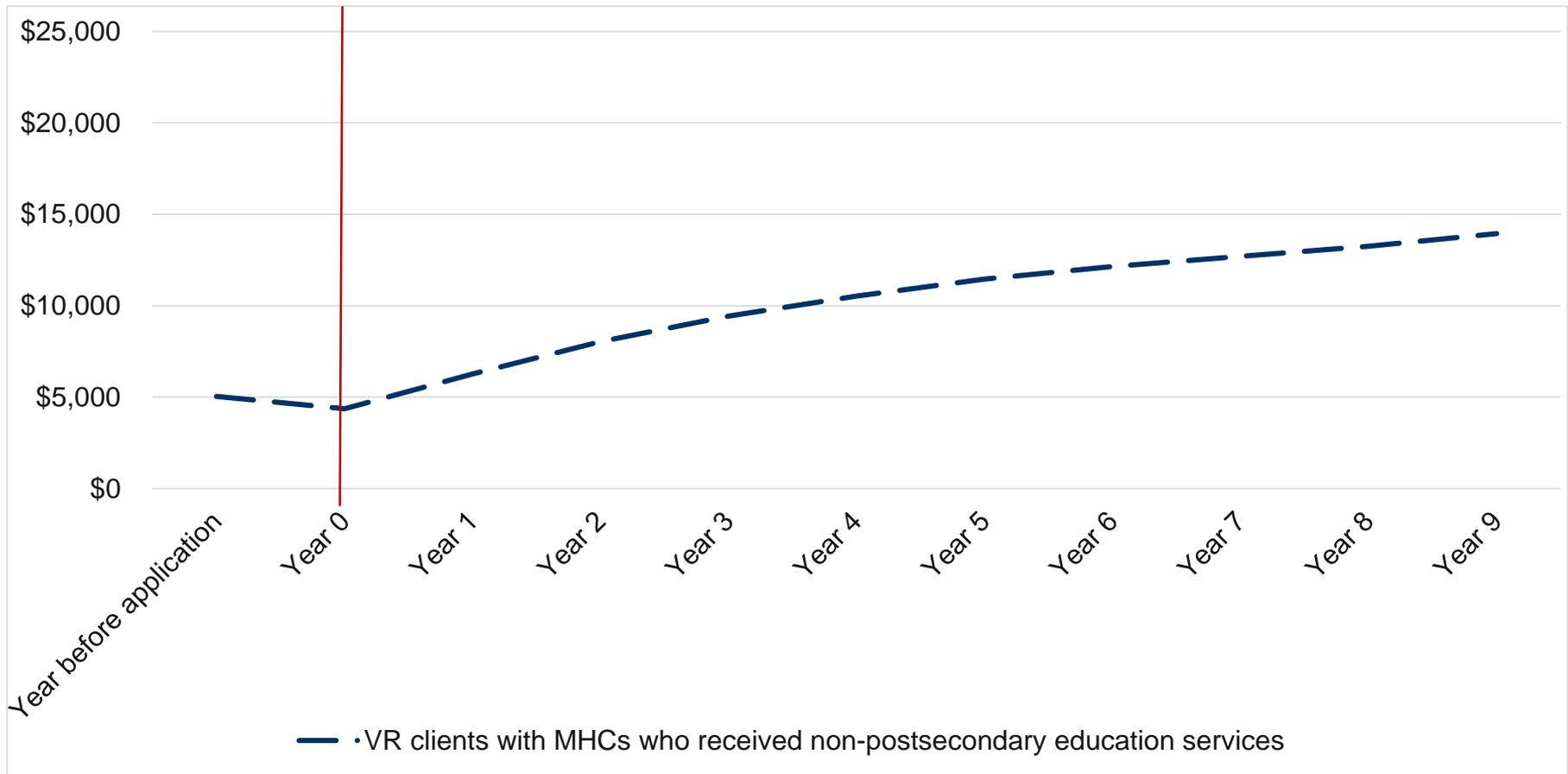
# Employment Rates for MHC Youth Receiving Non-Postsecondary Education Services



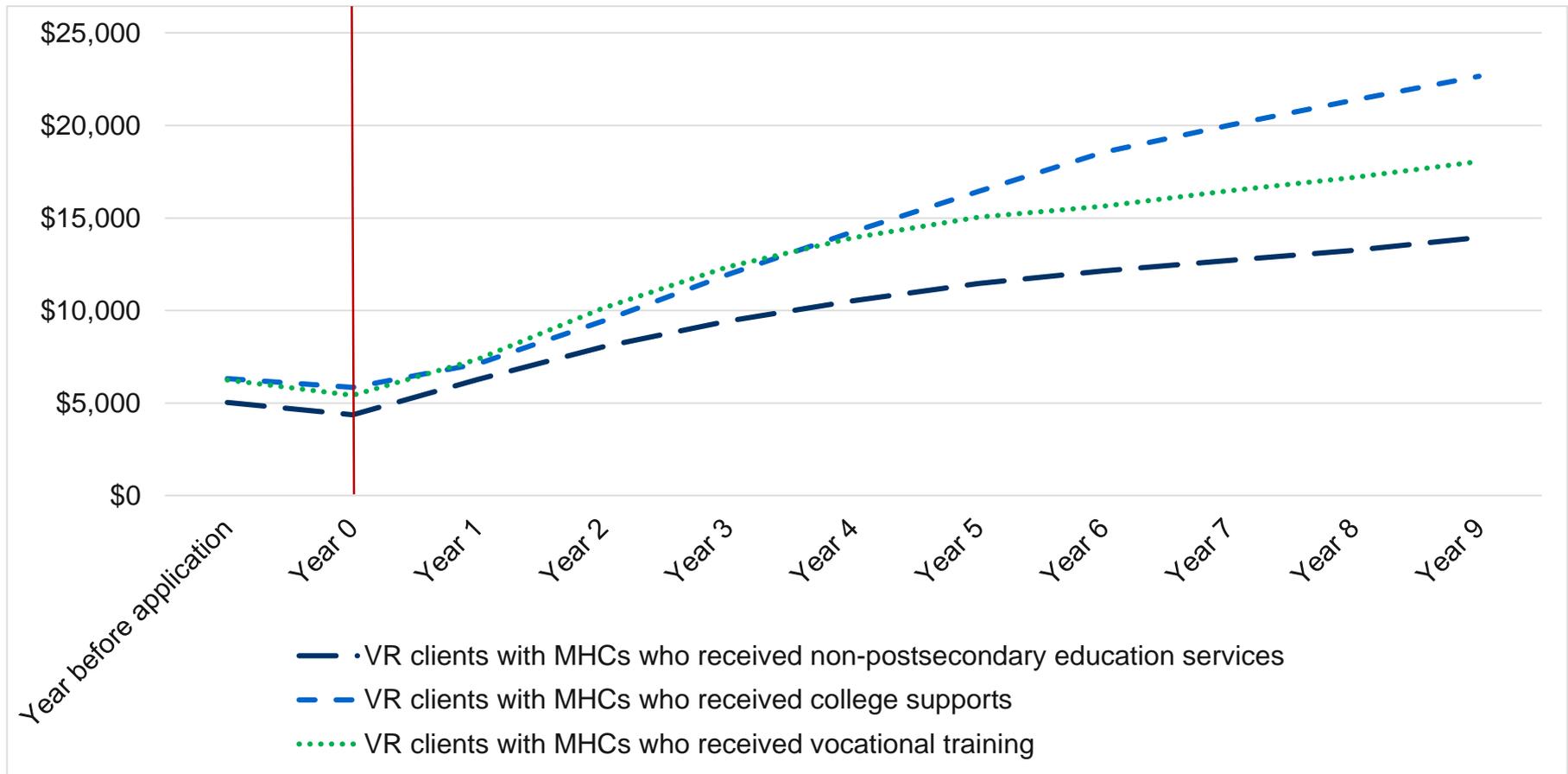
# Employment Rates for MHC Youth Receiving VR Services, by Service Type



