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Providing Public Workforce Services to Job Seekers: 15-month Impact Findings on the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

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WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs | Gold Standard Evaluation

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About the Evaluation Team

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With a growing need for a more skilled workforce, providing effective and efficient employment and training services is an important national priority. First authorized under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and then reauthorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are two of the nation's largest publicly funded programs providing employment and training services. Despite their importance, the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs have not been evaluated using the most rigorous methods. Hence, in 2008, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) within the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) launched a national experimental evaluation of the two programs, the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs Gold Standard Evaluation. The evaluation's goals were to provide national estimates of the impact and cost-effectiveness of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and to provide a detailed description of their implementation.

Although the study occurred under WIA, its findings are still relevant under WIOA. While WIOA made important changes to the workforce system, it did not significantly change the basic set of services that the local areas offered, nor who was eligible to receive them. In addition, many of the important changes explicitly introduced by WIOA reflected changes the local areas were already making under WIA.

In this report, we present the study's findings on the short-term impacts of the programs. It focuses on the effectiveness of the availability of WIA-funded training and intensive services (primarily staff-assisted employment services), both separately and together. It presents estimated impacts of the services based on customers' experiences during the 15 months after they were found eligible for intensive services, the point of random assignment. A subsequent report will present estimated impacts of the services based on customers' experiences for a longer period, 30 months, and will also examine impacts on employment and earnings using administrative data from the National Directory of New Hires.

The WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs

WIA required that Local Workforce Investment Boards, each responsible for managing services within a Local Workforce Investment Area (local area), establish a coordinated delivery system composed of American Job Centers (also known as One-Stop Career Centers). At these centers, the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs offered services in three tiers that provided progressively greater levels of assistance according to customers' needs:

1. **Core.** These services consisted mainly of information and online tools to help customers plan their careers and find employment.
2. **Intensive.** These services generally required higher levels of staff assistance than core services. They included assessments, workshops, job search assistance, development of career and service plans, one-on-one career counseling and case management, placement in work experience positions, and short-term prevocational training.
3. **Training.** After receiving core and intensive services, some customers were eligible for training designed to prepare them for jobs in high-demand fields. WIA required that the

majority of training be funded through individual training accounts (ITAs), which were vouchers that customers could use to procure training from approved programs. On-the-job training, entrepreneurial training, adult basic education, and training customized for specific employers were also permissible.

The two programs also offered some supportive services, such as assistance with expenses related to books, uniforms, tools, child care, and transportation.

The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs offered almost identical services, but each program had its own eligibility rules.

- Adult program services were available to customers ages 18 and older, but in certain instances, such as when funds were limited, recipients of public assistance and other low-income customers had priority for accessing intensive and training services.
- Dislocated Worker program services were available to customers who (1) were terminated or laid off from a job, showed attachment to the workforce, and were unlikely to return to their previous occupation or industry; (2) were terminated or laid off as a result of a plant closure or substantial plant downsizing; (3) were self-employed and experiencing unemployment as a result of general economic conditions; or (4) were displaced homemakers, individuals who had been providing unpaid services to family members in the home while dependent on income of another family member but are no longer supported by that income.

The evaluation design

The impact evaluation examined whether the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs improved customers' outcomes. It focused on the impact of the programs' two key services: intensive services and training. It addressed whether the provision of intensive services and training individually and together improved customers' employment outcomes. In summary, the evaluation addressed three main policy-relevant questions:

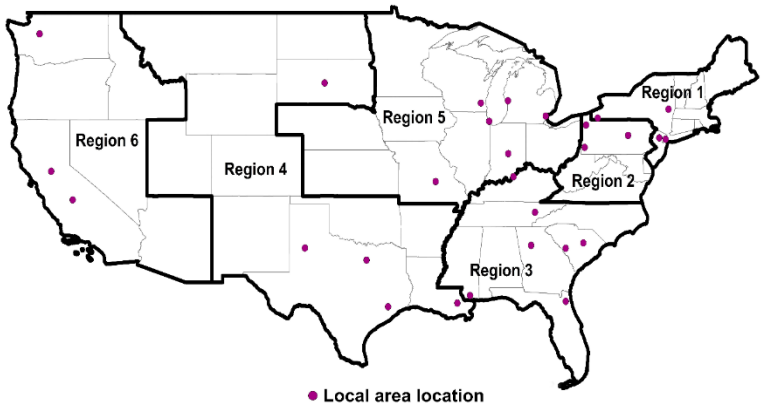
- Did the availability of core, intensive, and training services improve employment-related outcomes (such as earnings, employment, and job quality) more than the availability of core and intensive services only?
- Did the availability of core and intensive services improve employment-related outcomes more than the availability of core services only?
- Did the availability of core, intensive, and training services improve employment-related outcomes more than the availability of core services only?

In addition, the evaluation explored whether the effectiveness of the programs' services varied between customers—did some customers benefit more than others from the services? It also explored whether the findings varied by the local areas' characteristics—the local unemployment rate or how the programs were implemented.

The study also included an implementation study and a benefit-cost analysis. The findings of the implementation study are reported in D'Amico et al. (2015) and a series of briefs. A forthcoming report will examine the findings from the benefit-cost analysis.

The evaluation produced nationally representative impacts of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. We randomly selected 30 local areas from among 487 local areas operating in the contiguous 48 states and the District of Columbia as well as "replacement" local areas that were similar to each of the 30 originally selected areas. These 487 local areas represent 98 percent of customers who receive WIA-funded intensive services in the contiguous United States. We excluded 76 local areas with fewer than 100 customers receiving intensive services annually because of the high costs of implementing the intervention in areas that would supply only a small number of WIA customers for the study. The study occurred in 28 local areas spread across DOL's six administrative regions (Figure 1); 26 of these were among the 30 originally selected areas and 2 were replacement local areas.

Figure 1. Locations of the 28 randomly-selected local areas participating in the study



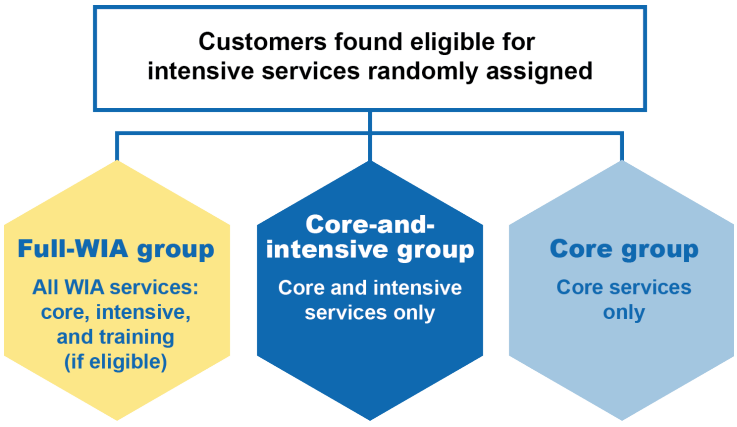
Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation.

With some exceptions, all customers found eligible for intensive services in each local area in the study were randomly assigned into one of three study groups (Figure 2):

1. **Full-WIA group.** Customers in this group could receive all services—core, intensive, and training—from the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs that they would have been eligible for in the absence of the study.
2. **Core-and-intensive group.** Customers in this group could receive core and intensive services but not training from the programs.
3. **Core group.** Customers in this group could receive only core services from the programs and not intensive services or training.

Customers were enrolled in the study from November 2011 through April 2013, with most customers enrolled in 2012.

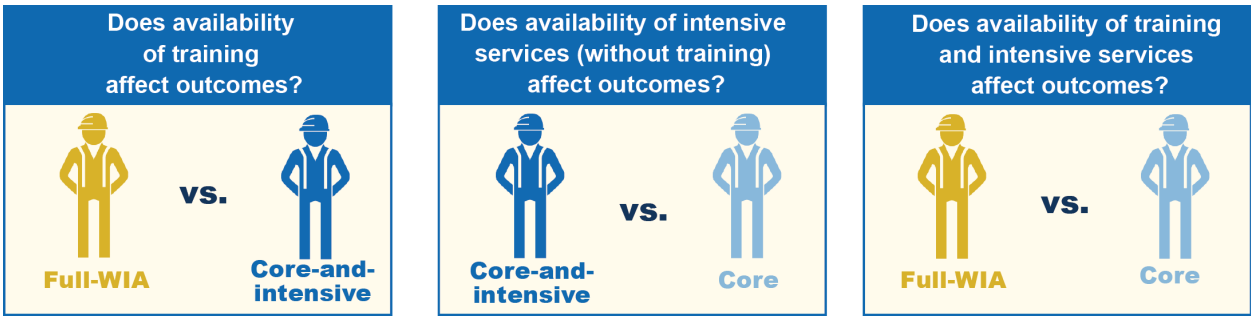
Figure 2. The three study groups



To address the research questions, we compared the service receipt, training participation, and employment and other outcomes of the customers in the three study groups (Figure 3).

- To determine the effect of the availability of training services, we compared the average outcomes of full-WIA customers with those of core-and-intensive customers.
- To determine the effect of the availability of intensive services, we compared the average outcomes of the core-and-intensive customers with those of core customers.
- To determine the effect of the availability of both training and intensive services, we compared the average outcomes of full-WIA customers with those of core customers.

Figure 3. Comparing outcomes between the study groups



To understand the impacts of the availability of services on employment outcomes, we examined differences across study groups in their receipt of core, intensive, and training services. The receipt of services differs from the availability of services because no customer in the study was required to receive any service. In addition, customers from all three groups could seek services that were similar to those provided by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs but offered elsewhere in the community.

We estimated the impact of the programs on many outcomes across many subgroups, and for each outcome and subgroup, we make the three comparisons illustrated in Figure 3. Performing multiple statistical tests means that it is more likely that we will find some differences to be statistically significant simply by chance. To guard against this, we determined before we analyzed the data that one outcome should be our priority outcome. For this report, this priority outcome is earnings in the fifth quarter after random assignment. We chose this outcome because it is the latest measure of earnings available in the 15-month follow-up period and thus the best indication of future earnings. We view estimated impacts on other outcomes as less rigorous evidence.

This report presents findings based on comparisons of service receipt and outcomes measured using program administrative records and a follow-up survey conducted at about 15 months after random assignment. Data on the characteristics of customers were collected from self-administered forms completed by the customers just before random assignment. Data on the characteristics of the local areas were collected primarily from the implementation study.

Context

Local areas in the study varied considerably in their size, funding, and number of customers served as well as the degree of urbanicity. For example, the smallest local area in the study covered slightly more than 100 square miles and comprised only part of one county. In contrast, the largest local area in the study covered more than 75,000 square miles and included an entire state.

The study occurred at a time of high, but declining, unemployment. When the first person was randomly assigned, the recession was officially over, but the national unemployment rate was still nearly 9 percent. The average unemployment rate was about 8 percent in 2012 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015), when most customers were randomly assigned.

At the same time, funding for the programs was declining. In 2012, funding for the two programs was the lowest it had been in more than a decade. According to local area staff interviewed for the implementation study, these funding cuts led to the closing of some American Job Centers and a reduction in opening hours for others. Funding cuts also led to fewer career counselors, less funding for training, and reductions in supportive services.

Many customers faced multiple barriers to becoming successfully employed. About 78 percent of customers had no more than a high school diploma or a General Educational Development certificate. About one-fifth of customers had not been employed in the five years before random assignment. Eighty-one percent of customers in the study had been without a job for 27 or more weeks. Adults were typically more disadvantaged and faced more barriers to employment than dislocated workers.

Measuring the receipt of services from WIA and in the community

To understand the impacts of the availability of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs' services on employment, we first examined the effects of the availability of the programs' services on the receipt of services. Although during the study core-and-intensive customers were unable to receive WIA-funded training and core customers were unable to receive WIA-funded intensive services or training, all customers in the study could receive services from other sources in the community. Understanding the differences in the receipt of services by study group—whether or not these services were funded by WIA or from other sources in the community—helps the interpretation of the impacts on employment outcomes.

We found that training and services similar to WIA-funded intensive services were available to all customers in our study from other programs. We found that core-and-intensive and core customers enrolled in training funded from other sources, albeit at lower rates overall than the full-WIA group. Similarly, some core customers received services similar to WIA-funded intensive services funded by other sources. If customers in our study had not received these other services, our estimates would likely be larger. However, our estimates address the important policy question: what is the impact of WIA-funded services over and above those available in the community.

Receipt of core, intensive, and supportive services

Full-WIA customers received more core services than core-and-intensive customers, who in turn received more than core customers (Table 1). For example, 78 percent of the full-WIA group used a resource room, a core service, compared with 75 percent of the core-and-intensive group and 71 percent of the core group. In most instances, customers were using resource rooms at American Job Centers, but sometimes they were using resource rooms elsewhere. These differences occurred even though the study did not restrict the receipt of core services, suggesting that customers receiving training and intensive services were also more likely to continue to receive core services at the centers.

Core-and-intensive customers received more intensive services than core customers. Core-and-intensive customers were more likely to take an assessment and meet one-on-one with a program staff member (both intensive services) than core customers. Survey data suggest that core-and-intensive customers received on average about half an hour more one-on-one assistance than core customers (including zeros for customers who received no assistance).

Table 1. Differences in receipt of core, intensive, and supportive services

Service received or accessed during the 15 months after random assignment at an American Job Center or elsewhere	Comparisons between study groups		
	Full-WIA versus core-and-intensive	Core-and-intensive versus core	Full-WIA versus core
Resource room	+	+	+
Workshops	0	+	+
Job clubs	0	0	0
Assessments	+	+	+
One-on-one assistance	0	+	+
Supportive services	+	+	+

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

0 indicates no statistically significant difference at the 5 percent level.

+ indicates a statistically significant positive difference at the 5 percent level.

Full-WIA customers received more supportive services (either funded by WIA or from other sources in the community) than core-and-intensive customers, who in turn received more than core customers. Although 21 percent of the full-WIA group received supportive services, only 12 percent of the core-and-intensive group and 5 percent of the core group received them.

Participation in training

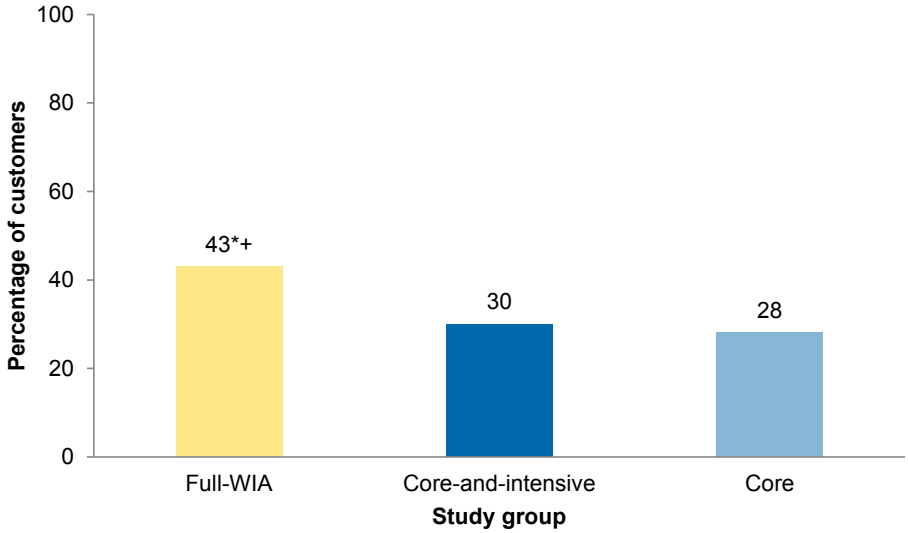
The availability of WIA funding for training increased the proportion of customers who enrolled in a training program. Full-WIA customers were 13 percentage points more likely to enroll in training during the 15 months after random assignment than core-and-intensive customers and 16 percentage points more likely to enroll in training than core customers (Figure 4). Full-WIA customers spent on average about 93 more hours in training (including zeros for customers who did not enroll in training) than core-and-intensive customers and 113 more hours in training than core customers.

