



PATHWAYS TO WORK

Evidence Clearinghouse



What Works During Economic Recessions and Recoveries? Evidence from the Pathways Clearinghouse

Technical Appendices

SYNTHESIS REPORT: WHAT WORKS DURING ECONOMIC RECESSIONS AND RECOVERIES? EVIDENCE FROM THE PATHWAYS CLEARINGHOUSE

TECHNICAL APPENDICES

OPRE Report 2021-229

November 2021

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Contract Number: HHSP233201500035/HHSP23337034T

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This report is in the public domain. Permission to reproduce is not necessary. Suggested citation: Stanczyk, Alexandra, Dana Rotz, Erin Welch, and Andrei Streke. (2021). Synthesis Report: What Works During Economic Recessions and Recoveries? Evidence from the Pathways Clearinghouse. Technical Appendices. OPRE Report # 2020-229, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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This document contains four appendices to Stanczyk et al. (2021).

Appendix A. *Details on the Technical Approach* gives additional detail on the methods used to obtain the findings presented in the report. This section includes information about how we conducted the literature scan, calculated the effect sizes from the original studies, conducted meta-analysis, and developed meta-regression models.

Appendix B. *Additional Table and Figures* provides the full results for each analysis presented in the report.

Appendix C. *Sensitivity Analysis* presents and describes checks of the sensitivity of key findings presented in the report to key analytic decisions.

Appendix D. *Citations Included in the Pathways Clearinghouse* lists the citations for the studies included in the meta-analysis data set.

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Appendix A: Details on the Technical Approach

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A. Literature scan

The goal of the literature scan was to conduct a targeted review of past research that provided insights into how or why effects of interventions aimed at improving employment outcomes among people with low incomes might differ depending on the economic context.

To conduct the scan, we built off a recent, related review by the Clearinghouse for Labor and Evaluation Research (Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research 2020). First, we included all relevant articles from this review. Next, we conducted a Google Scholar search for additional relevant peer-reviewed articles, government reports, and working papers. We conducted the search using a set list of terms to capture phrases related to economic conditions, types of interventions, and focal populations of interest for this report (Table A.1). We screened search results for relevance and extracted relevant information from each screened-in resource into a matrix.

Table A.1. Literature scan search terms

Topics	Search terms
Economic conditions	recession OR “economic recovery” OR “economic expansion” OR “business cycle”
Intervention	“Active labor market” OR “training” OR apprenticeships OR “career pathways” OR “employment coaching” OR “employment retention services” OR “job search assistance” OR “subsidized employment” OR “transitional jobs” OR “work experience” OR “work readiness activities” OR internships
Population	“low-income” OR “less-skilled” OR “low-skill”

Our search resulted in more than 20,000 results. Given the targeted nature of this literature scan, we relied on the Google Search algorithm to guide our screening and examined the 800 search results tagged as most relevant. We more closely screened 20 search results for possible inclusion. Of these, we extracted data from 13 articles into a review matrix—and ultimately included findings or insights from 6 articles in the report.

One Pathways Clearinghouse staff member conducted the search, screened search results for relevance, and completed the review matrix. A second staff member reviewed all results. We looked across matrix entries for each study examined to identify cross-cutting themes.

B. Meta-analysis and meta-regressions

This section provides further technical details on the meta-analysis and meta-regression methods used by the Pathways Clearinghouse to combine and contrast findings across studies and interventions. Meta-analysis and meta-regression enable us to combine the findings catalogued by the Pathways Clearinghouse into meaningful conclusions about what works, for whom, and in what context (Higgins and Green 2011). Meta-analysis produces an average estimate of impacts, with more weight given to more precise estimates. This averaging is valuable because each impact estimate might have flaws. As a rule, some studies will overestimate effects, and others will underestimate effects. Because of this, averaging findings across studies produces a more reliable estimate of the effect than that of any individual study.

Meta-regression further enables us to investigate different dimensions simultaneously. Meta-regression builds on standard regression models in which an outcome variable (for example, earnings) is examined in relationship to one or more explanatory variables (for example, demographic characteristics). But there are some differences between regression and meta-regression. A meta-regression analyzes outcomes from different studies rather than outcomes from different people. The outcome variable is the effect size in meta-regression, whereas the explanatory variables are characteristics of studies that might influence the size of that effect. Also, the data is weighted so larger studies have more influence on the estimated relationships than smaller studies.

1. Calculation of effect sizes and their variances

When possible, the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse team calculated effect sizes as Hedges' g , the ratio between the estimated impact of the intervention and the standard deviation pooled across intervention and comparison groups. In particular, we calculated Hedges' g as:

$$g = \frac{\omega(y_i - y_c)}{S}$$

where y_i and y_c are the means of the outcome for the intervention and comparison groups, ω is an adjustment for sample size (Hedges 1982, Hedges and Olkin 1985), and S is the pooled standard deviation of the outcome. ω and S may further be calculated as

$$\omega = 1 - \frac{3}{4(n_i + n_c) - 9}$$
$$S = \sqrt{\frac{(n_i - 1)s_i^2 + (n_c - 1)s_c^2}{n_i + n_c - 2}}$$

where n_i and n_c are the number of people in the intervention and comparison groups, and s_i^2 and s_c^2 are the variances of the outcome for the intervention and comparison groups.

Furthermore, we defined the variance of an effect size, g , as:

$$\sigma^2 = \frac{1}{n_i} + \frac{1}{n_c} + \frac{g^2}{2(n_i + n_c)}$$

Hedges' g is one of the most widely used effect size estimates, but some systematic reviews and meta-analyses use alternative indices to estimate effect sizes for binary variables (that is, those that take on values of 0 and 1 only, such as employment). For example, the What Works Clearinghouse uses the Cox index. Although research has shown that using the Cox index can be preferable to using Hedges' g , this research is based on assumptions that are unlikely to hold for the key binary outcomes of interest to the Clearinghouse (Sánchez-Meca et al. 2003). For

example, the Cox index produces artificially large effect sizes when most people in the sample have a 0 or 1 value for the outcome of interest, a condition that holds for employment and benefit receipt in some studies the Pathways Clearinghouse has reviewed. This analysis therefore used Hedges' g for both binary and nonbinary variables.

Researchers have developed a wide variety of alternative formulas for computing g (for example, see Lipsey and Wilson 2001), and the actual calculation of an effect size from a study depends on the type of statistics reported (for example, t-statistics, F-tests, or regression coefficients). Rotz et al. (2020) provides further details on the formulas used by the Pathways Clearinghouse based on the data reported.

To ensure the meta-analysis results were consistent and interpretable, we coded all effect sizes such that positive values indicated a favorable treatment effect. In particular, because the Pathways Clearinghouse aims to explore studies that help people become more economically self-sufficient, decreases in public benefit receipt were viewed as favorable outcomes. Therefore, we transformed decreases in public benefit receipt into positive effect sizes (and increases into negative effect sizes). We made this change for 779 public benefit receipt effect sizes (including measures of short-term benefits not included in this meta-analysis).

In addition, we used an alternative measure of the effect size, ES_{alt} , when study authors did not provide sufficient information for us to estimate Hedges' g . To calculate ES_{alt} , we used (1) the study's measure of an intervention's impact and (2) a nationally representative measure of the standard deviation of the outcome, based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series version of the Current Population Survey (CPS) (Flood et al. 2018). The CPS is a nationally representative survey of U.S. households that has consistently collected information on income and employment since 1962. We used the CPS to calculate one standard deviation for each outcome in each year from 1990 to 2019. In other words, we used the same S to construct effect sizes for the same outcome in different studies.

