
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Adult Programs Evaluation

09/30/2023

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Introduction and Methodology

Introduction to WIOA Title I Adult Programs

Minnesota's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Adult-focused programs are the Dislocated Worker and Adult programs.

The Dislocated Worker (DW) program assists individuals of any working age to overcome barriers to employment and return to work as quickly as possible. When individuals become dislocated due to job loss, mass layoffs, global trade dynamics, national emergencies/disasters, or transitions in economic sectors, the program provides services to ensure individuals can re-enter the workforce and employers have trained workers.

Minnesota is unique in having both a state and federally funded Dislocated Worker (DW) program to support these types of services, which are based on each participant's specific needs. Having the state DW program allows for an added eligibility criterion for individuals who are long-term unemployed to also receive DW services.

- Career services including activities such as: initial skill assessments, labor exchange services, development of an Individual Employment Plan, career counseling, peer support groups, referral to supportive services available in the community, pre-vocational, and work readiness training.
- Training services to assist participants with identifying interests, skills, and abilities to maximize employment choices. Training services included occupational skills training, on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, and entrepreneurial training.
- Supportive services to provide a participant with the resources necessary for them to be successful while enrolled in career and training services. Supportive services including assistance with transportation, childcare, housing, health care, school supplies and linkages to other services.

Minnesota's WIOA Adult program provides employment and training assistance to adults who face significant barriers to employment. The program prioritizes veterans, individuals who receive public assistance or who are basic-skills deficient, and individuals with low incomes.

For each participant, the overarching goal is obtaining or retaining employment in an in-demand occupation that provides a family-sustaining wage. WIOA Adult program participants work to increase their earnings, retain employment, and diversify their occupational skills. Eligible individuals who are enrolled in the WIOA Adult program may receive one or more of the following: career services, training services, and supportive services. These categories of services offered are the same as what are offered in the Dislocated Worker Program but are uniquely tailored to best meet the needs of the participant.

About Performance and Technical Management

Performance and Technical Management (PTM) is the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)'s independent data analysis, production, and reporting unit. PTM is independent of the programs it evaluates and does not receive funding from WIOA for operational support.

PTM specializes in producing analyses and reports that allow DEED to meet state and federal reporting requirements, evaluate, and make data-based decisions about programs and processes. PTM also uses Tableau and other data visualization tools to create easy-to-digest data analysis for our stakeholders. DEED's Uniform Report Card is an example of creating data dashboards using Tableau.

Evaluation Questions

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the workforce in Minnesota. Much research has been done by DEED's own Labor Market Information office and other entities¹ on the effects of the pandemic on Minnesota's workforce. Not much work has been done, however, on evaluating how Minnesota's workforce development system was able to respond to the pandemic. This evaluation focuses on two key questions:

1. How have Title I Adult program participant characteristics changed before, during, and post-pandemic?
2. Did Title I Adult programs serve those most negatively impacted by the pandemic?

Methodology

For this report, two cohorts were created. Participants must have enrolled in a Title I Adult Program between 07/01/2017 and 09/30/2022. Participants were assigned one of two cohorts dependent on their enrollment date, as outlined in Table 1.

Cohort Assignment Overall

Cohort Name	Enrolled Between	Number of Participants
Pre-Covid	07/01/2017-03/30/2020	3,750
Peak and Post-Peak Covid	04/01/2020-09/30/2022	3,765

Table 1

Cohort Assignment by Program

Program	Cohort Name	Enrolled Between	Number of Participants
WIOA Adult	Pre-Covid	07/01/2017-03/30/2020	1,568
WIOA Adult	Peak and Post-Peak Covid	04/01/2020-09/30/2022	1,870

¹ [Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis 2020](#), [Tuck 2020](#), and [Ewig et. al 2020](#)

Dislocated Worker	Pre-Covid	07/01/2017-03/31/2020	2,186
Dislocated Worker	Peak and Post-Peak Covid	04/01/2020-09/30/2022	1,911

Table 2

Demographics, training completion, and enrollment rates were compared across cohorts using Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) data. A *t*-test ($p < .05$) was conducted to assess if differences were statistically significant. Participant occupation is initially stored as an Occupational Information Network (ONET) code. These ONET codes were then converted into a Standard Occupational Classification system (SOC) code using a crosswalk provided by the O*Net Resource Center.