Thirty-one percent of full-WIA customers enrolled in WIA-funded training. Nearly all the customers who enrolled in WIA-funded training received an ITA to pay for it. On average, full-

WIA customers who enrolled in training spent about 660 hours in training over about 28 weeks. About 12 percent of full-WIA customers enrolled in training that was not paid for by the Adult or Dislocated Worker programs.

When customers were placed in a study group that did not allow access to WIA funds for training, just less than one-third of customers still enrolled in training. Thirty percent of the core-and-intensive group and 28 percent of the core group enrolled in training, which they paid for themselves or by using sources other than WIA (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Participation in training funded by any source in the 15 months after random assignment



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

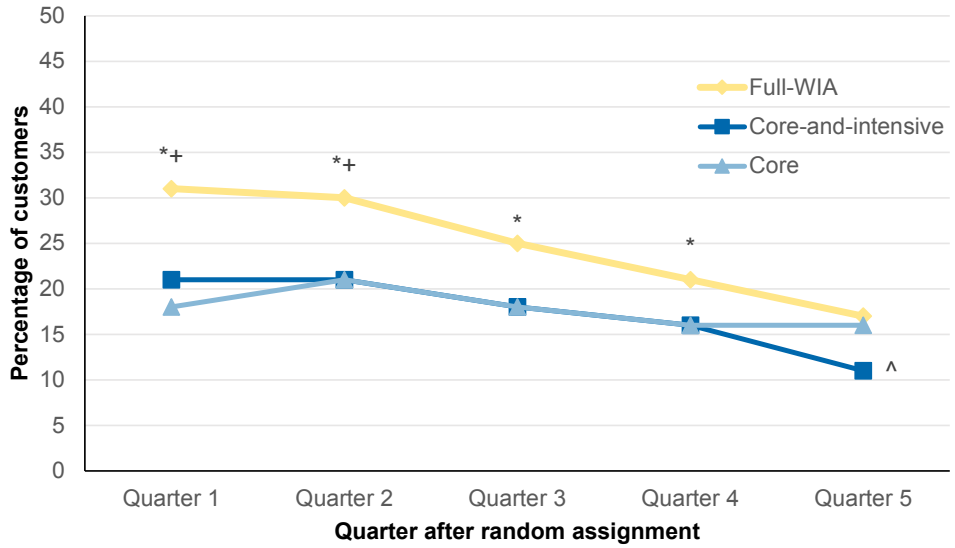
The difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Full-WIA customers were more likely to participate in training than core-and-intensive customers in the first four quarters after random assignment. Rates of training participation were highest, and differences across study groups in these rates were largest, in the first quarter after random assignment and then generally declined over time (Figure 5). In the fifth quarter after random assignment, a similar percentage of full-WIA and core customers were in training, but core-and-intensive customers were significantly less likely than core customers to be in training.

Full-WIA and core-and-intensive customers who enrolled in training were more likely to choose a vocationally oriented training program. Only 81 percent of core trainees enrolled in a vocationally oriented training program, compared with 90 percent of full-WIA trainees and 88 percent of core-and-intensive trainees. The differences between the core trainees and trainees in the other two study groups were statistically significant. Full-WIA trainees were significantly less likely to enroll in an educational program than core trainees.

Figure 5. Participation in training, by quarter after random assignment



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Trainees in the full-WIA group were more likely than trainees in the core group to complete a training program and more likely to earn a credential. Seventy-one percent of full-WIA trainees completed a training program, and 54 percent of full-WIA trainees received a credential. In comparison, only 56 percent of core trainees completed a training program and 41 percent of core trainees received a credential. These differences arose both because core trainees were more likely than full-WIA trainees to drop out and because they were more likely to still be enrolled in training at the end of the follow-up period.

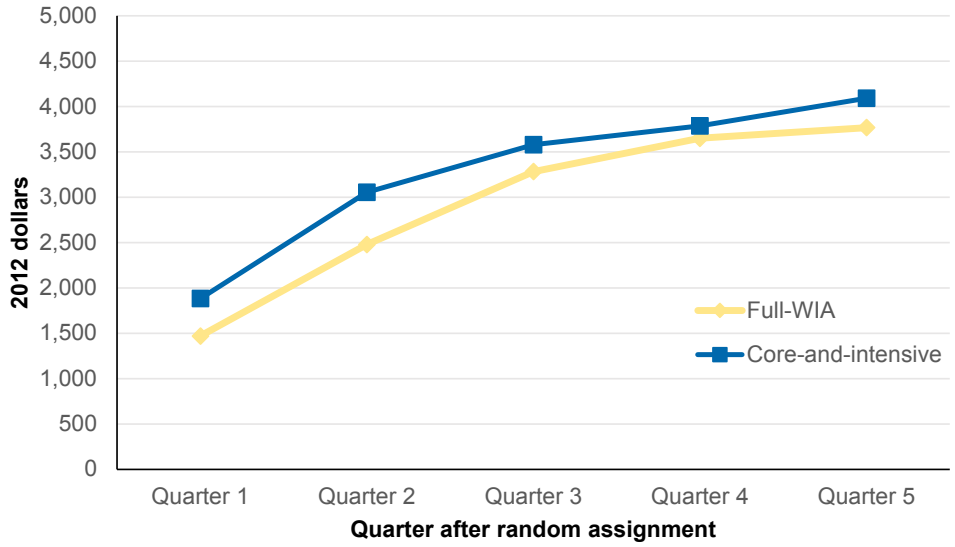
The evidence suggests that differences in training rates across study groups were larger for dislocated workers than for adults. The difference in the training rate between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups was 6 percentage points for adults and 23 percentage points for dislocated workers, although the difference in these differences (6 versus 23) was not statistically significant.

Impacts on earnings and employment of the availability of WIA-funded training

The availability of WIA-funded training did not increase earnings or employment in the 15 months after random assignment:

- The impact of the availability of training on Quarter 5 earnings, our priority outcome, was negative but not statistically significant. Similarly, in each of the first four quarters after random assignment, full-WIA customers earned less (Figure 6), and were less likely to be employed, than core-and-intensive customers, but none of these differences were statistically significant.

Figure 6. Quarterly earnings for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.
None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

- On average, the jobs obtained by full-WIA customers were less likely than those obtained by core-and-intensive customers to offer fringe benefits such as health insurance and retirement benefits. The jobs obtained by full-WIA customers were also less likely to be regular wage and salary jobs. They were slightly more likely to be self-employed or to work as an independent contractor or on-call employee but these differences are not statistically significant. The number of hours worked per week and the hourly wage rate did not differ significantly.

The lack of positive earnings and other employment outcomes likely resulted from the full-WIA customers being more likely to be enrolled in a training program and hence having less time for employment in these early quarters. In the fifth quarter after random assignment, about 17 percent of full-WIA customers were still in training and others had only finished training in the fourth quarter after random assignment. Eleven percent of the core-and-intensive group and 16 percent of the core group were still in training in Quarter 5 as well.

Impacts on earnings and employment of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services

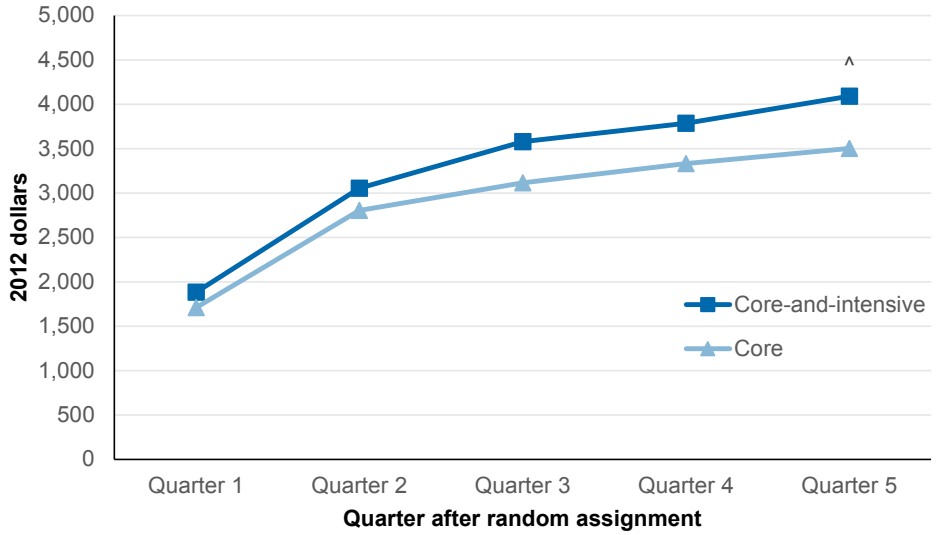
Our findings suggest, but not definitively, that the availability of WIA-funded intensive services increased earnings and employment in the fifth quarter after random assignment:

- The impact of the availability of intensive services on Quarter 5 earnings, our priority outcome, was about $600, or 17 percent. This estimated impact is statistically significant at the 5 percent level but does not meet the more stringent significance test that accounts for the fact that we made three comparisons on the same outcome. This means that the positive impact is more likely to have occurred by chance than if the estimate had met the more stringent criteria. Core-and-intensive customers earned more than core customers in each of

the five quarters after random assignment, but the difference was only statistically significant at the 5 percent level in the fifth quarter.

- Core-and-intensive customers were more likely to be employed and worked more hours than core customers in each quarter after random assignment, but the impacts on employment and hours were statistically significant only in the fifth quarter (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Quarterly earnings for core-and-intensive and core groups



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

- The most recent jobs held within the follow-up period by core-and-intensive and core customers had similar wages and hours per week, but core-and-intensive customers were more likely than core customers to have jobs that offered fringe benefits such as health insurance, retirement benefits, and tuition assistance.

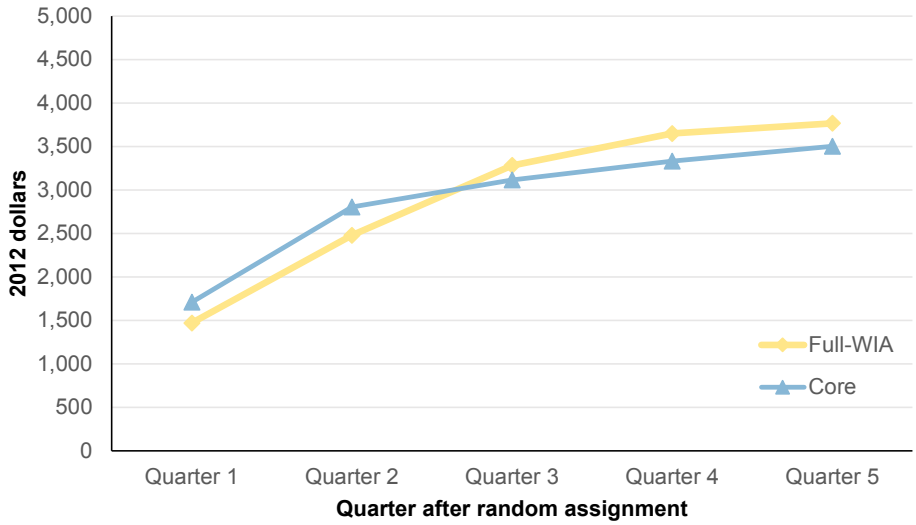
Impacts on earnings and employment of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services and training together

The availability of both WIA-funded training and intensive services increased the proportion of customers who were employed, but not their average earnings, in the fifth quarter after random assignment:

- The full-WIA customers were 6 percentage points more likely to be employed than core customers in the fifth quarter after random assignment, a significant difference. However, full-WIA customers earned about the same on average as the core customers in each quarter (Figure 8).
- The jobs held by full-WIA customers were significantly less likely to be regular jobs than those held by core customers.

The pattern of earnings impacts are broadly similar for dislocated workers and adults, but more pronounced for dislocated workers, although the differences in estimated impacts between adults and dislocated workers are not statistically significant.

Figure 8. Quarterly earnings for full-WIA and core groups



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.
None of the differences between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

We found little evidence that the availability of training or intensive services affected other outcomes. Availability of these services did not significantly affect total annual household income, receipt of public assistance, reported health, health insurance coverage, or criminal activity within the 15-month follow-up period.

Differences in impacts by customers' characteristics, local area unemployment rates, and local area policies

We examined impacts for different subgroups of customers and local areas, but because of smaller sample sizes the estimated impacts are imprecise. Hence, we consider these analyses exploratory.

The findings did not differ significantly by customer subgroup:

- Similar to the estimated impact for the full sample, the availability of WIA-funded training did not significantly affect Quarter 5 earnings for subgroups defined by education, gender, race/ethnicity, age, or employment history.
- The estimated impact of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services on Quarter 5 earnings was generally positive (and sometimes statistically significant) for most examined subgroups.

- The estimated impact of the availability of both WIA-funded intensive and training services on Quarter 5 earnings was significantly positive for three subgroups: (1) men, (2) customers who were white and non-Hispanic, and (3) customers who did not work in the year before random assignment. Our estimates suggest that this was driven by the positive impact of intensive services.

The estimated impacts were generally similar across local areas with high and low unemployment rates:

- The availability of WIA-funded training did not increase earnings in either high- or low-unemployment local areas. High unemployment rates were defined as those at or above the median local area unemployment rate of 8.5 percent and low unemployment rates were defined as those below 8.5 percent.
- We found some suggestive evidence that intensive services might be more effective in high-unemployment local areas than in low-unemployment local areas.
- Our evidence suggests that fewer intensive and training services were available from sources other than WIA in local areas with high unemployment rates compared with those with low unemployment rates.

We found no strong evidence to suggest that some local areas' policies were more effective than others. We considered two particular local area policies that the implementation study found varied in important ways that influenced the services provided and which services were offered to particular customers: (1) whether new customers to an American Job Center were first directed to use the resource room or instead were administered an enhanced intake that determined which services they were offered and (2) whether intensive services were primarily offered to customers interested in training or were offered to a broader set of customers. Our evidence suggested the following:

- Full-WIA customers in local areas that did not offer an enhanced intake were 14 percentage points more likely to participate in WIA-funded training than full-WIA customers in local areas that offered an enhanced intake. This suggests that local areas that offered an enhanced intake had fewer funds available for training.
- Some evidence suggests that intensive services were more effective in local areas that offered an enhanced intake, but the difference in impacts across the two subgroups of local areas was not significant.
- Nearly one-half of full-WIA customers in local areas that offered intensive services primarily to customers interested in training did not participate in training in the 15 months after random assignment, suggesting an unmet demand for training.
- We find no conclusive evidence about whether services were more effective in local areas that offered intensive services to a broad group of customers or local areas that offered them primarily to those interested in training.

Main conclusions

It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of training. The finding that the availability of training did not increase employment or earnings within the short follow-up period was unsurprising. We expected that training would have a negative impact in early quarters because when customers are enrolled in training they have less time for employment. Many full-WIA customers were still in training in the fifth quarter.

The evidence on intensive services is encouraging. Our findings suggest but are not conclusive that intensive services, when offered as a standalone service without training, were effective at increasing earnings and employment. Unlike the case for training, we expected that the impact of intensive services would be observed within five quarters because participating in intensive services is less time consuming than training and hence less likely to prevent customers from working.

It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of the availability of both training and intensive services. Just as five quarters is too short a period to judge the effectiveness of training, it is also too short a period to judge whether the availability of both WIA-funded training services and intensive services was more effective than a counterfactual in which neither of these services were available.