To estimate the appropriate standard deviations using national data, we first identified the people in the CPS who could reasonably be considered to have low income. Ideally, this would include people with low earnings potential and not those who have low earnings as the result of temporary investments in education or unemployment (for example, a graduate student pursuing an advanced degree, or a highly skilled individual who was recently laid off). To identify people with lower earnings potential, we first ran a regression analysis using education, age, gender, and race and ethnicity to predict income within each CPS survey year from 1990 to 2019 (including only people ages 16 to 65). We then defined people as having low income if their predicted income was in the bottom 20 percent of the distribution of predictions. We selected this threshold because about 20 percent of adults in the United States participate in government assistance programs in any given month (Irving and Loveless 2015). Finally, we used the actual outcome values for this population to estimate outcome standard deviations.

We used the CPS to calculate standard deviations for several key outcomes (see Rotz et al. 2020 for further details):¹

- Annual earnings (CPS wage and salary income)
- Monthly earnings (CPS wage and salary income)
- Quarterly earnings (CPS wage and salary income)
- Annual cash-based public assistance income
- Monthly cash-based public assistance income
- Number of months received cash-based public assistance in past year
- Annual value of food stamps or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
- Monthly value of food stamps or SNAP benefits (only available from 1995 to 2014)
- Number of months received food stamps or SNAP benefits in past year
- Hourly wage rates
- Weekly earnings in current job

Hedges' g and ES_{alt} answer slightly different research questions by comparing impact estimates against the variation of the outcome in different samples. Using study data to calculate effect sizes produced estimates of the size of an intervention's effects relative to variation in the outcome for study participants (Hedges' g). Using national data to calculate effect sizes produced estimates of the size of effects relative to variation in the outcome across the U.S. low-income population (ES_{alt}). We used Hedges' g in our analysis whenever it was available. The two measures of the standard deviation produce similar average effect sizes (Streke and Rotz 2021).

2. Sample selection

To create the analytic sample for this report, we began with all effect sizes, studies, and interventions generated by the first two waves of the Pathways Clearinghouse reviews. We then applied the following restrictions:

- **Keep only high- and moderate-rated studies and outcomes.** We only included findings that Pathways Clearinghouse reviewers gave a high or moderate study quality by finding rating. These findings were generated using methods that support the conclusion that the intervention itself—rather than an outside, confounding factor—caused the observed change in outcomes.
- **Drop findings in the short-term public benefits domain.** Because increased use of public benefits during recessions is expected and often part of program design, we did not include findings for short-term public benefit receipt in this report.

¹ All listed outcomes are continuous. Standard deviations for binary outcomes can be calculated based on the means of these variables, making the use of nationally representative data unnecessary.

- **Drop findings where the effect size is missing.** 203 findings were missing the information (typically, the standard deviation of the outcome) needed to calculate an effect size and were dropped.
- **Drop findings missing information on timing of enrollment.** This report used information recorded by Pathways Clearinghouse reviewers on the timing of participant enrollment to classify studies by economic conditions. One remaining finding was missing information on enrollment timing—because this information was not available in the study manuscripts—and was dropped.

Following these sample restrictions, the remaining analytic sample for this report included 1,423 effect sizes, drawn from 188 studies of 141 interventions.

C. Statistical analyses

1. Fixed effect and random effect models

The two most common types of models that exist for meta-analysis are fixed effects and random effects models. A fixed effects model assumes that all studies are estimating the same (fixed) treatment effect, whereas a random effects model allows for differences in the treatment effect from study to study. That is, fixed effects models assume that the only reason effect sizes differ is because of random chance and that, in the absence of this random chance, all studies would estimate the same impact. In contrast, random effects models assume that effect sizes might differ for other reasons, such as differences in the effectiveness of different interventions. Put another way, fixed effects models test whether all the effect sizes being combined in a meta-analysis are equal to zero, whereas random effects models test whether the average of the effect sizes being combined is equal to zero (Borenstein et al. 2009). In general, random effects models are seen as more conservative than fixed effects model because they result in wider confidence intervals (Borenstein et al. 2009).

Whenever possible, we used random effects models for our analysis. The studies included in the Pathways Clearinghouse estimate effects for a range of interventions, making it likely that effect sizes differ for reasons other than random chance. As such, a random effects model was most appropriate (Borenstein et al. 2009).

However, for meta-analyses including a small number of studies, we needed to use a fixed effects model. Random effects models estimated with robust variance estimates (as described later) can produce unreliable estimates with a small number of included studies, in particular, when there are fewer than 10 studies contributing to the model (Tanner-Smith and Tipton 2012). The fixed effects model, while having less desirable assumptions, enabled us to avoid this concern. In practice, we used fixed effects models to estimate average effects by intervention but random effects models otherwise. For the intervention average effects, we therefore implicitly assumed that different implementations of the same intervention would have the same effect.

2. Analysis weights

In estimating fixed effect and random effects models, we averaged effect sizes within and across studies. We weighted the individual effect sizes being aggregated to account for the fact that some estimates are more precise than others (Hedges and Olkin 1985).

For fixed effects analyses, we used weights equal to the inverse of an effect size's variance:

$$w_{i,fe} = \frac{1}{\sigma_i^2}.$$

The random effects model weights each study by the inverse of the variance plus a constant (τ^2) that represents the variability across the population effects, as well as adjusting for the number of effect sizes contributed to the analysis by a study (k_i) and the correlation in those effect sizes (ρ):

$$w_{i,re} = \frac{1}{\{(\sigma_i^2 + \tau^2)[(1 + (k_i - 1)\rho)]\}}.$$

That is, the random effects weight also incorporates information about how much the effect sizes vary from one another via tau-squared (τ^2). Substantively, a small tau-squared estimate indicates that evidence is consistent across effects. It is conservatively assumed that the correlation (ρ) is equal to 1 in the random effects weight calculations (Tanner-Smith and Tipton 2012).

3. Handling within-study dependence of effect sizes

Our analysis accounts for the fact that effect sizes from the same study are not independent measures of intervention effectiveness. Because many studies reported multiple effect sizes for the same participant samples (for example, short-term and long-term measures of employment measures), we found that it was not feasible to assume independence of the effect size estimates. Failing to account for this dependency could result in incorrect measures of estimates' precision.

The best approach to correct for within-study dependence of effect sizes is to account for the actual relationships between effect sizes from the same study when estimating the standard errors of the parameters. But, in practice, the information needed to do this is not readily available.

We used two approaches to account for the statistical dependencies in our analysis: robust variance estimation techniques and the “synthetic effect size” approach.

- **Robust variance estimation (RVE) for random effects models.** RVE uses estimation techniques that account for the statistical dependencies among effect sizes in the same study, as outlined by Hedges and others (Hedges et al. 2010; Tanner-Smith and Tipton 2012). In particular, Hedges et al. (2010) demonstrate that one can use regression results to infer the extent of the within-study dependence of effect sizes and adjust regression results accordingly. Simulation results show that when estimating the average effect size, 10 studies

is sufficient for RVE to provide reasonable standard error. We implemented RVE using the STATA robumeta package (Hedberg et al. 2017).

- **Synthetic effect sizes for fixed effects models.** In this approach described by Lipsey and Wilson (2001), we estimated the average effect size for each study (weighing by $w_{i,fe}$) and performed meta-analysis on these study averages.² By including only one effect size for each study, we can assume each effect size is independent from those for the other studies included in the analysis. We implemented this approach using the Stata meta package.

4. Regression model

Meta-regression allows a researcher to simultaneously investigate the effects of several characteristics on effect sizes. Our meta-regression models included the following characteristics:

- Type of primary service (some models)
- Study characteristics
 - Sample size
 - Whether an outcome was measured using survey or administrative data
 - Whether outcomes were compared to another intervention or business-as-usual
- Intervention and contextual characteristics
 - Duration
 - Whether the intervention was delivered by a public provider (as compared with a private provider or both public and private)
 - Whether the intervention was delivered in an urban context (as compared with rural or a combination of rural, urban, and suburban)
- Study sample characteristics
 - Share of participants identifying as female
 - Share of participants identifying as Black, Hispanic, White and not Hispanic, or of another racial and ethnic background
 - Whether all study participants were eligible for or receiving cash assistance
- Outcome characteristics
 - Type of measure (employment, earnings, or public benefits)
 - Timing of measure (short-term as compared with long- or very long-term)

²The variance of the study-level average effect size is estimated as $\sigma_s^2 = \frac{1}{\bar{n}_i} + \frac{1}{\bar{n}_c} + \frac{g^2}{2(\bar{n}_i + \bar{n}_c)}$, where \bar{n}_i and \bar{n}_c are the average sample sizes for the individual effect sizes used to create the study-level average. When combining study average effect sizes across studies, we weighted the average effect sizes by $1/\sigma_s^2$

5. Missing data

The analysis sample is limited to findings with nonmissing effect sizes. All findings also include data on the primary and other services provided as part of the intervention. But information on some characteristics was missing for some findings. For almost all characteristics examined, less than 10 percent of data were missing. But two characteristics had 17 to 19 percent of data missing: intervention duration and the percent of the study sample that was female.