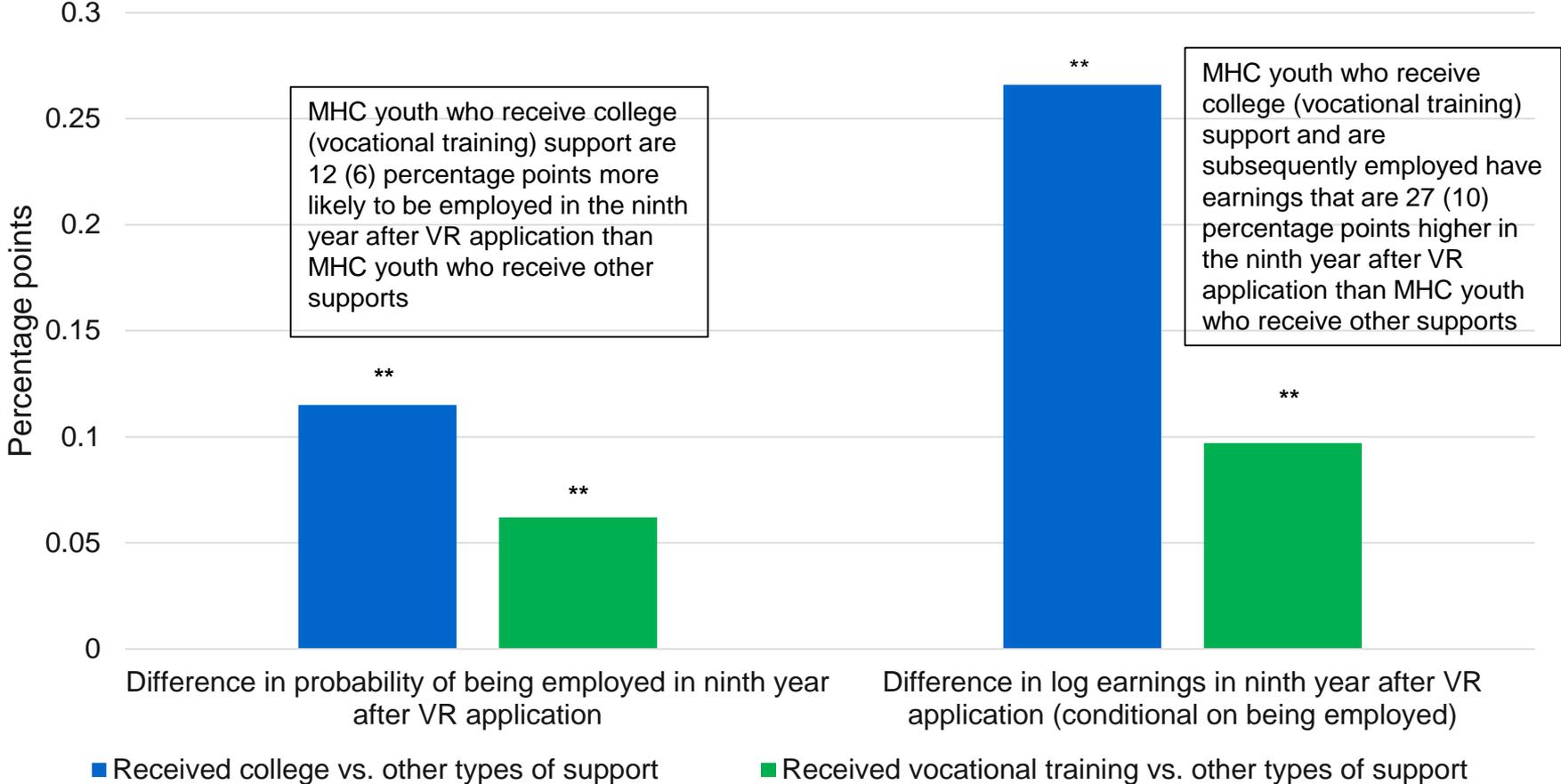
# Average Earnings of MHC Youth Receiving Non-Postsecondary Education Services



# Average Earnings of MHC Youth Receiving VR Services, by Service Type



# Adjusted Estimates of Employment and Earnings Differences by Service Type for MHC Youth



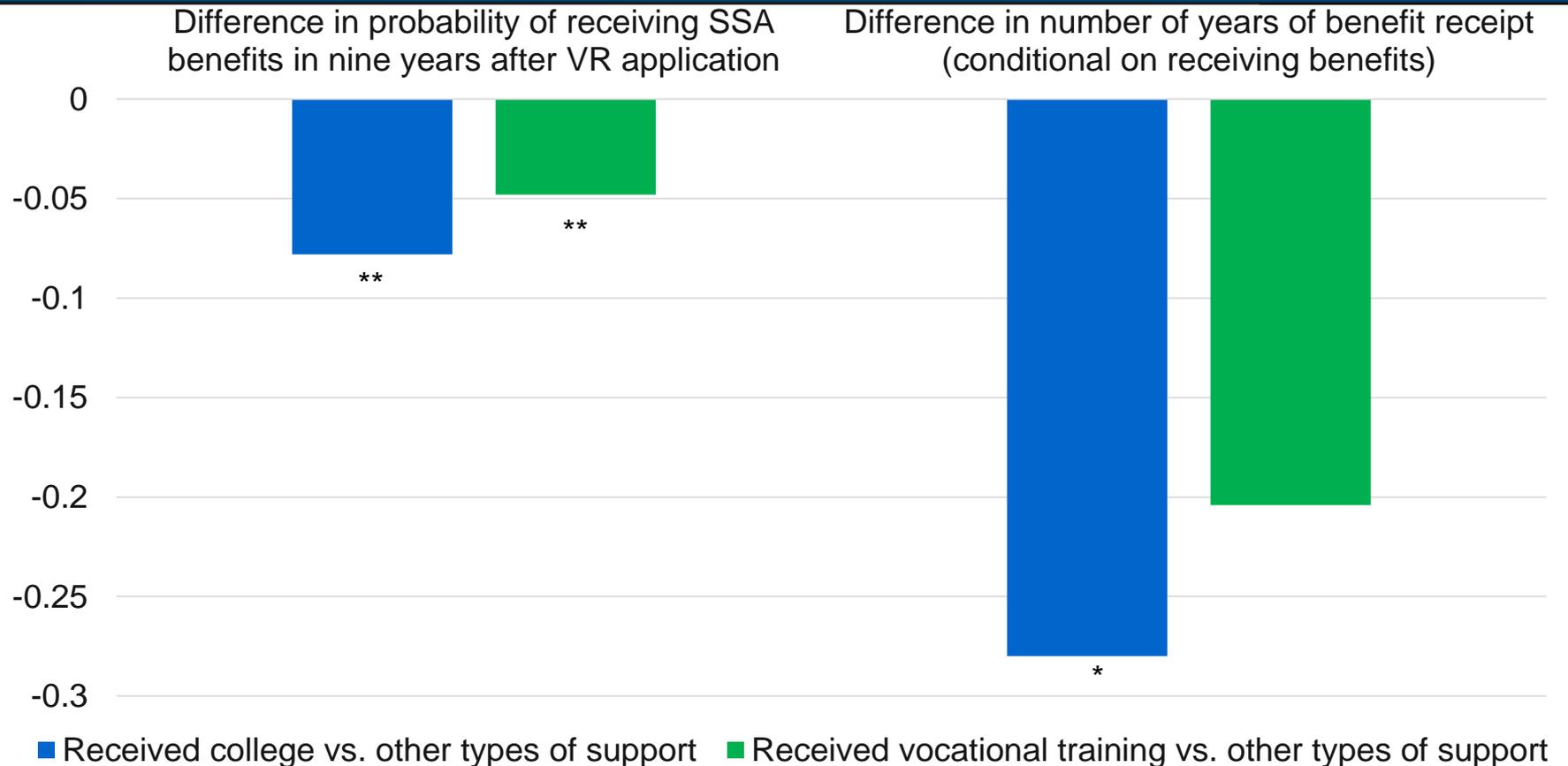
\*\* Coefficients are statistically significant at the 1% level.

# SSA Benefit Receipt for MHC Youth Without Benefits at VR Application

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	Received services (not postsecondary education support)	Received college support	Received vocational training support
% received benefits in the nine years after VR application	18.9%	12.3%	13.5%
Average number of years received benefits in the nine years after VR application (conditional on receiving benefits)	6.4	6.4	6.2

# Adjusted Estimates of Benefit Receipt Differences by Service Type for Youth Without Initial Benefits



\*\*/\* coefficients are statistically significant at the 5%/1% level.

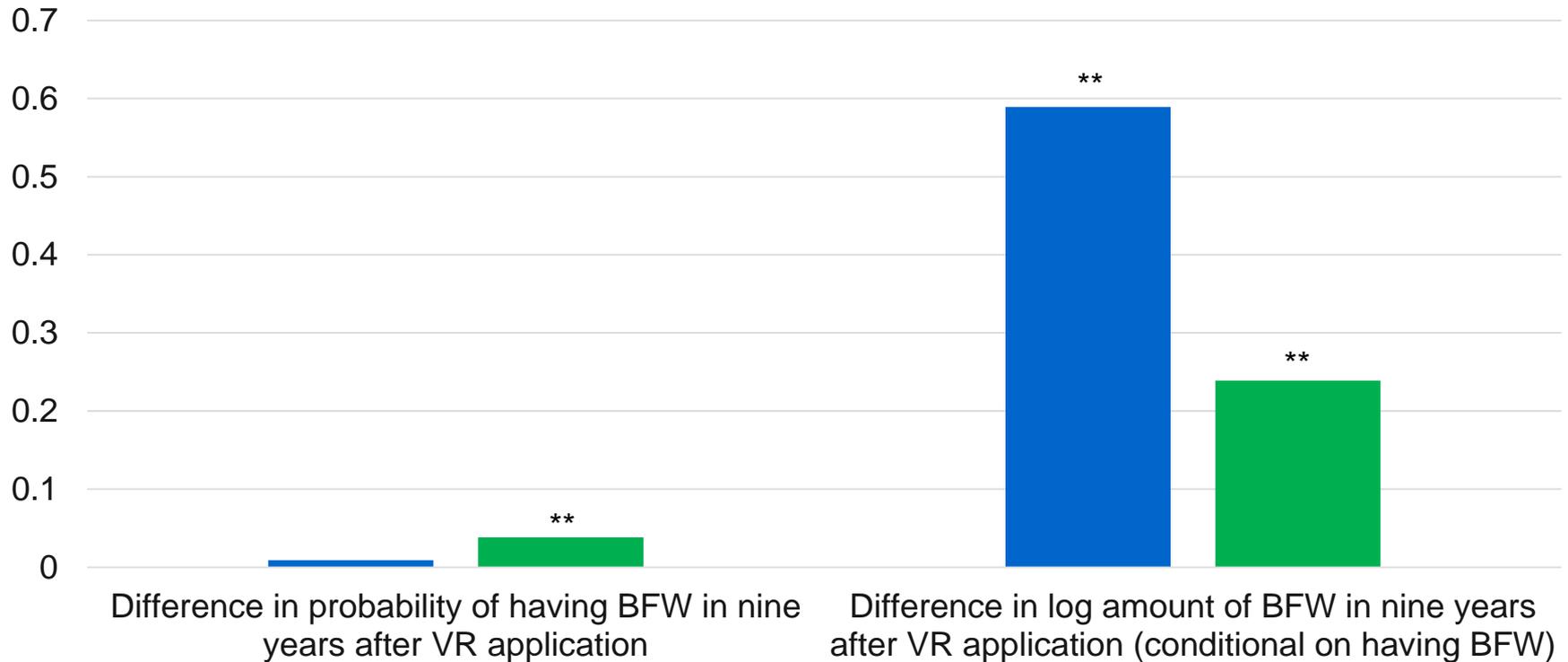
# SSA Benefit Receipt for MHC Youth with Benefits at Application

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	Received services (not postsecondary education support)	Received college support	Received vocational training support
% with BFW in the nine years after VR application	61.6%	61.2%	62.2%
Average BFW in the nine years after VR application (conditional on having BFW)	\$8,666	\$15,938	\$11,699

BFW = benefits forgone for work.