We estimated the impacts of the availability of program services, which are likely smaller than the impacts of receiving the services. The estimated impact of the availability of a service differs from the impact of the receipt of a service because customers did not always take up services that the programs offered. Hence, the impact on earnings of enrolling in training was likely more negative than our estimate of the availability of training and the earnings impact of the receipt of intensive services was likely more positive than our estimate.

We estimated the impact of the availability of program services compared with a situation in which customers could receive services in the community. We found that core-and-intensive and core customers enrolled in training funded from other sources, albeit at lower rates than the full-WIA group. Similarly, some core customers received services similar to WIA-funded intensive services funded by other programs. If customers in our study had not received these other services, our estimates would likely be larger. However, our estimates address the important policy question: what is the impact of WIA-funded services over and above those available in the community?

Our findings might have differed if the programs had been evaluated when the economy was stronger or program funding greater. We do not know what the estimated impacts would have been if the economy was stronger. Evidence from a comparison between local areas with relatively high and low unemployment rates suggests that the impacts of training do not differ much with the unemployment rate, but the impacts of intensive services might be smaller in a strong economy. We do not know whether the services would be more effective if funding had been higher, but we expect that members of the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups would have received more services if more funding had been available.

Next steps

A forthcoming report, to be released in 2017, will provide more definitive evidence. It will discuss the estimates of the effectiveness of the programs based on following the study participants for another 5 quarters for a total of 10 quarters, or 30 months, after random assignment. The report will discuss impacts estimated using data from both the 30-month follow-up survey and the National Directory of New Hires. It will address whether the availability of WIA-funded training starts to increase earnings and employment in Quarters 6 through 10 as those who participated in training have more time to reap its benefits. It will also assess whether the positive impacts of intensive services found in Quarter 5 persist in the subsequent quarters and whether the availability of both training and intensive services boost employment and earnings in these later quarters. Finally, it will also examine whether any positive benefits of the services on earnings are large enough to cover the costs of the services.

I. INTRODUCTION

With a growing need for a more skilled workforce, providing effective and efficient employment and training services is an important national priority. First authorized under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and then reauthorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are two of the nation's largest publicly-funded programs providing employment and training services. In program year (PY) 2012, which was July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2013, the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs together received nearly $2 billion in funding and served about 8 million customers (U.S. Department of Labor 2013).

Despite their importance, the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs have not been evaluated using the most rigorous methods. Hence, in 2008, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) within the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) launched a national experimental evaluation of the two programs, the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs Gold Standard Evaluation (WIA Gold Standard Evaluation). The evaluation's goals are to provide national estimates of the impact and cost-effectiveness of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and to provide a detailed description of their implementation.

This report presents the study's findings on the short-term effectiveness of the programs. It focuses on the effectiveness of WIA-funded staff-assisted employment services, or "intensive services," and WIA-funded training, both separately and together. The effectiveness of the services are estimated relative to WIA core services and other services available in the community. The study presents estimated impacts of the services based on customers' experiences during the 15 months after they were found eligible for intensive services. The full effects of the services may not have materialized within the 15-month follow-up period, especially since many customers were still in training at the end of the period. In a meta-analysis of workforce programs, Card et al. (2015) concluded that impacts of workforce programs do not become positive until two or three years after the end of the programs. Hence, any longer-term effects of the services may not yet be apparent. While the report's findings are suggestive, they do *not* provide conclusive evidence about the ultimate effectiveness of the programs. A subsequent report will present impact estimates, as well as estimates of the programs' cost-effectiveness, based on the customers' experiences during the 30 months after they were randomly assigned.

In the remainder of this chapter, we present an overview of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs (Section A), discuss how the programs might change under WIOA (Section B), present an overview of the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation (Section C), summarize the findings from the implementation study (Section D), and summarize the findings from prior studies of the programs (Section E). We conclude the chapter by presenting a road map to the subsequent chapters of this report (Section F).

A. The WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs

WIA was enacted in 1998 (U.S. Congress 1998) in response to concern that the public workforce investment system, made up of more than 150 separately funded programs, was severely fragmented and lacked effective coordination or collaboration. This fragmentation

resulted in redundancies, inefficiencies, and a confusing maze of programs difficult for customers to navigate (U.S. Government Accountability Office 1994). Congress enacted WIA to minimize this fragmentation and make the public workforce system customer focused and demand driven, ultimately to help job seekers find and prepare for high-quality jobs and to assist employers in recruiting productive workers. WIA was based on six underlying principles that are applicable to the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs (U.S. Department of Labor 2000):

1. **Streamlining service delivery through program integration.** WIA mandated the establishment of a coordinated service delivery system composed of American Job Centers (also called One-Stop Career Centers). It designated more than a dozen separately funded programs as mandatory partners in this system. Partners included the WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; Job Corps; Wagner-Peyser Employment Service; Veterans Employment and Training Services; Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA); Unemployment Insurance (UI); Vocational Rehabilitation; adult education and literacy activities authorized by Title II of WIA; postsecondary vocational education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act; and others. WIA section 121(b)(1)(B) provides a list of all mandatory partners.
2. **Providing universal access to basic services.** WIA gave everyone access to basic or core services offered at American Job Centers. These core services included resources that customers might use with minimal or no staff assistance to find and apply for jobs and plan careers.
3. **Empowering individuals through a customer-focused approach to services.** WIA encouraged customers to take charge of their own career planning by first accessing the self-directed core services. Further, customers who were approved for training could do so using individual training accounts (ITAs), which operate like vouchers that customers use to access training programs from approved providers.
4. **Promoting state and local flexibility.** Operating on the premise that states and localities know best what service designs and delivery strategies are optimal for their communities, WIA further devolved decision-making authority away from the federal level. State governors designated Local Workforce Investment Areas (local areas) and oversaw the work of these areas' Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs). Each LWIB was responsible for designing its local area's service system. For example, it had the discretion to determine the emphasis on various services (for example, training versus core services), the contracted service providers, the location of American Job Centers, and the customers targeted for services. Each of ETA's six regional offices oversaw the implementation of the WIA programs in a specific set of states.
5. **Promoting system accountability.** While devolving authority downward, WIA enhanced the focus on accountability and continuous improvement by mandating that local areas meet minimum standards on performance measures relating to customers' success in obtaining and retaining employment. Additionally, it required training providers to meet performance criteria to be eligible to serve ITA holders.
6. **Engaging businesses as an important customer.** WIA emphasized the importance of meeting the needs of businesses as well as job seekers. Accordingly, the legislation required businesses to have majority representation on each state workforce board and each LWIB.

Further, American Job Centers were required to offer services to businesses and to provide job seekers with funding to train only for skills deemed to be in high demand by local businesses.

Depending on their needs and eligibility, Adult and Dislocated Worker program customers were offered services through three tiers: (1) core services, which either were self-directed (accessed from resource rooms located at the American Job Centers or via the Internet) or required a modest amount of staff assistance; (2) intensive services, which generally required more staff assistance than core services; and (3) training. Adult and Dislocated Worker program funding for training was viewed as "funding of last resort" and could only cover training costs not funded from other sources. Hence, customers were not offered funding for training if, for example, it could be covered by a Federal Pell Grant. WIA required that local areas provide core, intensive, and training services sequentially. That is, customers had to receive at least one core service to receive an intensive service and at least one intensive service before receiving funding for training.

The act required that all recipients of WIA-funded intensive services or training be legally able to work in the United States and that men must be registered with the Selective Service System, if appropriate, but otherwise allowed each local area to develop its own eligibility criteria for these services. The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs offered almost identical services, but each program had its own eligibility rules.

- **Adult** program services were available to customers age 18 and older, but in certain instances, such as when funds were limited, as determined locally, recipients of public assistance and other low-income customers (as defined by WIA Section 101(25)) had priority for accessing intensive and training services.
- **Dislocated Worker** program services were available to customers who: (1) were terminated or laid off from a job, showed attachment to the workforce, and were unlikely to return to their previous occupation or industry; (2) were terminated or laid off as a result of a plant closure or substantial plant downsizing; (3) were self-employed and experiencing unemployment as a result of general economic conditions; or (4) were displaced homemakers, individuals who had been providing unpaid services to family members in the home while dependent on income of another family member but are no longer supported by that income.

B. Changes to the programs under WIOA

WIOA represented the first significant reform of the public workforce system since WIA's enactment in 1998 (U.S. Congress 2014). It has a phased implementation, with major programmatic changes effective on July 1, 2015, and performance accountability changes taking effect on July 1, 2016.

Much of what we learn from studying the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs under WIA will continue to apply to these programs as they are implemented under WIOA. WIOA left in place most of WIA's key principles, retained the American Job Centers, and continued the authorization of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The two programs will continue to include the same basic set of services offered under WIA and retain similar eligibility rules. Customers will continue to choose their training programs under some restrictions and with

guidance from program staff. Moreover, some of the important changes introduced by WIOA add flexibility for local areas to continue in directions they were already heading:[1]

- **Merging core and intensive services into one tier.** WIOA combines core and intensive services into a single "career services" tier. Local areas can continue to offer the core and intensive services they offered under WIA as career services. The implementation study concluded that the distinction between core and intensive services was not always clear cut even under WIA (D'Amico et al. 2015). For example, assistance with developing a résumé from a staff member in the resource room was considered a core service; the same assistance from an employment counselor in the same American Job Center was considered an intensive service. With a few exceptions, the study typically followed the local areas' definition of each service (Mastri et al. 2015).
- **Eliminating the requirement that customers access service tiers sequentially.** WIOA allows customers to receive training before intensive services; in addition, by merging core and intensive services, it allows customers to receive what had been an intensive service without receiving a core service. Under WIA, many local areas already moved customers through core and intensive services quickly. For example, some local areas counted the interactions with the center greeter as the core service required for intensive service eligibility and the determination of training eligibility as the intensive service receipt required for training eligibility.
- **Promoting improved workforce system partnerships.** WIOA requires that states and workforce system partners in each local area develop unified strategic plans and report on common measures of performance. It adds Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as a required American Job Center partner, unless a state's governor opts out. It also requires the co-location of WIA programs and the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, which already occurred in most local areas included in the study (Koller and Paprocki 2015).
- **Emphasizing credentials.** WIOA emphasizes the importance of customers obtaining industry-recognized credentials. However, even under WIA, some local areas were either making training approval contingent on the possibility of attaining a credential or were providing a higher ITA amount for programs that led to credentials.

Other changes made by WIOA include:

- **Aligning workforce and economic development goals.** WIOA requires local areas within an economic region to coordinate with each other and emphasizes sector-based strategies to promote employment in high-demand industries and occupations.
- **Promoting work-based training.** WIOA relaxes restrictions on the use of training for employed workers and increases the maximum allowable reimbursements to employers for on-the-job and customized training. It also authorizes transitional job placements.
- **Increasing the flexibility to transfer funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.** Under WIA, local areas' ability to transfer funds between the two programs

[1] See the study's implementation study report, D'Amico et al. (2015), for more information.

varied based on state-obtained waivers. WIOA allows the transfer of 100 percent of funds between the two programs without a waiver.

- **Enhancing the performance accountability system.** WIOA adds new performance measures to promote accountability within the public workforce system. In addition to the employment-related measures under WIA, WIOA requires local areas to measure customers' credential attainment and skills gain and businesses' engagement in the system.

C. Overview of the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation

The evaluation's objectives are to estimate the impacts and cost-effectiveness of intensive and training services provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and to examine how the programs were implemented nationwide. It was not designed to estimate the impact of core services even though these were important services used by millions of customers. Because universal access to core services was a key tenet of WIA, we could not have denied some customers access to core services and therefore could not evaluate them experimentally. Furthermore, the evaluation focuses on the services offered by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs using the "formula funds" or program funds provided directly to local areas and not held in reserve at the national or state levels. Hence, it does not include specific federal grants, such as the National Emergency Grants, or state funds used for rapid response activities, which are activities that address the needs of workers resulting from specific plant or company closings.

The evaluation addresses three main research questions:

1. Did the availability of services in the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs improve employment-related outcomes (such as employment, earnings, and use of public assistance)?
    - Did the availability of core and intensive services improve employment-related outcomes more than the availability of core services only?
    - Did the availability of core, intensive, and training services improve employment-related outcomes more than the availability of core and intensive services only?
    - Did the availability of core, intensive, and training services improve employment-related outcomes more than the availability of core services only?
    - Did the effectiveness of the programs' services vary by the characteristics of the customers, the local unemployment rate, or how the programs were implemented?
2. Did the benefits from WIA intensive and training services exceed their costs?
3. How were the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs implemented?

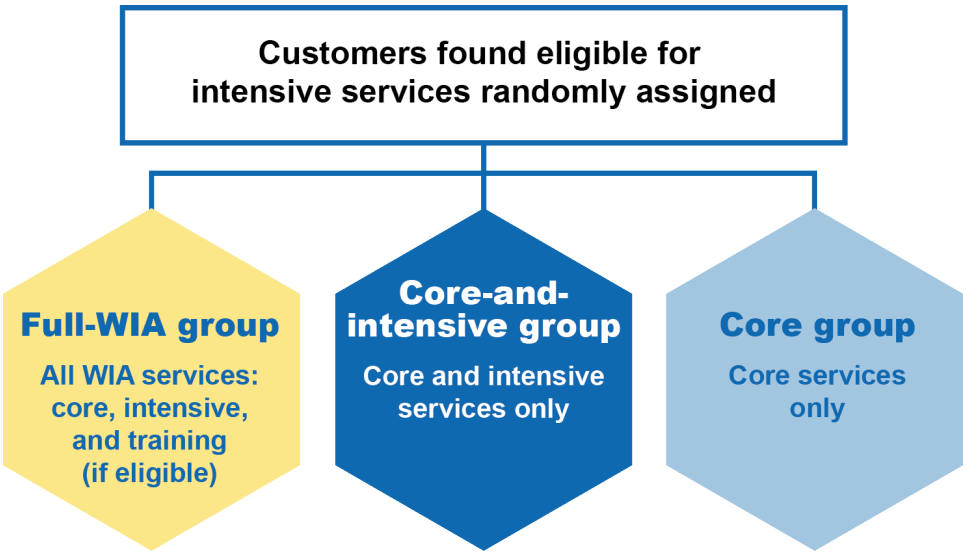
To answer these research questions, the study design included three mutually reinforcing components: (1) an impact study that focuses on the first set of research questions, (2) a cost-benefit study that focuses on the second question, and (3) an implementation study that focused on the third question.

This report presents the short-term findings from the impact study. A forthcoming report will present the findings from the longer-term impacts of the programs and the cost-benefit

analysis. D'Amico et al. (2015) and a series of issue briefs discuss the implementation of the programs. Rosenberg et al. (2015) presents findings from a study of workforce services provided to veterans. Visit http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/wia-gold-standard-evaluation for a full list of the currently published issue briefs and reports from this study.

The evaluation was designed to produce nationally representative and experimental estimates of the impacts of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The study occurred in 28 randomly selected local areas that were representative of all but the smallest programs operating in the contiguous 48 states and the District of Columbia. With some exceptions, such as TAA program participants and veterans,[2] all customers found eligible for intensive services were randomly assigned into one of three study groups: (1) the full-WIA group, which could receive all services—core, intensive, and training—that the group members would be eligible for in the absence of the study; (2) the core-and-intensive group, which could receive core and intensive services but not training; and (3) the core group, which could receive only core services (see Figure I.1). Customers were enrolled in the study from November 2011 through April 2013, with most customers enrolled in 2012.