For meta-regressions examining multiple characteristics at once, we replaced missing values with a characteristics' mean value. For the two characteristics that were missing for more than 10 percent of observations, we also included in the regression model an indicator variable equal to one if the value was imputed and zero otherwise (a total of two indicators were included). Methods for missing data have not been studied extensively in the context of meta-analysis (Pigott and Polanin 2020) but mean imputation is a widely used and commonly accepted tactic for handling missing data in other contexts (Rotz et al. 2020).

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Appendix B: Additional Tables and Figures

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Table B.1. Average effects overall and by economic conditions during enrollment and when outcomes were measured

	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Tau-squared
Overall	1438	188	0.050***	0.007	[0.037, 0.063]	<0.001	0.009
Economic conditions when enrollment occurred							
Recession	336	39	0.040***	0.009	[0.022, 0.058]	<0.001	0.006
Recovery	836	112	0.062***	0.008	[0.047, 0.078]	<0.001	0.008
Stable	380	53	0.033**	0.015	[0.002, 0.064]	0.037	0.010
Economic conditions when outcomes were measured							
Recession	123	33	0.035***	0.010	[0.014, 0.056]	0.002	0.004
Recovery	518	107	0.065***	0.009	[0.047, 0.082]	<0.001	0.008
Stable	797	143	0.040***	0.007	[0.025, 0.055]	<0.001	0.008

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Tau-squared (τ^2) indicates the extent of variation among the effects observed in different studies. For some studies, the enrollment period included both recession and recovery years. In these cases, we include the given study in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a recession and in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a recovery. Analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a stable economic period only include studies for which all years in the enrollment period were classified as stable.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

CI = confidence interval.

Table B.2. Intervention average effect sizes by economic conditions during study enrollment

Intervention name	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Economic conditions during enrollment
Enrollment included a recession and recovery							
Public Health Nursing	1	1	0.195*	0.107	[-0.015, 0.405]	0.069	Recession and recovery
Riverside Labor Force Attachment	13	1	0.141***	0.025	[0.092, 0.190]	<0.001	Recession and recovery
Riverside Human Capital Development Program	13	1	0.104***	0.037	[0.031, 0.177]	0.005	Recession and recovery
Teenage Parent Demonstration	7	3	0.091***	0.028	[0.037, 0.146]	0.001	Recession and recovery
Grand Rapids Labor Force Attachment Program	13	1	0.086**	0.038	[0.012, 0.160]	0.025	Recession and recovery
Grand Rapids Labor Force Attachment Program (as compared with Grand Rapids Human Capital Development Program)	3	1	0.064*	0.036	[-0.007, 0.135]	0.075	Recession and recovery
Greater Avenues for Independence	16	2	0.061***	0.021	[0.019, 0.103]	0.004	Recession and recovery
Grand Rapids Human Capital Development Program	13	1	0.054	0.038	[-0.020, 0.128]	0.157	Recession and recovery
Oklahoma City's Education, Training, and Employment Program	13	1	0.020	0.023	[-0.025, 0.065]	0.389	Recession and recovery
Broadened Horizons, Brighter Futures	13	1	0.014	0.073	[-0.129, 0.157]	0.846	Recession and recovery
Riverside Labor Force Attachment Program (as compared with Riverside Human Capital Development Program)	3	1	0.013	0.035	[-0.056, 0.082]	0.720	Recession and recovery
Riverside Human Capital Development Program (as compared with Riverside Labor Force Attachment Program)	3	1	-0.013	0.035	[-0.082, 0.056]	0.720	Recession and recovery
Grand Rapids Human Capital Development Program (as compared with Grand Rapids Labor Force Attachment Program)	3	1	-0.064*	0.036	[-0.135, 0.007]	0.075	Recession and recovery

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Intervention name	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Economic conditions during enrollment
Enrollment occurred during a recession							
Transitional Jobs Reentry Demonstration	9	1	0.107**	0.048	[0.013, 0.201]	0.024	Recession
Personal Roads to Individual Development and Employment	20	2	0.076**	0.037	[0.004, 0.148]	0.038	Recession
Florida's Project Independence	15	1	0.044**	0.017	[0.011, 0.077]	0.011	Recession
Project Quality Employment Through Skills Training	17	1	0.106	0.104	[-0.098, 0.310]	0.308	Recession
Transition WORKS	13	1	0.059	0.073	[-0.084, 0.202]	0.416	Recession
Work Plus (as compared with Training Focused Program)	3	1	0.041	0.056	[-0.069, 0.151]	0.468	Recession
Family Rewards	20	1	0.030	0.033	[-0.035, 0.095]	0.350	Recession
Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration	10	1	0.018	0.077	[-0.133, 0.169]	0.812	Recession
Future Steps	22	1	0.014	0.084	[-0.151, 0.179]	0.863	Recession
Texas Employment Retention and Advancement	34	4	0.009	0.027	[-0.043, 0.062]	0.726	Recession
Minnesota Tier 2	11	1	0.005	0.050	[-0.093, 0.103]	0.922	Recession
Work Plus	14	2	-0.002	0.042	[-0.085, 0.080]	0.955	Recession
Moving Up-South Carolina	2	1	-0.006	0.124	[-0.249, 0.237]	0.962	Recession
Welfare-to-Work Vouchers	9	1	-0.016	0.023	[-0.061, 0.029]	0.488	Recession
Training Focused Program	14	2	-0.033	0.049	[-0.129, 0.062]	0.493	Recession
New Visions Self-Sufficiency and Lifelong Learning Project	6	1	-0.034	0.063	[-0.157, 0.089]	0.591	Recession
Training Focused Program (as compared with Work Plus)	3	1	-0.041	0.056	[-0.151, 0.069]	0.468	Recession
Enrollment occurred during a recovery							
Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training	1	1	0.592***	0.095	[0.406, 0.778]	<0.001	Recovery
Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership Manufacturing Pathway	3	1	0.479***	0.108	[0.267, 0.691]	<0.001	Recovery
Partners for a Competitive Workforce: Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati	3	1	0.324***	0.035	[0.255, 0.393]	<0.001	Recovery
Vocational Coaches to Enhance Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults (MST-EA)	1	1	0.293	0.380	[-0.452, 1.038]	0.447	Recovery

