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# SUPPORTIVE SERVICES IN JOB TRAINING & EDUCATION:

A Research Review

**JOB TRAINING**  
===== **SUCCESS**

# Supportive Services in Job Training and Education: A Research Review



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## About This Report

This report presents findings from a review and analysis of literature on the importance, effectiveness, and availability of support services for participants in job training programs in the United States. It assesses current knowledge about these services by examining reports on training and education programs, as well as literature on the importance of supportive services for low-income individuals in general. The report also examines the availability of supportive services in the workforce development system, funding sources for these services, and common barriers to employment and training—such as lack of access to child care, transportation, and stable housing—that these supports can address. The report was informed by interviews with 25 experts on workforce development and supportive services. It is a part of a larger Institute for Women’s Policy Research project on the role of supportive services in promoting job training and employment success that is funded by the Walmart Foundation.

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The Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women, promote public dialogue, and strengthen families, communities, and societies. The Institute’s research strives to give voice to the needs of women from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds across the income spectrum and to ensure that their perspectives enter the public debate on ending discrimination and inequality, improving opportunity, and increasing economic security for women and families. The Institute works with policymakers, scholars, and public interest groups to design, execute, and disseminate research and to build a diverse network of individuals and organizations that conduct and use women-oriented policy research. IWPR’s work is supported by foundation grants, government grants and contracts, donations from individuals, and contributions from organizations and corporations. IWPR is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that also works in affiliation with the women’s studies and public policy and public administration programs at The George Washington University.

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## Executive Summary

Job training programs open up opportunities to a better future with higher quality, more financially sustaining jobs. For some individuals, however, challenging life circumstances—such as a lack of access to affordable child care or transportation, financial strain, or health issues—make it difficult to complete training programs. Life challenges that hinder program completion point to the importance of supportive services; few studies, however, have examined in depth the need for these services or evaluated their impact on job training outcomes, leaving an information gap when developing policies or programs that might increase the ability of individuals to get jobs and advance in the workforce.

This report addresses this gap by providing an overarching description of supportive services in job training and education programs, drawing on a review of relevant studies that mention these services. The report examines which supportive services are available to job training participants, whether there is evidence that these services lead to better outcomes, and whether any promising practices on service delivery emerge from existing research. To supplement the research review, the report draws on interviews with 25 experts in the workforce development field. Key findings from the interviews and research review include the following.

### The Need for and Availability of Supportive Services in Job Training

- Many participants in job training and education do not complete their programs. A study by Social Policy Research Associates found that more than three in ten women who received training and exited a WIA-funded program in Program Year 2013 (fourth quarter) did not complete the program (completion rates were similar for men). Similarly, IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Education data found that among all first-time, beginning students enrolled in certificate programs at postsecondary institutions starting in 2003, over one-third left college without getting a degree or certificate within six years.
- A 2012 study by Mathematica suggests that the need for supportive services may exceed their availability: among exiters from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) adult program in 2009, only 18 percent of women and 12 percent of men received supportive services of any kind. Among women exiters, 47 percent were low-income, but only 22 percent of low-income women received supportive services. Experts interviewed for the current study said that access to these services is greater in some local areas than in others, but that services are generally insufficient to meet the needs of job training participants.
- Supportive services are sporadically offered across the workforce system, and some services are more readily available than others. The Workforce Benchmarking Initiative of the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce—which has collected data from 259 programs on participant demographics, services received, and outcomes—found that 36 percent of organizations surveyed provided financial literacy or counseling and 48 percent provided transportation assistance to at least half of their participants. Only six percent, however, gave assistance with child care expenses to a majority of participants. Experts interviewed for this report said that child care assistance represents a key need for many participants but is difficult to provide, in part due to the relatively high cost of offering the service. The Urban Institute reports that 69 percent of low-income parents in education and training have children younger than six years old.

## The Role of Supportive Services in Employment, Training, and Education Success

- While few evaluations have examined the role of supportive services in promoting job training success, a number of studies that examine individual job training programs indicate that these services are associated with positive outcomes. For example, the Mathematica study mentioned above of female exiters from Workforce Investment Act (WIA)-funded programs found that among women participating in the Adult program, 78 percent who received supportive services were employed within one year of exiting the program, compared with 73 percent who received no supportive services. Women who received these services earned, on average, \$3,674 per quarter, compared with \$3,285 for those who did not receive them. Among women participating in the dislocated worker program, the difference was even greater: 82 percent of those who received support services were employed within one year of exiting the program, compared with 70 percent of those who did not. Average earnings for those who received supportive services were \$4,395 per quarter—about \$700 more—than those who did not receive these services (\$3,676).
- One study found that those who complete certificates at a college, business, vocational, technical, or trade school earn 20 percent more than those with only a high school diploma in lifetime earnings.

## Funding Opportunities for Supportive Services

- A number of federal funding sources can be used to provide supportive services within the workforce development system. The Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the largest source of federal funding for job training activities, and WIOA funds may be used for supportive services as determined by state and local areas. Other federal sources—such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T), the U.S. Department of Labor’s Strengthening Working Families Initiatives, and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)—can augment the funding offered through WIOA. Organizations that provide job training may also receive funding for supportive services from nongovernmental sources, including private foundations and corporations.
- While WIOA represents a major source of federal funding for workforce development activities, the funding it provides has decreased considerably over the last 15 years. In 2015, WIOA Title I (which has funding streams for adults, dislocated workers, and youth) provided approximately \$2.8 billion, compared with about \$5.2 billion in fiscal year 2000. Funding for TANF, which plays a significant role in the provision of supportive services—especially child care—for job training participants, has also declined. Since 1996, funding for TANF has been set at \$16.5 billion each year, which means that its real value has decreased by one-third due to inflation.
- SNAP E&T is an underutilized source of funding for supportive services. The program has several kinds of grants, including 50 percent reimbursement grants (or “50-50” funds), which are uncapped federal grants that reimburse states for up to half of certain nonfederal SNAP E&T program costs—including supportive services such as dependent care—that enable individuals to participate in SNAP E&T programs. Several experts interviewed said most states do not use 50-50 funds as much as they could. Washington state, however, has a well-developed E&T program that leverages 50-50 funds to help SNAP participants get employment and training services and to provide a range of supportive services through partnerships with community colleges and community-based organizations.



## Promising Models and Service Delivery Practices

- To maximize the resources they offer, some job training programs have implemented promising programmatic models and support service delivery practices. For example, the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI), administered by the Arkansas Department of Education, provides funding to 25 Arkansas community colleges to build career pathways programs and provide wraparound support services, including assistance obtaining child care and transportation services, to eligible students. While the CPI is funded by federal TANF dollars, students do not have to be TANF recipients to participate.
- Experts in the field point to the importance of integrated case management in helping job training participants navigate across systems to access a range of services. This approach allows individuals to work with a single case manager who helps them access all the services they need rather than multiple case managers who each try to connect them with different resources.
- A bundled or integrated service delivery approach, which provides a set of coordinated services in one location, also represents a promising practice used by programs such as Single Stop USA, The Center for Working Families, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation's Financial Opportunity Centers, and One Stop Centers with the United Way. Bundled service delivery recognizes the interconnections among the many challenges individuals face and the difficulties they often encounter when required to go from one agency to another. While the particular configuration of bundled services may vary across organizations and networks, many bundled service providers integrate services in several key areas, including employment and/or education, public benefits access and work supports, and financial services and asset building.

## Recommendations

- Changes to the workforce development system could strengthen supportive services for job training participants. Recommended changes include improving funding for these services, such as by encouraging WIOA providers to coordinate with a broader network of supportive service providers, helping states make better use of the 50-50 funds available through SNAP E&T, and building stronger connections between early childhood and workforce development systems at the federal, state, and local levels. In particular, changing state requirements that limit the use of child care subsidies for parents in training and education would benefit those with children.
- Strengthening partnerships between organizations can also allow organizations to maximize their resources and serve populations they may otherwise not reach effectively.
- Evaluation and other research on supportive services for job training participants could add to discussions of how training programs can best equip workers with the skills to acquire jobs and advance in the labor market. Such research should include analysis of the needs and challenges of job training participants broken down by gender, as well as the impact of specific supportive services on the job training and employment outcomes of women and men; analysis of the needs and challenges of job training participants across other population groups, including racial and ethnic

minorities, immigrants, and younger and older workers; and research on the availability of supportive services across training fields and programs.

An effective job training system that provides people with the supports needed to improve their standing in the labor market is critical to helping many individuals earn family-sustaining wages and to developing a workforce with the skills that businesses need. Existing research, however, has not yet analyzed in depth the need for and provision of supportive services within the workforce development system. This research review takes a first step toward closing this information gap by drawing on available literature and expert interviews to understand the extent to which supportive services are available to job training participants, whether these services promote their success, and which research areas need further exploration to deepen the picture of supportive services in job training that emerges from existing studies.



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## I. Introduction

The job training available through the workforce development system can often provide individuals who are not working with a job and individuals who are employed in low-wage jobs with a better-paying job or career. Unfortunately, challenges such as inadequate access to child care, transportation, and housing assistance make it difficult for some adults to enroll and succeed in job training programs. Supportive services that address these needs may help individuals complete training programs that can improve their economic standing (Conway, Blair, and Helmer 2012; Roder 2008). Research to date, however, has yet to provide an overarching description of the need for and provision of supportive services in job training programs, leaving an information gap when developing policies or programs that might increase the ability of individuals to develop their skills through job training.

While research on supportive services in job training programs is limited, existing studies indicate that many individuals, especially those with low incomes, face barriers that these services could help address. One study of low-income parents in training and education in the United States found that about half work while participating in their program, and nearly seven in ten of these parents have children aged five or younger (Eyster, Callan, and Adams 2014).<sup>1</sup> Although both women and men may need a range of supportive services to help them navigate the challenges of completing training and education while working and caring for children, services addressing family care needs may especially benefit women, who constitute more than 82 percent of low-income parents in training and education (Eyster, Callan, and Adams 2014) and bear the lion's share of caregiving responsibilities within most families (Center for Community College Student Engagement 2015; Pew Research Center 2015).

Many women and men in training programs, however, do not receive supportive services. A Mathematica study of female exiters from WIA programs found that only a small minority of both women and men received supportive services while in WIA-funded training (18 percent of all women and 12 percent of all men in the Adult program). The data on support service receipt indicate that the availability of these services may be insufficient to meet the need: while 47 percent of women in the Adult program had low-incomes, only 22 percent of low-income women received supportive services (Maxwell et al. 2012).

This synthesis aims to help fill the information gap on supportive services in job training programs by reviewing relevant research to summarize what is known about the provision of supportive services in these programs. It examines what this research says about the extent to which supportive services are available in job training programs, whether there is evidence that these services lead to positive outcomes, and whether any promising practices emerge from the research in this area. To examine these issues, the study draws on more than 300 publications from research firms, universities, and government reports (see Appendix A for a description of the study's methodology). The publications reviewed include studies on the barriers to success faced by low-income individuals pursuing training and education, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities, as well as evaluations and other studies on programs that provide supportive services.