Figure I.1. The three study groups



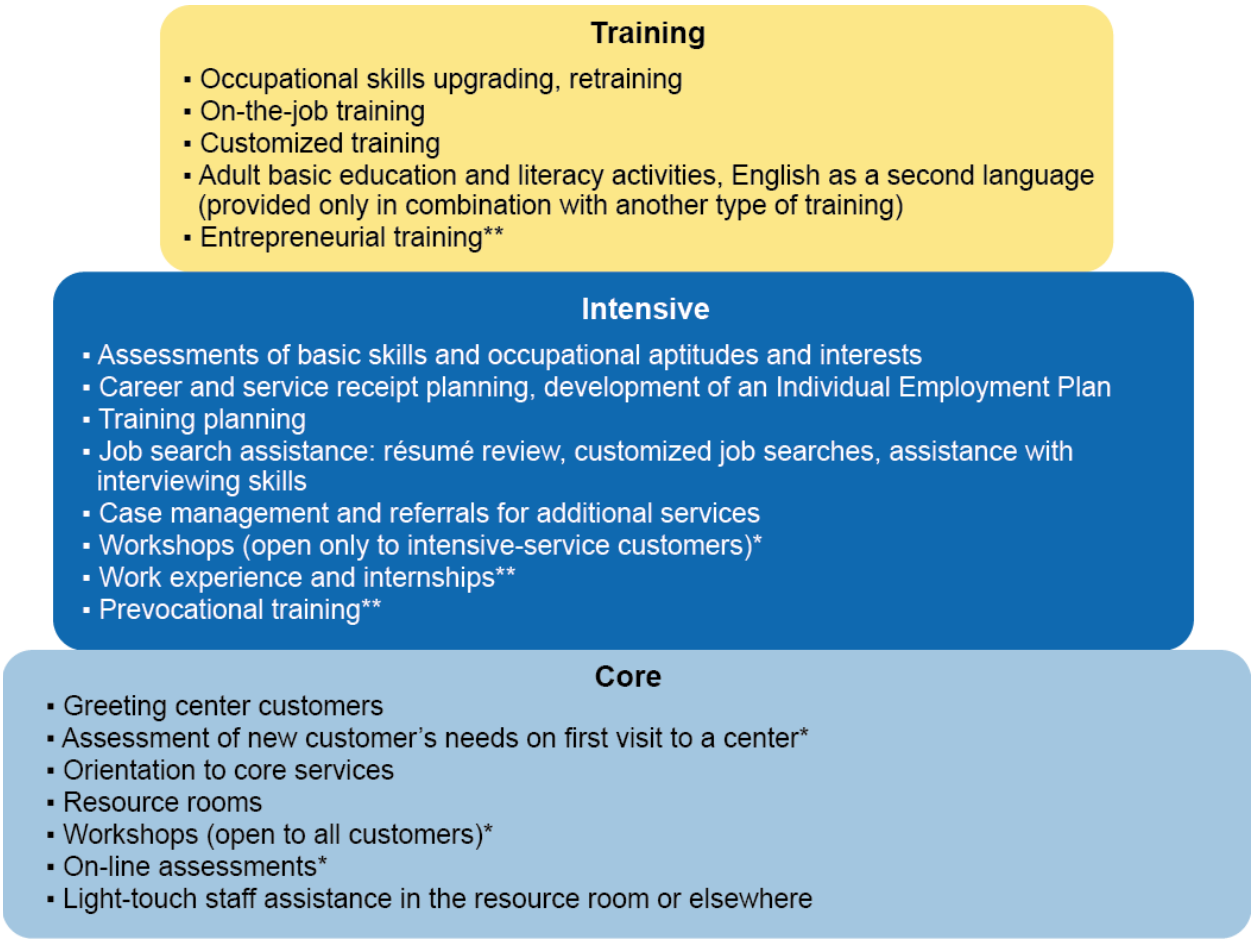
The study uses data about study participants collected from self-administered forms, administrative sources, and two follow-up surveys conducted at about 15 and 30 months after random assignment. We will use these data to compare the service receipt, training participation, and labor market and other outcomes of the customers in the study over a 30-month period. This report is primarily based on the data collected from the survey administered to customers at about 15 months after they were randomly assigned. Chapter II provides more information about the design of the impact study.

[2] Chapter II describes the exceptions in detail.

D. What we learned from the implementation study

Through the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation's implementation study (D'Amico et al. 2015), we found that most local areas offered the same basic set of services—a resource room, workshops, assessments, career and service planning, and training—but local areas varied in the exact services they provided and to whom they offered the services. The resource room typically provided information about available community services, job matching systems, labor market information, job search tools, and career exploration tools. Individualized assistance by a career counselor was the key feature of intensive services and included career and service receipt planning and case management. Customers generally received occupational training through an ITA, but some could receive entrepreneurial training, on-the-job training (training provided by an employer while the customer is employed and the customer's wage is subsidized by the local area), or customized training developed for a particular employer and provided to current or prospective employees. Figure I.2 provides a list of the services that were provided in the local areas in the study. As the local areas were selected randomly, this reflects the services that were being offered across the United States.

Figure I.2. Types of services offered by local areas in the study



Source: D'Amico et al. (2015).

*In some, but not all, local areas.

**Rarely offered, and offered to only a small number of customers.

Eligibility for intensive services and training varied by local area. Most local areas considered customers ineligible for intensive services if they had one or more serious challenges to successfully finding or keeping a job (such as a substance abuse problem) or if they lacked the motivation to find employment, but how these criteria were implemented varied. To receive training funding, most local areas required that customers meet specific local area eligibility criteria such as a minimum education level, minimum work experience, attainment of a minimum score on basic skills tests, and evidence of the necessary supports to complete training. Customers were typically also required to develop a training plan that involved completing a series of activities such as researching occupations and training programs. As well as ensuring an informed choice, completion of these activities tested customers' motivation and hence their likelihood of completing the training program and becoming employed.

Local areas could also offer supportive and follow-up services to Adult and Dislocated Worker program customers. Supportive services refers to assistance to help customers succeed in their job search and training activities and to address barriers to employment. Examples of supportive services included bus passes or help paying for gas, tools, uniforms, and child care. Some of these services were funded by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs; more frequently, program staff referred customers to other programs for these services. Follow-up services typically involved phone calls to customers to provide support to the customers and document their labor market experiences after they had left the program to gather data for performance measures.

Study local areas implemented one of three general approaches to serving customers new to the American Job Centers. Eighteen study local areas offered a customer-initiated approach, in which these new customers were directed first to use the resource room, typically after receiving an orientation to center services. These customers were offered additional staff assistance if they were unsuccessful in independently searching for a job. However, to address a concern that some new customers may not have the skills to conduct an effective job search independently, staff in eight study local areas conducted an enhanced intake on all new customers when they first visited the center. This enhanced intake involved an initial assessment of the customers' needs. Customers deemed capable of finding a job without more staff assistance were directed to use the resource room, while other customers were provided with more intensive staff assistance (either a staff-assisted core service or an intensive service). In the remaining two study local areas, the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs almost exclusively served customers interested in training; new customers interested in job search were directed to resource rooms overseen by Wagner-Peyser Employment Service staff, and new customers interested in training met with a WIA career counselor to determine training eligibility.

E. What we know from prior studies

Although the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation is the only experimental study of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, well-implemented non-experimental studies have been conducted of the programs (Hollenbeck et al. 2005; Heinrich et al. 2008, 2013; Hollenbeck and Huang 2008; Hollenbeck 2009; Andersson et al. 2013; Hollenbeck and Huang 2014). Heinrich et al. (2008, 2013) and Andersson et al. (2013) addressed the research questions most comparable to those addressed by the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation. The other non-experimental studies generally estimated the impact of the receipt of services from any of the eight or nine programs

funded by WIA compared to receiving no services from any WIA program rather than the impact of just the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

Although the Heinrich et al. (2008) study did not select programs to be representative of the programs nationally, it did include programs in 12 diverse states: Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, Tennessee, Utah, and Wisconsin. It examined the impact of the programs on customers who began receiving services from July 2003 to June 2005, which was about eight years before customers in this study began receiving services. Andersson et al. (2013) conducted a similar analysis with 1999–2005 data from two unnamed states.

Both studies found the effects of receiving training were mixed (Table I.1). Participation in WIA-funded training generally led to negative impacts on earnings in the first quarter after receiving the first program services. This would be expected if participation in training limited the time available for paid work. Training resulted in increases in earnings in later quarters for those served under the Adult program. Training did not boost earnings for dislocated workers in the four years of follow-up in the Heinrich et al. study but did slightly after about two and a half years in one of the states examined in Andersson et al.

Table I.1. Summary of findings from multistate non-experimental studies of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs

		Impacts on quarterly earnings in quarter after entering the program			
Program	**Gender**	**Quarter 1**	**Quarter 5**	**Quarter 10**	**Quarter 16**
Impact of the receipt of training (Heinrich et al. 2008)					
Adult	Female	-$220*	$451*	$835*	$917*
Adult	Male	$192*	$497*	$585*	$1,285*
Dislocated Worker	Female	-$629*	-$883*	-$39	-$2
Dislocated Worker	Male	-$447*	-$574*	-$49	-$164
Impact of the receipt of staff-assisted core and intensive services (Heinrich et al. 2008)					
Adult	Female	$569*	$400*	$296*	$238*
Adult	Male	$665*	$317*	$250*	$365*
Dislocated Worker	Female	-$3	$240*	$309*	$476*
Dislocated Worker	Male	-$28	$148*	$320*	$323*
Impact of the receipt of training (Andersson et al. 2013)					
Adults	State A	-$597*	-$11	$393*	NA
Dislocated Workers	State A	-$939*	-$478*	-$155	NA
Adults	State B	-$688*	$24	$405*	NA
Dislocated Workers	State B	-$1,258*	-$662*	$163*	NA

Sources: Heinrich et al. (2008) and correspondence with the authors, and Andersson et al. (2013).

Notes: Earnings for Heinrich et al. are expressed in 2005 dollars and those of Andersson et al. are in 2008 dollars.

*Significantly different from zero at the 5 percent level.

NA = Not available.

Heinrich et al. (2008) also estimated the impact of receiving core and intensive services. The authors compared the outcomes of customers who received these WIA-funded services with those of customers who did not receive these WIA-funded services but received either unemployment insurance or services from the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, depending on the state. Heinrich et al. studied only those core services for which there were administrative data on their receipt. As local areas are only required to report the receipt of core services that involve staff assistance, core services that are accessed with little to no staff assistance were not studied. The study found that the receipt of staff-assisted core and intensive services led to increased earnings. Adults—both men and women—received a boost in earnings of $665 or $569, respectively, in the first quarter after entering the program. That boost declined over time but was still significant four years after they entered the program. The earnings benefits from receiving staff-assisted core and intensive services increased over time among dislocated workers. (Andersson et al. did not estimate the impacts of core and intensive services.)

The main shortcoming of non-experimental studies of employment and training services is that, because they cannot account for all the differences in the characteristics of customers who receive services and those who do not receive them, their findings may be misleading. In an experiment, on average, all the characteristics—both observed and unobserved—of customers, measured before the receipt of services, are the same in each study group being compared. This is especially true when the number of study participants is large, as it is in this study. Hence, any differences in the outcomes of customers across study groups can be attributed to the employment and training services rather than differences in customers' characteristics. In the non-experimental studies, even if the groups of customers who are being compared are similar on observed characteristics, such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, and work history, unobserved differences in customer characteristics may be driving the results. For example, the non-experimental studies might find that the post-program earnings of those who participated in training are higher than those who do not even if the training is ineffective because those who trained are more motivated than those who did not pursue training. Hence, results from non-experimental studies could be misleading. The present study was designed to overcome these limitations.

F. Organization of this report

The rest of this report is organized as follows:

- In Chapter II, we describe the design of the impact study.
- In Chapter III, we provide context for the study findings by describing the characteristics of the local areas, the labor markets in which they provided services, and the characteristics of the customers in the study.
- In Chapter IV, we describe the differences across study groups in the receipt of core, intensive, and supportive services.
- In Chapter V, we describe the differences across study groups in the participation in training.
- In Chapter VI, we present the impacts of the programs' intensive and training services on employment outcomes.

- In Chapter VII, we present the impacts of the programs' intensive and training services on household income, receipt of public assistance, and some other measures of customer well-being.
- In Chapter VIII, we discuss how the impacts of the programs' intensive and training services vary by the characteristics of customers.
- In Chapter IX, we discuss how the impacts of the programs' intensive and training services vary by the local unemployment rate.
- In Chapter X, we discuss how the impacts of the programs' intensive and training services vary by two key local area policy differences.
- In Chapter XI, we discuss the key study findings.

A technical supplement in an accompanying volume to this report includes appendices that describe our analyses in more detail, presents an analysis of the sensitivity of the estimates to different assumptions and analytical approaches, and provides detailed estimates that include *p*-values and sample sizes.

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II. THE DESIGN OF THE IMPACT STUDY

The WIA Gold Standard Evaluation was ambitious in its design in two ways. First, it aimed to be nationally representative—to estimate impacts that would be representative of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs nationwide rather than just in a subset of local areas. This required that the evaluation include randomly selected local areas rather than those that volunteered to participate. Second, it used an experimental design that required random assignment of tens of thousands of customers. Because the programs were ongoing, the evaluation had to be designed in a way that minimized disruptions to their operations.

In this chapter, we provide an overview of the evaluation's impact study, which is the focus of this report. We begin by describing the random selection of local areas for the study (Section A). We then describe the experimental design (Section B) and data sources (Section C). We end by presenting the analytic methods used in the impact analysis (Section D). Mastri et al. (2015) provides further details about the design and implementation of the evaluation. Appendix A in the technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the analysis approach.

A. Randomly selecting local areas for the study

We randomly selected 30 local areas nationwide for the study from a list of 487 local areas. We started with a list of all the 585 local areas in the United States and its territories as of March 2008. Primarily to reduce the evaluation costs involved in recruiting and monitoring local areas in the study, we excluded the 22 local areas outside the 48 contiguous states and 76 very small local areas. This left 487 local areas, representing 83 percent of all local areas and more than 98 percent of customers who received WIA-funded intensive services in the contiguous United States in 2008. In selecting the 30 local areas, we ensured that there would be variation in DOL region, states, the size of the local area, and the emphasis the local area placed on training.

We anticipated that not all of the selected local areas would agree to participate, and we had a backup plan for those that did not. For each of the 30 randomly selected local areas, we identified potential replacement local areas to help maintain the representativeness of the study sample if the originally selected local area declined to participate. We chose the replacement local areas to have characteristics that were as similar as possible to the originally selected local area.