# Adjusted Estimates of Benefit Receipt Differences by Service Type for Youth with Initial Benefits



■ Received college vs. other types of support ■ Received vocational training vs. other types of support

\*\* coefficients are statistically significant at the 1% level.

# Summary

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- **For youth with MHCs, receiving postsecondary education support was associated with:**
  - Higher likelihood of being employed in the ninth year after VR application
  - Higher earnings in the ninth year after VR application
  - Lower likelihood of receiving benefits for those not receiving benefits at VR application
  - Larger BFW for those who were receiving benefits at VR application

# Implications and Next Steps

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- **Relationships are not causal but suggest a positive relationship between postsecondary education support and outcomes**
  - A rigorous evaluation is needed for causal estimates
- **Should also consider cost and benefits when deciding whether to expand support**
  - Cost is estimated to be \$2,600 to \$7,000 higher for VR clients with MHC who receive postsecondary education support versus other support, and BFW is \$2,100 to \$5,000 higher

# Contact Information

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# **Improving the Outcomes of Youth with Medical Limitations Through Comprehensive Training and Employment Services: Evidence from the National Job Corps Study**

**Heinrich Hock, Dara Lee Luca, Tim Kautz, and  
David Stapleton**

**Presented at the Center for Studying Disability Policy  
forum on *Reviewing the Evidence: What Works in  
Disability Employment Services***

**June 22, 2017**

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# Acknowledgment / Disclaimer

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- **The findings and conclusions are those of the authors and do not represent the policy of HHS or NIDILRR**
- **The authors retain sole responsibility for any errors or omissions**

# Overview

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- Prompted by ongoing assessment of how to improve labor market outcomes for youth with disabilities
- Re-analyzed data from the National Job Corps Study (NJCS), a randomized experiment conducted for the U.S. Department of Labor
- Focused on youth who identified a medical limitation at enrollment

# Job Corps: A Promising Option?

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- **Focuses on economically disadvantaged youth**
- **Comprehensive, intensive, and integrated services**
  - **General education, vocational training, soft-skills development, and job placement**
  - **80% residential**
  - **Average participation time is 8-9 months**
- **Services are all work-focused**
- **Wraparound supports include medical exams and treatment**

# Our Analysis

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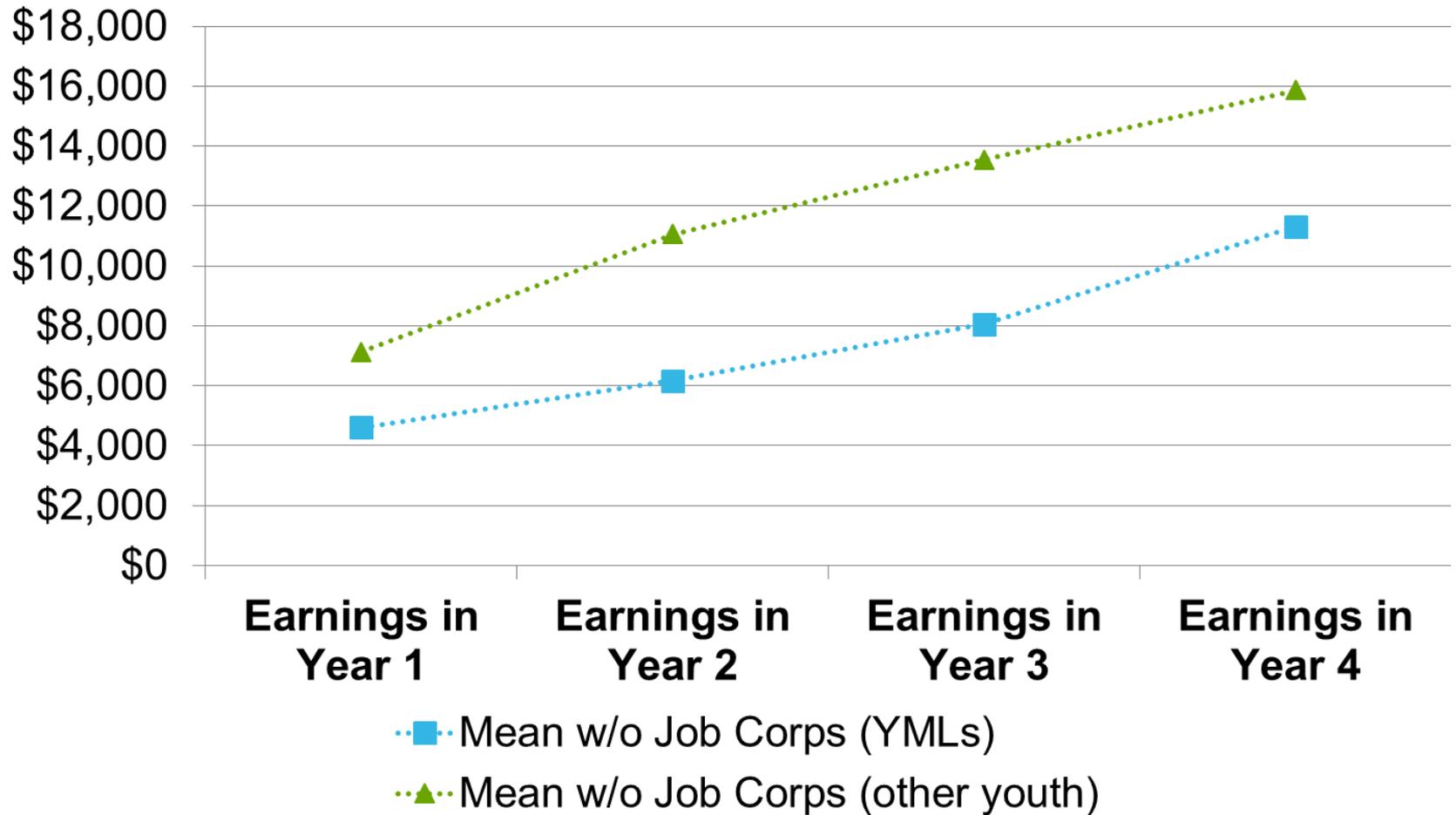
- **Based on youth who were part of Job Corps lottery in 1990s and then tracked by survey for 48 months**
- **Focused on 472 youth with medical limitations (YMLs) identified in baseline survey**
  - “Do you have any serious physical or emotional problem that limits the amount of work you can do or other regular daily activities?”
- **Calculated per-participant impacts of Job Corps**
- **Main research questions**
  - Did Job Corps have positive impacts on outcomes of YMLs?
  - Were those impacts bigger than they were for other youth?

# Medical Conditions of Youth in the NJCS

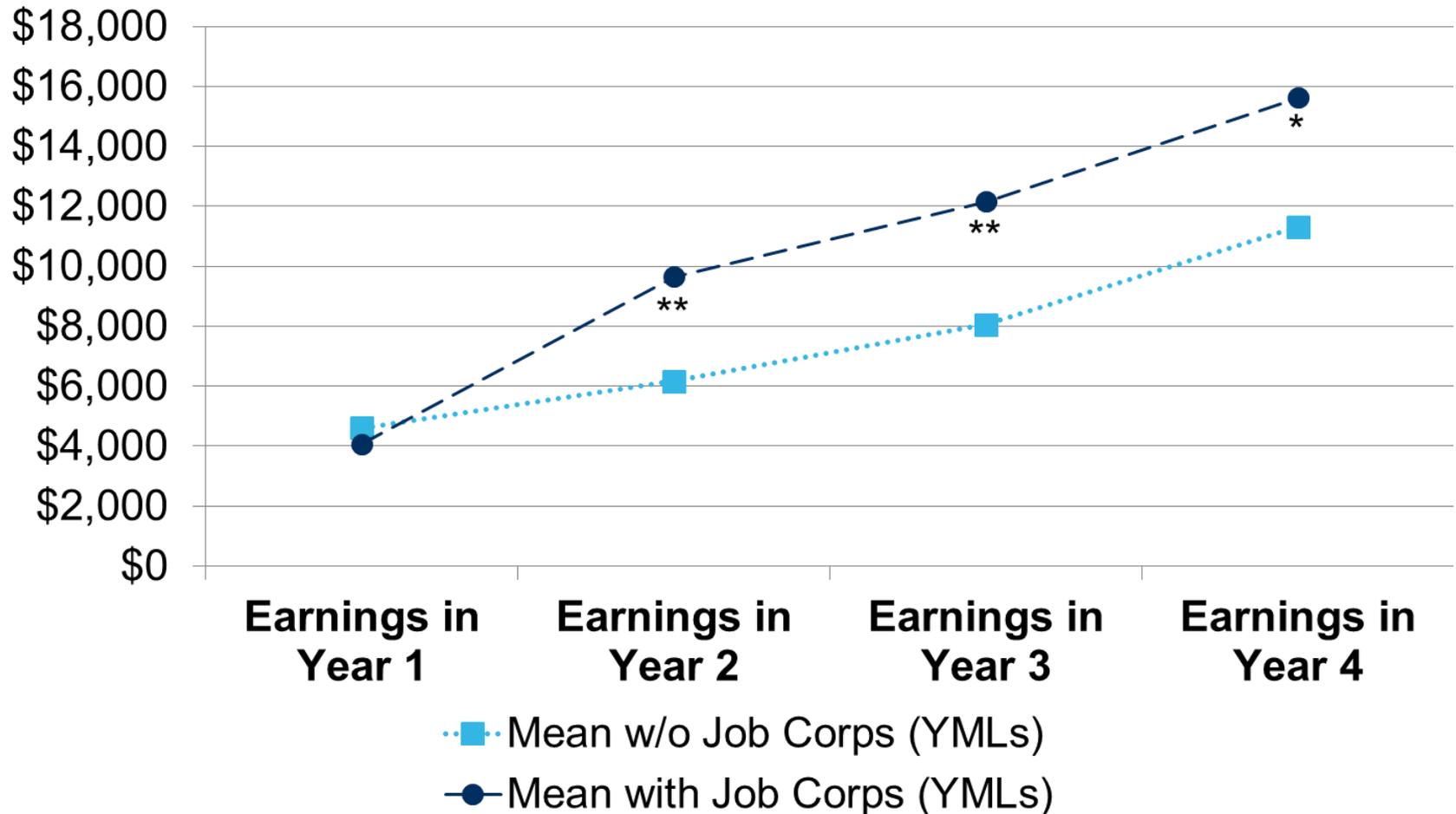
Condition	Prevalence
Asthma, allergies, respiratory	29%
Mental disorders	17%
Extremities, arthritis	15%
Back	14%
Heart, blood pressure	7%
Ulcers, diabetes, vital organs	5%
Epilepsy, cerebral palsy	3%
Hearing, visual	3%
Headaches, migraines	2%
Other	5%