To help identify key studies and provide a broad overview of the landscape of supportive services in job training programs, the project team also worked with an advisory committee and conducted phone interviews with 25 experts in the workforce development field, including researchers, policy analysts, program leaders, and leaders of networks and coalitions (see Appendices B and C). Interviewees

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<sup>1</sup> The study includes training and education activities that are covered in the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP): postsecondary education (enrollment at college or a vocation, technical, or business school); training (enrollment in a program designed to train individuals for a new job or develop new skills for a current job); and adult education (education that leads to a high school credential and may include adult basic education or preparation for the GED test; Eyster, Callan, and Adams 2014).

consistently emphasized that there is a general understanding in the field that supportive services are critical to job training success, but little information about the impacts of specific services on job training success is available. Many organizations want to provide more supportive services but face budgetary limitations that make it difficult to do so; as a result, these services are not consistently offered throughout the field and are often in short supply. At the same time, interviewees pointed to underutilized sources of funding for supportive services, as well as individual programs that have developed innovative practices for the provision and delivery of these services. These insights into the need for supportive services, opportunities to secure funding for them, and promising practices in service delivery inform the report in important ways.

The report begins with a brief overview of the public and private workforce development system and a discussion of the value of job training for those who participate in this system. It then examines what existing literature says about the impact of specific supportive services—such as child care assistance, housing and transportation assistance, among others—on job training, education, and employment success and considers where supportive services are offered within the workforce development system. Next, the report identifies promising practices that emerge from the field and examines some program examples that implement these practices, with particular attention to whether the literature offers any evidence that their provision of support services leads to positive outcomes. It concludes with recommendations for strengthening funding for supportive services in the workforce development system, implementing promising practices in service delivery to increase access to these supports, and conducting additional research to better understand the impact of and need for supportive services.

## II. Job Training in the Workforce Development System: Economic Benefits and Obstacles to Completion

The U.S. workforce development system consists of many institutions, agencies, and organizations. In the public workforce development system, the U.S. Department of Labor administers the largest number of programs (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2011), with much of the funding provided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA (Center for Law and Social Policy 2014). Signed into law in July 2014, WIOA—which is the successor to the 1998 Workforce Investment Act—has a set of core programs: Title I—Workforce Development Activities, which includes three funding streams for adults, dislocated workers, and youth; Title II—Adult Education and Family Literacy, which provides adult basic education, literacy, and English language acquisition; Title III—Wagner Peyser, which provides job search assistance, referrals, and placement; and Title IV—Vocational Rehabilitation, which provides services to help those with disabilities obtain jobs (Center for Law and Social Policy 2014).

The workforce development system also includes other institutions and organizations that can receive funding from WIOA and other federal or nonfederal sources. Institutions of higher education, especially community and technical colleges, are a key component of this system that help to meet the growing demand for workers with “mid-level skills”—those who have some education or training beyond high school but may not pursue a four-year degree. Some colleges offer job training to help students acquire the certification and skills to pursue careers in specific industries, such as health care, manufacturing, and energy. Private workforce development programs run by organizations such as Goodwill Industries International, Inc., and the Structured Employment Economic Development Corporation (SEEDCO), also help many individuals acquire skills and advance in the workforce.

In general, workforce development programs include a variety of activities that help individuals prepare for jobs, obtain employment, and advance in their careers. These programs can provide education and training to help individuals remedy basic skills deficiencies (such as a lack of high school diploma), as well as upgrade the skills they have so they can advance in their careers. Training and education can take place in the workplace or in a classroom setting, and in some instances it leads to a certificate or degree (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015). While some job training programs aim to develop “soft skills,” such as job interviewing skills and resume preparation, this report focuses on those that provide “hard skills” or occupational training designed to meet the technical needs of the U.S. workforce.

### The Economic Benefits of Training

For many individuals, job skills training leads to jobs with higher wages that improve financial security.

- Women who received occupational skills training from Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult programs in Program Year (PY) 2010 had wages that were 80 percent higher during the year after leaving the program than those who received services other than training. In the WIA dislocated worker program, women’s wages during the year following training were 37 percent higher than those who did not receive training (Maxwell et al. 2012).
- A study analyzing outcomes data from nine sectoral training programs—including six job skills training programs in the health care, manufacturing, paralegal, and information technology industries—found that participants in the skills training programs reported an average increase

of 30 percent in hourly wages between a year before the training to two years after it. This increase resulted from both working more hours and earning more per hour (Roder 2008).<sup>2</sup>

- A three-year demonstration project of six partnerships between community-based organizations (CBOs) and community colleges also reported strong outcomes in completion and job attainment for job training participants, and found that most program graduates received higher wages after completion (Conway, Blair, and Helmer 2012). For example, participants of the Training Futures program in Virginia who were employed at the time of enrollment had median hourly wages that were 29.3 percent higher after the program than before (Conway, Blair, and Helmer 2012).
- One study found that those who complete certificates at a college, business, vocational, technical, or trade school earn 20 percent more than those with only a high school diploma in lifetime earnings (Carnevale, Rose, and Hanson 2012).

## Completion Rates

Some individuals who enter job training or education programs, however, do not complete these programs.

- Among adults who participated in any WIA-funded training program and received intensive or training services in PY 2013 (fourth quarter), three in ten who exited did not finish the program (29.5 percent of men and 31.2 percent of women; Social Policy Research Associates 2015).
- About one in four exiters who were single parents (26 percent) did not finish their programs (Social Policy Research Associates 2015). The slightly higher rates of completion among single parents could be due to the fact that single mothers are more likely to receive supportive services than other women WIA participants (Maxwell et al. 2012).
- Institute for Women’s Policy Research (2014) analysis of data from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study finds that among all first time, beginning students enrolled in certificate programs at postsecondary institutions in 2003–2004, over one-third (36 percent) left college without attaining a credential or degree within six years.
- Women in certificate programs had a higher attainment rate within six years of enrollment than men (54 percent compared with 51 percent).
- Single parents of dependent children in certificate programs had a lower rate of certificate attainment (45 percent) than married student parents (62 percent), married students without children (61 percent), and single students who were not parents (52 percent).

***Among all first-time, beginning students enrolled in certificate programs at postsecondary institutions in 2003–2004, 36 percent left college without attaining a credential or degree in six years.***

Experts interviewed for this report pointed to numerous reasons many participants in job training and education do not complete their programs, including a lack of access to reliable transportation and affordable child care, financial challenges, and mental health or other personal issues. Such challenges highlight the potential importance of support services in facilitating job training completion and success.

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<sup>2</sup> The other organizations included two that operated social enterprises in health care and day labor, and one that created a membership association of workers in the child care sector (Roder 2008).



### III. The Role of Supportive Services in Employment, Community College Completion, and Job Training Success

Although the life circumstances of many participants in job training and education programs suggest there is a demand for supportive services, few evaluations have examined the specific effects of these services on job training success. Evaluations of programs that offer support services, however, suggest that these supports are associated with improved outcomes. For example:

- A 2012 Mathematica study examining the experiences of female exiters from WIA programs found that among women participating in the Adult program, 78 percent who received supportive services were employed within one year of exiting the program, compared with 73 percent who received no supportive services. Women who received supportive services earned, on average, \$3,674 per quarter (data include both part- and full-time workers), compared with \$3,285 for those who did not receive these services (Maxwell et al. 2012). Among women participating in the dislocated worker program, 82 percent of those who received supportive services were employed within one year of exiting the program, compared with 70 percent of those who did not. Average earnings for those who received supportive services were \$4,395 per quarter—about \$700 more than those who did not receive these services (\$3,676).
- The P/PV study mentioned above that assessed outcomes data for nine sectoral programs noted that the comparatively high completion rates of one program, Project QUEST, could be related to the strong support system this program provides (Roder 2008).
- Another P/PV study that examined the experiences of 1,286 individuals attending three sector-focused training programs that provide both job training and supportive services—such as child care, transportation, and financial assistance—found that the treatment group study participants who received services from job training programs had greater earnings and likelihood of finding work, working consistently, and finding a job with benefits than control group participants (who did not receive services from the study sites, but could access them from external organizations). The report, though, did not specify how many participants accessed any of the supportive services offered, or discuss the benefits of those supports to labor market success (Maguire et al. 2010).

The next section examines in more detail what existing research says about the potential impact of supportive services on job training success, focusing on eight services commonly identified by experts in the field as integral to promoting positive outcomes. Because studies on job training outcomes and supportive services are limited, this section draws on relevant literature about employment and educational success in addition to reviewing research on supportive services in job training programs.

#### The Role of Child Care in Job Training and Labor Market Success

Child care is critical to help low-income parents pursue training or maintain employment, especially for women, who provide a large share of dependent care in most families. Although there is no national estimate of the number of low-income parents who want or need workforce development programs and face child care barriers, available data indicate that many job training participants have circumstances that may require child care. For example, 59 percent of low-income parents in education and training are single, and 69 percent have children younger than six years old (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015).

***Nationally, families with children under the age of 15 years who earn less than \$1,500 per month spend half of their income on child care.***

Child care is often prohibitively expensive, especially for low-income families. Nationally, families with children under the age of 15 years who earn less than \$1,500 per month spend half of their income (49.5 percent) on child care (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). Child care subsidies funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) can help low-income parents afford the care they need, but such subsidies are limited and inaccessible to many families. In 2011 (the most recent year for which data are available), only 17 percent (2.4 million) of the 14.3 million federally-eligible children received subsidized care (Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation 2011).

Greater access to affordable child care can improve education outcomes for mothers (Hess et al. 2014; Johnson et al. 2009; Matus-Grossman and Gooden 2001) and increase workforce participation and job retention (Lee 2007; Henry, Werschkul, and Rao 2003; Boushey 2002). In addition, some studies have found that child care subsidies are associated with increased likelihood of employment (Shlay, Weinraub, and Harmon 2007), longer duration of employment (Lee 2007; Martinez-Beck and Goerge 2009), higher earnings (Shlay, Weinraub, and Harmon 2007), fewer child care related work disruptions (Forry and Hofferth 2011; Gennetian et al. 2004), and greater enrollment in work-related activities like school (Herbst and Tekin 2011).

While research examining the role of child care in promoting job training success is scarce, one study that surveyed 220 program recipients of the Community-Based Job Training Grant (CBJTG) program, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), found that programs offering supportive services, including child care, came closer to meeting their completion goals than those that did not offer these services. Over half (56 percent) of the CBJTG grant-funded programs that offered child care (15.5 percent of the total sample) met or were on track to meet their completion goals, compared with 49 percent of all programs in the study (Eyster et al. 2012).

Several interviewees for this report noted that child care is an important unmet need for many job training participants, due in part to the relatively high cost of providing this service. The Workforce Benchmarking Initiative, a nationwide study of 259 community-based workforce development programs,<sup>3</sup> found that across participating organizations, only six percent gave assistance with child care expenses to at least half of their participants, compared with 48 percent that provided transportation assistance to at least half of their participants and 36 percent that provided financial literacy training or counseling to at least half of the individuals in their programs (Workforce Benchmarking Initiative 2015).

## Public Benefits and Job Training and Educational Success

Public benefits such as cash assistance, food stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, the Child Tax Credit, subsidized health care, and other safety net programs can help low-income individuals complete education and training. An IWPR survey of women community college students in Mississippi, for example, found that 40 percent of respondents who interrupted their education said financial considerations were a main reason they took time off, and 46 percent said more financial aid would have helped them stay in school (Hess et al. 2014). Few low-

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<sup>3</sup> Not all of these programs provide occupational skills training. Rather, the programs offer a range of services, including educational services such as adult basic education, English as a second language, and preparation for the GED test; employment preparation and social services such as job readiness training, case management, job search assistance, and financial literacy training; occupational or vocational skills training; customized skills training developed in partnership with an employer or group of employers, among others.

income students, however, receive the public benefits for which they are eligible, suggesting that expanded access represents an opportunity to increase financial support to low-income postsecondary students (Duke-Benfield 2015; Gault, Reichlin, and Román 2014).