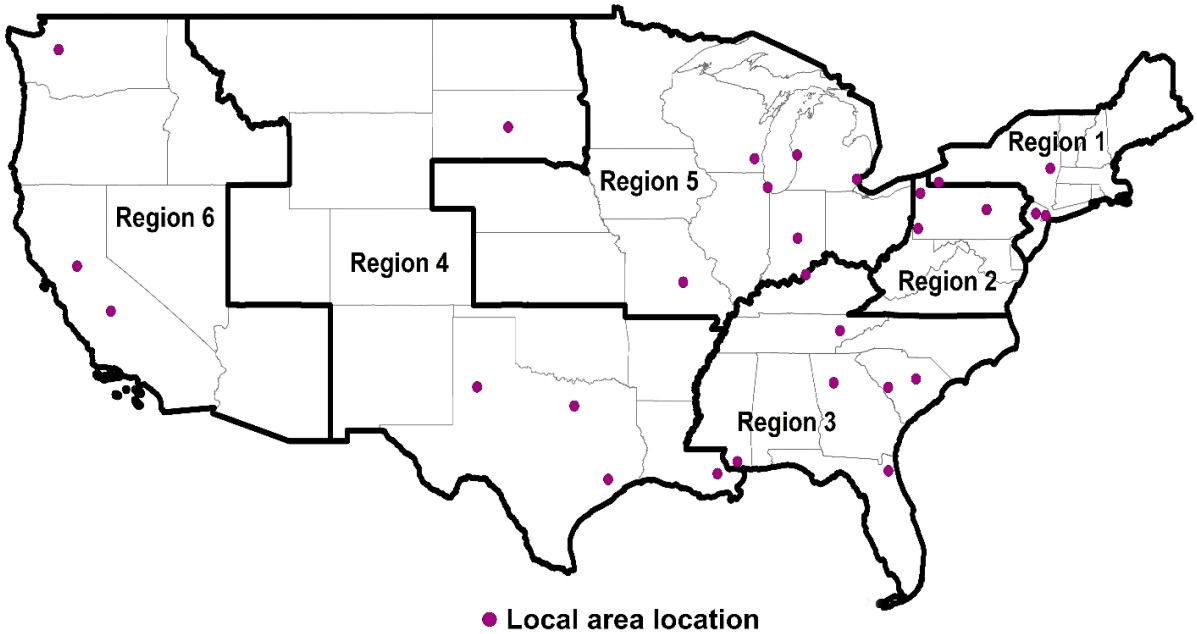
The study included 28 local areas (see the text box for a list of these areas). We convinced 26 of the 30 randomly selected local areas—87 percent—to participate. We successfully replaced two of the four local areas that declined to participate. The LWIBs of two other local areas declined to participate, but we did not have sufficient time to recruit and set up study procedures in their replacement local areas within the study's timeline. No local areas dropped out of the evaluation after recruitment was complete. As expected given the random selection, the characteristics of the 28 participating local areas were similar to those of local areas nationwide (Mastri et al. 2015). The statistical power of the study was viewed as sufficient with 28 participating local areas. Figure II.1 shows the locations of the local areas participating in the study.

Local areas participating in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation

Atlanta Regional Workforce Board (Georgia)
Capital Regional Workforce Board (New York)
Central Region Workforce Investment Board (Missouri)
Chautauqua County Workforce Investment Board (New York)
Chicago Workforce Investment Council (Illinois)[a]
East Tennessee Human Resource Agency
EmployIndy Workforce Investment Board (Indiana)
Essex County Workforce Investment Board (New Jersey)
First Coast Workforce Investment Board (Florida)
Fresno Regional Workforce Investment Board (California)
Greater Louisville Workforce Investment Board (Kentucky)
Gulf Coast Workforce Board (Texas)
Lower Savannah Workforce Investment Area (South Carolina)
Muskegon/Oceana Michigan Works! Workforce Development Board
New Orleans Workforce Investment Board (Louisiana)
New York City Workforce Investment Board
North Central Texas Workforce Development Board-Workforce Solutions
Northwest Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)
Sacramento Works Workforce Investment Board (California)
Santee-Lynches Workforce Investment Board (South Carolina)
South Dakota Workforce Development Council
South Plains Workforce Development Board (Texas)
Southeast Michigan Community Alliance Workforce Investment Board
Southwest Corner Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)
Twin Districts Workforce Area (Mississippi)
Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Counties (Wisconsin)
Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (Washington)
Workforce Investment Board of Central Pennsylvania

[a]In July 2012, during the course of the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation, the Chicago Workforce Investment Council merged with the Workforce Board of Northern Cook County and Cook County Workforce Investment Board to form a single workforce investment area, the Chicago Cook Workforce Investment Board. Only those American Job Centers located within the boundaries of the City of Chicago participated in the study, both before and after the merger.

Figure II.1. Locations of the 28 local areas participating in the study



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation.
Note: The map shows the location of the six ETA regions.

Two factors were important in the success of our recruitment: (1) DOL's engagement and (2) the low rates of assignment to the study groups in which services were restricted. The ETA assistant secretary at the time called staff at each local area selected for the study and then DOL staff accompanied evaluation team members on recruitment visits. The low rate of assignment to the core and core-and-intensive group—only about 6 percent of customers on average were assigned to each of these groups—was a key factor in securing the participation for many local areas.

B. Experimental design

An experimental design is the strongest possible design for an evaluation of employment and training services. A well-implemented experimental design ensures that the effects we estimate are attributable to the programs being studied and not to other observed or unobserved characteristics of the customers who participate in them.

Random assignment into three study groups. Staff in the local areas randomly assigned all customers (with some exceptions described below) who were eligible for intensive services from the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and consented to participate in the study. They were randomly assigned to one of three groups:

1. **Full-WIA group.** Customers in this group could receive any core, intensive, or training services for which they were eligible, just as they would in the absence of the evaluation. Note that it was not required that everyone be offered training, nor that everyone offered training actually enroll in a training program; these practices also reflected what occurs in the absence of the evaluation.
2. **Core-and-intensive group.** Customers in this group could receive any core or intensive services for which they were eligible but they could not receive *training* services funded by the Adult or Dislocated Worker programs. No customer was required to receive intensive services.
3. **Core group.** Customers in this group could receive *only core services* and no intensive or training services funded by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

Members of all three study groups were free to access other employment and training services available in the community at any time.

For the most part, core, intensive and training services were defined similarly across local areas. However, a few services were defined as core services in some local areas and intensive in others. For example, the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) was considered a core service offered to all customers in some local areas but seen as an intensive service in others. (A staff person discussing the results of the TABE with the customer was considered an intensive service in all local areas.) Similarly, some workshops with similar content, such as how to write a résumé, were offered as core services in some local areas and intensive services in others. In most cases, we used the local area's definition of core and intensive services during the study. Mastri et al. (2015) discusses the few exceptions.

Local areas varied in the services they offered and to whom they offered the services. We did not ask any local areas to change the services they offered or to whom they offered the services during the study. As the local areas were randomly selected, this variation in service provision in the local areas in the study reflects the variation in service provision in all the local areas and the estimates of the impacts of the availability of services can be generalized to the services nationwide.

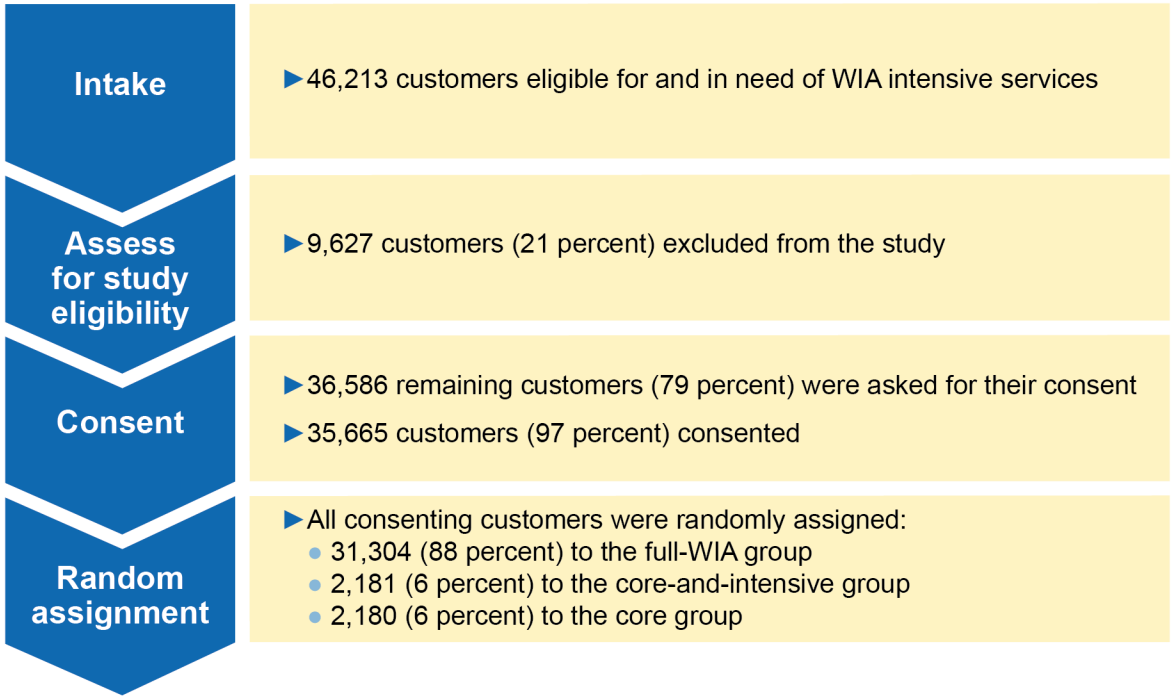
Random assignment was conducted in all American Job Centers and online intake points in the local areas participating in the study from November 2011 through April 2013. After customers were randomly assigned, they could receive only the services allowed for their study group; these restrictions lasted for 15 months after each customer was randomly assigned. For example, a member of the core group could not receive intensive or training services through the Adult or Dislocated Worker programs for 15 months after he or she was randomly assigned. After 15 months, customers could receive any Adult or Dislocated Worker program services for which they were eligible. Customers who did not consent to participate in the study could receive only core services for the duration of the study intake period in their local area.

Customers who were not included in the study. Some groups of customers found eligible for intensive services were not included in the study (Mastri et al. 2015). These customers were not randomly assigned but were allowed to receive the same services they would have received in the absence of the study. These customers included:

1. **Participants in the TAA program.** TAA is an entitlement program—those eligible for TAA cannot be denied TAA services. Many states and local areas require that TAA participants be enrolled in the Dislocated Worker program to receive case management and other services. Hence, TAA participants could not be randomly assigned to the core or core-and-intensive group.
2. **Veterans and covered spouses.** Veterans and some spouses of veterans receive priority of service. ETA decided that denying intensive or training services to veterans or covered spouses would go against the spirit of the priority of service provision. Moreover, some local areas only agreed to participate in the study on the condition that veterans be exempted.
3. **Customers referred by an employer.** Local area staff expressed concern that their relationships with employers could be harmed if customers who had been referred to the American Job Center by employers seeking on-the-job training funds were randomly assigned to a group that prohibited training.
4. **Customers exempted for local area-specific reasons.** Some groups of customers in specific local areas were exempt from the study because they were required or encouraged to be co-enrolled in the Adult or Dislocated Worker program. For example, in some local areas, participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program were required to co-enroll in the Adult or Dislocated Worker program. In other local areas, some customers participating in other studies, such as the Reemployment Eligibility and Assessment Initiative Evaluation, were exempted to preserve the validity of the other study. In addition, on a case-by-case basis, we exempted a few customers before random assignment for extenuating circumstances (such as the customer being deemed unable to understand the consent process).

Across all local areas in the study, staff determined, using a study eligibility checklist, the study eligibility of 46,213 customers who were eligible for intensive services through the WIA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs (Figure II.2). Of those customers, 9,627 customers (21 percent) were excluded from the study because they met exemption criteria. The customers found ineligible for the study were not informed about the study, not asked for their consent, and not randomly assigned. The remaining 36,586 customers who were eligible for the study were asked to participate in the evaluation, and 97 percent of them consented to take part. In total, 35,665 customers, or 77 percent of the 46,213 customers determined to be eligible for intensive services, were determined eligible for the study and consented to participate. All these consenting customers completed a study registration form and contact information form and were then randomly assigned to one of the three study groups.

Figure II.2. Number of customers at each stage of study intake



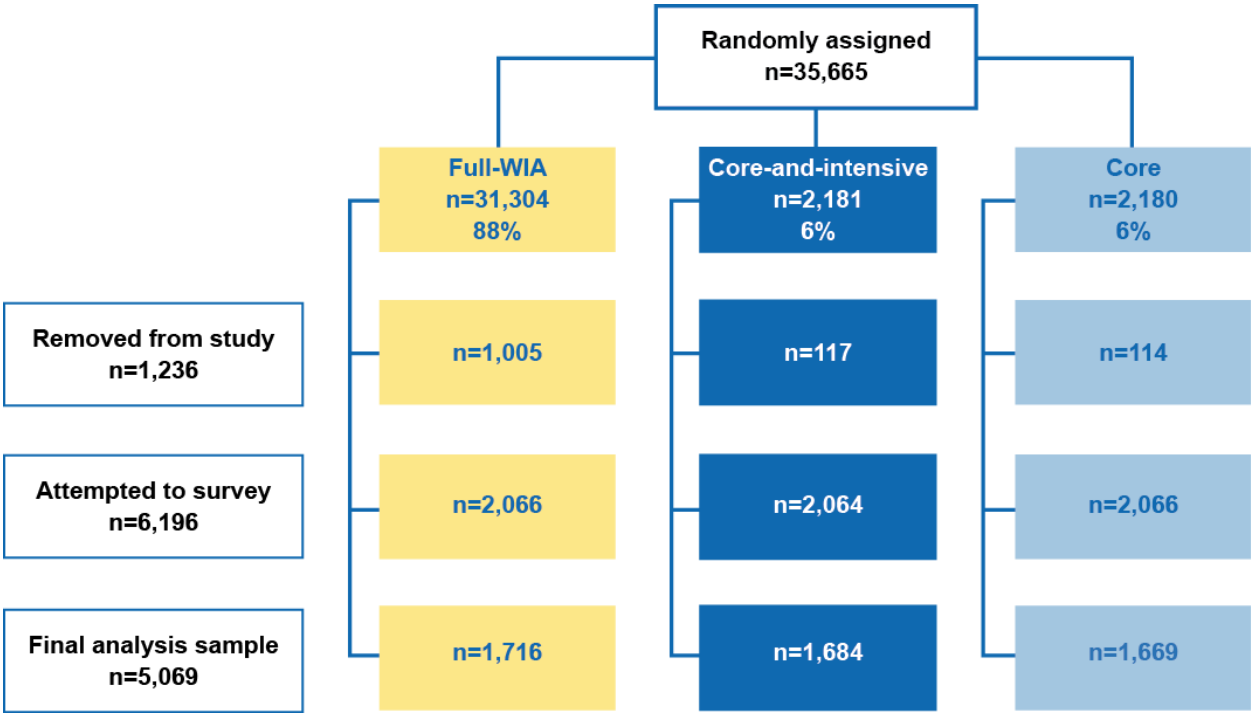
Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation's study eligibility checklists and consent forms.

Across all the study local areas, more than 35,600 customers were randomly assigned (Figures II.2 and II.3). Most of these customers were randomly assigned to the full-WIA group and could receive any core, intensive, or training services for which they were eligible, just as they would in the absence of the study. About 6 percent of customers were randomly assigned to the core-and-intensive group, and about 6 percent were randomly assigned to the core group (Figure II.3). The random assignment rates to the core-and-intensive and core groups were set low for two main reasons. First, denying services to a large proportion of the customers would likely change program operations and so we would no longer be estimating the impact of the programs as they were usually operated. Second, low rates of assignment to the core-and-intensive and core groups made the study more acceptable to the local area staff and hence increased the likelihood that they would agree to participate in the study. The rates were set

lower in larger local areas than in smaller ones to ensure that the core-and-intensive and core groups would not consist mainly of customers from the largest local areas.

Customers who left the study after random assignment. As is typical with experimental studies, we did not obtain follow-up data for all the customers who were randomly assigned (Figure II.3). Some customers left the study entirely—because they withdrew consent, found out later they were ineligible for the study (because, for example, they later qualified for TAA), or the local area did not send us their consent form and hence we could not verify they had consented to the study. Others remained in the study but did not respond to the follow-up survey. Among the 35,665 customers who were randomly assigned, 1,236 (3.5 percent) either became ineligible after random assignment (2.1 percent); withdrew their consent after random assignment (0.1 percent); or were removed from the study because we did not receive their consent form (1.2). Study attrition was low in all three groups: only 3.2 percent of full-WIA customers, 5.4 percent of core-and-intensive customers, and 5.2 percent of core customers were removed from the study (Figure II.3). We did not try to survey or collect administrative data on any of these customers.

Figure II.3. Attrition of customers from the study



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation's random assignment system database and 15-month follow-up survey.