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Intervention name	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Economic conditions during enrollment
RecycleForce	12	1	0.249***	0.067	[0.118, 0.380]	<0.001	Recovery
Good Transitions	12	1	0.238***	0.066	[0.109, 0.367]	<0.001	Recovery
Year Up	4	1	0.227***	0.042	[0.145, 0.309]	<0.001	Recovery
Families Achieving Success Today	3	1	0.197*	0.105	[-0.009, 0.403]	0.061	Recovery
About Face (AF) plus Individual Placement and Support (as compared to AF only)	2	1	0.181	0.220	[-0.250, 0.612]	0.413	Recovery
Partners for a Competitive Workforce: Advanced Manufacturing Partnership	3	1	0.178***	0.043	[0.094, 0.262]	<0.001	Recovery
TransitionsSF	8	1	0.150**	0.066	[0.021, 0.279]	0.023	Recovery
The Self-Sufficiency Project	10	2	0.143***	0.023	[0.098, 0.188]	<0.001	Recovery
Portland Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program	10	1	0.141***	0.048	[0.047, 0.235]	0.004	Recovery
Family Transition Program	11	1	0.135***	0.039	[0.059, 0.211]	0.001	Recovery
Ready, Willing and Able Pathways2Work	12	1	0.130*	0.067	[-0.001, 0.261]	0.055	Recovery
Parent Success Initiative	8	1	0.121*	0.065	[-0.006, 0.248]	0.063	Recovery
Pathways to Prosperity	2	1	0.118	0.132	[-0.141, 0.377]	0.375	Recovery
Workforce Training Academy Connect	1	1	0.116	0.073	[-0.027, 0.259]	0.115	Recovery
Bridges to Pathways	7	1	0.114	0.131	[-0.143, 0.371]	0.384	Recovery
Pathways to Healthcare	1	1	0.112*	0.064	[-0.013, 0.237]	0.082	Recovery
YVLifeSet	2	1	0.112*	0.061	[-0.008, 0.232]	0.067	Recovery
Delaware's A Better Chance Welfare Reform Program	6	1	0.101***	0.033	[0.036, 0.166]	0.003	Recovery
Minnesota Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration	3	1	0.100	0.071	[-0.039, 0.239]	0.156	Recovery
Minnesota Family Investment Program (as compared with MFIP Incentives Only)	6	2	0.098***	0.031	[0.038, 0.158]	0.001	Recovery
Supporting Families Through Work	12	1	0.090	0.066	[-0.039, 0.219]	0.175	Recovery
Integrated Case Management	13	1	0.089***	0.030	[0.030, 0.148]	0.003	Recovery
Los Angeles County Transitional Subsidized Employment Program-Paid Work Experience	20	1	0.083*	0.051	[-0.017, 0.183]	0.099	Recovery
STEP Forward	7	1	0.082	0.074	[-0.063, 0.227]	0.269	Recovery

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Intervention name	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Economic conditions during enrollment
Second Chance Act Adult Demonstration	5	1	0.079	0.071	[-0.060, 0.218]	0.265	Recovery
Atlanta Labor Force Attachment	14	1	0.076*	0.039	[-<0.001, 0.152]	0.050	Recovery
Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement	3	1	0.075	0.065	[-0.052, 0.202]	0.244	Recovery
Young Adult Internship Program	10	1	0.072*	0.041	[-0.008, 0.152]	0.080	Recovery
Grameen America Program	1	1	0.065	0.064	[-0.060, 0.190]	0.307	Recovery
Breaking Barriers	3	1	0.064	0.079	[-0.091, 0.219]	0.418	Recovery
Traditional Case Management	13	1	0.062**	0.030	[0.003, 0.121]	0.040	Recovery
Greater Avenues for Independence	13	1	0.057***	0.017	[0.024, 0.090]	0.001	Recovery
Atlanta Human Capital Development Program	14	1	0.056	0.038	[-0.018, 0.130]	0.144	Recovery
Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise Pilot Program	4	1	0.053	0.071	[-0.086, 0.192]	0.453	Recovery
New Hope	14	1	0.052	0.056	[-0.058, 0.162]	0.349	Recovery
Connecticut's Jobs First Program	15	1	0.049	0.031	[-0.012, 0.110]	0.115	Recovery
Wider Opportunities for Women's Minority Female Single Parent Program	2	1	0.048	0.057	[-0.064, 0.160]	0.402	Recovery
Los Angeles County Transitional Subsidized Employment Program-Paid Work Experience (as compared with On-the-Job Training)	21	1	0.047	0.050	[-0.051, 0.145]	0.353	Recovery
Madison Strategies Group WorkAdvance Program	13	1	0.042	0.077	[-0.109, 0.193]	0.586	Recovery
Per Scholas Sectoral Employment Program	11	1	0.042	0.076	[-0.107, 0.191]	0.585	Recovery
YouthBuild	17	1	0.039	0.037	[-0.034, 0.112]	0.302	Recovery
Job Corps	30	1	0.037**	0.018	[0.002, 0.072]	0.042	Recovery
Towards Employment WorkAdvance Program	18	1	0.037	0.079	[-0.118, 0.192]	0.643	Recovery
Welfare Restructuring Project (as compared with WRP Incentives Only)	33	3	0.035	0.024	[-0.012, 0.082]	0.142	Recovery
Los Angeles County Transitional Subsidized Employment Program-On-the-Job Training	20	1	0.034	0.050	[-0.064, 0.132]	0.496	Recovery
Welfare Restructuring Project	22	3	0.034	0.027	[-0.018, 0.087]	0.202	Recovery
Michigan Opportunity and Skills Training Followed by Work First	15	1	0.032	0.031	[-0.029, 0.093]	0.303	Recovery

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Intervention name	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Economic conditions during enrollment
Health Profession Opportunity Grants 1.0-Emergency Assistance	2	1	0.031	0.054	[-0.075, 0.137]	0.570	Recovery
Atlanta Labor Force Attachment Program (as compared with Atlanta Human Capital Development [HCD] Program)	3	1	0.030	0.037	[-0.043, 0.103]	0.414	Recovery
Welfare Restructuring Project Incentives Only	28	3	0.028	0.030	[-0.030, 0.086]	0.349	Recovery
Partners for a Competitive Workforce: Construction Sector Partnership	3	1	0.027	0.054	[-0.079, 0.133]	0.619	Recovery
Patient Care Pathway Program	2	1	0.027	0.095	[-0.159, 0.213]	0.778	Recovery
Urban Alliance's High School Internship Program	5	1	0.025	0.065	[-0.102, 0.152]	0.697	Recovery
Post-Employment Services Demonstration	45	4	0.023	0.031	[-0.037, 0.084]	0.455	Recovery
Paycheck Plus: Employment Referral Services	3	1	0.022	0.043	[-0.062, 0.106]	0.609	Recovery
St. Nick's Alliance WorkAdvance Program	13	1	0.022	0.092	[-0.158, 0.202]	0.815	Recovery
Integrated Case Management (as compared with Traditional Case Management)	6	1	0.021	0.028	[-0.034, 0.076]	0.463	Recovery
Paycheck Plus	4	1	0.020	0.026	[-0.031, 0.071]	0.431	Recovery
Minnesota Family Investment Program Incentives Only	6	2	0.017	0.030	[-0.042, 0.075]	0.578	Recovery
Project NetWork Case Management	6	3	0.014	0.029	[-0.044, 0.071]	0.643	Recovery
Parents' Fair Share	6	1	0.008	0.028	[-0.047, 0.063]	0.776	Recovery
Next STEP (Subsidized Transitional Employment Program)	12	1	0.006	0.068	[-0.127, 0.139]	0.932	Recovery
Enhanced Vocational Rehabilitation (as compared to Community Connections Individual Placement and Support)	1	1	0.002	0.163	[-0.317, 0.321]	0.992	Recovery
Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration	13	1	<0.001	0.025	[-0.049, 0.049]	0.995	Recovery
Minnesota Family Investment Program	1	1	<0.001	0.042	[-0.082, 0.082]	1.000	Recovery
Health Profession Opportunity Grants 1.0-Facilitated Peer Support	2	1	-0.072	0.067	[-0.203, 0.059]	0.287	Recovery