One community college participating in the Benefits Access for Community College Completion demonstration project (BACC), Gateway Community and Technical College in Kentucky, saw a positive association between expanded access to public benefits and increased rates of retention.<sup>4,5</sup> Gateway connected low-income students with public benefits through referrals and case management; three-quarters of Gateway students who accessed public benefits through the BACC program were retained, compared with 54 percent of students in the comparison group (Gateway Community and Technical College 2013). A formal evaluation of the BACC initiative also found that low-income Gateway students who received public benefits enrolled in more terms than their counterparts who did not receive public benefits (2.8 terms compared with 2.4 terms; Price et al. 2014). In addition, the evaluation found that bundling public benefits increased persistence and completion outcomes: individuals who received more than one benefit enrolled in more terms, earned more credits, and were more likely to earn college credentials than students who received fewer or no benefits (Price et al. 2014).<sup>6</sup>

## Transportation Assistance

Low-income women and men need stable, affordable transportation. Yet, transportation costs are often the largest family expense after housing, with average families spending 19 percent of household income on transportation (U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration 2014).

Limited transportation access can hinder job training as well as employment success. In an evaluation of Single Stop USA's Community College initiative, multiple site coordinators identified transportation needs as especially acute for their students (Goldrick-Rab, Broton, and Frank 2014). In addition, a survey of 177 current and past apprentices in Oregon found that gas costs can make persistence in apprenticeship programs challenging, with women of color more likely than apprentices overall to report struggling to cover these costs: 22 percent of women of color and 17 percent of all apprentices surveyed said that paying for fuel was difficult (Kelly and Wilkinson 2012).

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<sup>4</sup> Run by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the BACC initiative ran from 2012–2014 and was intended to help colleges “develop and institutionalize scalable and sustainable organizational and funding policies and practices that connect low-income students to an array of public benefits, such as food assistance and health insurance” (CLASP 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Evaluation of the impact of public benefits access on students' academic outcomes was dependent on each participating college's ability to match student records with state and county human services agencies. Gateway was the only college that was able to match these records for all enrolled students, and therefore only results from Gateway are presented (Price et al. 2014).

<sup>6</sup> The authors note that these results are exploratory and should be interpreted with caution.

Transportation assistance can mitigate these challenges. A small qualitative study of one Oregon apprenticeship program reported that transportation supports allowed apprentices to take jobs they would otherwise have turned down (Kelly 2013). Another study found that owning a car is associated with an increase in the likelihood of employment for single mother TANF recipients in Los Angeles by nine percentage points, and having a lower insurance premium is associated with an increase in this likelihood by four percentage points (Ong 2002). In addition, a study of two major U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development sponsored programs, the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) Fair Housing Program and the Welfare to Work (WTW) Voucher Program, suggests that car access is strongly associated with finding and keeping a job for participants in both programs, while access to public transit is strongly correlated with maintaining employment for MTO participants (with varying results for adults in the WTW program). Car ownership, and public transit to a lesser extent, was also positively associated for both programs with higher earnings over time (Pendall et al. 2014).<sup>7</sup>

***A survey of 177 current and past apprentices in Oregon found that gas costs can make persistence in apprenticeship programs challenging, with women of color more likely than apprentices overall to report struggling to cover these costs: 22 percent of women of color and 17 percent of all apprentices surveyed said that paying for fuel was difficult.***

## Housing Assistance

The economic insecurity experienced by many low-income women can translate into unstable living situations for them and their families. Federal housing assistance, however, is subject to funding limits and therefore difficult to secure. Even when one has been deemed eligible to receive housing assistance, long waiting lists are common (Goldrick-Rab, Broton, and Frank 2014). One study of Single Stop, a coordinated benefits access program, found that the program's coordinators often feel frustrated by their inability to help with students' housing issues, including the limited access to Section 8 housing, periodic homelessness, and long waiting periods to receive the assistance for which students had already qualified (Goldrick-Rab, Broton, and Frank 2014).

Research exploring the relationship between public housing assistance and job access, employment, and earnings has yielded mixed results. One study of workers who left the TANF program in 1996 in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, found that those who received housing certificates and vouchers were able to live closer to their jobs, had shorter commutes, were better connected to work via public transit, and had access to more job openings compared with those who received assistance from public housing projects or no assistance at all (Bania, Coulton, and Leete 2003). Another study that evaluated two random assignment welfare reform experiments, the Connecticut Jobs First Program and the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), found that housing assistance had a positive impact on employment and earnings (Verma, Riccio, and Azurdia 2003).

Other studies, however, have found that housing assistance is not associated with higher employment and earnings levels among low-income adults. An experimental evaluation of the effects of housing vouchers on 8,731 families receiving welfare in six study sites across the nation found that voucher users had slightly lower employment rates and earnings than control group members in the first year or two after random assignment. This small negative effect of voucher use, however, disappeared over time and may have resulted from chance alone. The report's literature review also concluded that a number

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<sup>7</sup> MTO and WTW were conducted in the 1990s and early 2000s in 10 major U.S. cities: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, and Baltimore (MTO); and Atlanta, Spokane, Augusta, Houston, and Fresno (WTW; Pendall et al. 2014).

of previous nonexperimental studies of housing assistance have found small negative or neutral effects on employment and earnings of low-income families receiving welfare (Wood, Turnham, and Mills 2008).

## Mental Health Counseling

Many individuals experience mental health issues that may make it difficult to complete training and education. In the United States, 21 percent of adults aged 18 and older report having experienced a mood disorder, which includes major depressive disorder, dysthymia, and bipolar disorder, and 29 percent report having experienced an anxiety disorder at some point in their lifetime (Kessler et al. 2005).

While data on the effects of mental health issues on job training completion are not available, several interviewees for this report noted that in their experience as program administrators or through their conversations with program leaders, they have learned that mental health issues are a key barrier for some job training participants. Research indicates that these issues can also pose challenges for students seeking to complete postsecondary education. The 2015 American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment II found that when asked about the obstacles threatening their academic success, students most commonly pointed to stress (30.0 percent) and anxiety (21.9 percent); depression was the sixth most common response (13.8 percent; American College Health Association 2015).<sup>8</sup> One study of 2,798 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in fall 2005 at a large, public, academically competitive university found that depression was associated with a higher likelihood dropping out of college (Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Hunt 2009).

Psychological counseling can play an important role in helping college students remain enrolled in education and training. One study, which used client records from 562 Iowa State University students who requested counseling services between 1993 and 1994, found that retention was higher for students who received counseling than students who requested but never received it (79 percent compared with 65 percent (Wilson, Mason, and Ewing 1997). Another study found similar results: 70.9 percent of students who received counseling while in school at a moderate-sized, Western land-grant university reenrolled the following fall semester, compared with 58.6 percent of the general student population (Turner and Berry 2000).

## Domestic Violence Services

Analysis of the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey indicates that over one in three women in the United States (35.6 percent) has experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner at some point in her lifetime (Black et al. 2011). In general, economic insecurity correlates with higher rates of violence; according to a report by the National Institute for Justice, couples with extensive financial strain experience violence more than three times as often as those with low levels of financial strain (Benson and Fox 2004). Tolman and Rosen (2001), using data on 753 women receiving welfare from the Women's Employment Study, found that half of the women in the sample reported having experienced severe violence at some point in their lives.

While research has not yet examined the relationship between domestic violence and enrollment and completion in job training programs, some studies have explored the effects of this violence on employment outcomes. In a study of 120 women survivors of domestic violence, the Maine Department of Labor and Family Crisis Services found that the large majority of respondents (96 percent) reported

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<sup>8</sup> The National College Health Assessment II contains survey data for 93,034 college students at 108 schools, the majority of which (103) were four-year institutions or above (and five were two-year schools; American College Health Association 2015).



that the abuse negatively affected their ability to perform their work responsibilities, 79 percent said that it caused them to be late for work, and 60 percent said they were fired or they quit their job due to domestic abuse (Ridley et al. 2005). Another study of 1,550 women and 823 men employed at mid-sized businesses found that 30.1 percent of women and 19.3 percent of men had experienced intimate partner violence at some point in their lives. Of the respondents in the sample, those who had experienced this violence had higher rates of absenteeism than those who had never experienced it (Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly 2007).

Two other studies also found that domestic violence affects women’s employment outcomes. Swanberg and Logan (2005) found that more than 50 percent of the 32 women in their study reported missing work with “some regularity,” and 91 percent reported losing a job in the past two years, due to partner abuse. In another study of 753 single mothers between the ages of 18 and 54 receiving welfare in an urban Michigan county, nearly half (48 percent) of the women in the sample reported that their partners had interfered with their ability to go to work or perform their jobs in the past year (Tolman and Rosen 2001).

A range of services for domestic violence survivors—including legal assistance, counseling, and ongoing safety planning—can help them to remain safe and to become and stay employed (McKean 2004). One national demonstration project that created a collaborative model among employment services and domestic violence services agencies found that providing a mix of resources such as information sessions about the availability of domestic violence services, referrals to counseling and other services, onsite counseling, and support groups helped meet the needs of clients seeking work who were domestic violence survivors. Participants reported that the services they received helped to prepare them for the workforce and connect them with necessary resources (McKean 2004).

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## Life Coaching

Life coaching is intended to help individuals set and attain personal and/or professional goals to improve their well-being. Life coaches work one-on-one with clients to help them develop and implement solutions that will allow them to overcome obstacles and make progress toward goal attainment (Spence and Grant 2007).

Though research on life coaching is scarce, a few studies have demonstrated its potential effectiveness. A study of data from InsideTrack (Bettinger and Baker 2011), an independent provider of coaching services for students in college, found that students who received coaching were significantly more likely to be enrolled after 6, 12, 18, and 24 months of coaching compared with control group students who did not receive coaching (controlling for age, gender, and other variables).

In an exploratory study of 20 postgraduate students, Grant (2003) examined the impact of life coaching using a within-subject study design. The study found that solution-focused life coaching significantly increased goal attainment; reduced participants’ reported levels of depression, anxiety, and stress; and enhanced their quality of life. Another study used a randomized control trial to examine a 10-week life coaching group program. The authors found that participants who took part in the life coaching program

saw increased goal striving, subjective well-being, psychological well-being, and hope (Green, Grant, and Oades 2006).

## Financial Coaching and Education

Low-income adults often face barriers to affordable banking, accessing fair credit, managing debt, building assets, and achieving other financial goals (Barr 2004). Many families earning \$25,000 and under who do not have a checking or savings account, for example, rely on alternative financial services such as check cashers or payday lenders, which can charge high transaction costs that decrease take-home income, limit the effectiveness of federal income transfer programs like EITC, and hinder the ability to establish good credit to qualify for loans or increase savings (Barr 2004).

Financial education services—which focus on the development of skills such as household budgeting, debt management, asset building, and setting financial goals—attempt to help low-income individuals achieve financial stability in the short and long run (Kaul, Burnett, and St. George 2011; Liston and Donnan 2012; Rankin 2015). These services, also referred to as financial literacy services, are delivered in a variety of ways, including through workshops, credit and non-credit bearing courses, and one-on-one advising (Liston and Donnan 2012).