- **During the 1990s, program screened out conditions that**
  - Represented a hazard
  - Made it unlikely that the participant would successfully finish the program
  - Required intensive or expensive treatment
- **For those without Job Corps access, annual Supplemental Security Income (SSI) reciprocity rate: 15% to 17%**

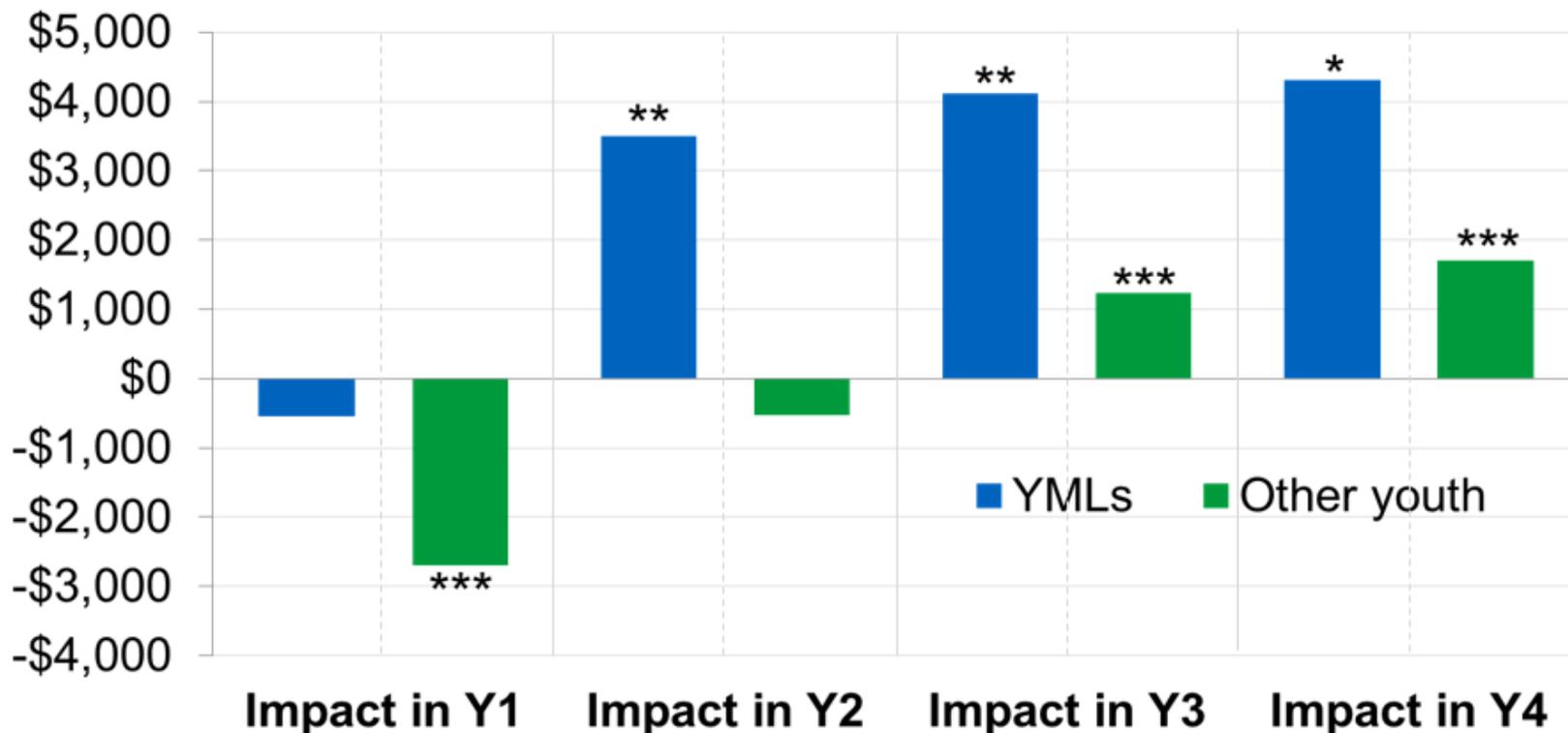
# Earnings of Youth Without Job Corps Access Grew After Lottery Date



# Job Corp Participation Led to Additional Earnings Gains for YMLs

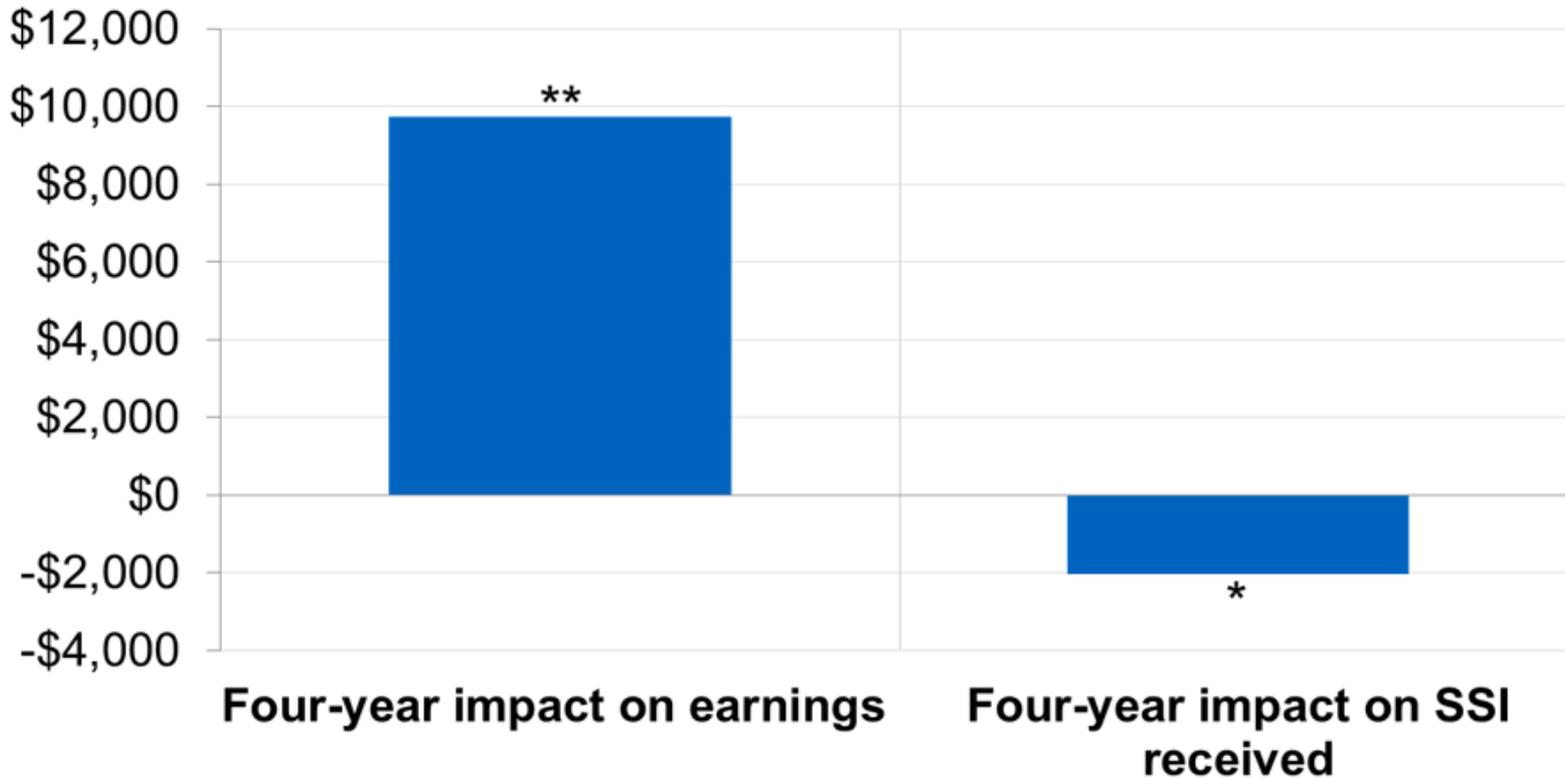


# Impacts on Earnings for YMLs Were Larger Than for Other Youth



Percentage change (relative to mean without Job Corps access)							
-12%	-38%	57%	-5%	51%	9%	38%	11%