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Intervention name	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Economic conditions during enrollment
Los Angeles County Transitional Subsidized Employment Program-On-the-Job Training (as compared with Paid Work Experience)	21	1	-0.047	0.050	[-0.145, 0.051]	0.353	Recovery
Health Profession Opportunity Grants 1.0-Noncash Incentives	2	1	-0.044	0.061	[-0.164, 0.076]	0.468	Recovery
Los Angeles Reconnections Career Academy Program	8	1	-0.037	0.048	[-0.131, 0.057]	0.449	Recovery
Back to Work (B2W)	1	1	-0.036	0.039	[-0.112, 0.040]	0.348	Recovery
Atlanta Human Capital Development Program (as compared with Atlanta Labor Force Attachment Program)	3	1	-0.030	0.037	[-0.103, 0.043]	0.414	Recovery
Atlanta Urban League Minority Female Single Parent Program	1	1	-0.028	0.078	[-0.181, 0.125]	0.722	Recovery
Family Rewards 2.0	11	1	-0.022	0.041	[-0.102, 0.058]	0.596	Recovery
Traditional Case Management (as compared with Integrated Case Management)	6	1	-0.021	0.028	[-0.076, 0.034]	0.463	Recovery
Family Self-Sufficiency program	6	1	-0.011	0.040	[-0.089, 0.067]	0.790	Recovery
Center for Employment Training's Minority Female Single Parent Program	2	1	-0.004	0.074	[-0.149, 0.141]	0.956	Recovery
Community Connections Individual Placement and Support (as compared to Enhanced Vocational Rehabilitation)	1	1	-0.002	0.163	[-0.321, 0.317]	0.992	Recovery
Health Profession Opportunity Grants1.0	5	1	-0.001	0.018	[-0.036, 0.034]	0.948	Recovery
Enrollment occurred during a stable economic period							
Transitional Jobs Program at the Transitional Work Corporation (as compared to Success Through Employment Preparation)	1	1	0.443***	0.053	[0.339, 0.547]	<0.001	Stable
Per Scholas Sectoral Employment Program	2	1	0.247**	0.109	[0.033, 0.461]	0.025	Stable
National Guard Youth ChalleNGe	7	1	0.192***	0.060	[0.074, 0.310]	0.001	Stable
Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership Sectoral Employment Program	2	1	0.178	0.109	[-0.036, 0.392]	0.103	Stable

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Intervention name	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Economic conditions during enrollment
Jobs-First Greater Avenues for Independence Program	20	2	0.146***	0.016	[0.115, 0.178]	<0.001	Stable
Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration with Incentive Payments	11	1	0.077	0.062	[-0.045, 0.199]	0.214	Stable
Indiana Welfare Reform Initiative	31	3	0.076***	0.016	[0.044, 0.107]	<0.001	Stable
The San Diego Saturation Work Initiative Model	12	2	0.067**	0.030	[0.009, 0.125]	0.024	Stable
Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency program	13	2	0.062*	0.036	[-0.009, 0.133]	0.086	Stable
Building Nebraska Families	7	1	0.055	0.083	[-0.108, 0.218]	0.506	Stable
Chicago Employment Retention and Advancement	13	1	0.053	0.050	[-0.045, 0.151]	0.287	Stable
Transitional Jobs Program at the Transitional Work Corporation	10	1	0.046	0.059	[-0.070, 0.162]	0.433	Stable
California Work Pays Demonstration Project	3	1	0.035	0.026	[-0.016, 0.086]	0.175	Stable
Virginia Independence Program with Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare	49	6	0.035	0.027	[-0.017, 0.087]	0.190	Stable
Individualized Job Search Assistance	9	2	0.027	0.021	[-0.013, 0.068]	0.182	Stable
Cleveland Employment Retention and Advancement	8	1	0.023	0.078	[-0.130, 0.176]	0.767	Stable
Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families	4	1	0.018	0.029	[-0.039, 0.075]	0.540	Stable
Structured Job Search Assistance	9	2	0.018	0.021	[-0.022, 0.058]	0.379	Stable
Individualized Job Search Assistance with Training	9	2	0.016	0.021	[-0.024, 0.057]	0.431	Stable
Center for Employment Opportunities Prisoner Reentry Program	8	1	0.013	0.065	[-0.114, 0.140]	0.842	Stable
Virginia Independence Program	18	4	0.006	0.030	[-0.053, 0.065]	0.845	Stable
Valuing Individual Success and Increasing Opportunities Now	14	2	-0.064	0.048	[-0.157, 0.029]	0.180	Stable
Progress Towards Retention, Opportunities, Growth, Enhancement and Self-Sufficiency	18	2	-0.039	0.055	[-0.146, 0.068]	0.476	Stable
Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration	7	1	-0.038	0.067	[-0.169, 0.093]	0.567	Stable
Career Builders	10	1	-0.033	0.079	[-0.188, 0.122]	0.679	Stable
Enhanced Job Club	13	2	-0.016	0.054	[-0.122, 0.090]	0.768	Stable

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Intervention name	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Economic conditions during enrollment
Transition, Advancement, and Growth Program	18	2	-0.016	0.050	[-0.115, 0.082]	0.747	Stable
Enhanced Early Head Start	16	1	-0.009	0.086	[-0.178, 0.160]	0.915	Stable
Success Through Employment Preparation	8	1	-0.009	0.060	[-0.127, 0.109]	0.875	Stable
Reach for Success	13	1	-0.008	0.027	[-0.061, 0.045]	0.777	Stable
Working toward Wellness	4	1	-0.007	0.097	[-0.197, 0.183]	0.944	Stable
Moving Up-South Carolina	12	1	-0.004	0.039	[-0.080, 0.072]	0.927	Stable
Success Through Employment Preparation (STEP) (as compared to Transitional Jobs Program at the Transitional Work Corporation (TWC))	1	1	-0.443***	0.053	[-0.547, -0.339]	<0.001	Stable

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: See Appendix A for further details on estimation methods.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

CI = confidence interval.

Table B.3. Meta-regression: Differences in average intervention effects by economic conditions during enrollment

Factors predicting effect size	B	SE	p-value
Constant	0.119***	0.039	0.003
Economic conditions during enrollment			
Recession (1 = yes)	0.008	0.016	0.594
Recovery (1 = yes)	0.034*	0.019	0.075
Stable(1 = yes) (reference)			
Type of primary service			
Case management or other supports (1 = yes)	-0.061**	0.027	0.028
Education and training (1 = yes)	-0.023	0.021	0.280
Employment retention services (1 = yes)	-0.029	0.019	0.126
Employment services (1 = yes)	-0.026	0.022	0.257
Incentives and sanctions (1 = yes)	-0.038**	0.019	0.048
Work and work-based learning (1 = yes) (reference)			
Study characteristics			
Sample size (# of participants)	<0.001	<0.001	0.315
Source of data (1 = survey, 0 = administrative sources)	0.029**	0.014	0.039
Comparison group (1 = business as usual, 0 = another intervention)	-0.037	0.038	0.330
Intervention and contextual characteristics			
Intended intervention duration (months)	<0.001	<0.001	0.757
Intervention delivered by a public provider (1 = yes)	<0.001	0.015	0.977
Urban setting (1 = yes)	0.002	0.015	0.906
Study sample characteristics			
Share female (percent)	<0.001	<0.001	0.114
Share non-White (percent)	<0.001	<0.001	0.487
Welfare recipient sample (1 = yes)	0.010	0.016	0.507
Outcome characteristics			
Employment (1 = yes)	-0.034	0.027	0.212
Earnings (1 = yes)	-0.039	0.029	0.187
Public benefits (1 = yes)	-0.027	0.028	0.349
Short-term (1 = yes, 0 = long-term or very long-term)	0.021*	0.011	0.054
Tau-squared estimate (τ^2)	0.009		

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Mixed-effects meta-regression models were estimated with robust standard errors to account for dependent effect sizes estimates. Number of effect sizes = 1,438. Number of studies = 188. For some studies, the enrollment period included both recession and recovery years. In these cases, we categorized the study as occurring during a recession and as occurring during a recovery. Studies are classified as occurring during a stable economic period only if all years in the enrollment period were classified as stable. The model contains indicators for characteristics for which more than 10 percent of values were missing and mean-imputed. See Appendix A for additional details on missing data.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error.