In an analysis of program data for 39,491 clients in 62 Financial Opportunity Centers, Rankin (2015) found that participants who received higher levels of financial counseling had higher rates of job placement and 180-day job retention, even when controlling for the fact that those receiving more financial counseling services may also access more employment services. Another study that evaluated

***One study that evaluated three Center for Working Families sites found that participants who receive bundled supports including financial literacy have higher rates of completion in job training or degree programs and better rates of job placement, retention, and advancement.***

three Center for Working Families<sup>9</sup> sites also suggests a positive association between financial coaching services and positive economic outcomes, such as receiving an associate's or bachelor's degree, completing a hard skills course, experiencing job advancement, or holding a job for more than six months (Kaul, Burnett, and St. George 2011). Participants who receive bundled supports, including financial literacy, were more likely to have higher rates of completion in job training or degree programs and better rates of job placement, retention, and advancement. They were also more likely to pay off debt and live within a budget (Kaul, Burnett, and St. George 2011; Rankin 2015).

## Integrated Case Management

Because many job training participants need a range of supportive services, working with a case manager who establishes an ongoing relationship with participants and helps them to assess their needs and interests, access multiple services, plan their careers, and obtain a job can be extremely valuable (Laird and Holcomb 2011). To link participants to various support services, case managers must have a broad understanding of the services available in their community, including those provided by American Job Centers, local community-based organizations, state or local agencies, and other organizations. It is

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<sup>9</sup> Developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Center for Working Families offers an integrated service delivery approach that has been implemented in 26 states, including at a number of community colleges. For more on this model, see section V below.



often helpful for case managers to build relationships with staff at these organizations to more effectively facilitate their clients' access to the services they need (Laird and Holcomb 2011).

Several promising practices in case management emerged in conversation with experts in the field. One individual underscored that case managers must know how to navigate government and community-based organizations to find relevant supportive services and added that ideally, case managers will spend time addressing barriers to training and employment—such as child care issues and lack of transportation—before their clients even begin training. Another recommended an integrated approach to case management, so that individuals can work with a single case manager who helps them access all the services they need rather than multiple case managers who each connect them with different resources.

An evaluation of a welfare-to-work program in Columbus, Ohio—one of the 11 sites for the five-year National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS)—demonstrates the importance of a streamlined approach to case management. It examines the difference in outcomes for participants who received one of two types of case management: traditional (which involved two case managers, one who worked with participants on issues related to welfare eligibility and payment issues such as income maintenance, and another who focused on employment and training issues) and integrated (which involved only one case manager who worked with participants in both realms simultaneously; Hamilton 2002).<sup>10</sup> The study found that the integrated model more effectively engaged participants in program activities and led to better income management; participants who received integrated services had higher five-year earnings and 1.4 fewer months participating in the TANF program, compared with those who received traditional services. In addition, those who received integrated case management experienced a larger increase in earnings than those who received traditional case management (Hamilton 2002).<sup>11</sup>

Several experts interviewed also noted that continuity is vital for effective case management. One cautioned, however, that case managers' jobs are sometimes funded by a grant that lasts for a specified period of time; when the grant ends, the case manager position may disappear, leaving clients without the ongoing assistance they need to access an array of supports.

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<sup>10</sup> Recipients of the two types of case management received identical program services and were subject to the same eligibility requirements and payment system (Hamilton 2002).

<sup>11</sup> The difference found in five-year earnings was not statistically significant when comparing recipients of the two types of case management and their respective control groups, but, when looking specifically at the nongraduate subpopulation, the earnings difference was statistically significant (Hamilton 2002).

## IV. Sources of Funding for Supportive Services in the Workforce Development System

While supportive services can make an important difference for many individuals pursuing job training or education, organizations often struggle to provide these services due to budgetary constraints. Still, opportunities for leveraging funding for supportive services exist within the workforce development system and can be sought in creative ways. WIOA represents the major source of federal funding for these services, but other federal sources—such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T), and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Strengthening Working Families Initiatives—can augment the funding offered through WIOA (see Appendix D for additional sources of federal funding). Organizations that provide job training may also receive funding from nongovernmental sources, including private foundations and corporations, such as The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Ford Foundation, JPMorgan Chase, The Kresge Foundation, the Walmart Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Supportive services are critical to the intent of the WIOA legislation, which requires states to submit a plan describing their strategy to provide “comprehensive, high-quality services including priority support services” (*Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* 2014). An estimated 2,500 American Job Centers, formerly called One-Stop Career Centers, are funded by WIOA to provide employment services and connect individuals with training and education (Griffith et al. 2015). These Centers also provide supportive services such as information about public benefits, child care, emergency funds, financial assistance, and referrals to community resources (U.S. Department of Labor 2015a).

The WIOA legislation also points to the importance of supportive services by emphasizing the development of career pathways, a programmatic approach that connects progressive levels of education, training, and services to address the specific needs of individuals and facilitate their educational and career advancement. WIOA requires local workforce investment boards (WIBs), in partnership with representatives of secondary and postsecondary education programs, to implement career pathways that align employment, training, education, and supportive services needed by adults and youth—particularly those facing barriers to employment—with state or regional needs (Bird, Foster, and Ganzglass 2014). While some elements of the workforce development system have pursued career pathways approaches for years, WIOA makes it a function of state and local workforce boards and deems the implementation of career pathways a permissible activity under all parts of the Act.

As described in WIOA legislation and guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, WIOA funds may be used for supportive services as determined by states and local areas (Center for Law and Social Policy n.d.). Supportive services may be given to eligible individuals based on individual assessment and availability of funds. These services may include, among others, transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments (available only to those in training services; U.S. Department of Labor 2015).

While WIOA represents a major source of federal funding for workforce development activities, the funding provided through Title I has decreased considerably over the last 15 years (Figure 1). In 2015, WIOA (Title I) provided approximately \$2.8 billion, compared with about \$5.2 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2000 (National Skills Coalition 2015).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The WIOA Adult Formula (to states) was \$776,736,000 in 2015, which is \$84 million below FY 2010 levels (National Skills Coalition 2015).

Although it is too soon to predict the impact of WIOA’s changes on support services provision, research indicates that many job training participants have not received these services in the past. As noted above, a 2012 Mathematica study revealed that, among exiters in WIA adult programs in the 2009 calendar year, only 18 percent of women and 12 percent of men received supportive services, including assistance with child care, transportation, or other needs-related payment (Maxwell et al. 2012). The lack of a significant funding increase under WIOA may mean that this pattern of low receipt will remain unchanged.

Figure 1. Federal Funding for the Workforce Investment (and Opportunity) Act, 2000–2015 (in billions)



Note: Dollar amounts are not adjusted for inflation.

Source: IWPR compilation of data from the National Skills Coalition 2015.

## Other Federal Sources of Funding for Supportive Services

### Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a public benefit program designed to help low-income individuals achieve economic self-sufficiency, plays a significant role in the provision of supportive services—particularly child care—for job training participants. Under WIOA, TANF—which served an average of 1.5 million families per month in fiscal year 2014 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Family Assistance 2015)—has become a mandatory partner, meaning that all American Job Centers must now provide access to TANF services.<sup>13</sup>

Under TANF, the federal government provides grants to states to develop their own cash assistance program with specific eligibility criteria (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2015). With some

<sup>13</sup> Although TANF has been added as a required partner at One-Stop Career Centers under WIOA, governors have the authority to make TANF an optional partner (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration 2015).

exceptions, adult TANF recipients must participate in work activities; based on their needs, TANF may provide them with services to help meet this work requirement and fulfill the program's goals, including job skills training, work experience, job readiness training, child care assistance, and transportation (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2015). One interviewee for this report said TANF's provision of supports for job training participants varies across localities; in some places, the workforce development and TANF systems are better integrated than in others, allowing for greater service coordination.

***Increasing opportunities for TANF recipients to participate in education could allow more low-income adults to complete job training programs with wraparound supports; as of fiscal year 2009, only 15 percent of single parent TANF recipients aged 21 and older reported counting vocational education toward their core activity requirements.***

Federal regulations allow vocational education to count as a "core" activity (which counts for any hours of participation) for TANF work requirements for up to 12 months; job training and education directly related to employment are "non-core" activities and must be combined with at least 20 hours per week of a core activity, such as unsubsidized employment or subsidized private employment (Lower-Basch 2015). States, however, have some flexibility in the extent to which they allow TANF recipients to count education as work (Huber et al. 2015). Increasing opportunities for TANF recipients to participate in education could allow more low-income adults to complete job training programs with wraparound supports; as of fiscal year 2009, only 15 percent of single parent TANF recipients

aged 21 and older reported counting vocational education toward their core activity requirements (Hahn, Kassabian, and Zedlewski 2012).

To help more low-income adults attain education and training, some states have implemented programs funded by TANF dollars and targeted at TANF-eligible adults. For example, the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI), launched in 2005 and administered by the Arkansas Department of Education, provides funding to 25 Arkansas community colleges to build career pathways programs and provide wraparound support services to eligible students (Arkansas Career Pathways 2013a). While the CPI is funded by federal TANF dollars, students do not have to be TANF recipients to participate (Arkansas Career Pathways 2013b; Bone 2010).

Like WIOA, funding for TANF has declined in recent years. Since 1996, the basic TANF block grant has been set at \$16.5 billion each year; the lack of any increase means that its real value has decreased by one-third due to inflation (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2015).

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training Program**

Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the federal Food Stamp Program, provides nutrition assistance to low-income families. Under SNAP, states are also able to provide services to SNAP recipients to help them secure employment and increase their incomes. Originally authorized under the Food Stamp Act of 1977, and most recently amended by the Agriculture Act of 2014 (also known as the Farm Bill), the SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T) is a funding source that states can utilize to provide services such as job search, adult education, vocational training, and work experience to recipients of SNAP benefits (Lower-Basch 2014; National Skills Coalition 2014).

SNAP E&T offers several types of funding. The program has E&T grants, through which states can receive a capped allotment of "100 percent" federal funds that can be used to provide E&T services. It also has 50 percent reimbursement grants (or "50-50 funds"), which are uncapped federal grants that

reimburse states for up to half of certain non-federal SNAP E&T program costs—including support services such as dependent care—that enable individuals to participate in SNAP E&T programs (National Skills Coalition 2014). SNAP E&T programs can partner with other providers, such as community colleges and community-based organizations, which can increase their ability to make use of 50-50 reimbursement grants and provide greater access to E&T services for SNAP participants (National Skills Coalition 2014).<sup>14</sup>

Only a small proportion of SNAP participants take part in SNAP E&T. In 2013, more than 47 million individuals received SNAP benefits in an average month, but in 2012 (the most recent year for which data are available) only 15.3 percent of nonelderly adult SNAP participants received training from the E&T program (Lower-Basch 2014).

In Fiscal Year 2013, combined state and federal spending on SNAP E&T was \$393.3 million, with the federal share (which includes both 100 percent funds and 50 percent reimbursements) comprising \$287 million (National Skills Coalition 2014). Of the \$287 million, approximately \$98 million were for 100 percent funds, and \$189 million were federal reimbursements to states for the provision of services (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service 2014). One hundred percent funds have been capped at \$90 million since 2004 and reduced in FY 2012 to \$79 million; the 2014 Farm Bill raised the 100 percent funds to \$90 million once again (National Skills Coalition 2014).

Several experts interviewed for this report noted that use of the SNAP E&T program varies considerably across states. Washington state, for example, has a well-developed E&T program that leverages 50-50 funds to help SNAP participants get employment and training services and to provide a range of supportive services through partnerships with community colleges and community-based organizations. Most other states, however, have not yet built up their SNAP E&T programs, which one interviewee attributed to multiple factors, including a lack of awareness about the availability of 50-50 funds and an inability to afford the 50 percent state contribution. With information and guidance, however, more states could use these funds.