All customers remaining in the core-and-intensive and core groups were targeted for the survey, but we attempted to survey only a random sample of those in the full-WIA group. In total, we have survey responses from 5,069 customers. Survey nonresponse differed little among the three study groups. We have survey data on the 15 months after random assignment from

83 percent of the full-WIA group, 82 percent of the core-and-intensive group, and 81 percent of the core group (Figure II.3).[3]

The characteristics of customers in the final sample were similar across all three study groups (see Mastri et al. 2015 and Appendix Table C.II.1 of the technical supplement to this report). This was not surprising given random assignment and the low rates of attrition from the study.

C. Data sources

The findings in this report are based on data from four main sources:

1. **Study registration form.** Local area staff asked customers who consented to participate in the study to complete a hard copy study registration form, which collected data on customers' demographic characteristics, employment histories, receipt of public benefits or unemployment compensation, and history of seeking services at an American Job Center. Staff members were asked to indicate on the form whether the customer was likely to enroll in WIA as an adult, a dislocated worker, or both.
2. **15-month follow-up survey.** The 15-month follow-up survey is the primary source of service receipt and outcomes data examined in this report. We conducted follow-up telephone surveys with a subset of study participants about 15 months after each was randomly assigned. All members of the core and the core-and-intensive groups, along with 2,066 randomly selected members from the full-WIA group, were targeted for the surveys (see Figure II.3). The survey asked for information about customers' service receipt, participation in training, and employment and earnings in the 15 months after random assignment.
3. **Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD).** ETA requires states to submit individual-level data for every customer who receives WIA-funded services, describing the customer's characteristics, service receipt, and outcomes. Together, these data form the WIASRD. We collected these data for two reasons. First, we used WIASRD to examine service receipt by study participants. Second, we monitored compliance with random assignment by collecting data on all customers in the local area to ensure that no customers who were eligible for the study received services before they were randomly assigned and that no randomly assigned participants received WIA-funded services that were not allowed by their study group.
4. **Financial data from local areas.** Local areas provided us data on the value of the ITAs and (in most cases) supportive services provided to study participants.

We will collect additional follow-up data from the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) and another survey. In early 2016, we will complete the administration of a 30-month follow-up survey to the customers selected for the 15-month follow-up survey. We will also collect 10

[3] The response rate for the 15-month survey was 79 percent. However, the 30-month survey asked customers who did not respond to the 15-month survey for data on training, employment, and earnings since random assignment. Hence, for these outcomes, we were able to include the data on the first 15 months after random assignment for some customers who did not respond to the 15-month survey but did respond to the 30-month survey.

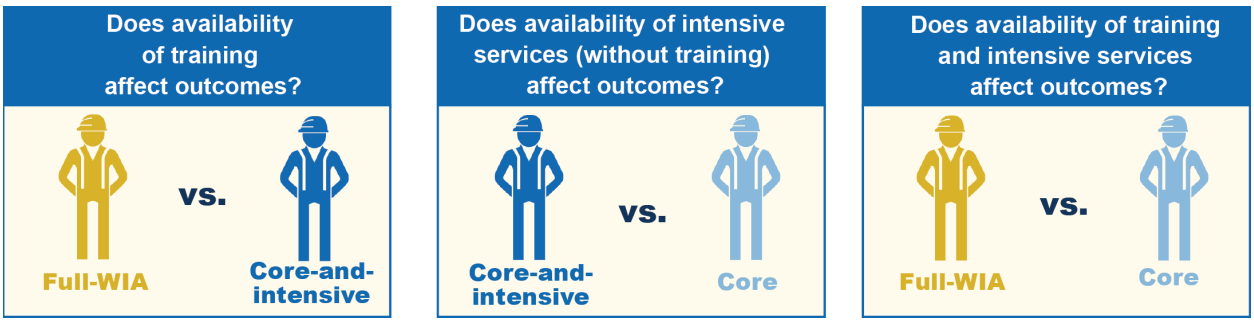
follow-up quarters of administrative data on quarterly earnings, new hires by employers, and unemployment insurance benefit receipt for all members of all three study groups from the NDNH. We will present findings from the analyses of these data in a future report.

D. Analysis approach

At its heart, our approach to estimating how program services affect customers' outcomes was simple: we compared the average outcomes across the three study groups. Because the characteristics of the customers in each of the three groups before random assignment were on average the same, we can attribute the difference in the outcomes of the customers after random assignment to the differences in the services available to customers in each group. The analysis approach can be summarized as follows (and is depicted in Figure II.4):

- **To determine the effect of the availability of training services:** we compared the average outcomes of full-WIA customers with those of core-and-intensive customers.
- **To determine the effect of the availability of intensive services:** we compared the average outcomes of the core-and-intensive customers with those of core customers.
- **To determine the effect of the availability of both training and intensive services:** we compared the average outcomes of full-WIA customers with those of core customers.

Figure II.4. Comparing outcomes between the groups



In addition to estimating program impacts for all customers in the study, we also estimated impacts separately for adults and dislocated workers (as classified by program staff at study intake). As previously discussed, program staff were asked to record before random assignment whether the customer would be enrolled in the Adult program, the Dislocated Worker program, or both. We used this designation for our analysis. When program staff recorded that customers would be enrolled under both programs, we categorized the customers as dislocated workers. We followed this practice because most customers who meet the criteria for being a dislocated worker also meet the criteria for being an adult, but the reverse is not true—many customers who meet the criteria for being an adult do not meet the criteria for being a dislocated worker. Appendix B in the technical supplement to this report discusses the sensitivity of our findings to this decision.

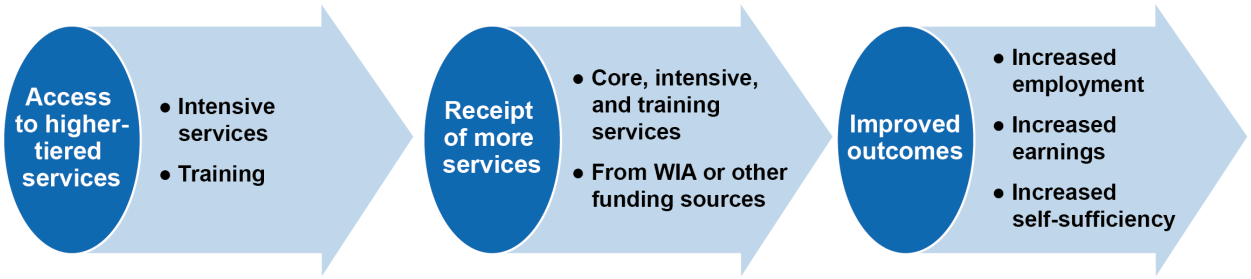
We estimated impacts for subgroups of customers that past research or our implementation study suggested may have been affected by the Adult or Dislocated Worker programs differently and for subgroups of local areas. We examined impacts for groups of customers such as those defined by age, sex, race and ethnicity, and educational and employment background. To

investigate the sensitivity of our analysis to the economic conditions during the study, we examined how impacts varied by the local unemployment rate. To examine how impacts vary by how programs were implemented, we estimated the effects of the programs for groups of local areas that—as determined through the implementation study—have similar policies or program implementation.

Estimating the difference in service receipt between study groups. In most experimental studies, the estimated effects represent the *offer of* services, and not necessarily the *receipt of* the services. Even in drug trials, some patients do not take the medications offered to them. In this study, customers were not required to participate in any services in their assigned study group. In addition, some customers in the full-WIA group were not eligible for training according to local area policies. Many local areas reported being unable to fund training of all customers who would benefit from it. As a result, as we will discuss in Chapters IV and V, some customers in the core-and-intensive group did not receive intensive services, some customers in the full-WIA group did not receive training, and some customers in the full-WIA group received neither intensive services nor training. Moreover, not all local areas offered the same set of services. For example, some local areas offered on-the-job training and others did not. Customers in any of the study groups could also access other services in the community.

An interpretation of the differences in the employment outcomes across study groups must consider customers' receipt of services. As illustrated in Figure II.5, access to services should lead to increased use of services, which in turn should lead to improved employment outcomes for those who receive them, if the services are effective. But even if the services are highly effective, we might find small differences in the employment outcomes of the study groups on average if relatively few people in the study groups received services. For instance, finding a small difference in earnings between the full-WIA group and the core-and-intensive group could indicate either that training was not effective or that it was effective but many full-WIA customers did not receive it. The policy implications of these two scenarios are different—the former suggests reducing funding for training or altering the way training is delivered whereas the latter suggests policies to increase participation in training. For these reasons, we begin our analysis by examining differences between the study groups in their service receipt and participation in training before examining impacts on employment and earnings.

Figure II.5. How access to services might improve outcomes



Estimating impacts on customers' outcomes. We estimated impacts by comparing averages of customer outcomes across the three groups. We used t-tests to determine whether those differences are statistically significant. "Statistical significance" is a measure of how confident we are that the impact was true and did not arise purely by chance. When we

calculated the average across groups, each observation was weighted. These weights ensure that the impacts we estimated were representative of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs nationwide.

Accounting for multiple statistical tests. We estimated the impact of the programs on many outcomes across myriad subgroups, and for each outcome and subgroup, we make the three comparisons illustrated in Figure II.4. Performing multiple statistical tests means that it is more likely that we will find some differences to be statistically significant simply by chance. To help guard against this, we determined prior to analyzing the data that one outcome should be our priority outcome. For this report, this one outcome is earnings in the fifth quarter after random assignment for the full sample. We chose this outcome because it is the latest measure of earnings available in the 15-month follow-up period and thus the best indication of future earnings. The estimated impacts on other outcomes and subgroups could be informative, especially if they fit within a pattern of similar impacts. However, we view these analyses as exploratory to provide policy-relevant, yet less rigorous evidence about program effects for continuous program improvement and to identify hypotheses that could be subject to more rigorous future examination.

The multiple comparisons problem also arises when focusing on one outcome only, because our analysis involves making pairwise comparisons across the three research groups. Thus, to adjust for this, we lowered the threshold for determining statistical significance of each tested difference in earnings in the fifth quarter from the 5 percent significance level to the 1.85 percent level.[4]

For additional information. In detailed technical appendices in an accompanying volume to this report, we provide additional information about the analysis approach and detailed tables of the findings. In Appendix A of that accompanying volume, we describe our analytical approach, including additional details on the study design, weights, approach to addressing missing data due to survey-item nonresponse, impact estimation approach, adjustment for multiple statistical tests, and minimum detectable impacts for key outcomes. In Appendix B, we present an analysis of the sensitivity of our results to different statistical approaches and assumptions. In the remaining appendices, we provide detailed tables of the results that include sample sizes, *p*-values, and additional tests of statistical significance for all customers as well as separate estimates for adults and dislocated workers and for other subgroups of local areas and customers.

[4] The rationale for the 1.85 percent significance level is discussed in Appendix A of the technical supplement to this report

III. CONTEXT

Documenting the context in which the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs operated and the characteristics of the customers served by the programs is important for understanding the impact study findings. The geographic and political context for the local areas, program funding, the needs of the customers, and economic conditions during the study could all influence the effectiveness of the programs. To provide this context, in this chapter we describe the local areas in the study (Section A), their labor market and funding conditions at the time of the study (Sections B and C), and the characteristics of the study participants (Section D). In Chapters VIII, IX, and X we explore the evidence on how the effectiveness of the services vary by these contextual factors and the characteristics of the customers.

Key findings

- Reflecting the national variation in local areas, local areas in the study varied considerably in their degree of urbanicity, size, funding, and number of customers served.
- The study occurred at a time of high, but declining, unemployment and declining funding for the programs.
- Many customers—especially adults—faced multiple barriers to becoming successfully employed. Few customers were employed when they entered the study and many had been without a job for a long period of time.
- Those participating in the Adult program were typically more disadvantaged and faced more barriers to employment than those participating in the Dislocated Worker program.

A. Variation in local areas in which the programs operated

By design, the 28 randomly selected local areas reflected the variation in local areas nationwide. The local areas in the study varied considerably in the size of the geographic area, number of customers served, and amount of funding provided (Table III.1). In physical size, the smallest local area in the study was Essex County in New Jersey, which did not include even a whole county because the city of Newark, which is located in Essex County, is not included in the local area. In contrast, another local area was the entire state of South Dakota. In New York City, over 200,000 customers "exited"[5] the programs in calendar year 2012, whereas fewer than 200 customers exited the programs in the South Plains (Texas) local area. The local areas that received the most funding for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in calendar year 2012 were New York City and Gulf Coast (Texas) at around $36 million and $23 million, respectively; Chautauqua County (New York) received the least funding (about $500,000) of the local areas in the study. On average, the local areas received about $6.25 million in funding.

The local areas in the study also varied considerably in the extent to which they served customers in urban areas. Consistent with U.S. population patterns, most local areas were more urban than not. In just more than one third of the local areas, over 90 percent of the population lived in urban areas (Table III.1). The percentage of the population that was urban was less than 50 percent in only three local areas.

[5] "Exited" is a program operations term that means a participant has not received a service funded by the program or a partner program for 90 consecutive calendar days and is not scheduled for future services. Performance measures are based on program exiters.

Table III.1. Features of the study local areas

Local area	Square miles	Number of counties	Percentage urban	WIA funding ($000s)	Number of exiters in calendar year 2012
Atlanta Region (Georgia)	1,840	7	93	$7,023	880
Capital Region (New York)	1,380	3	85	$1,844	15,176
Central Pennsylvania	5,354	9	60	$2,439	2,146
Central Region (Missouri)	11,784	19	50	$2,282	25,474
Chautauqua County (New York)	1,060	1	56	$507	5,192
Chicago (Illinois)	945	1	100	$15,755	7,044
East Tennessee	4,337	9	50	$2,071	432
Essex County (New Jersey)	102	<1	100	$1,827	307
First Coast (Florida)	3,929	6	87	$9,651	1,491
Fresno County (California)	5,958	1	89	$11,357	1,561
Gulf Coast (Texas)	12,189	13	92	$23,082	12,073
Indianapolis (Indiana)	396	1	99	$5,628	4,638
Louisville (Kentucky)	1,869	7	89	$3,925	466
Lower Savannah (South Carolina)	3,908	6	47	$2,334	592
Muskegon (Michigan)	1,011	2	68	$1,686	452
New Orleans (Louisiana)	169	1	99	$1,379	3,249
New York City	303	5	100	$36,329	215,123
North Central Texas	10,527	14	79	$7,818	796
Northwest Pennsylvania	4,398	6	60	$2,076	282
Sacramento (California)	964	1	98	$8,468	2,987
Santee-Lynches (South Carolina)	2,409	4	49	$1,269	322
Seattle-King County (Washington)	2,116	1	97	$7,001	1,199
South Dakota	75,811	66	57	$2,759	1,039
South Plains (Texas)	13,595	15	79	$1,348	165
Southeast Michigan	1,023	1+	95	$6,170	1,160
Southwest Corner Pennsylvania	1,868	3	68	$2,119	292
Twin Districts (Mississippi)	14,513	24	47	$5,508	13,942
Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Counties (Wisconsin)	1,213	3	84	$1,341	566
Average	**6,606**	**8.3**	**78**	**$6,250**	**11,395**
Median	**1,993**	**4.5**	**84**	**$2,599**	**1,180**

Sources: ETA provided information on the geographic configurations of local areas. Number of square miles was estimated from Census Quick Facts (http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html). Number of counties represents the number of counties encompassed by the local area; + means that the local area includes part of an additional county. In calculating the average and median, we counted a part of a county as a whole county. The percentage of the local area's population that was urban was measured for 2010 from https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/ualists_layout.html. Funding is for PY2011 except in five study local areas, where it is for PY2012: Chicago (Illinois), New Orleans (Louisiana), Northwest Pennsylvania, Santee-Lynches (South Carolina), and Seattle-King County (Washington). The PY2012 funding reported for Chicago (Illinois) reflects the funding of only the City of Chicago. In PY2011, the Chicago local area consolidated with other local areas but only Chicago participated in the evaluation. The WIASRD provided the number of customers who exited from the local Adult or Dislocated Worker program in calendar year 2012 after receiving at least one staff-assisted service.