Table B.4. Average effects by type of primary service and economic conditions during enrollment

	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	+95% CI	p-value	Tau-squared
Case management or other supports							
Overall	194	27	0.012	0.022	[-0.032, 0.057]	0.569	0.010
Recession	45	7	0.079***	0.024	[0.032, 0.125]	0.001	<0.001
Recovery	88	16	0.049***	0.012	[0.023, 0.075]	0.001	0.002
Stable	82	9	-0.057***	0.017	[-0.090, -0.023]	0.001	<0.001
Education and training							
Overall	284	43	0.070***	0.018	[0.034, 0.106]	<0.001	0.012
Recession	85	10	0.006	0.020	[-0.041, 0.052]	0.787	0.006
Recovery	224	33	0.076***	0.021	[0.032, 0.119]	0.001	0.013
Stable	20	5	0.045**	0.019	[0.008, 0.082]	0.017	<0.001
Employment retention services							
Overall	165	19	0.024**	0.010	[0.003, 0.044]	0.027	0.002
Recession	61	8	0.011	0.020	[-0.028, 0.051]	0.574	<0.001
Recovery	45	4	0.023	0.031	[-0.037, 0.084]	0.455	<0.001
Stable	59	7	0.030	0.023	[-0.015, 0.074]	0.192	<0.001
Employment services							
Overall	271	34	0.055***	0.012	[0.031, 0.078]	<0.001	0.007
Recession	73	7	0.071***	0.011	[0.050, 0.092]	<0.001	<0.001
Recovery	136	17	0.066***	0.018	[0.027, 0.104]	0.002	0.009
Stable	107	15	0.044**	0.017	[0.006, 0.081]	0.026	0.007
Incentives and sanctions							
Overall	171	24	0.036***	0.012	[0.012, 0.061]	0.006	0.005
Recession	29	2	-0.001	0.019	[-0.037, 0.036]	0.970	<0.001
Recovery	110	16	0.044**	0.016	[0.009, 0.078]	0.016	0.006
Stable	32	6	0.028	0.019	[-0.009, 0.064]	0.140	<0.001
Work and work-based learning							
Overall	353	41	0.075***	0.014	[0.046, 0.104]	<0.001	0.013
Recession	43	5	0.049**	0.020	[0.008, 0.089]	0.018	<0.001
Recovery	233	26	0.072***	0.015	[0.041, 0.102]	<0.001	0.009
Stable	80	11	0.079*	0.040	[-0.010, 0.168]	0.077	0.020

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Tau-squared (τ^2) indicates the extent of variation among the effects observed in different studies. For some studies, the enrollment period included both recession and recovery years. In these cases, we include the given study in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recession year and in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recovery year. Analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a stable economic period only include studies for which all years in the enrollment period were classified as stable.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

CI = confidence interval.

Table B.5. Average effects by type of primary service and economic conditions when outcomes were measured

	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	+95% CI	p-value	Tau-squared
Case management or other supports							
Overall	194	27	0.012	0.022	[-0.032, 0.057]	0.569	0.010
Recession	21	7	0.061***	0.022	[0.017, 0.105]	0.006	<0.001
Recovery	35	11	0.016**	0.006	[0.002, 0.031]	0.033	<0.001
Stable	138	19	-0.006	0.030	[-0.069, 0.056]	0.832	0.014
Education and training							
Overall	284	43	0.070***	0.018	[0.034, 0.106]	<0.001	0.012
Recession	11	4	-0.035*	0.021	[-0.076, 0.006]	0.092	<0.001
Recovery	116	29	0.094***	0.023	[0.046, 0.142]	<0.001	0.011
Stable	157	29	0.020*	0.011	[-0.003, 0.044]	0.085	0.006
Employment retention services							
Overall	165	19	0.024**	0.010	[0.003, 0.044]	0.027	0.002
Recession	8	2	-0.062	0.052	[-0.163, 0.040]	0.232	<0.001
Recovery	3	2	0.039	0.049	[-0.057, 0.135]	0.429	<0.001
Stable	154	19	0.028**	0.010	[0.007, 0.048]	0.013	0.002
Employment services							
Overall	271	34	0.055***	0.012	[0.031, 0.078]	<0.001	0.007
Recession	32	6	0.075***	0.009	[0.057, 0.092]	<0.001	<0.001
Recovery	91	20	0.074***	0.019	[0.033, 0.115]	0.001	0.009
Stable	148	30	0.058***	0.014	[0.029, 0.087]	<0.001	0.009
Incentives and sanctions							
Overall	171	24	0.036***	0.012	[0.012, 0.061]	0.006	0.005
Recession	27	6	0.006	0.014	[-0.021, 0.033]	0.653	<0.001
Recovery	45	16	0.043***	0.013	[0.014, 0.072]	0.006	0.003
Stable	99	21	0.042**	0.017	[0.007, 0.077]	0.022	0.006
Work and work-based learning							
Overall	353	41	0.075***	0.014	[0.046, 0.104]	<0.001	0.013
Recession	24	8	0.044***	0.014	[0.017, 0.072]	0.002	<0.001
Recovery	228	29	0.065***	0.015	[0.034, 0.097]	<0.001	0.014
Stable	101	25	0.078***	0.020	[0.036, 0.120]	0.001	0.007

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Tau-squared (τ^2) indicates the extent of variation among the effects observed in different studies.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

CI = confidence interval.

Table B.6. Meta-regression models: Differences in average intervention effects between interventions for which enrollment included recessions or recoveries and those that enrolled participants during stable economic conditions, by type of primary service

Factors predicting effect size	B	SE	p-value
Constant	0.170***	0.062	0.008
Type of primary service			
Case management or other supports (1 = yes)	-0.163**	0.070	0.029
Education and training (1 = yes)	-0.033	0.058	0.581
Employment retention services (1 = yes)	-0.083	0.053	0.133
Employment services (1 = yes)	-0.074	0.051	0.155
Incentives and sanctions (1 = yes)	-0.074*	0.040	0.091
Work and work-based learning (1 = yes) (<i>reference</i>)			
Case management or other supports			
During recession (1 = yes)	0.058	0.033	0.104
During recovery (1 = yes)	0.102**	0.045	0.034
Education and training			
During recession (1 = yes)	-0.048**	0.027	0.010
During recovery (1 = yes)	-0.004	0.033	0.915
Employment retention			
During recession (1 = yes)	0.024	0.031	0.442
During recovery (1 = yes)	0.014	0.034	0.686
Employment services			
During recession (1 = yes)	0.018	0.024	0.476
During recovery (1 = yes)	0.040	0.032	0.217
Incentives and sanctions			
During recession (1 = yes)	-0.012	0.031	0.740
During recovery (1 = yes)	0.017	0.025	0.520
Work and work-based learning			
During recession (1 = yes)	-0.025	0.046	0.612
During recovery (1 = yes)	-0.037	0.053	0.532
Study characteristics			
Sample size (# of participants)	<0.001	<0.001	0.293
Source of data (1 = survey, 0 = administrative sources)	0.030**	0.013	0.024
Comparison group (1 = business as usual, 0 = another intervention)	-0.024	0.038	0.520
Intervention and contextual characteristics			
Intended intervention duration (months)	<0.001	<0.001	0.964
Intervention delivered by a public provider (1 = yes)	0.010	0.015	0.509
Urban setting (1 = yes)	<0.001	<0.001	0.964
Study sample characteristics			
Share female (percent)	<0.001	<0.000	0.274
Share non-White (percent)	<-0.001	0.018	0.993

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Factors predicting effect size	B	SE	p-value
Welfare recipient sample (1 = yes)	<-0.001	<0.001	0.274
Outcome characteristics			
Employment (1 = yes)	-0.038	0.026	0.150
Earnings (1 = yes)	-0.045	0.028	0.115
Public benefits (1 = yes)	-0.031	0.027	0.262
Short-term (1 = yes, 0 = long-term or very long-term)	0.022**	0.010	0.034
Tau-squared estimate (τ^2)			0.010

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Mixed-effects meta-regression models were estimated with robust standard errors to account for dependent effect sizes estimates. Number of effect sizes = 1,438. Number of studies = 188. For some studies, the enrollment period included both recession and recovery years. In these cases, we categorized the study as occurring during a recession and as occurring during a recovery. Studies are classified as occurring during a stable economic period only if all years in the enrollment period were classified as stable. The model contains indicators for characteristics for which more than 10 percent of values were missing and mean-imputed. See Appendix A for additional details on missing data.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error.