***The use of the SNAP E&T program varies considerably across states. Washington state, for example, has a well-developed E&T program that leverages 50-50 funds to help SNAP participants get employment and training services and to provide a range of supportive services through partnerships with community colleges and CBOs. Most other states, however, have not yet built up their SNAP E&T programs.***

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<sup>14</sup> In addition to the 100 percent and 50-50 funds, states may receive a third type of funding for SNAP E&T: Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) grants. These grants are available for states that pledge to offer and provide a qualifying work or training opportunity—including education, training, or workfare opportunities—for ABAWDs entering their third and final month of SNAP eligibility. Total grants are capped at \$20 million per year, and are allocated to states on a formula that takes into account the relative share of ABAWDs in a state compared to all other “pledge” states (National Skills Coalition 2014).

## Focus On: SNAP E&T Pilot Projects

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized up to \$200 million for the development, implementation, and evaluation of up to 10 pilot projects to build on existing SNAP E&T programs and test innovative approaches that can help SNAP work registrants to increase employment and gain skills and education that lead to jobs with higher earnings (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service 2015a).

As of October 2015, SNAP E&T pilots were underway in California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington. Pilot projects target individuals with significant barriers to employment and include strategies and approaches such as case management; career pathways; work-based learning, including pre-apprenticeship programs and on-the-job learning; and public-private partnerships (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service 2014). For example, the County of Fresno Department of Social Services pilot project will offer multiple career-driven services, including education, job training, support services, ongoing case management, financial literacy, and services to ensure that children thrive in school. Partners include the local economic development corporation, community based organizations, workforce boards, local education providers, community and career colleges, and local employers (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service 2015b).

In Washington State, the Washington Department of Social and Health Services' Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE) project will operate in four counties—King, Pierce, Spokane, and Yakima—to help individuals with significant barriers to employment through comprehensive case management and work-based learning opportunities. Community colleges and CBOs will provide case management services for the project. Case managers will address barriers to employment by accessing housing resources, working with the Division of Child Support for clients who are delinquent in child support payments, and creating accelerated training strategies and job placements within industries where there is considerable growth or demand. Partners include the Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and community-based organizations (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service 2015b).

## **U.S. Department of Transportation On-the-Job Training Support Services Programs**

Federal highway funding offers states a stable resource to support activities that increase women's entry into and success in construction trades. States are able to reserve one half of one percent of their total Federal Surface Transportation Program funding allocation for On-the-Job Training Support Services (OJT/SS) Programs aimed at increasing the numbers of women, minorities, and disadvantaged individuals in highway construction (Hegewisch et al. 2014). Such funds can be used to support trainees and apprentices by providing, among other activities, funding for child care and transportation assistance (Hegewisch et al. 2014). In addition, states receive an allocation of funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's \$10 million annual fund (distributed among states on a pro-rated basis) for OJT/SS targeted at improving diversity (Hegewisch et al. 2014; U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration 2012).

The example of the state of Oregon shows the potential benefits of using this provision. Since the 2009 passage of §184.866 *Highway Construction Workforce Development*, a portion of Oregon's federal Surface

Transportation funds has been dedicated to activities that facilitate the participation and success of women and other underrepresented groups in construction training programs, such as pre-apprenticeship programs and retention services. These activities include supports like fuel subsidies and assistance with child care expenses. An evaluation of Oregon’s program shows the positive impact on the retention of apprentices who received supportive services; for example, only 6 percent of women of color who received retention services ended their programs without completing, compared with 39 percent of their peers who did not receive those services (Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries n.d.). For the 2013–2015 budget period, funding was set at \$2.1 million (Hegewisch et al. 2014).

### Focus On: The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which is also known as the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG), provides child care assistance for low-income families needing child care to work or participate in education and training, in addition to other activities related to child care quality and coordination (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Care 2012). As documented in a recent Urban Institute report, many states have allowed CCDF funding to be used for parents in education and training, although resources are limited, and many states restrict access depending on the type of educational activity or population served (Adams et al. 2014). Some states also limit the use of subsidies by requiring parents to work a certain number of hours while in education or training, requiring them to enroll in a set number of hours of class or training per week (e.g. at least 20 hours per week), or restricting the duration of time parents are allowed to pursue education or training while still being eligible for subsidies (e.g. 20 months to 40 months; National Women’s Law Center 2015).

Most CCDF funds are administered through vouchers that families can use to purchase child care in their communities (Adams et al. 2014), although some funds are paid directly to programs to buy slots that eligible families can use or to support programs that provide early care and education (Adams, Spaulding, and Heller 2015). States have significant flexibility in setting policies for this program, since funds come as a block grant with federal guidelines. In 2012, \$11.4 billion was spent using the CCDF, including funds transferred from TANF and \$2.8 billion spent directly from TANF (Matthews and Schmit 2014).

### **U.S. Department of Labor Strengthening Working Families Initiative**

In December 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor announced a new funding initiative intended to support parents’ pursuit of education and training by expanding their access to affordable, quality child care. Grants of up to \$4 million will go towards public-private partnerships linking early care and education providers, human services providers, business entities, the public workforce system, and private providers of education and training. Funded programs will facilitate access to training and customized support services for parents pursuing jobs in fields such as IT, health care, and advanced manufacturing. Up to 25 percent of a grantees’ award may be used to provide child care and other services. All partnerships must include at least three employers, and must match requested grant funds by at least 25 percent of the total by leveraging outside funding sources (U.S. Department of Labor 2015b).



## Focus On: Job Training and Supportive Services in Institutions of Higher Education

Institutions of higher education, especially community and technical colleges, are a key component of the workforce system that help meet the growing demand for workers who have some education or training beyond high school but may not pursue a four-year degree. Many community and technical colleges (as well as high schools, career centers, and four-year universities) offer career and technical education (CTE) programs, which prepare students for college and careers by providing core academic and job readiness skills, as well as skills that are technical and job-specific (Association for Career and Technical Education n.d.). To meet the nonacademic needs of students, community colleges often partner with community-based organizations, allowing students access to a greater range of supports (Conway, Helmer, and Jain 2015). Some supportive services, however, are lacking or in decline. For example, research by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research finds that the share of two- and four-year campuses providing on-campus child care services has decreased in recent years. As of 2013, only 46 percent of two-year campuses provided on-campus child care, compared with a high of 53 percent in 2003–04. At public four-year institutions, the share of campuses with on campus-care declined from 54 percent in 2002 to 51 percent in 2013 (Gault et al. 2014).

Two federal sources of funding can potentially provide resources for supportive services for college students. The TRIO programs within the U.S. Department of Education include eight federally funded grant programs to help economically disadvantaged and first-generation college students succeed in postsecondary education (Chaney 2010). While some of these programs work with middle or high school students, others—including the Student Support Services (SSS) program, which was funded at the level of \$264 million in 2007–2008 and served nearly 200,000 students—help individuals attending postsecondary institutions. Many of the services offered through this program are academic supports such as tutoring, workshops, and laboratories, but the program does fund professional counseling, which includes both academic and nonacademic counseling (Chaney 2010).

In addition, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act provides federal funding for career and technical education programs for participating secondary and community college students (National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education 2015). The Perkins Act allows local recipients to use funds to provide career guidance and academic counseling to CTE students, as well as mentoring and support services. Support services, however, are defined by the Perkins Act (2006) to be “services related to curriculum modification, equipment modification, classroom modification, supportive personnel, and instructional aids and devices,” as opposed to wraparound supports such as child care, transportation, or housing assistance. As of early 2016, the Perkins Act was up for reauthorization, with some organizations advocating for increased funding in the Act for supportive services that enable individuals to complete education and training and address gaps in equity (American Association of University Women n.d.; National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity 2015).

## V. Using Supportive Services to Facilitate Success: Program Models and Examples

Despite the various funding sources for support services in job training programs, experts interviewed for this report emphasized that the funding for these services remains insufficient to meet the needs of many low-income individuals. To maximize what they can offer, organizations often seek innovative ways to provide supportive services and use multiple approaches to support service provision. For instance, a training program may partner with a local nonprofit to provide housing assistance, directly provide transportation stipends, and make referrals to other organizations that offer child care services. According to experts in the field, having a human point of contact—and a well-developed network of partnerships—is often essential for organizations to help job training participants navigate across systems to access the full range of services they need.

This section examines a set of four promising models that emerge in the literature on job training, with attention to key features of each, some challenges they report facing in providing support services, and whether there are evaluations or data suggesting that the programs' provision of services correlate with higher rates of job training and employment success. While the programs selected here represent several different models or approaches to training and support service provision, all make support service delivery integral to their work and have been identified as promoting successful outcomes.

### Integrated Service Delivery: Coordinating Services to Meet Multiple Needs

#### **Center for Working Families**

The Center for Working Families (CWF) model, which was developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2005, bundles three core services: 1) employment and career advancement services, such as certificate or associate's degree programs, job training, and job search and placement; 2) income and work supports, such as public benefits screening, assistance with benefit applications, and tax assistance services; and 3) financial services and asset building supports, such as educational workshops and financial literacy classes, financial coaching, and access to financial products (Liston and Donnan 2012). As of 2015, the CWF model had been implemented in 26 states across the nation, including at a number of community colleges (Liston and Donnan 2012).<sup>15</sup>

An evaluation conducted by Abt Associates (“the Service Pathways Analysis”) examined the demographics, service receipt, and outcomes of participants across three institutions implementing the CWF approach: Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque, New Mexico (CNM); the Metropolitan Education and Training Center in Wellston, Missouri (MET Center); and the Bon Secours of Maryland Foundation in Baltimore, Maryland (Bon Secours). Across the three sites, the Service Pathways Analysis found significant associations between support services received and outcomes achieved.

- At CNM, participants who received help with qualifying for child care assistance and obtaining transportation assistance or TANF benefits were significantly more likely to obtain a GED or an associate's or bachelor's degree than those who did not.
- Participants who received financial literacy training at CNM and the Met Center were more likely to complete hard skills training. Financial literacy services were also positively associated

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<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.aecf.org/work/economic-opportunity/center-for-working-families/>.

with outcomes such as job retention (at Bon Secours and the MET Center), job advancement (at Bon Secours), and obtaining an associate's or bachelor's degree (at CNM; Kaul, Burnett, and St. George 2011).

- Those who emerged as the highest achievers at the three sites were more likely than their peers to have received bundled services (defined as services in two out of the three core areas). In the CNM program, 95 percent of the highest achievers received bundled services, compared with 81 percent of all other participants. One hundred percent of the highest achievers in the MET Center program received bundled services, compared with 85 percent of all other participants. In the Bon Secours program, 87 percent of the highest achievers received bundled services, compared with 66 percent of all other participants (Kaul, Burnett, and St. George 2011).

Another study conducted by MDC that examined the experiences of 10 community colleges across the United States that have implemented the CWF model found promising initial outcomes for students who received bundled services at the participating colleges. For example, more than eight in ten CWF students (84 percent) at Des Moines Community College in 2010 enrolled in a subsequent term, compared with a college wide retention rate of just 70 percent. Similar results were found at Skyline Community College in San Bruno, California, and Central New Mexico Community College.<sup>16</sup> The retention rate at Central New Mexico Community College among students who accessed supports through CWF between fall 2010 and spring 2011 was 85 percent, compared with 71 percent for all first-time students (Liston and Donnan 2012). Overall, the majority of participating colleges reported more than an 80 percent rate of term-to-term retention among students who enrolled in the program, which is higher than the overall rate for all students at two-year public colleges of 71 percent (Liston and Donnan 2012).