# Cumulative Impact Per YML Participant: Large for Both Earnings and SSI Receipt



Percentage change (relative to mean without Job Corps access)	
Four-year impact on earnings	29%
Four-year impact on SSI received	-53%

# New Answers, New Questions?

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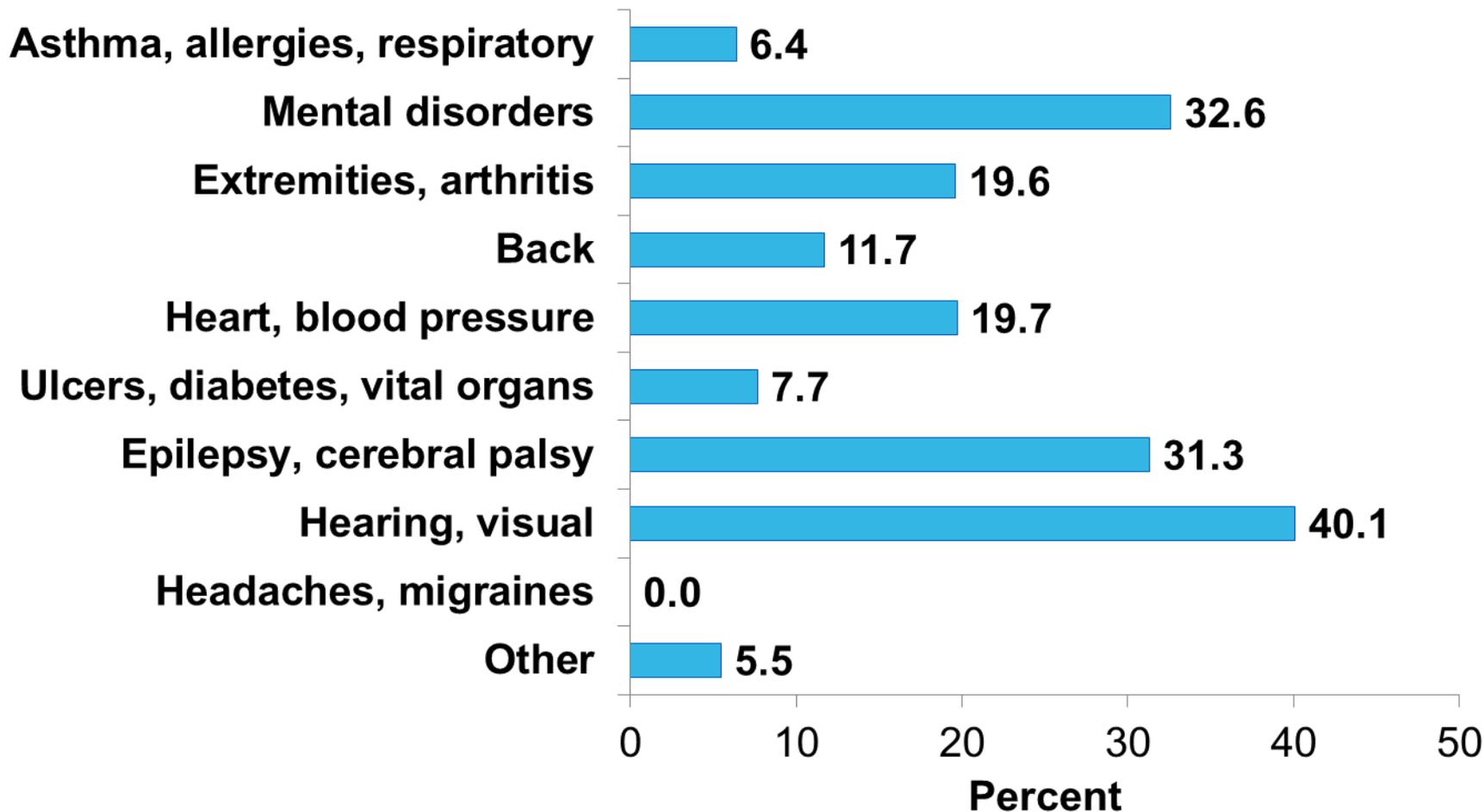
- Findings might suggest how to meet federal VR mandate and align with philosophy of inclusion
- Results also point toward differences in impacts across subgroups of YMLs
- More questions about the 1990s evaluation
  - How did such large impacts arise for YMLs?
  - How long were impacts sustained?
- Additional questions about Job Corps today
  - How does it serve youth with disabilities?
  - Is it particularly effective for some groups versus others?

# For More Information

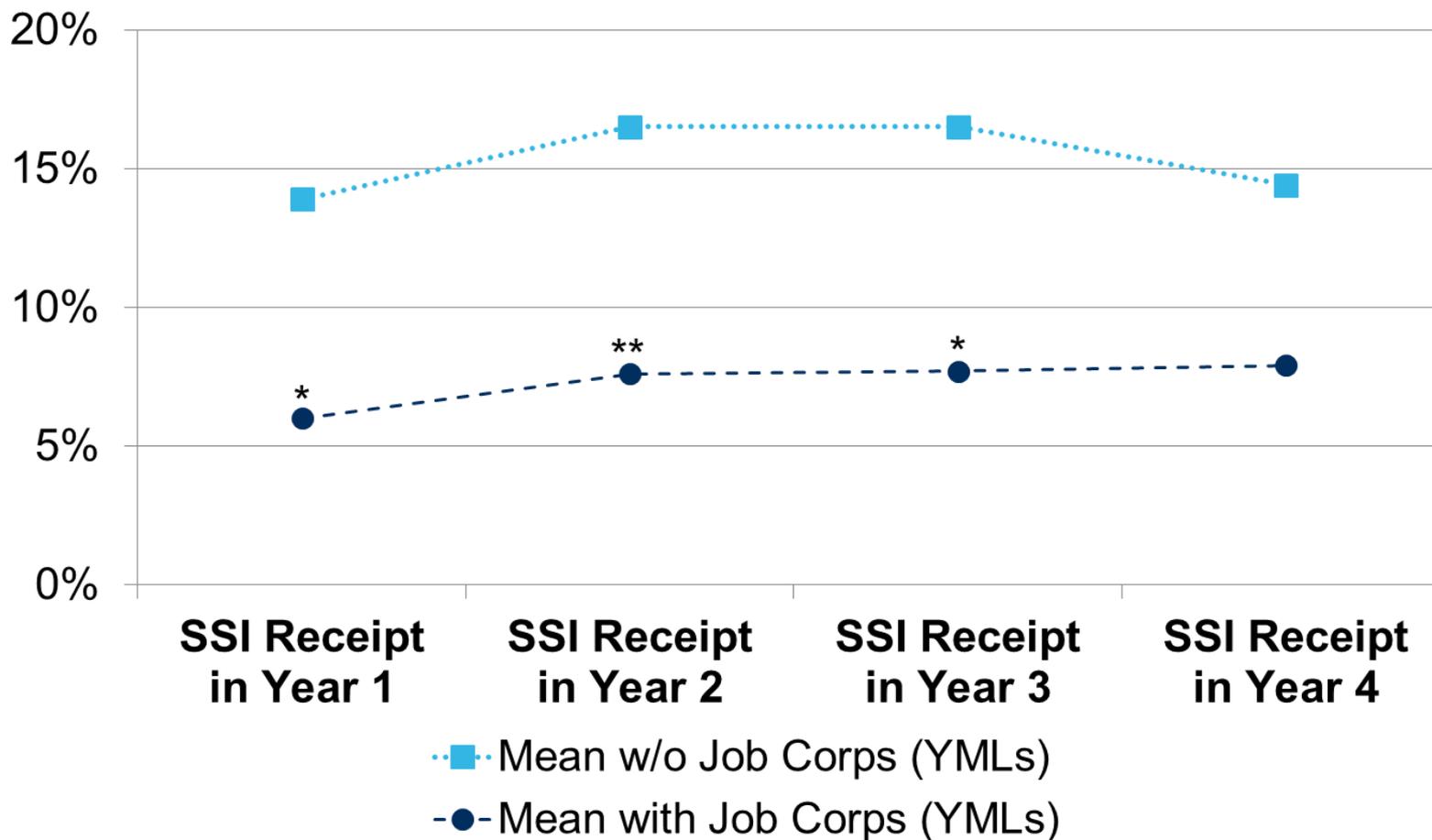
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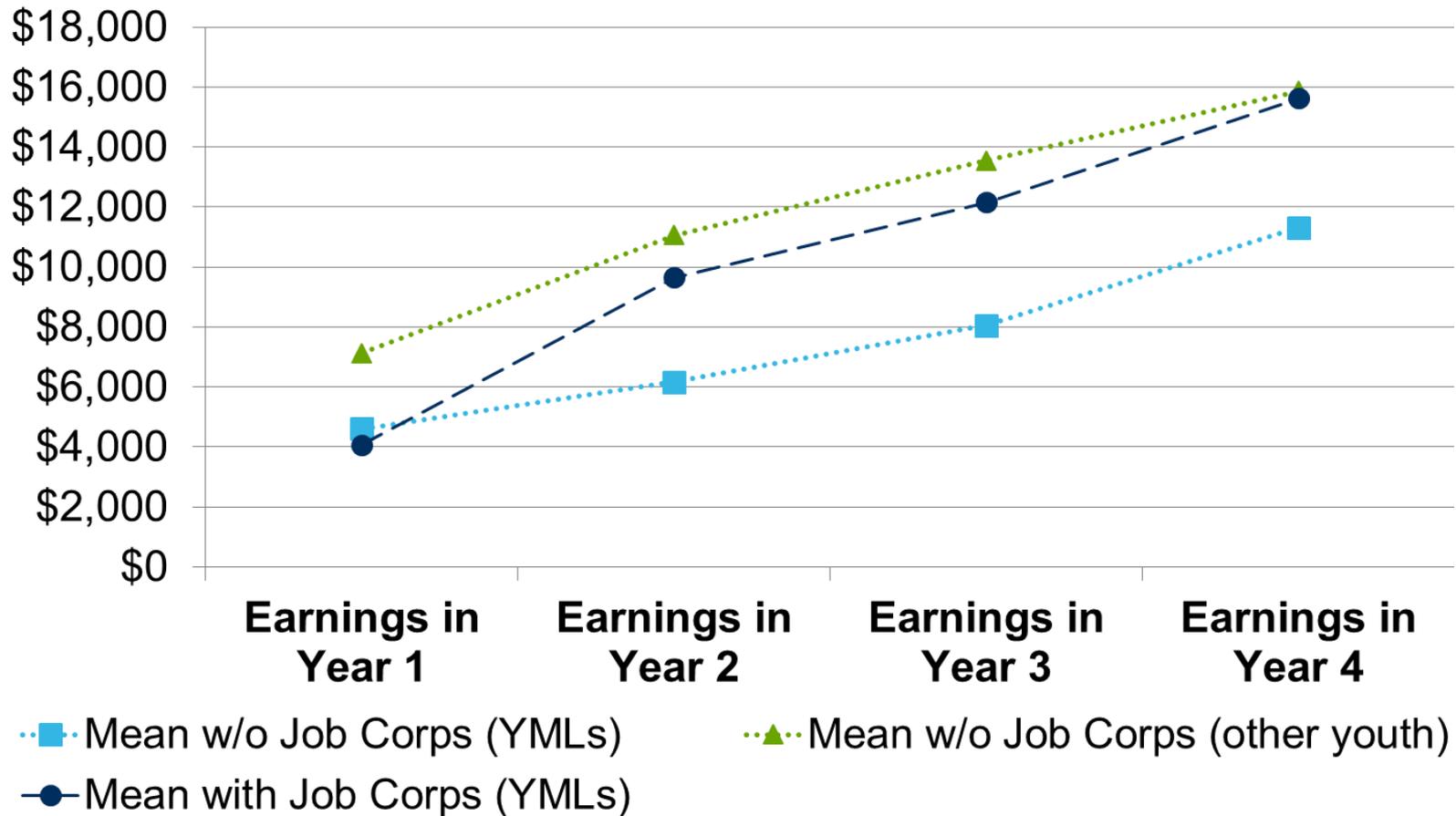
# Year 3 SSI Receipt in Control Group by Medical Condition