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Appendix C: Sensitivity Analysis

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We tested the sensitivity of study results to key analytic decisions. In these sensitivity analyses, we focused on results considering economic conditions during enrollment, because these results were the primary focus of the report.

A. Sensitivity to the selection of the within-study correlation between effect sizes

When using robust variance estimation for random effects models, it is standard to test sensitivity to the selection of the within-study correlation between effect sizes, or ρ (Tanner-Smith and Tipton 2012). Following the literature, we used 0.8 as the value for ρ in main analyses, and we re-estimated results using the following values for ρ , in turn: 0.1, 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, 0.5, 0.6, 0.7, and 0.9. Results were unchanged. We did not present results of this sensitivity test here, for brevity, but results are available by request.

B. Sensitivity of results to unemployment cutoffs used to assign each year to an economic period

In the main analysis, we used a 0.5 percentage point cutoff for annual change in the unemployment rate to assign each year to an economic period. For these sensitivity analyses, we used two alternate cutoffs—one that uses 50 percent of the main version or a 0.25 percentage point cutoff (Table C.1 and C.2), and one that uses 200 percent of the main cutoff or a 1 percentage point cutoff (Table C.3 and C.4). In general, the pattern of results described in the main text was robust to the chosen cutoff.

Table C.1. Average effects overall and by economic conditions during enrollment and when outcomes were measured, sensitivity check using 0.25 percentage point change in unemployment to assign years to economic conditions

	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Tau-squared
Overall	1438	188	0.050***	0.007	[0.037, 0.063]	<0.001	0.009
Recession	480	55	0.031***	0.007	[0.016, 0.046]	<0.001	0.006
Recovery	1066	141	0.055***	0.008	[0.038, 0.071]	<0.001	0.010
Stable	146	23	0.046***	0.012	[0.022, 0.071]	0.001	0.005
Recession	201	48	0.032***	0.008	[0.016, 0.048]	<0.001	0.004
Recovery	727	146	0.054***	0.008	[0.037, 0.070]	<0.001	0.009
Stable	510	111	0.047***	0.007	[0.034, 0.060]	<0.001	0.006

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Tau-squared (τ^2) indicates the extent of variation among the effects observed in different studies. For some studies, the enrollment period included both recession and recovery years. In these cases, we included the given study in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recession year and in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recovery year. Analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a stable economic period only include studies for which all years in the enrollment period were classified as stable.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

CI = confidence interval.

Table C.2. Average effects by type of primary service and economic conditions during enrollment, sensitivity check using 0.25 percentage point change in unemployment to assign years to economic conditions

	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	+95% CI	p-value	Tau-squared
Case management or other supports							
Overall	194	27	0.012	0.022	[-0.032, 0.057]	0.569	0.010
Recession	98	12	0.031*	0.017	[-0.007, 0.069]	0.095	0.004
Recovery	148	23	0.015	0.025	[-0.036, 0.066]	0.550	0.011
Stable	0	0					
Education and training							
Overall	284	43	0.070***	0.018	[0.034, 0.106]	<0.001	0.012
Recession	85	10	0.006	0.020	[-0.041, 0.052]	0.787	0.006
Recovery	256	37	0.079***	0.020	[0.039, 0.119]	<0.001	0.014
Stable	11	3	0.024	0.020	[-0.016, 0.064]	0.234	<0.001
Employment retention services							
Overall	165	19	0.024**	0.010	[0.003, 0.044]	0.027	0.002
Recession	120	15	0.024*	0.011	[-0.001, 0.049]	0.056	0.003
Recovery	88	9	0.008	0.022	[-0.036, 0.052]	0.720	<0.001
Stable	0	0					
Employment services							
Overall	271	34	0.055***	0.012	[0.031, 0.078]	<0.001	0.007
Recession	94	10	0.052**	0.017	[0.013, 0.092]	0.016	0.006
Recovery	178	23	0.050***	0.016	[0.017, 0.083]	0.005	0.008
Stable	65	9	0.074***	0.009	[0.056, 0.091]	<0.001	<0.001
Incentives and sanctions							
Overall	171	24	0.036***	0.012	[0.012, 0.061]	0.006	0.005
Recession	40	3	0.006	0.018	[-0.029, 0.041]	0.748	<0.001
Recovery	121	17	0.045***	0.015	[0.013, 0.078]	0.010	0.006
Stable	21	5	0.023	0.020	[-0.016, 0.061]	0.248	<0.001
Work and work-based learning							
Overall	353	41	0.075***	0.014	[0.046, 0.104]	<0.001	0.013
Recession	43	5	0.049**	0.020	[0.008, 0.089]	0.018	<0.001
Recovery	275	32	0.079***	0.018	[0.043, 0.116]	<0.001	0.013
Stable	49	6	0.035	0.027	[-0.017, 0.087]	0.190	<0.001

Note: Tau-squared (τ^2) indicates the extent of variation among the effects observed in different studies. For some studies, the enrollment period included both recession and recovery years. In these cases, we included the given study in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recession year and in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recovery year. Analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a stable economic period only include studies for which all years in the enrollment period were classified as stable.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

CI = confidence interval.

Table C.3. Average effects overall and by economic conditions during enrollment and when outcomes were measured, sensitivity check using 1 percentage point change in unemployment to assign years to economic conditions

	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Tau-squared
Overall	1438	188	0.050***	0.007	[0.037, 0.063]	<0.001	0.009
Economic conditions when enrollment occurred							
Recession	221	24	0.030**	0.012	[0.005, 0.055]	0.021	0.008
Recovery	631	77	0.056***	0.009	[0.038, 0.074]	<0.001	0.008
Stable	586	87	0.050***	0.011	[0.027, 0.072]	<0.001	0.010
Economic conditions when outcomes were measured							
Recession	96	23	0.019	0.014	[-0.010, 0.048]	0.181	0.006
Recovery	203	49	0.088***	0.016	[0.056, 0.121]	<0.001	0.013
Stable	1139	173	0.039***	0.006	[0.027, 0.050]	<0.001	0.007

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Tau-squared (τ^2) indicates the extent of variation among the effects observed in different studies. For some studies, the enrollment period included both recession and recovery years. In these cases, we included the given study in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recession year and in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recovery year. Analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a stable economic period only include studies for which all years in the enrollment period were classified as stable.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

CI = confidence interval.

Table C.4. Average effects by type of primary service and economic conditions during enrollment, sensitivity check using 1 percentage point change in unemployment to assign years to economic conditions