The study also assessed student perceptions of the CWF services and the impact of these services on their college experience. It found that as a result of the CWF services they received, students at the 10 participating colleges reported feeling more connected to college and more capable of determining where to find assistance for both academic and nonacademic issues. Students at these colleges viewed income and work supports such as access to scholarships, emergency funds, bus passes, and other financial supports as the most valuable services they received (Liston and Donnan 2012).

### **Working Families Success Network**

The Working Families Success Network (WFSN), which grew out of the CWF model, consists of national and local foundations, community-based organizations, businesses, and community colleges committed to an integrated service delivery model to help low-income families achieve financial security. The Network's integrated service delivery model includes three components: employment, education, and career advancement services; financial coaching and asset building services; and access to work supports, public benefits, and tax credits services (Working Families Success Network 2013). The Network came into its own through collaboration among the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, United Way Worldwide, the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, MDC, Achieving the Dream, and the Kresge Foundation. The Network includes 115 locations, in 30 cities in 24 states (Working Families Success Network n.d.). To date, no evaluations have examined the impact of supportive services within this model on job training outcomes.

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<sup>16</sup> Data are not given for the other schools participating in the study.

### **Local Initiative Support Corporation's (LISC) Financial Opportunity Centers**

LISC, the largest community development support organization in the country, supports a national network of 76 Financial Opportunity Centers (FOCs) across the country based on an integrated service delivery model (Rankin 2015). In general, FOCs offer employment services, access to income supports, and financial education and financial coaching, although some only offer one or two of these services. A study conducted by LISC of 62 FOCs in 15 cities found that the network primarily serves low-income clients; approximately 87 percent of those served in the 34 months covered by the study were in the bottom fifth of the U.S. income distribution. Fifty-seven percent were female, 63 percent were single, and 57 percent identified as African American or black (Rankin 2015).

The study found that receiving bundled services from the FOCs correlates with positive outcomes in job placement and retention. FOC clients receiving bundled services in employment services, financial counseling, and income supports were much more likely to be placed in a job than clients enrolled in just employment counseling (39 percent compared with 22 percent). Clients receiving all three services<sup>17</sup> also experienced the greatest increases in average net income. Higher levels of employment services, financial counseling, and income support services were each associated with increased client job placement and job retention rates. The clients in the highest quartile of time spent receiving all three bundled services experienced a 74 percent job placement rate (compared with 33 percent among all participants), and a 78 percent 180-day job retention rate (compared with 56 percent among all participants; Rankin 2015a).

### **Financial Stability One Stop Centers with United Way**

Many local United Way programs practice an integrated service delivery model through Financial Stability One Stop Centers, or “place-based” programs that offer bundled services, including financial coaching, job training programs, financial education workshops, and screening for benefits eligibility and help with enrolling in public and private income supports (United Way Worldwide and Rowen 2011). While each United Way may offer different services, including job skills training, core components of Financial Stability One Stop Centers include bundling and sequencing services, a multi-year commitment to serving clients, one-on-one coaching or counseling, and cross-training staff in different services.

An evaluation of United Way Financial Stability One Stop Centers found that successful Centers have multiple partners with specific expertise and capacities, and establish common values among partners that inform their planning, program features, and service delivery. While collecting standardized data across service providers has proven to be difficult, the Centers that have successfully captured data have demonstrated promising results for clients, such as helping them to secure better jobs, accumulate assets, and reduce their debt to income ratios. The evaluation also found that sustainability of these Centers requires multi-year funding from a variety of funders (United Way Worldwide and Rowen 2011).

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<sup>17</sup> One-third of the FOCs participating the study offered all three core services (Rankin 2015).

## Focus On: Promising Practices in Service Delivery

**Take a Holistic Approach.** A holistic approach to service provision sees participants as members of families with needs in multiple areas of their lives. Some programs, for example—often referred to as providing a two-generation approach to support service provision—consider the needs of parents and their children together and work to ensure that parents receive education, training, and other services, while their children receive services such as home visiting, early childhood education, and help dealing with trauma (Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn 2014). Participants in job training programs may also face elder care challenges, as well as mental health issues, financial challenges, transportation issues, and other barriers. A holistic approach strives to understand the complexity of the individual’s life, engage the whole person, and address the full spectrum of their needs and concerns.

**Use Bundled or Integrated Service Delivery.** A bundled or integrated service delivery approach provides a set of coordinated services to help low-income individuals attain financial self-sufficiency. With this model, clients receive assistance with the eligibility determination and application processes for a number of services in one location, as well as help identifying other sources of support. Bundled service delivery recognizes the interconnections between the challenges that many individuals face and the difficulties they often face when required to go from one agency to another for services (ROMA Center 2014). Although the particular configuration of services offered varies across networks and organizations, many bundled service providers integrate services in several key areas, including employment and/or education, public benefits access and work supports, and financial services and asset building.

Examples of organizations and networks that have launched bundled service delivery include Single Stop USA, the Center for Working Families, the Working Families Success Network, Local Initiatives Support Corporation’s (LISC) Financial Opportunity Centers, Financial Stability One Stop Centers with United Way, and United Way of the Bay Area’s SparkPoint Centers (Goldrick-Rab, Broton, and Frank 2014; Rankin 2015; United Way Worldwide and Rowen 2011; Working Families Success Network 2013).

**Develop strong organizational partnerships.** While some organizations provide training services to participants directly, others lack the funding, space, or staff to do so. To increase their ability to connect job training participants with supportive services, many nonprofit organizations and institutions develop partnerships that offer an array of services. Such partnerships can help organizations maximize their resources and effectively serve populations they may not otherwise reach.

**Use integrated case management.** Experts in the field point to the importance of case management in helping job training participants navigate across systems to access range of services. Several experts and studies emphasize that case management is most effective when an integrated approach is used, which allows individuals to work with a single case manager who helps them access all the services they need rather than multiple case managers who each try to connect them with different resources.

## Organizational Partnerships: Expanding the Availability of Services

### Courses to Employment (C2E) Partnerships

Partnerships between community colleges and community-based organizations (CBOs) represent one promising form of partnership for providing supportive services to job training participants. The Aspen Institute Workforce Strategies Initiative (AspenWSI) has identified a set of collaborations between community colleges and nonprofit organizations, Courses to Employment (C2E) partnerships, that use a variety of educational, support, and industry engagement strategies to help students increase their skills, obtain a job, or advance in their career. A three-year demonstration project of six C2E partnerships (The Automobile Career Pathways Project in Seattle; Capital IDEA and Austin Community College in Austin, Texas; *Carreras en Salud* in Chicago; The Training Futures program in Fairfax County, Virginia; The Logistics/Transportation Academy in Los Angeles; and The Flint Healthcare Career Pathways Project in Flint, Michigan) reported strong outcomes in completion and job attainment for participants (Conway, Blair, and Helmer 2012). Each partnership provides a range of supportive services; the Logistics/Transportation Academy partnership, for example, provides participants with case management and help with covering the costs of child care, transportation, tuition, books, and other expenses. The Flint Healthcare partnership has worked with the public workforce system and other local nonprofits to provide emergency assistance funds, case management, and other services.

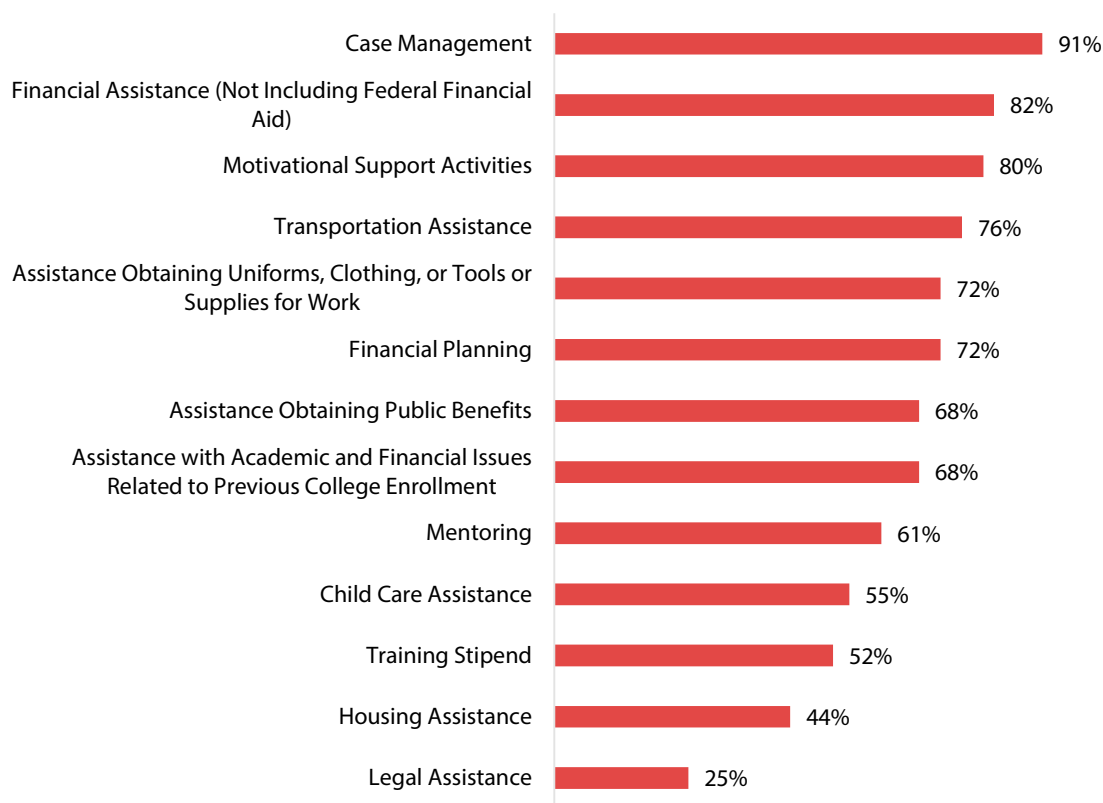
In 2013, the Aspen Institute Workforce Strategies Initiative (AspenWSI) conducted a survey of C2E partnerships across the country. The survey found that:

- Both nonprofits and community colleges identified the provision of supportive services as a best practice in serving community college students (Conway, Helmer, and Jain 2015).
- Some respondents said that career navigators were an especially vital resource in helping students enter college, access support programs, and obtain a job (Conway, Blair, and Helmer 2012).
- C2E partnerships provide comprehensive supportive services to their clients. More than nine in ten partnerships (91 percent) report offering case management (Figure 2). Slightly smaller shares offer financial assistance not including federal financial aid (82 percent), motivational support activities (80 percent), and transportation assistance (76 percent). Other supports offered include financial planning (72 percent), assistance obtaining public benefits such as TANF and food stamps (68 percent), child care assistance (55 percent), and housing assistance (44 percent; Figure 2).
- Partnerships between nonprofits and community colleges typically result in positive education and employment outcomes for students. More than seven in ten (72 percent) of the nonprofit organizations surveyed said that a student served by their partnership usually finds employment in a training-related field, and nearly half (48 percent) of the colleges surveyed reported that students served by the partnership—who may face significant barriers to success—are more likely to achieve their educational goals than those who participate in other training programs offered by the college (Conway, Helmer, and Jain 2015).

The authors note that because the partnerships serve students who may face significant challenges, these findings indicate considerable success (Conway, Blair, and Helmer 2012).



Figure 2. Supportive Services Provided by Courses to Employment Partnerships



Note: Sample includes 88 nonprofit and community college partnerships. Figures represent the shares of partnerships that report offering each service. The percentage of participants who use the services is unknown.

Source: Conway, Helmer, and Jain 2015. Reprinted with permission.