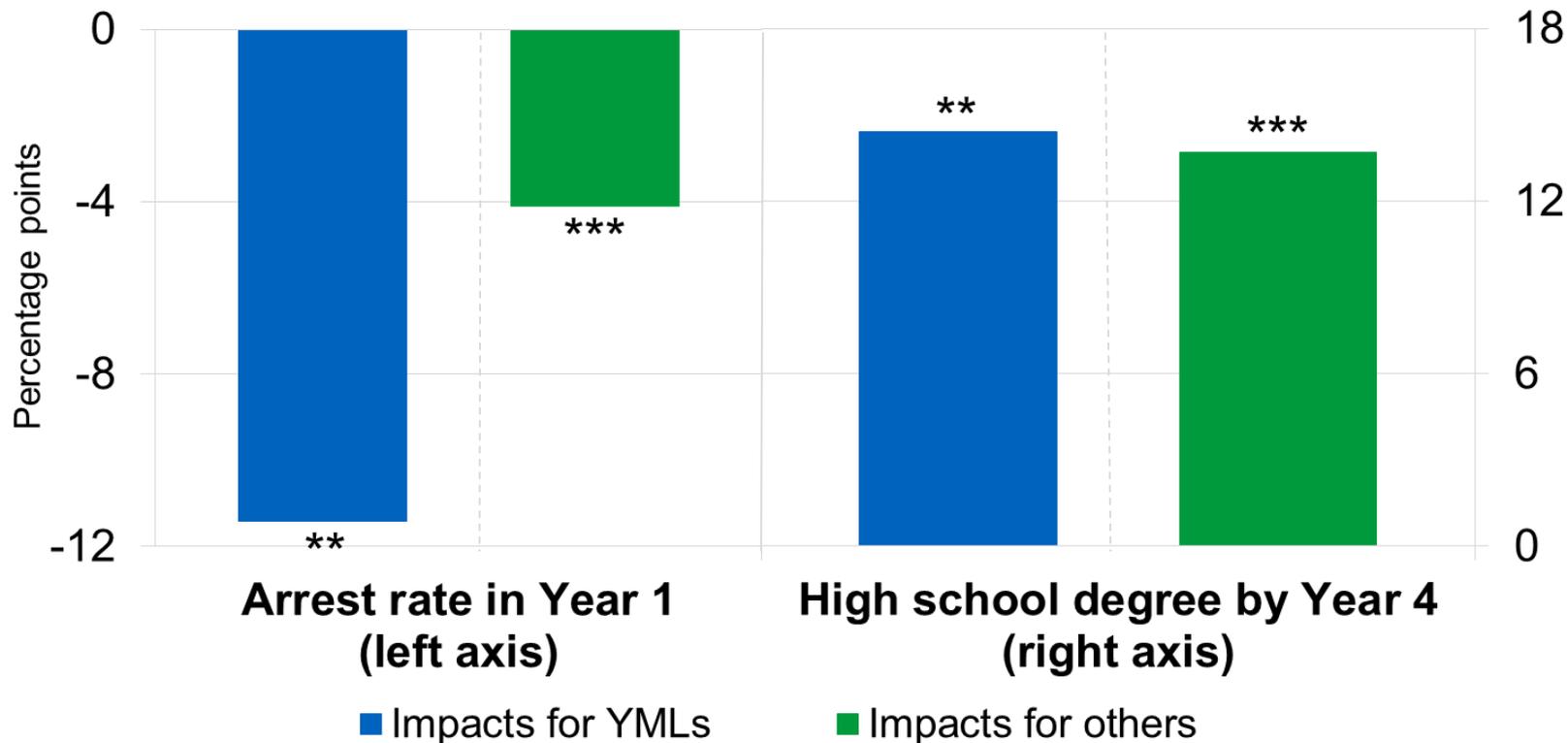
# Job Corps Participation Decreased SSI Reciprocity Among YMLs



# Increases in Earnings for YML Participants

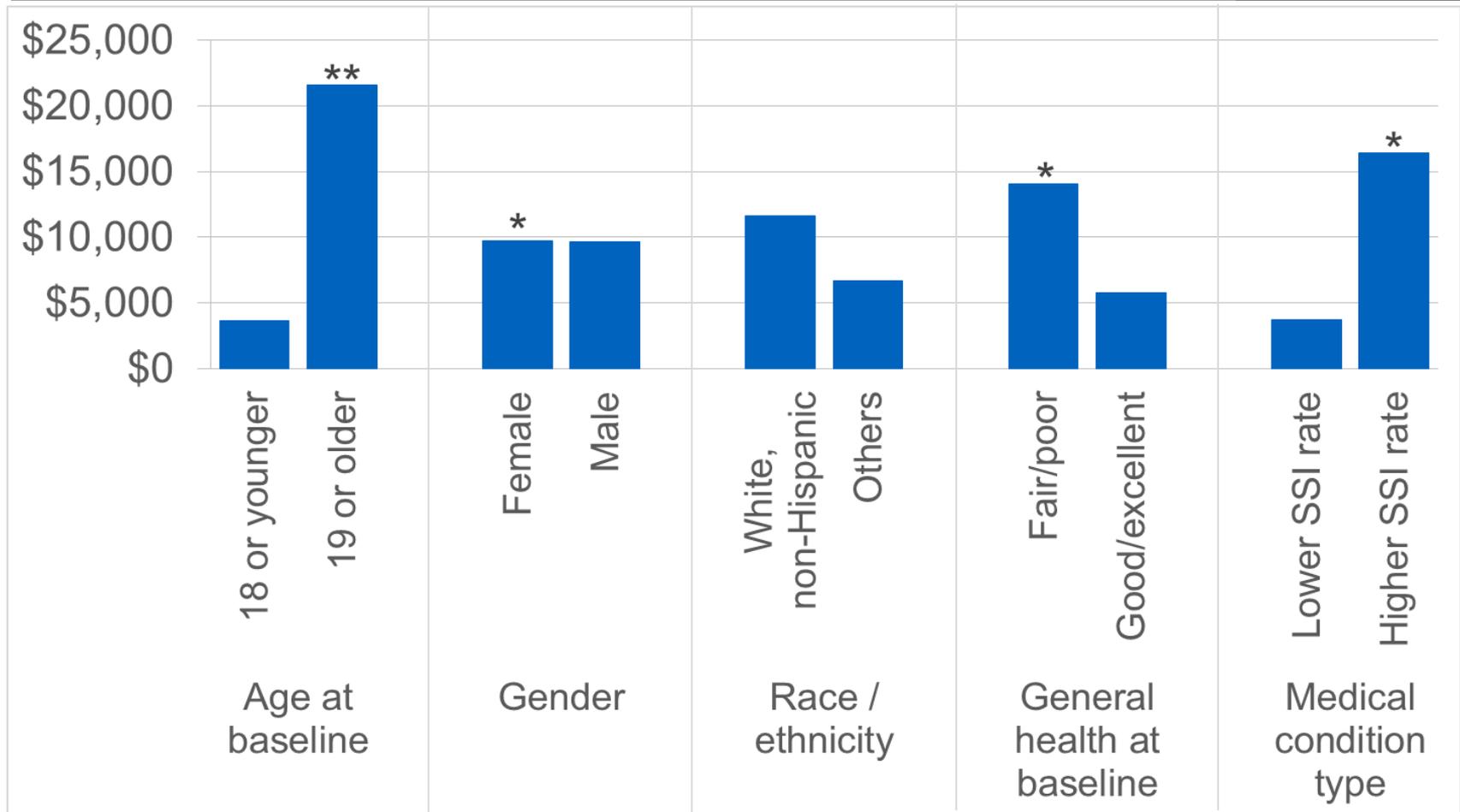


# Large Impacts of Job Corps Participation on Additional Outcomes for YMLs



Percentage change (relative to mean without Job Corps access)			
-52%	-30%	34%	28%