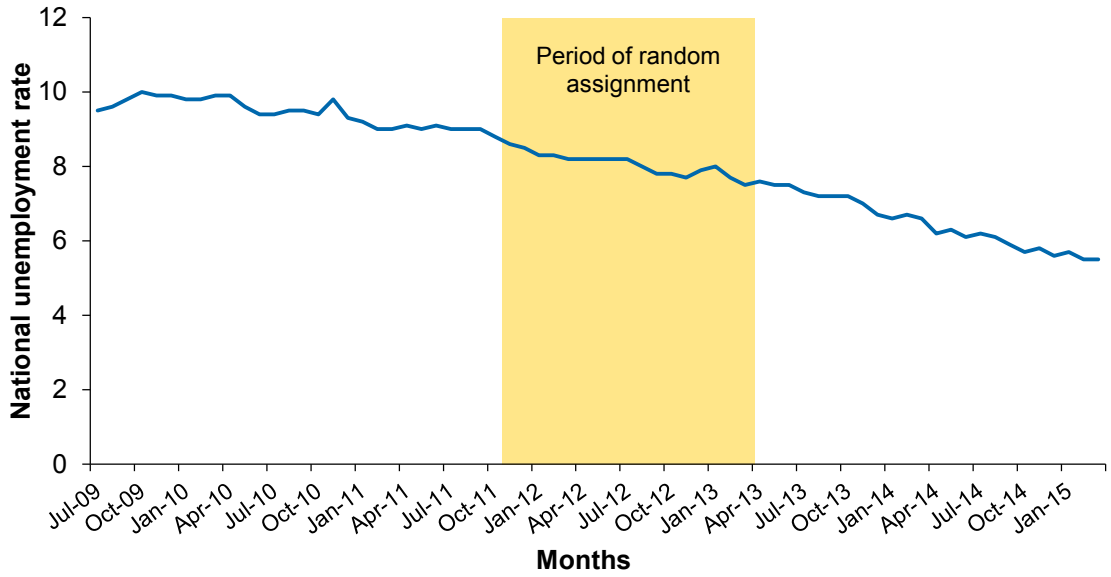
PY = program year; WIASRD = Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data.

B. Labor market conditions

The weak economy of the study period may influence the effectiveness of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The evaluation occurred as the nation was emerging from the major recession that occurred between December 2007 and June 2009 (National Bureau of Economic Research n.d.). In November 2011, when random assignment for the study began, the national unemployment rate was 8.6 percent (U.S. Department of Labor n.d.a). As intake into the study proceeded, the economy continued to recover from the recession and unemployment rates decreased gradually, but they remained high (Figure III.1). At the end of random assignment in spring 2013, the national unemployment rate was 7.6 percent, and it continued to fall thereafter to about 6 percent in early 2015.

The national unemployment rate masks substantial variation across the 28 study local areas (Figure III.2). In 2012, when most study participants were randomly assigned, the national unemployment rate was 8.1 percent. The highest unemployment rate among local areas in the study was in Fresno County (California) at 15 percent, followed by Southeast Michigan at 11 percent. South Dakota had the lowest unemployment rate in 2012, at just above 4 percent. To explore whether the weak labor market conditions at the time of the evaluation affected our estimates of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs effectiveness, we examined impacts separately for subgroups of local areas defined by whether they had high or low unemployment rates (see Chapter IX).

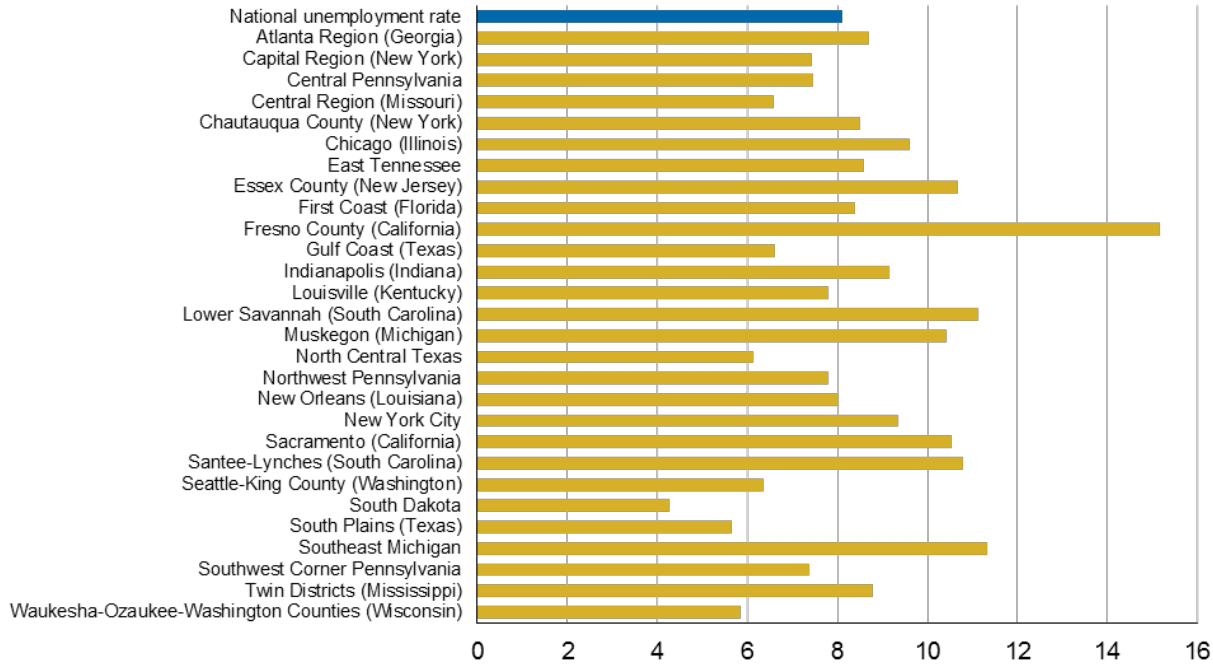
Figure III.1. National unemployment rate during the study period



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey.* Available at http://data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet?request_action=wh&graph_name=LN_cpsbref3. Accessed on January 13, 2015.

Notes: The unemployment rate is seasonally adjusted.

Figure III.2. Annual unemployment rates in the 28 study local areas in 2012



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics: Labor Force Data by County, 2012 Annual Averages. Available at [http://www.bls.gov/lau/laucnty12.txt]. Accessed on January 13, 2015.

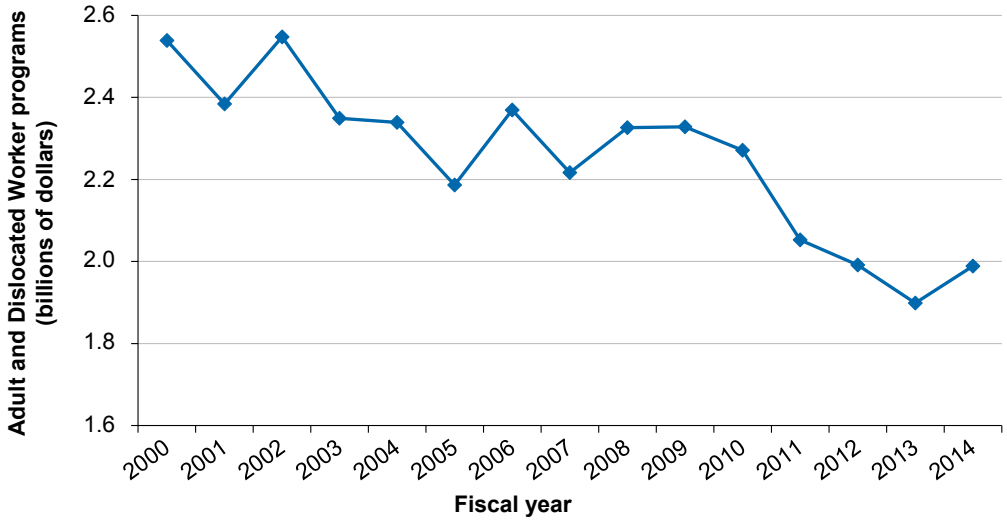
Notes: Rates calculated from annual average unemployment rates for U.S. counties.

The high national unemployment rate during the study was accompanied by a high rate of long-term unemployment, which affected both the characteristics of customers in the study and the availability of staff at the American Job Centers to provide core services to study participants. The percentage of the unemployed who had been unemployed for 27 weeks or more was above 38 percent nationally throughout the study intake period (Kosanovich and Theodossiou 2015). As discussed below, a high percentage of study participants had been unemployed for a long period. In addition, administrators in the study local areas noted that the staff in the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service were required to provide additional services to the long-term unemployed who were receiving unemployment insurance benefits. As a result, an increase in the number of the long-term unemployed meant that they had less time to provide core services (D'Amico et al. 2015). Hence, some core services may have been less available to the customers during the study than would have been the case at a time when the rate of long-term unemployment was lower.

C. Funding availability

Funding nationwide for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs has been declining since the programs were enacted. Between 2000 and 2012, combined funding for the two programs nationwide declined by 22 percent (U.S. Department of Labor 2015 n.d.b). The drop in funding was particularly pronounced after 2010 (Figure III.3). The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) added funds to the programs (not shown in Figure II.3), but this infusion had ended before the beginning of the study. Funding for the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service was also reduced over the same time period.

Figure III.3. Trend in national funding for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, 2000–2014



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, "Training and Employment Programs, Summary of Budget Authority, FY 1984 to 2012, by Year of Appropriation." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 2014. Available at http://www.doleta.gov/budget/bahist.cfm. Accessed on January 13, 2015.
U.S. Department of Labor, "FY 2015 Department of Labor Budget in Brief." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, n.d). Available at https://www.dol.gov/dol/budget/2015/PDF/FY2015BIB.pdf. Accessed on January 13, 2015.

Notes: Fiscal year refers to a federal fiscal year, which runs from October 1 to September 30, and is identified by the year it ends (fiscal year 2014 runs from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014). The data exclude special appropriations as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The reduction in funding led study local areas to cut back on the services they offered (D'Amico et al. 2015). About one-third of the study local areas had closed one or more American Job Centers between our visits in 2012 and subsequent follow-up telephone calls in late 2013 or early 2014. These closings resulted in an overall decline in the number of centers in the study local areas of nearly 12 percent. Funding cuts also led to some study local areas reducing center hours of operation and relocating centers to facilities with lower rents. According to administrators at study local areas, funding cuts also led to fewer career counselors, fewer customers participating in WIA-funded training, and reductions in supportive services (such as assistance with transportation expenses).

This study presents estimates of the effectiveness of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs during a period when funds were declining despite greater needs due to high unemployment and specifically high long-term unemployment. It might be that the programs would have been able to offer more services to customers in the study had there been more funding or the demands on the staff that resulted from high unemployment had been less.

D. Customer characteristics

The WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs serve a range of customers, many of whom have multiple barriers to employment. The diversity among intensive service customers and the barriers to employment they faced are reflected in the characteristics of customers who participated in the study (Table III.2). Because the study included only customers who had been

Table III.2. Characteristics of all customers, dislocated workers, and adults in the 15-month analysis sample

	All customers	Adults	Dislocated workers	Difference between adults and dislocated workers
Participant in Adult Program (%)	59	100	0	100
Participant in Dislocated Worker Program (%)	32	0	78	-78*
Both adult and dislocated worker program participants (%)	9	0	22	-22
Female (%)	61	62	60	2
Age at random assignment (%)				
18–20	3	5	1	4*
21–24	12	17	7	10*
25–32	19	22	14	8*
33–42	27	27	28	-1
43–50	21	15	29	-13*
51 or older	18	14	22	-8*
Race/ethnicity (%)				
Hispanic	12	13	10	4
White, non-Hispanic	38	34	42	-8
Black, non-Hispanic	44	44	44	0
Asian	4	4	3	2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or Native American	1	2	1	1
Other, or multiple races	1	2	1	1
Primary spoken language is Spanish (%)	2	3	2	0
Primary spoken language is neither English nor Spanish (%)	3	4	1	3
Highest degree (%)				
Less than high school degree	8	10	4	6*
High school or GED	70	71	67	4
Associate's or equivalent	8	7	10	-3
Bachelor's or equivalent	11	9	14	-5
Master's or higher	3	2	4	-3*
Received a vocational training certificate[a] (%)	19	18	19	-1
Have health problems that limit work or training (%)	5	6	3	2
Ever arrested[†] (%)	25	27	21	6
Ever convicted of a felony[†] (%)	10	12	6	5*
Working at random assignment (%)	2	3	1	2
Employed in past five years (%)	79	69	92	-23*
Average number of weeks since last employed[b]	64.7	72.1	55.1	17.0*
Number of weeks since last employed by duration[c] (%)				
1 to 26	17	12	23	-11*
27 to 52	21	17	25	-8*
53 to 104	26	22	33	-11*
105 to 260	12	14	10	4
261 or more	21	31	8	23*
Average hourly wage[d] ($)	13.07	11.63	14.85	-3.21*
Receipt of public assistance (%)				
TANF, SSI/SSDI, or GA	10	13	5	8*
SNAP or WIC	37	45	26	19*
Unemployment compensation	30	10	58	-47*
Other public assistance	2	2	1	1*
Visited a center previously (%)	33	33	33	0
Sample size	**5,069**	**2,971**	**2,098**	

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation study registration form and WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey (marked with a dagger [†]).

Notes: Dollars are 2012 dollars. The sample is restricted to respondents to the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey. Data are weighted to account for the probability that (1) the local area was selected to participate in the study, (2) the local area agreed to participate in the study, (3) the customer consented to the study, (4) the customer was selected for the survey, and (5) the customer completed the survey. Sample sizes for specific outcomes might vary slightly due to item nonresponse. All numbers are rounded to the nearest integer. The difference between the adults and dislocated workers for specific characteristics are tested using a t-test. The difference in distributions for categorical variables are tested using a chi-squared test. The distributions for age, education levels, and number of weeks since last employed are all statistically significant at the 5 percent level with *p*-values less than 0.001, less than 0.01, and less than 0.001 respectively. Differences in race are not statistically significant, with a *p*-value of 0.069.

[a]Respondent reported receiving a vocational or technical degree or certificate or a business degree or certificate.

[b]Respondents employed in the five years before random assignment and who reported being currently unemployed on WIA Gold Standard Evaluation study registration form.

[c]Respondents who reported having ever been employed.

[d]Respondents employed in the five years before random assignment.

*Significantly different from zero at the 5 percent level.

GA = general assistance; GED = General Educational Development certificate; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; SSDI = Social Security Disability Insurance; SSI = Supplemental Security Income; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

found eligible for intensive services, many of whom were unsuccessful in finding a job with core services alone, the customers in the study were likely more disadvantaged than those who did not move beyond the core service tier.

Customers in the study had diverse demographic characteristics. Women made up 61 percent of those in the study and men made up 39 percent. Although customers varied in age from 18 to over 80, about 18 percent of customers in the study were 51 or older when they were found eligible for intensive services and entered the study. The racial composition of customers was also quite diverse, and most customers were racial or ethnic minorities. Only a small proportion (5 percent) of customers in the study did not speak English as a primary language.

Nearly all customers in the study were not working at the time they were randomly assigned, and many faced barriers to employment:

- Seventy-eight percent of customers had no postsecondary degree.
- About one-fifth of customers had not been employed in the five years before random assignment.
- The average customer had been without a job for more than a year, and 81 percent had been without a job for 27 or more weeks, meeting the definition of long-term unemployed.
- Among those customers who were employed in the five years before they were randomly assigned, the average wage in the most recent job was about $13 per hour in 2012 dollars.
- More than a third of customers (37 percent) reported receiving SNAP or Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits at the time of random assignment, and 30 percent reported receiving unemployment compensation. Ten percent received TANF, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, or General Assistance at that time.
- About 5 percent of customers in the study reported a health problem severe enough to limit their ability to work or participate in training.