Results

Finding #1: Programs are serving a higher percentage of participants from targeted groups during and after the pandemic than before

A Higher Percentage of Participants Enrolling since the Start of the Pandemic Come from Target Groups, Particularly BIPOC and Unemployment Insurance (UI)-eligible

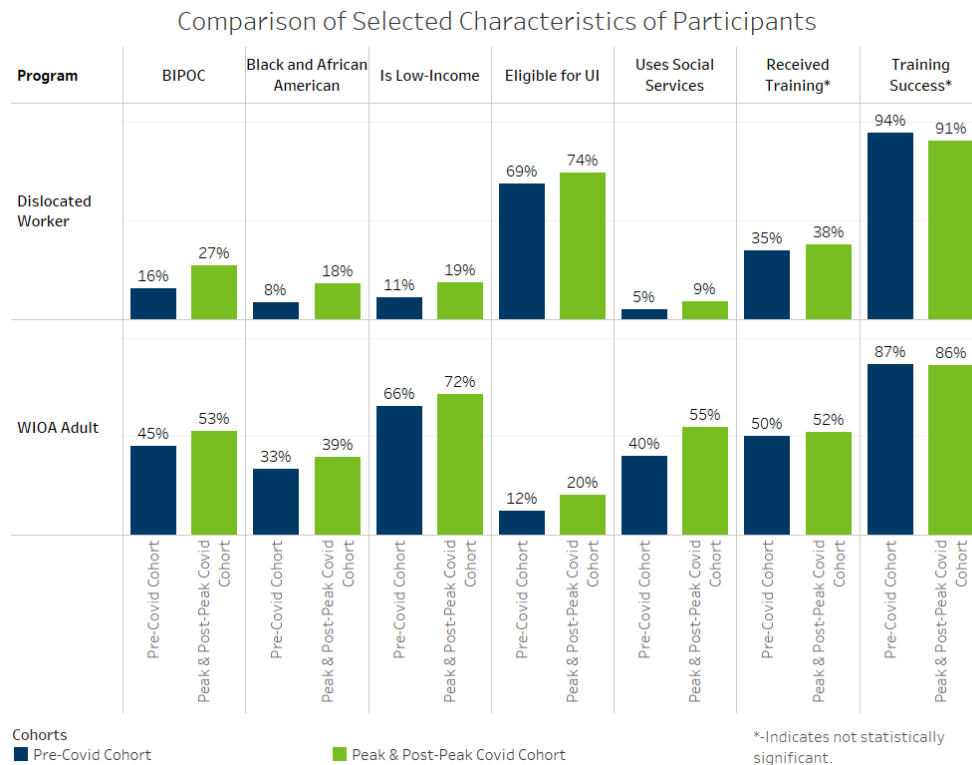


Figure 1

Figure 1 includes the characteristics of the two cohorts across five demographic measures: Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), Black and African Participants, Low-Income, UI eligible, and participants who use some social service².

² Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program(SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

The results of this analysis strongly support that participants in both Title I programs analyzed here are significantly more diverse and face more significant barriers than the pre-pandemic cohort. This is especially true for black participants, who saw the greatest statistically significant increase. Ewig et. al. 2020 notes that:

[I]t is concerning that we see an especially strong impact [of Covid-19] on Black and Native workers, who have traditionally faced high levels of employment discrimination. Based upon the industries in which they are concentrated, Black workers overall, and Black men in particular, should be less likely than any other group to face layoffs as a result of COVID-19.³

While this analysis did not look at the intersection of occupation and race, the increase in Black/African American participants in our programs reflects the racially inequitable impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finding #2: Program Outputs are comparable across cohorts

Figure 1 also demonstrates that despite significant changes in who is served in Title I Adult programs, training completion rates and enrollment remain unchanged. This indicates that programs met their duty to provide services equitably and program participants receive important services.

Finding #3: Title I Adult Programs saw an increase of participants from industries with long-term UI claims during the pandemic; however, they were still a small proportion of overall participants

DEED's Labor Market Information Office created a list of the top 65 occupations that claimed unemployment the longest during the pandemic. The list of occupations can be found in Appendix A. Of the occupations identified, the percentage of Title I participants from these occupations more than doubled across both of the studied Title I programs; however, they were still a relatively small proportion of all Title I participants, accounting for less than 1 out of 5 enrollments during the peak and post-peak period.

³ Ewig, C., Bombyk, M., & Dorman, A. (2020). COVID-19's Unequal Impacts on Minnesota Workers: A Race and Gender Lens. https://www.hhh.umn.edu/sites/hhh.umn.edu/files/2020-12/CWGPP_Covid_Work_Report_121820.pdf

Proportion of Program Participants Who Previously Worked in the Top 65 Occupations by UI Claim Length

Program	Cohort	Number of People from Top 65 Occupations by UI Claim Length	Cohort Size	Percent
Dislocated Worker	Pre-Pandemic	71	2,186	3%
Dislocated Worker	Peak and Post-Peak Pandemic	266	1,911	14%
WIOA Adult	Pre-Pandemic	163	1,568	10%
WIOA Adult	Peak and Post-Peak Pandemic	334	1,870	18%
Combined	Pre-Pandemic	234	3,750	6%
Combined	Peak and Post-Peak Pandemic	600	3,765	16%

Table 3

Recommendations

Recommendation #1 Continue to serve marginalized participants

Title I Adult and DW programs have made significant pivots in serving marginalized participants and continue to do so. These efforts include partnering with local boards and setting aggressive goals around serving people in marginalized parts of the state. The success of these efforts is reflected in the changes in the participant population. As Minnesota continues the unequal recovery from the pandemic, workforce programs like WIOA Adult, with its specific focus on serving marginalized adult workers, will be invaluable in correcting this unequal recovery.