### **CareerAdvance Community Action Project (CAP)**

The Community Action Project is an anti-poverty agency in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that works with a range of local agencies, associations, and coalitions<sup>18</sup> to serve nearly 2,000 low-income families each year (Chase-Lansdale et al. 2015). Since 1998, CAP Tulsa has been the Head Start program grantee for the majority of Tulsa county (King, Chase-Lansdale, and Small 2015). In 2009, CAP Tulsa’s two-generation approach—which seeks to meet the needs of parents and their children through strong partnerships with community providers—took hold through *CareerAdvance*, a workforce development program to serve the parents of children enrolled in CAP Tulsa’s early education program. *CareerAdvance* uses a sector-focused career pathways training approach that offers stackable credentials through four levels of programming: English as a Second Language; Skill Ready (6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> grade level); College Bound (9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grade level); and Career Bound (acceptance into a college-level certificate or education program in health care or manufacturing; (King, Chase-Lansdale, and Small 2015).<sup>19</sup>

*CareerAdvance* places a strong emphasis on supportive services. In addition to receiving free or reduced cost tuition, books, and medical supplies, participants receive in-kind assistance in the form of child care

<sup>18</sup> For more on CAP’s partnerships, see <http://captulsa.org/about-cap/our-partners/>.

<sup>19</sup> The health care sector program is funded by the Health Professionals Opportunity Grant (HPOG), which is discussed in greater detail below.



beyond the CAP early childhood education, transportation assistance, and incentive payments for attendance and good performance (King, Chase-Lansdale, and Small 2015). Participants also benefit from career coaching and peer supports through regular cohort partner meetings. Exit interviews indicate that the supportive services that the program provides are highly valued by participants (King, Chase-Lansdale, and Small 2015). Eighty-two percent rated access to quality child care arrangements as extremely important to their success; 75 percent rated emergency financial resources, financial bonuses, and performance incentives as extremely important; and 58 percent rated peer support through partner meetings as extremely important (Smith, Christensen, and King 2014).

Researchers at the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University are leading the CAP Family Life Study, a quasi-experimental, mixed-methods study of the Career*Advance* health care program (Chase-Lansdale et al. 2015). The results from Year 4 of the study find that 76 percent of Career*Advance* Healthcare participants receive at least one new certificate within 16 months of enrollment, and that “parents who persist through 16 months and/or receive certification within 16 months of program entry have attended more partner meetings and received more incentives and in-kind assistance during those 16 months” than their less successful counterparts (Chase-Lansdale et al. 2015). The researchers caution, however, that it is difficult to assess the relationship between parents’ certification and their use of program services, since the incentive payments are tied to program persistence and certification.

## Supportive Services Within a Career Pathways Approach: Facilitating the Achievement of Stackable Credentials

In recent years, some individuals have identified a career pathways approach—which provides opportunities for individuals to attain “stackable” credentials through a combination of education, training, and other services—as one approach that includes supportive services as an integral component. Under WIOA, career pathways are defined to include a mixture of education, training, and services that fit the skills needs of industries of a given state or local area; prepare individuals to succeed in educational programs, including apprenticeships; and offer counseling to help them achieve their education and career goals (*Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* 2014).

### **Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE)**

The Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) study is an evaluation of nine career pathways programs designed to increase the employment and economic security of low-income adults and youth. The study will assess the career pathways approach and produce program-specific impact, implementation, and cost-benefit reports. Conducted by Abt Associates (Abt Associates 2014a), the sites for the study include Instituto del Progreso Latino’s *Carreras en Salud*; Des Moines Area Community College; Madison Area Technical College; Pima Community College; San Diego Workforce Partnership; Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA); the Washington I-BEST program in Bellingham Technical College, Everett Community College and Whatcom Community College; the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County; and Year Up.

The PACE career pathway framework emphasizes support services, with each of these nine programs providing supportive services to their participants. Nonacademic supports may include onsite provision or referrals to child care, transportation assistance, mental health counseling, peer supports, and financial assistance, among others (Abt Associates 2014a). For instance, participants in the Health Careers for All (HCA) program at Seattle-King County receive counseling services from a career navigator, who has a \$100 per-person budget to provide support services such as funding for food, utility bills, and transportation, as well as an additional \$8,000 annual budget for support services that can be used at the navigator’s discretion (Glosser, Hamadyk, and Wille 2014). Participants in the *Carreras en Salud* program receive nonacademic supports such as case management, assistance with

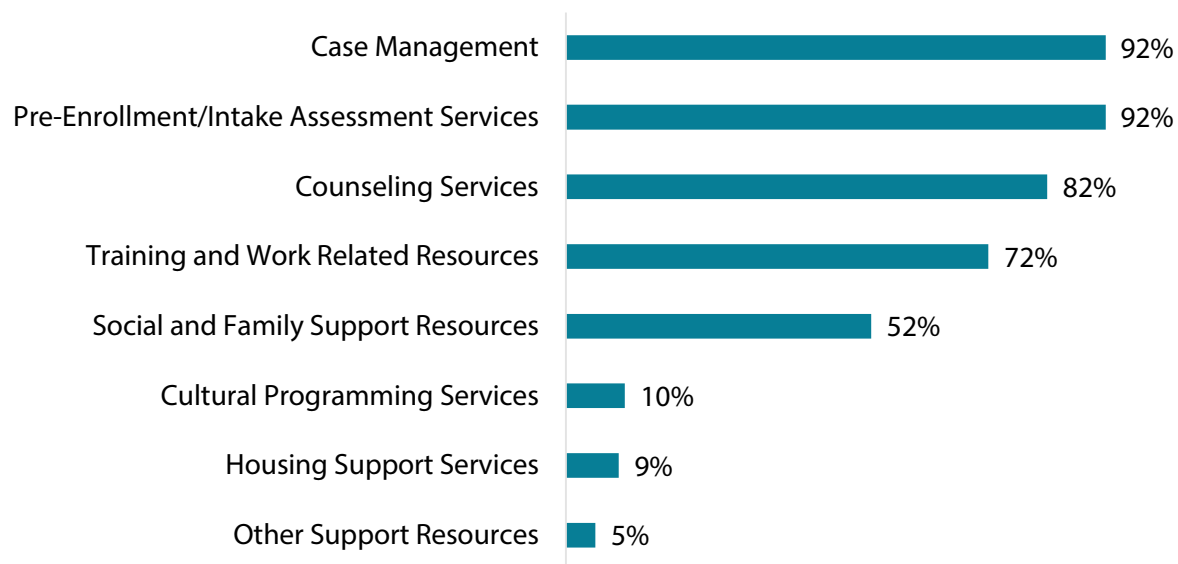
applying for public benefits and social services, in-house childcare and after school programs, transportation assistance, and referrals for legal assistance, financial coaching, and support in cases of domestic violence (Copson, Martinson, and Gardiner 2014). The implementation study will include an analysis of differential support service receipt between the treatment and control group (Abt Associates 2014b).

### **Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Program**

The Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Program was established by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) to provide funding for education and training in health care fields to TANF recipients and low-income individuals (Sick et al. 2015). In 2010, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) awarded five-year grants to 32 HPOG grantees in 23 states. Two of the stated goals of the HPOG Program are to support career pathways and to provide supportive services, along with education and training, to help participants overcome obstacles to employment (Sick et al. 2015).

The provision of supportive services is integral to the HPOG Program model, with all grantees offering case management and social and family services and resources. The grantees vary in their service delivery mechanism, with some providing services in-house, some making referrals, and others providing services through local partnerships (Sick et al. 2015). Of the 32,123 participants served by the HPOG Program from through Year 4 of the program, over half (52 percent) received social and family support resources at some point (Figure 3), including child care, transportation, and short-term emergency assistance such as car repair, utilities, and food and shelter. Transportation (46 percent) and child care (8 percent) were the two most common supports received within the category of social and family support resources.

**Figure 3. Participants Receiving HPOG Support Services Through Year Four**



Note: Sample is 32,123 participants served through September 30, 2014 of the HPOG Program.  
Source: Sick et al. 2015. Reprinted with permission.

### **Accelerating Opportunity**

The Accelerating Opportunity (AO) initiative implements a career pathways approach that focuses on serving low-skill individuals through Adult Basic Education (ABE) and opportunities to earn community college occupational credentials. Launched in 2011, and managed by Jobs for the Future (JFF), the AO model funds states and community colleges to allow students (many of whom are nontraditional) to access professional/technical, for-credit college programs while they are developing their basic skills, accelerating the time required to earn a credential (Spaulding and Martin-Caughey 2015).

The AO model allows students to earn stackable credentials, which then lead to additional credentials and degree programs that meet employer demand. The programs provide contextualized learning (where a CTE instructor and a basic skills instructor work together in the classroom) and integrated supportive services—such as those combining career coaching with child care and transportation assistance—that help students balance college with the other demands of their lives. In the first two years, 41 participating colleges enrolled 5,244 students and awarded 6,248 credentials and 35,514 credits, with 84 percent of students hired into jobs related to their AO training (Anderson et al. 2015).

Of 94 career pathways with data on supportive services, 83 percent offered case management, and 40 percent made case management mandatory for AO students. Eighty-nine percent offered college navigation support, and 45 percent had considered college navigation mandatory for AO students. Transportation and child care services were less common, with 48 percent of pathways offering transportation assistance, and 33 percent offering child care (Anderson et al. 2015). The development of partnerships with community-based agencies, employers, local workforce investment boards, and other partners has helped AO states and colleges to leverage resources and coordinate services that help students access the supports needed to complete the program and obtain employment (Wilson 2015).

An online survey of 444 AO students conducted by the Urban Institute across the four states participating in the program assessed the amount and intensity of services received and student perspectives on the program. Sixty-nine percent reported receiving support with college or academic issues, while 27 percent said they received support with personal issues and 24 percent with financial issues. Twenty-three percent reported not receiving any help from staff members (Spaulding and Martin-Caughey 2015). One study found that 35 percent of participants in year one, and 39 percent in year two, received a Pell grant. Since site visits to the programs suggested that financial need would be common among AO students, the authors of the study speculate that the percentage of participants receiving Pell might be higher were it not for factors such as eligibility barriers due to immigration status, criminal history, having used their Pell allocation, and owing money from prior college attendance (Anderson et al. 2015).

## Focus On: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Wraparound Services

In the wake of the Great Recession, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided funding to the U.S. Department of Labor to train workers in in-demand and emerging industries, such as health care and green jobs. In 2010, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) awarded 152 grants in 2010 to a range of organizations, including community college networks, private nonprofit organizations, state or local government, labor unions, and private for-profit firms or foundations. The grants were awarded through four grant applications: Pathways Out of Poverty (POP), Energy Training Partnerships (ETP), State Energy Sector Partnerships and Training (SESP), and Health Care and Other High Growth and Emerging Industries (HHG). The programs used a variety of service delivery mechanisms and had an extensive reach, with over 127,000 participants having received services through these programs and 104,302 participants having earned credentials upon completion of training (IMPAQ International 2012).

IMPAQ International was commissioned by the Education and Training Administration at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOLETA) to survey the 152 grantees and analyze the implementation of the grants and the lessons learned during the grant period. Respondents identified supportive services and case management as a critical part of the grant programs, with each program type providing supports such as transportation, child care, financial counseling, and emergency assistance (IMPAQ International 2012). The most common supports offered by grantees were transportation (69 percent), clothing (45 percent), child care (43 percent), financial counseling (32 percent), emergency assistance (26 percent), and housing (21 percent; Table 1). Still, over 15 percent of grantees did not provide any supportive services to participants.