	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	+95% CI	p-value	Tau-squared
Case management or other supports							
Overall	194	27	0.012	0.022	[-0.032, 0.057]	0.569	0.010
Recession	38	4	0.044	0.046	[-0.045, 0.134]	0.330	<0.001
Recovery	65	10	0.031**	0.013	[0.001, 0.060]	0.042	0.001
Stable	91	13	-0.018	0.041	[-0.108, 0.072]	0.671	0.023
Education and training							
Overall	284	43	0.070***	0.018	[0.034, 0.106]	<0.001	0.012
Recession	40	5	-0.024	0.030	[-0.083, 0.036]	0.434	<0.001
Recovery	152	19	0.062**	0.025	[0.009, 0.115]	0.026	0.010
Stable	92	19	0.098***	0.029	[0.037, 0.159]	0.003	0.015
Employment retention services							
Overall	165	19	0.024**	0.010	[0.003, 0.044]	0.027	0.002
Recession	61	8	0.011	0.020	[-0.028, 0.051]	0.574	<0.001
Recovery	45	4	0.023	0.031	[-0.037, 0.084]	0.455	<0.001
Stable	59	7	0.030	0.023	[-0.015, 0.074]	0.192	<0.001
Employment services							
Overall	271	34	0.055***	0.012	[0.031, 0.078]	<0.001	0.007
Recession	13	1	0.059	0.073	[-0.084, 0.202]	0.416	NA
Recovery	70	9	0.060***	0.014	[0.033, 0.087]	<0.001	<0.001
Stable	188	24	0.052***	0.012	[0.026, 0.077]	<0.001	0.006
Incentives and sanctions							
Overall	171	24	0.036***	0.012	[0.012, 0.061]	0.006	0.005
Recession	29	2	-0.001	0.019	[-0.037, 0.036]	0.970	<0.001
Recovery	84	14	0.047**	0.018	[0.009, 0.086]	0.020	0.006
Stable	58	8	0.026*	0.015	[-0.003, 0.055]	0.082	<0.001
Work and work-based learning							
Overall	353	41	0.075***	0.014	[0.046, 0.104]	<0.001	0.013
Recession	40	4	0.067***	0.025	[0.017, 0.116]	0.008	<0.001
Recovery	215	21	0.075***	0.017	[0.038, 0.111]	<0.001	0.012
Stable	98	16	0.075**	0.029	[0.012, 0.137]	0.022	0.014

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Tau-squared (τ^2) indicates the extent of variation among the effects observed in different studies. For some studies, the enrollment period included both recession and recovery years. In these cases, we included the given study in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recession year and in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recovery year. Analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a stable economic period only include studies for which all years in the enrollment period were classified as stable.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

CI = confidence interval; NA = not available.

C. Sensitivity to using National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) business-cycle dates rather than changes in unemployment rates to assign each year to an economic period

In the main analysis, we used annual changes in the unemployment rate to assign each year to an economic period (recession, recovery, or stable). Years classified following this method generally gave similar start and end dates of economic recessions published by NBER, a respected source for this information.³

In this sensitivity check, we re-estimated results using business-cycle dates published by NBER—rather than changes in unemployment—to classify years by economic condition. NBER provides dates for the peak and trough of each business cycle.⁴ Using these dates, we defined recession years as those between the peak and the trough, recovery years as the first half of the years between each trough and the following peak—rounding down when there was an odd number of years between peak and trough—and stable years as the second half of the years between each trough and the following peak. We assigned each year to the economic conditions that existed in the majority of the year. For example, because a peak occurred in the first quarter of 2001 with the trough falling in the fourth quarter of 2001, we classified 2001 as a recession year. Similarly, because a peak occurred in the third quarter of 1990, we classified 1990 as a stable economic year and 1991 as a recession year.

This alternative classification scheme yielded more observations in recovery years (Table C.5 and C.6). But the pattern of results was similar to the main analyses. Where there were changes, they were primarily in the average effect sizes for stable economic periods. Given the focus of this report on labor market outcomes, we preferred the classification scheme based on changes in unemployment rates.

³ The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) defines only two types of economic periods: (1) economic recessions, or the period between the highest and lowest point of economic activity as determined by a committee of experts who consider a wide range of economic indicators, including employment and gross domestic product; and (2) economic expansions, or the period between the lowest and highest point. To enable us to examine the effectiveness of interventions and types of services during periods of economic recovery after a recession as compared with periods of more steady or regular economic activity, we considered three types of economic periods. We differentiated between recessions, recoveries from recessions, and what we called “stable economic periods” (neither recession nor recovery). Our definitions of these three periods are discussed in the text.

⁴ See <https://www.nber.org/research/business-cycle-dating>.

Table C.5. Average effects overall and by economic conditions during enrollment and when outcomes were measured, sensitivity check using NBER business-cycle dates to assign years to economic conditions

	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	95% CI	p-value	Tau-squared
Overall	1438	188	0.050***	0.007	[0.037, 0.063]	<0.001	0.009
Economic conditions when enrollment occurred							
Recession	313	34	0.034***	0.010	[0.014, 0.054]	0.002	0.007
Recovery	1206	157	0.042***	0.007	[0.028, 0.056]	<0.001	0.008
Stable	139	24	0.100***	0.020	[0.058, 0.142]	<0.001	0.010
Economic conditions when outcomes were measured							
Recession	79	25	0.036***	0.012	[0.011, 0.061]	0.007	0.004
Recovery	544	111	0.056***	0.008	[0.039, 0.073]	<0.001	0.009
Stable	815	142	0.043***	0.007	[0.029, 0.057]	<0.001	0.007

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Tau-squared (τ^2) indicates the extent of variation among the effects observed in different studies. For some studies, enrollment period included both recession and recovery years. In these cases, we include the given study in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a recession and in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a recovery. Analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a stable economic period only include studies for which all years in the enrollment period were classified as stable.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

CI = confidence interval; NBER = National Bureau of Economic Research.

Table C.6. Average effects by type of primary service and economic conditions during enrollment, sensitivity check using NBER business-cycle dates to assign years to economic conditions

	Number of effect sizes	Number of studies	Average effect size	Standard error	+95% CI	p-value	Tau-squared
Case management or other supports							
Overall	194	27	0.012	0.022	[-0.032, 0.057]	0.569	0.010
Recession	38	4	0.044	0.046	[-0.045, 0.134]	0.330	<0.001
Recovery	186	23	<0.001	0.025	[-0.051, 0.052]	0.991	0.011
Stable	8	4	0.087***	0.025	[0.037, 0.137]	0.001	<0.001
Education and training							
Overall	284	43	0.070***	0.018	[0.034, 0.106]	<0.001	0.012
Recession	85	10	0.006	0.020	[-0.041, 0.052]	0.787	0.006
Recovery	241	36	0.043***	0.015	[0.013, 0.073]	0.006	0.007
Stable	26	6	0.221***	0.022	[0.179, 0.264]	<0.001	<0.001
Employment retention services							
Overall	165	19	0.024**	0.010	[0.003, 0.044]	0.027	0.002
Recession	61	8	0.011	0.020	[-0.028, 0.051]	0.574	<0.001
Recovery	148	17	0.027**	0.010	[0.005, 0.049]	0.020	0.001
Stable	7	1	-0.038	0.067	[-0.169, 0.093]	0.567	NA
Employment services							
Overall	271	34	0.055***	0.012	[0.031, 0.078]	<0.001	0.007
Recession	57	5	0.074***	0.012	[0.050, 0.098]	<0.001	<0.001
Recovery	181	24	0.050***	0.015	[0.019, 0.080]	0.003	0.008
Stable	62	8	0.076***	0.009	[0.059, 0.094]	<0.001	<0.001
Incentives and sanctions							
Overall	171	24	0.036***	0.012	[0.012, 0.061]	0.006	0.005
Recession	29	2	-0.001	0.019	[-0.037, 0.036]	0.970	<0.001
Recovery	116	20	0.036**	0.014	[0.007, 0.065]	0.017	0.004
Stable	26	2	0.055**	0.028	[-0.001, 0.109]	0.049	<0.001
Work and work-based learning							
Overall	353	41	0.075***	0.014	[0.046, 0.104]	<0.001	0.013
Recession	43	5	0.049**	0.020	[0.008, 0.089]	0.018	<0.001
Recovery	334	37	0.073***	0.016	[0.041, 0.106]	<0.001	0.012
Stable	10	3	0.073*	0.042	[-0.010, 0.156]	0.084	<0.001

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Tau-squared (τ^2) indicates the extent of variation among the effects observed in different studies. For some studies, the enrollment period included both recession and recovery years. In these cases, we included the given study in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recession year and in analyses focused on studies for which enrollment included a recovery year. Analyses focused on studies for which enrollment occurred during a stable economic period only include studies for which all years in the enrollment period were classified as stable.

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

CI = confidence interval; NBER = National Bureau of Economic Research.

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Appendix D: Citations Included in the Pathways Clearinghouse

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Note: The number of listed citations does not match the number of reviewed studies because some citations include information for multiple studies and some studies are discussed across multiple citations.

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