Recommendation #2 Explore partnering with LMI and UI in identifying occupations that have long UI claim times as potential participants for upskilling/reskilling

Title I Adult and DW programs shine when it comes to serving the demographic groups most impacted by the pandemic. There is room for growth when it comes to serving people in the occupational groups most affected. Title I programs should explore working with LMI and UI to identify industries/occupations with long UI claimant times that are not seasonal. This is because these folks and occupations run the risk of exhausting benefits as well as potentially needing upskilling or reskilling. Title I programs can then use this information to tailor programming to those professions, particularly low-wage ones. For example, offering upskilling training to servers laid off during the pandemic.

Recommendation #3 Invest in staff/partner training and remove barriers to make entering occupation data easier

One of the most significant barriers to occupational data collection is that many program staff are not experts in data entry, and the system itself is not intuitive. For example, if a participant formerly worked at a restaurant as a cook/dishwasher, should they be coded as a 35-9021.00 a dishwasher, 35-2015.00 a short order cook, or a 35-2014.00 cooks, restaurant? Because Minnesota is required to report ONET codes, program staff should invest in training to ensure proper coding within an imperfect system and explore technological solutions to make ONET entry easier and more intuitive.

Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic substantially impacted how Minnesotans live, shop, and work. Trends in this evaluation indicate a shifting, more diverse population. Title I Adult and DW programs stepped up to serve those most impacted by the pandemic's economic effects during and right after the pandemic. While there is room for growth, particularly in targeting people in vulnerable occupations, Title I programs still were able to step up and serve many marginalized Minnesotans impacted by the pandemic.

Appendix A List of Top 65 Occupations with the Longest UI Claiming Period during the Pandemic

List of Top 65 Occupations with the Longest UI Claiming Period during the Pandemic

Occupation	Average Number of Weeks Claiming UI	Number of claimants
Waiters and Waitresses	18.7	24,537
Cooks except chefs, combined	16.6	16,892
Food preparation workers combined	15.4	15,914
Bartenders	18.4	13,117
Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee	15.5	5,439
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	16.1	5,312
Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	15.8	4,625
Food Servers, Nonrestaurant	17.3	3,960
Personal Care Aides	15.5	3,923
Teachers and Instructors, All Other	15.7	3,874
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping	14.9	3,748
Food Service Managers	15.8	3,520

Occupation	Average Number of Weeks Claiming UI	Number of claimants
Building Cleaning Workers, All Other	14.9	3,320
Transportation Workers, All Other	16.6	3,116
Dishwashers	17.2	2,935
Security Guards	15	2,805
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	16.5	2,475
Personal Care and Service Workers, All Other	15.8	2,468
Driver/Sales Workers	15.5	1,901
Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs	18.3	1,815
Actors, entertainers and performers combined	17.5	1,563
Counter and Rental Clerks	16.7	1,555
Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	17.5	1,527
Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender	17.1	1,444
Chefs and Head Cooks	16	1,411
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	16.7	1,318
Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers	16.1	1,289
Massage Therapists	15	1,100

Occupation	Average Number of Weeks Claiming UI	Number of claimants
Dancers, musicians, singers, craft artists combined	16.6	1,093
Film production workers combined	15.5	960
Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	15.4	907
Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	16.1	863
Reservation and Transportation Ticket Agents and Travel Clerks	17.3	742
Artists and Related Workers, All Other	16.1	729
Advertising Sales Agents	15.1	675
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Care	15.4	648
Travel Agents	19.3	609
Telemarketers	15.8	609
Lodging Managers	15	496
Media and Communication Equipment Workers, All Other	17.8	495
Tax Preparers	17.1	475
Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	18.2	460
Parking Lot Attendants	18.6	449

Occupation	Average Number of Weeks Claiming UI	Number of claimants
Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	15.8	428
Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance	15.3	416
Insurance Sales Agents	15.3	412
Audio, video, and sound engineers technicians combined*	19.9	360
Demonstrators and Product Promoters	17.8	299
Manicurists and Pedicurists	17.5	283
Social and Community Service Managers	15.4	276
Boilermakers	15	276
Exhibit designers and merchandize displays combined	18.4	240
Pressers, Textile, Garment, and Related Materials	15.7	238
Protective Service Workers, All Other	16.5	235
Door-to-Door Sales Workers, News and Street Vendor	15.1	229
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	15.2	183
Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, Except Postal Service	15.4	171

Occupation	Average Number of Weeks Claiming UI	Number of claimants
Airfield Operations Specialists	15.1	153
Recreation Workers	15.1	129
Multimedia Artists and Animators	15.9	124
Cargo and Freight Agents	16.5	105
Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	16.4	94
Gaming Dealers	18.7	82
Flight and Transportation Attendants combined	17	71
Credit Authorizers, Checkers, and Clerks	15.1	54

Source: Alessia Liebert, DEED Labor Market Information