POP grantees were most likely to offer supportive services (Table 1), in part because they targeted the most vulnerable populations. These populations were low-income individuals, the unemployed or underemployed, women, the homeless, those with limited work history or education, high school dropouts, persons with disabilities, and those with mental health issues, among others. The Energy Training Partnerships (ETP) grantees were least likely to offer supportive services because many participants were already employed (IMPAQ International 2012).

**Table 1. Supportive Services Offered by Grantees in Health Care and Green Jobs Training**

Support Services Offered by Grantees	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Transportation	92	50	76	60	69
Clothing	71	31	43	41	45
Child Care	63	31	48	36	43
Financial Counseling	58	25	24	26	32
Emergency Assistance	38	25	33	19	26
Housing	21	18	33	14	21
No Support Services Were Provided	0	25	19	14	15

Note: Sample includes 106 grantees.

Source: IMPAQ International 2012. Reprinted with permission.

Another study that conducted internet surveys and site visits of states on workforce investment and unemployment insurance issues following the implementation of the Recovery Act found that states increased their provision of supportive services and training as one of their accomplishments under this act (Center for Employment Security Education and Research and National Association of State Workforce Agencies 2012). Many states reported moderate or substantial increases in WIA-related spending on support services following the Recovery Act, with the most significant increases in expenditures on transportation and child care. In one 50-state survey conducted by the NASWA, 81 percent of states reported a moderate or substantial increase in expenditures on transportation and child care, compared with just 39 percent that reported a moderate or increase in expenditures on housing and 36 percent that reported such an increase for dependent care. Despite these increases, state and local workforce agencies reported that the amounts spent on supportive services were still a fairly small part of WIA expenditures.

## VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

The job training available through workforce development programs can help individuals who are unemployed to get a job and those who are working in low-wage positions to obtain a better-paying job or career; some individuals who participate in these programs, however, do not complete them, due to a range of life circumstances. The obstacles to completion that many individuals face point to the potential importance of supportive services in facilitating job training, education, and employment success. In general, research on training and education programs that offer supportive services finds an association between the receipt of these services and positive outcomes, although few evaluation studies examining the specific impact of supportive services have been done.

Despite the need for supportive services, job training participants who might benefit from these supports often do not receive them. Those interviewed for this report described the landscape of supportive services for job training participants as “hit or miss” across the workforce development system, stronger in some states and local areas than in others, as well as in certain segments of this system, but mostly inadequate across the workforce development system as a whole. Several studies found that some services are more readily available than others; transportation and financial counseling, for example, were easier to access than many other supports, while child care was commonly identified as a need many job training participants have but programs often are unable to meet, in part because of the high cost of providing the service.

Many organizations and programs face significant resource constraints, making it difficult to provide the full range of services their participants need. These constraints point to both the need for an increase in funding for supportive services and the importance of expanding models for support service provision that are cost-effective and easily replicable by organizations with real budgetary limitations.

This final section of the report provides several recommendations for strengthening funding for supportive services in the workforce development system, implementing promising practices in service delivery to increase access to these supports, and conducting research to better understand the support service needs of specific population groups and the impact of supportive services on job training success.

### **Strengthen Funding for Supportive Services**

While funding for support services in job training programs is limited, there are opportunities to align and potentially target resources for low-income populations in job training.

- The reauthorization of TANF offers an opportunity to expand education, training, and supports for low-income individuals. Encouraging states to allow education and training to count as a work activity, and creating incentives for case workers to make education and training referrals, would contribute to a system of integrated training and supports.
- States can increase supports for those with low incomes by improving the alignment of and collaboration between WIOA and TANF. Some areas for potential collaboration include strengthening partnerships between TANF and the One Stop system and ensuring that the TANF program provides promising practice examples to the field that highlight ways to help more low-income adults attain education and training.
- States can also increase the availability of wraparound supports for job training participants by using, to a greater extent, the 50-50 funds available through the SNAP E&T program. SNAP E&T

programs can develop new partnerships with other providers, such as community colleges and CBOs, which can increase their ability to make use of these reimbursement grants.

- The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) may also offer a source of funding to support low-income parents in job training programs. To date, most states have allowed this funding to be used for parents in education and training, although resources are limited and many states place limitations on eligibility that can hinder parents' ability to pursue high-quality occupations and threaten completion. For example, 11 states require parents pursuing higher education or training to also work a certain number of hours in order to be eligible to receive child care subsidies; 35 states link subsidy eligibility to specific vocational degrees, limiting the level of education parents can ultimately pursue; and 17 limit the amount of time parents can receive subsidies while pursuing education or training (National Women's Law Center 2015). Removing such requirements would better align the child care subsidy system with national and state higher education goals to increase the number of U.S. adults with postsecondary credentials.
- Additional funding streams such as the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) could be leveraged to support child care and transportation services for program participants enrolled in work-readiness, job training, and education programs as needed to ensure participation.

### **Implement Promising Practices in Service Delivery**

Even when supportive services are funded and available, some job training participants do not obtain all the services they need. Implementing promising practices in service delivery can increase the access of low-income individuals to the supports that can help them complete training and education.

- Using case managers can make it easier for job training participants by giving clients one-on-one assistance in identifying their needs and interests and helping them navigate multiple systems. By taking an integrated approach to case management—which involves using one case manager who works with clients across multiple systems to address a range of needs, rather than multiple case managers who help individuals access different services—organizations can more effectively address barriers to employment and training.
- Offering bundled or integrated services can eliminate the need for individuals to access various supports through different providers operating independently of one another. To maximize the effectiveness of bundled services, a case manager can work with families to determine their needs, help them access resources, and monitor progress toward their goals.
- A holistic approach to support service delivery that focuses on the needs of the entire family—including parents and children together—can increase job training success by addressing barriers to completion that might otherwise remain unresolved. In particular, attending to the needs of the children of job training participants—including the need for quality early childhood education—can give parents the time and resources to focus on their own training and education, increasing their chances of success.
- Strengthening partnerships between nonprofit organizations and community colleges offering career and technical education and workforce development programs can increase access to supportive services for CTE and training participants. Such partnerships can allow community colleges and workforce development programs to maximize their resources and serve populations they may otherwise not reach or serve effectively.

### **Conduct New Research on Job Training and Supportive Services**

While existing research finds an association between supportive services for job training participants and more positive outcomes, few evaluation studies have specifically assessed the importance of these services for job training and employment success. Given WIOA's focus on training that can help improve success in the labor market and on innovative strategies for addressing the needs of individuals facing barriers to employment, evaluation and other research on supportive services for job training participants could add valuable knowledge to ongoing discussions of how training programs can best equip workers with the skills to advance in the labor market. The following research areas deserve attention:

- Analysis of the needs and challenges of job training participants broken down by gender, as well as the impact of specific supportive services on the job training and employment outcomes of women and men.
- Analysis of the needs and challenges of job training participants across other population groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, and both younger and older workers.
- Research on the availability of supportive services across job training fields and programs. Studies examining whether certain fields are more or less likely to offer supports can give insight into how these programs can best attract women and nontraditional populations.
- Research on the most needed core services of bundled service delivery in different settings and for different population groups.

Conducting new research to better understand the landscape of support service provision and implementing changes to policies and practices that can help low-income individuals complete job training will benefit those seeking to gain new skills and advance in the workforce. An effective job training system that provides individuals with the supports needed to improve their standing in the labor market is critical to helping many individuals earn family-sustaining wages and to developing a workforce with the skills that businesses need.



## Appendix A. Methodology

To identify relevant reports and evaluations, IWPR conducted an online search of publications from independent research firms and universities (using relevant databases such as ProQuest Research Library Plus, JSTOR, Wiley Online Library, and EBSCO), a broad web search to locate government reports and evaluations from federal and state agencies (such as the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Department of Education), and a review of studies and evaluations prepared by individual job training programs, including those supported by private foundations. Since few studies on the funding of these supports exist, the research team identified information on funding for support services in job training programs by reviewing relevant legislation, appropriations, budget documents, policy and research reports. In total, more than 300 publications were reviewed and organized by topic using the Zotero reference management software. The literature was broadly characterized into three groups: 1) the barriers to employment and training faced by low-income women; 2) the use and effectiveness of socioeconomic supports, including support service delivery practices that are associated with positive outcomes; and 3) evaluations and research studies prepared by or looking at individual job training programs. In reviewing the literature, IWPR sought to identify any correlations between the provision of supportive services and job training and employment outcomes for participants overall as well as for different demographic groups (e.g., women vs. men, mothers vs. non-mothers, women from different educational, economic, and racial/ethnic backgrounds).

To ensure that key studies were examined, IWPR consulted with an expert advisory committee comprised of researchers, program leaders, and members of national networks and conducted phone interviews (generally lasting about one hour) with 25 experts in the field. Interviewees were identified through online searching, in consultation with project advisors, and by using a snowball sample. Those interviewed included researchers, philanthropists focused on workforce development issues, and leaders of nationally recognized job training provider networks or programs. The interviews were semi-structured and included questions about the availability of research literature and evaluations, promising programs that stand out for their effective use of supportive services, and the availability of administrative or program data that would allow IWPR to analyze the effectiveness of support services. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded by hand to identify common patterns and themes, as well as original insights on the provision of support services within the workforce development system.

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## Appendix D. Additional Federal Funding Sources for Workforce Development

Several funding streams from an array of federal, state, and local sources support workforce development programs for low-income individuals, including job preparation, skill development, education, training, and supportive services. Among publicly funded programs, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program (SNAP E & T), the U.S. Department of Transportation's On-the-Job Training Support Services Program, and U.S. Department of Labor's Strengthening Working Families Initiative offer sources of funding for support services for low-income individuals in job training programs (see section IV above for information on these funding sources). Other potential funding sources for support services include Pell Community Services Block Grant, and Community Development Block Grant. While a range of other federal funding streams support workforce development programs, few fund supportive services.

### Pell Grants

The federal Pell Grant Program, authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act, supports postsecondary education and training for low-income students. The program distributes need-based awards through postsecondary institutions to help students with the costs of tuition, fees, and living expenses. Pell Grants are funded by the federal government and target lower-income students enrolled in programs that result in a certificate or degree (Center for Law and Social Policy 2015). Funding (including mandatory and discretionary funds) for the Pell Grant program in fiscal year 2015 was approximately \$28.5 million. The total maximum student award for 2015 was \$5,775 (U.S. Department of Education 2015).

### Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

CSBG is a flexible block grant that can be used to provide services to individuals with incomes below the poverty level (up to 125 percent of poverty at state option; Center for Law and Social Policy 2015). Funding is allocated to all 50 states and distributed through local grantees, typically Community Action Agencies (CAAs). The CAAs establish program priorities through a community needs assessment and use CSBG funds to address the causes and conditions of poverty in local communities (Center for Law and Social Policy 2015). Funding for CSBG in fiscal year 2015 was \$674 million (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families 2015).

### Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

CDBG is a flexible block grant used primarily to develop suitable and affordable housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families and to address other community development needs. CDBG funds are allocated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to large cities, urban counties, and states. States, in turn, spend their funds in smaller communities. With some restrictions, grantees have significant flexibility in determining how CDBG funds will be used. Communities may spend no more than 15 percent of the grant on public services, including employment, child care, education, and welfare needs, which may include support services. While funds cannot be allocated directly to individual participants, they can subsidize a program's cost (Center for Law and Social Policy 2015). The enacted program budget for CDBG in FY 2015 was approximately \$3.1 million (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2015).

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