# Four-Year Earnings Impacts Varied Across Subgroups of YMLs



# Early Findings from the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) Project Demonstration

Gina Livermore

Presented at the Center for Studying Disability Policy  
forum on *Reviewing the Evidence: What Works in  
Disability Employment Services*

June 22, 2017

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# SGA Project Overview

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- **Rehabilitation Services Administration grant to the University of Massachusetts Institute for Community Inclusion**
- **Develop, implement, and evaluate a service model that would improve the chances that VR clients receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) only (no SSI) would attain employment with earnings above the SGA level (currently \$1,170/month)**
- **Why focus on SSDI-only clients and SGA-level employment?**
  - **Large growth in SSDI program**
  - **Most SSDI beneficiaries have work skills and experience**
  - **SGA is a significant milestone for SSDI eligibility and VR agency reimbursement by SSA**
  - **Higher earnings improve financial well-being**

# SGA Project Implementation

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- **Kentucky and Minnesota volunteered to conduct the SGA Project demonstration**
- **Innovations**
  - **Faster pace of services with a focus on client motivation and engagement**
  - **Effective financial education and benefits counseling with a focus on household self-sufficiency**
  - **Effective employer relations and job development services**
  - **Coordinated team approach**
- **Implemented innovations in spring/summer 2015**

# SGA Project Evaluation

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- **Office-level (clustered) random assignment**
  - Offices were grouped into strata based on geographic location, urban v. rural, and past SSDI client outcomes
  - Offices from each stratum were randomly assigned to implement either
    - SGA Project innovations (treatment)
    - Services as usual (control)
  - Kentucky: 7 treatment and 8 control offices
  - Minnesota: 8 treatment and 9 control offices
- **About 1,000 SSDI-only clients were enrolled in the demonstration in each state**
  - Roughly half at treatment offices and half at control offices

# Advantages of Office-Level Random Assignment

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- **Rigorous way to evaluate the impact of a service change**
  - Randomization helps ensure that treatment and control group members are similar, and thus, comparable
- **Easier to implement than individual-level random assignment**
  - Randomize sites once
  - Easier to allocate innovation resources at the office level
- **Offices serve only treatment (T) or control (C) cases so no need to track T/C status of individuals**
  - Minimizes potential for control group contamination
  - Counselors are not faced with a perceived ethical dilemma

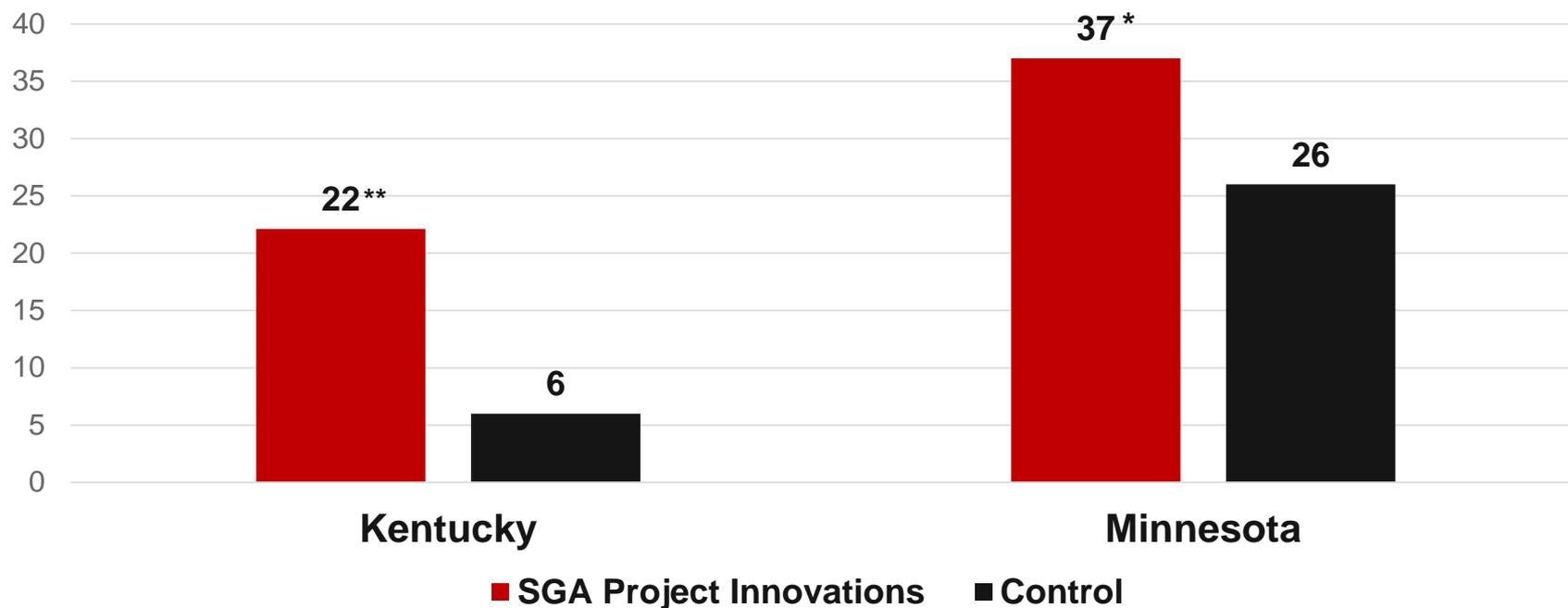
# Early Impact Analysis: Sample and Caveats

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- **VR case file data reflecting client outcomes during the first 6 months after application**
  - **Sample of clients enrolled for at least 6 months**
  - **Samples represented about half of all SGA Project clients**
- **Treatment and control clients were comparable**
- **Findings are preliminary**
  - **The full sample had not yet received services for 6 months**
  - **Insufficient time had elapsed for outcomes to occur**
  - **Most cases had not yet closed**

# Impacts 6 Months After Application: Pace of Services

Percent of clients with IPE within 30 days of application



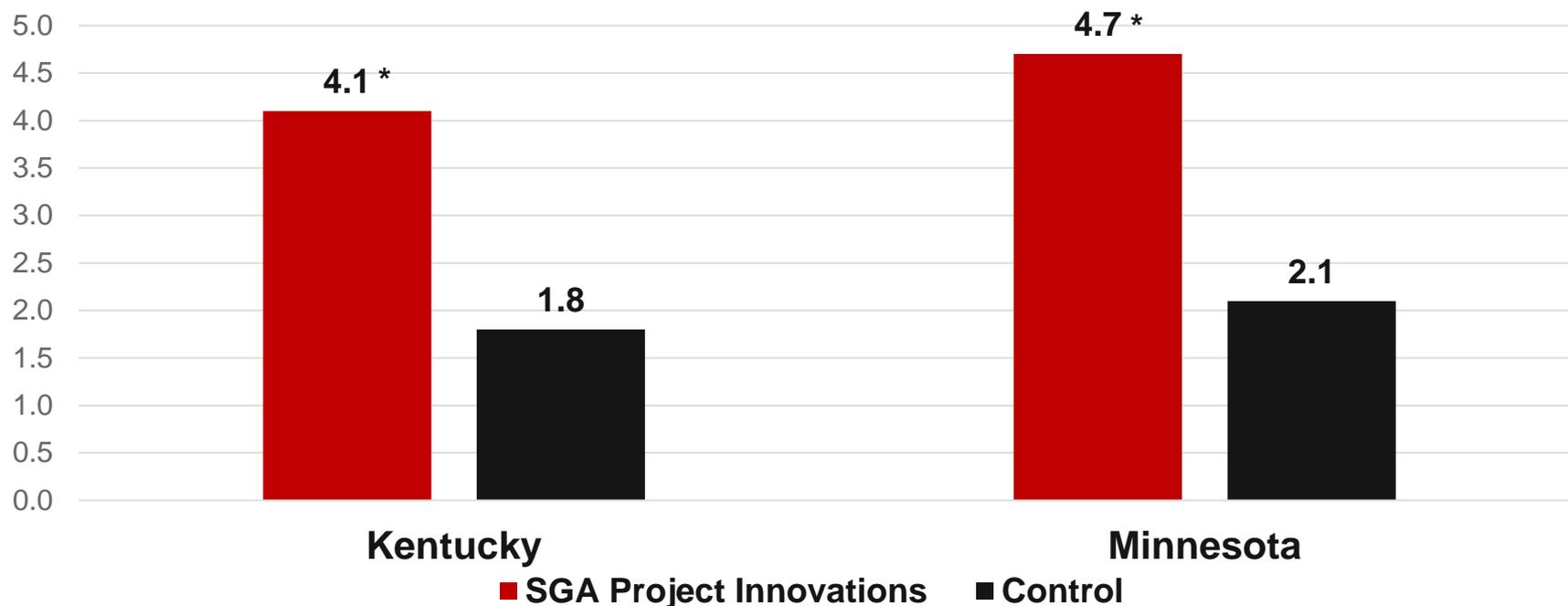
Note: IPE = individualized plan for employment.

\* Treatment/control difference significant at the 0.10 level.

\*\* Treatment/control difference significant at the 0.05 level.

# Impacts 6 Months After Application: Competitive Employment

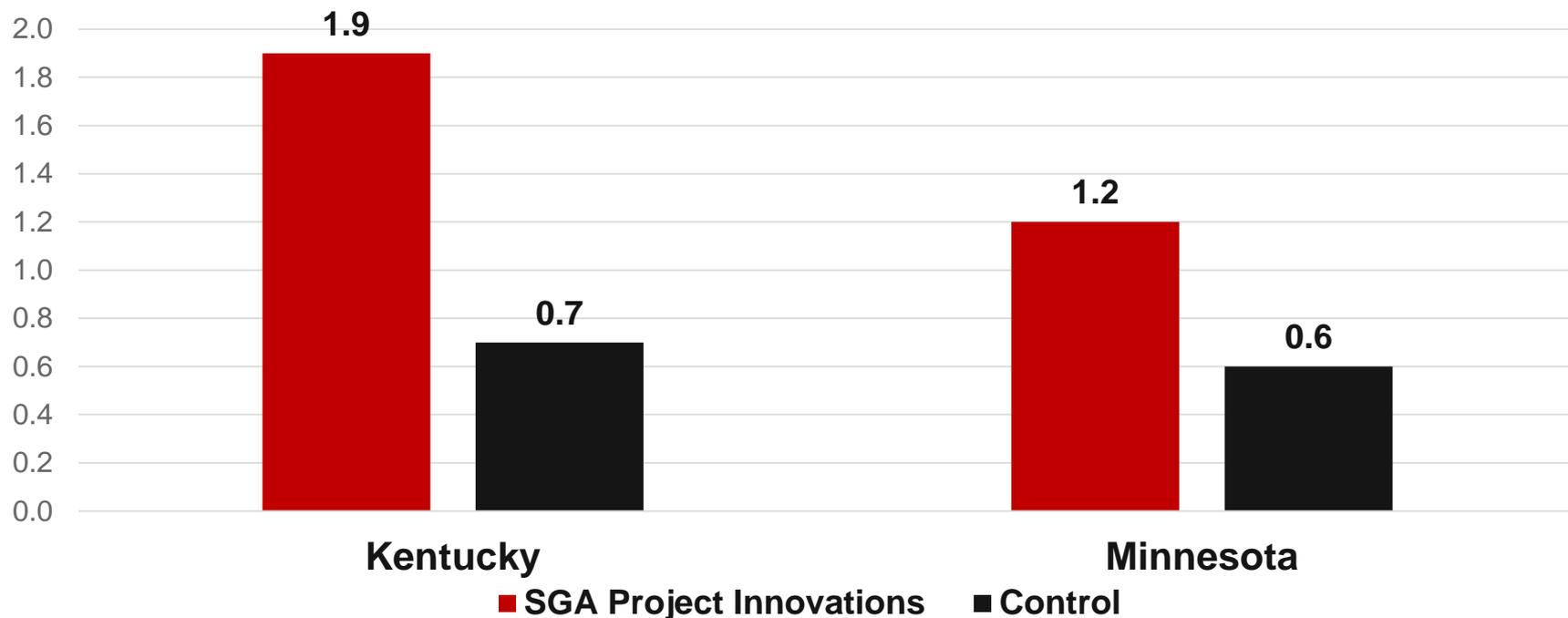
Percent of cases closed with competitive employment



\* Treatment/control difference significant at the 0.10 level.

# Impacts 6 Months After Application: SGA-Level Earnings

Percent of cases closed with SGA-level earnings



# Key Conclusions from Early Findings

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- **Both states substantially increased the pace of services over usual practice**
- **Both states showed early indications of meeting the SGA project goals**

# Other Conclusions

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- **Both states successfully implemented a clustered random assignment study design**
  - Comparable treatment and control groups
  - Statistical power adequate to detect moderate impacts
  - No indication of control group contamination
- **Approach has strong potential for rigorously testing other types of VR and other employment service innovations**

## For More Information

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- **Kentucky and Minnesota interim reports available**  
<https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/substantial-gainful-activity-sga-project-demonstration>
- **Contact**  
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# Discussant

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**David Stapleton**

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# Pressing Question

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- **What is the potential for mainstream employment and training programs to help people with disabilities?**

# **Rigorous impact evaluations are vital**

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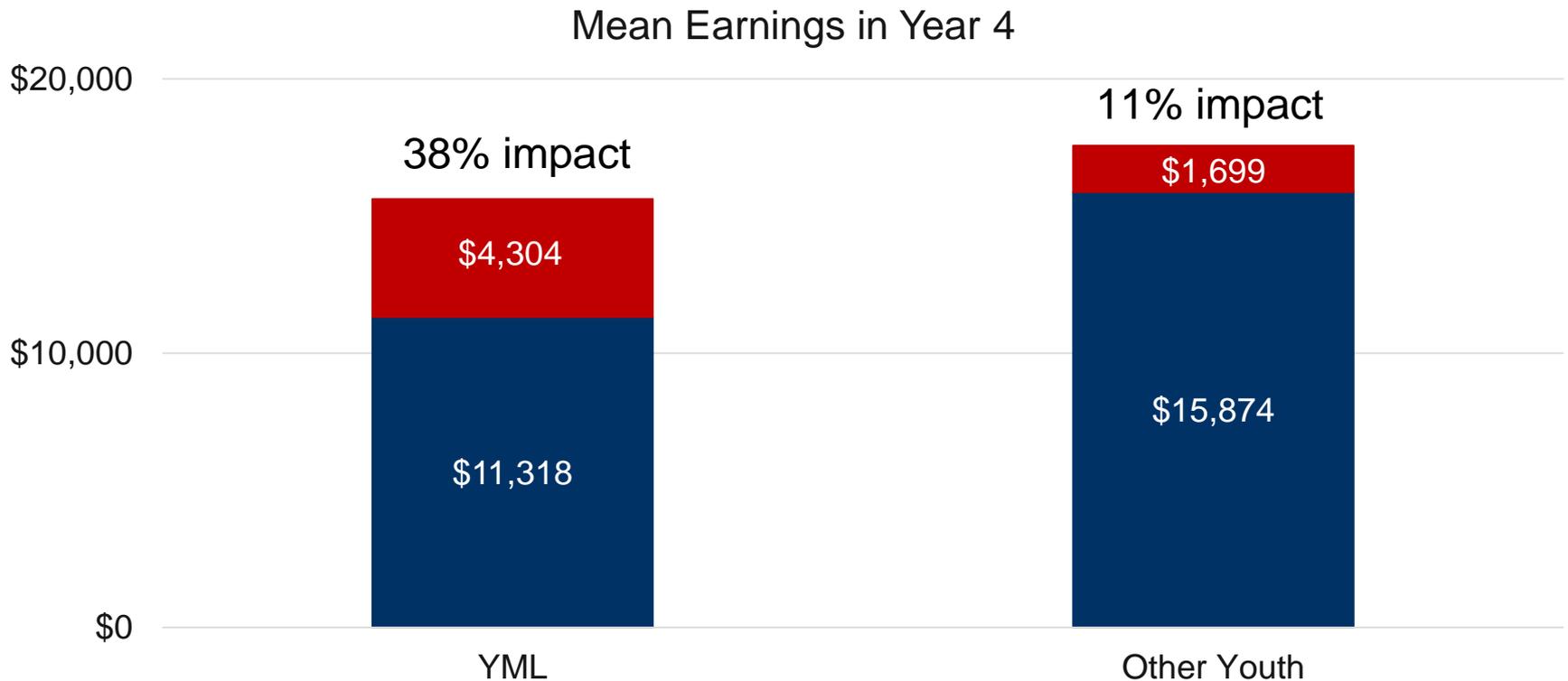
- **Outcome measurement is not enough**
- **Impact estimates are the difference between actual outcomes and unbiased estimates of “counterfactual” outcomes**

# Year 4 Outcomes from the NJCS

Mean Earnings in Year 4



# Year 4 Impacts from the NJCS



# More Rigorous Impact Evaluations Can Be Expected in the Future

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- **Increasing demand from policymakers and administrators**
- **Innovations are overcoming barriers to rigorous evaluations**

# **Policymakers and Administrators Demand Rigorous Impact Evaluations**

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- **What Works Clearinghouse**
  - Department of Education
- **Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR)**
  - Department of Labor

# Innovations Lower Barriers to Rigorous Impact Evaluations

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- **Major advances in:**
  - **Information technology**
  - **Evaluation methods**
- **These innovations:**
  - **Lower costs for implementation, data collection, and analysis**
  - **Reduce disruption to normal operations**
  - **Yield results more quickly**
  - **Address the practical and ethical limitations of randomized controlled trials**

# Three Ideas Illustrated by the Presentations

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- **The potential for mainstream employment and training programs to help people with disabilities is high but little explored**
- **Rigorous impact evaluations of employment support innovations for people with disabilities are vital**
- **More impact evaluations can be expected because barriers to conducting are lowered**

# Contact Information

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# Audience Q&A

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