- About one quarter of all customers (25 percent) had been arrested prior to random assignment, and 10 percent had a felony conviction.

Moreover, many customers had not previously used the American Job Center. About two-thirds of the customers in the study reported that they had not visited an American Job Center previously.

Many customers met the definition of both an adult and dislocated worker (see Chapter I for these definitions), and the decision of whether to designate them to receive services from the Adult or Dislocated Worker program may depend on available funding. Just before each customer was randomly assigned into the study, we asked the intake staff to record whether the customer was considered an adult, a dislocated worker, or both. Over half (59 percent) of all customers were considered adults and 32 percent were considered dislocated workers. The remaining 9 percent of the customers were considered by intake staff as both adults and dislocated workers. Because most dislocated workers also meet the definition of an adult but many adults do not meet the definition of a dislocated worker, we counted a customer whom the intake staff considered to be both an adult and a dislocated worker as a dislocated worker in Table III.2 and the analysis presented in this report.

Compared to adults, dislocated workers were less disadvantaged (Table III.2). On average, dislocated workers were more educated than adults. Only 4 percent of dislocated workers had less than a high school degree compared with 10 percent of adults. Not surprisingly, given the definition of a dislocated worker, dislocated workers were more likely to have been employed in the five years preceding random assignment (92 percent) than adults (69 percent). Dislocated workers had been without a job for 55 weeks at random assignment compared with 72 weeks for adults. The most recent hourly wage earned by dislocated workers (among those who were employed in the five years before random assignment) was about $15 (measured in 2012 dollars); in contrast, the most recent hourly wage of adults was only about $12 (measured in 2012 dollars). Dislocated workers were also less likely than adults to have a felony conviction (6 percent compared to 12 percent). Dislocated workers were also, on average, older than adults. For instance, 22 percent of dislocated workers in the study were 51 years or older, compared with 14 percent of adults. Only 8 percent of dislocated workers were between 18 and 24, while 22 percent of adults fell into that range.

The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs may be more effective for some customers than others. In Chapter VIII, we explore whether the effectiveness of services is greater or less for some groups of customers than others. Variation in the effectiveness of services by customer group may suggest that local areas target service provision to particular groups of customers.

IV. RECEIPT OF CORE, INTENSIVE, AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

During the study, customers who were randomly assigned to different study groups were eligible to receive different sets of services. Members of the full-WIA group were offered all the services—core, intensive, training, and supportive—that they would have been offered in the absence of the study; members of the core-and-intensive group were offered core and intensive services but not WIA-funded training; and members of the core group were offered core services but not WIA-funded intensive or training services. The study did not change the criteria for who could be offered supportive services (such as assistance with transportation expenses), but because half of the local areas tied supportive services to the receipt of intensive or training services, the study did affect whether customers were offered these services. We expect that these differences in service offerings across study groups could, in turn, affect customers' employment experiences.

To understand the impacts of the availability of services on employment outcomes, we examined differences across study groups in their receipt of core, intensive, supportive, and training services. No customer in the study was required to receive any service. In addition, all customers could seek services that were similar to those provided by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, but offered elsewhere in the community. Hence, the difference across study groups in the receipt of services is not the same as the difference in the availability of the services across study group.

In this chapter, we focus on differences across study groups in the receipt of core, intensive, and supportive services. It begins with a summary of the services available to and received by members of each group (Section A). It then examines the differences across study groups in the use of the resource room (Section B), workshops attended (Section C), job clubs attended (Section D), assessments taken (Section E), one-on-one staff assistance received (Section F), and supportive services received (Section G). In Section H, we discuss the findings separately for adults and dislocated workers. In the next chapter, Chapter V, we discuss customers' receipt of training services.

Key findings

- We found that the availability of WIA-funded services led to the receipt of more employment services. When WIA-funded services were not available because of the study, many study participants accessed other employment services that were available in the community but not WIA-funded. However, the use of these other services did not fully compensate for the reductions in the use of WIA-funded services.
  - Customers in the full-WIA group received more core and supportive services than core-and-intensive group customers, who in turn received more core and intensive services than core group customers.
  - Customers in the core-and-intensive group received more intensive services—one-on-one assistance and assessments—than customers in the core group.

A. Summary of differences across study groups in receipt of core, intensive, and supportive services

Although most local areas in the study offered a similar set of services—use of a resource room, workshops, assessments, and one-on-one assistance—the exact set of services offered to members of each study group varied by local area (Table IV.1). For example, some local areas offered WIA-funded supportive services and job clubs, whereas others did not, and one local

Table IV.1. Core, intensive, and supportive services (for which we have survey data on customer service receipt)

Description	Availability by study group and local area[a]
Resource rooms. Rooms with computers that provide information about jobs and services and online tools	All local areas offered access to all study groups.
Workshops. Sessions for groups of customers on topics such as job search, use of computers and online tools, self-assessment and goal setting, financial management, conflict resolution, and job retention skills	26 of 28 local areas offered workshops as a core service, available to all study groups. 15 of 26 local areas offering workshops as a core service also offered some workshops as an intensive service, available to the core-and-intensive and full-WIA groups. One local area offered no workshops as a core service and some workshops as an intensive service available to the core-and-intensive and full-WIA groups. One local area did not offer any workshops.
Job clubs. Groups of job seekers who meet to provide support and discuss job search strategies	10 local areas offered a job club as a core service, available to all study groups. 2 local areas offered job clubs as an intensive service, available only to members of the full-WIA and core-and-intensive group. 16 local areas did not offer job clubs.
Assessments. Formal assessment of basic skills, occupational aptitudes, and career interests	Most local areas offered some online self-assessments as a core service, available to all study groups. All local areas offered some assessments as an intensive service, available only to members of the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups. 8 local areas also offered basic skills assessments as a core service, available to all customers in the resource room. In all local areas, discussion of assessment results was an intensive service, available only to members of the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups.
One-on-one staff assistance. A meeting or meetings with an employment counselor, in person or by phone, to discuss employment-related issues	All local areas offered job search assistance, career and training planning, and case management as an intensive service, available only to members of the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups. Some limited one-on-one assistance (such as from staff in the resource room) may have been provided to members of all groups at all local areas.
Supportive services. In-kind and financial assistance to help customers succeed in their job search and training activities and to address barriers to employment	10 local areas offered supportive services only to customers receiving intensive or training services (full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups). 4 local areas offered these services only to customers receiving training services (full-WIA). 9 local areas offered some supportive services to customers irrespective of the other services they received. 5 local areas did not offer supportive services.

Source: D'Amico et al. (2015).

[a]As of the study team's first visit to the local area, typically in 2012.

area did not offer any core or intensive workshops. Whether the service received by the customer was an intensive or core service sometimes also varied slightly by local area. A service classified by some local areas as an intensive service could be classified by other local areas as a core service. For example, eight local areas offered basic skills assessments, such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), in the resource room as a core service, whereas the others offered it

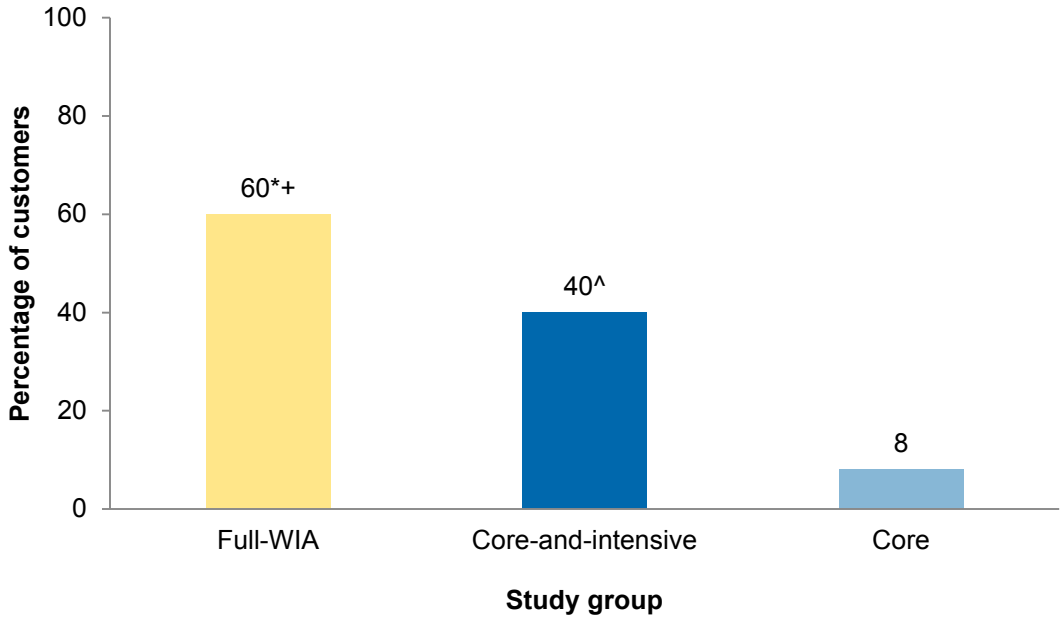
only as an intensive service. However, every local area in the study offered customers in the core-and-intensive group more services than they did customers in the core group.

We examined the services customers in the study received in the period starting from the time they were randomly assigned, which occurred after a customer was found eligible for intensive services, and ending about 15 months later. Before random assignment, customers would have received at least one core service from an American Job Center. In fact, many local areas required customers to look for a job in the American Job Center's resource room before they could pursue intensive services.

1. Service receipt as reported in the WIASRD

Even though customers in the full-WIA and the core-and-intensive groups were eligible to receive WIA-funded intensive services, full-WIA customers were much more likely to receive them. According to data reported in the WIASRD, about 60 percent of full-WIA customers received intensive services. In contrast, only 40 percent of the core-and-intensive group received a WIA-funded intensive service during the 15 months following random assignment (Figure IV.1). This is likely to be an underestimate of the intensive services that study participants in either group actually received, since staff at several local areas reported that they did not always enter data on the receipt of intensive services into the WIASRD.

Figure IV.1. Receipt of intensive services, as reported in the WIASRD, by study group (all customers)



Source: WIA Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) covering service receipt over about 15 months after random assignment.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

About 8 percent of core customers received WIA-funded intensive services, even though they were not supposed to be offered intensive services during the study period. This could have occurred for one or more of the following three reasons: (1) the customer may have received services that were viewed as core services for the study but that the local area recorded as intensive services; (2) a staff member may have entered data into the WIASRD incorrectly; or (3) staff members may have erroneously offered intensive services to customers in the core group. Mastri et al. (2015) provides evidence that many of the cases in which core group customers were recorded in WIASRD as having received intensive services were due to one of the first two reasons.

2. Service receipt as reported during the survey

The study's 15-month follow-up survey provided a richer description of the receipt of intensive services. The survey asked customers about their use of six types of services—a resource room, workshops, job clubs, assessments, one-on-one staff assistance, and supportive services (Table IV.1)—as well as participation in training. It asked about the receipt of these services in the 15 months after random assignment at an American Job Center and also asked about the receipt of services from elsewhere in the community.

In general, random assignment to a group with access to higher tiers of WIA-funded services increased customers' receipt of core, intensive, and supportive services, either at an American Job Center or elsewhere (as summarized in Table IV.2). Customers in both the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups were more likely than core customers to receive five of the six services, either from an American Job Center or elsewhere. Customers in the full-WIA group were in turn more likely than core-and-intensive customers to receive three of the six services, either at an American Job Center or elsewhere.

Table IV.2. Summary of differences in receipt of core, intensive, and supportive services

Service received or accessed during the 15 months after random assignment at an American Job Center or elsewhere	Comparisons between study groups		
	Full-WIA versus core-and-intensive	Core-and-intensive versus core	Full-WIA versus core
Resource room	+	+	+
Workshops	0	+	+
Job clubs	0	0	0
Assessments	+	+	+
One-on-one assistance	0	+	+
Supportive services	+	+	+

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The size of the differences between groups are presented in figures and tables below. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

0 indicates no statistically significant difference at the 5 percent level.

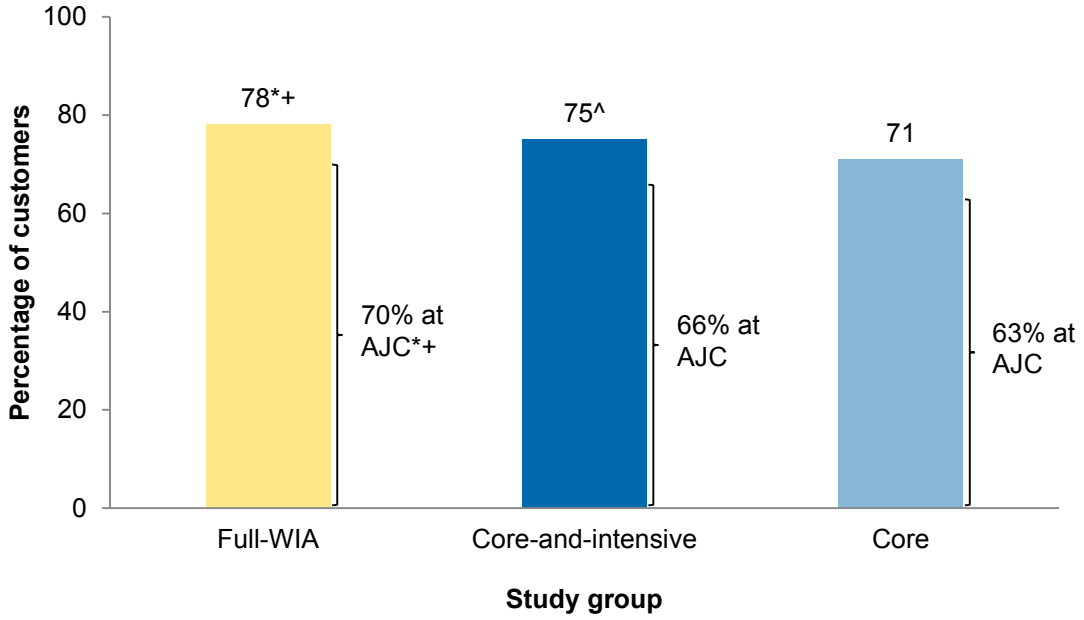
+ indicates a statistically significant positive difference at the 5 percent level.

B. Use of resource rooms

The resource rooms located in American Job Centers provided individual computer work stations with Internet access, which customers could use to access job matching systems, labor market information, and career exploration tools. Most also contained printers, copiers, and fax machines for customer use. Resource room use was considered a core service in all local areas in the study, and therefore all customers in the study could access these rooms, regardless of study group assignment. Many customers had likely already accessed a resource room prior to random assignment. Some of the services typically provided in an American Job Center resource room were also provided in alternative locations. For example, some public libraries provided Internet access and some community-based organizations had lists of available job openings. In this discussion, we refer to these services accessed at places other than American Job Centers as "resource rooms," even though the customers may not have had access to the same array of services as in a typical American Job Center resource room.

Even though customers in all three study groups had the same access to resource rooms, their use was greatest in the full-WIA group and least in the core group. In the 15-month follow-up period, 78 percent of customers in the full-WIA group used a resource room, either at an American Job Center or elsewhere, compared to 75 percent of the core-and-intensive group and 71 percent of the core group (Figure IV.2).

Figure IV.2. Used a resource room at an American Job Center or elsewhere (all customers)



Sources: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey and WIA Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) covering service receipt over about 15 months after random assignment.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

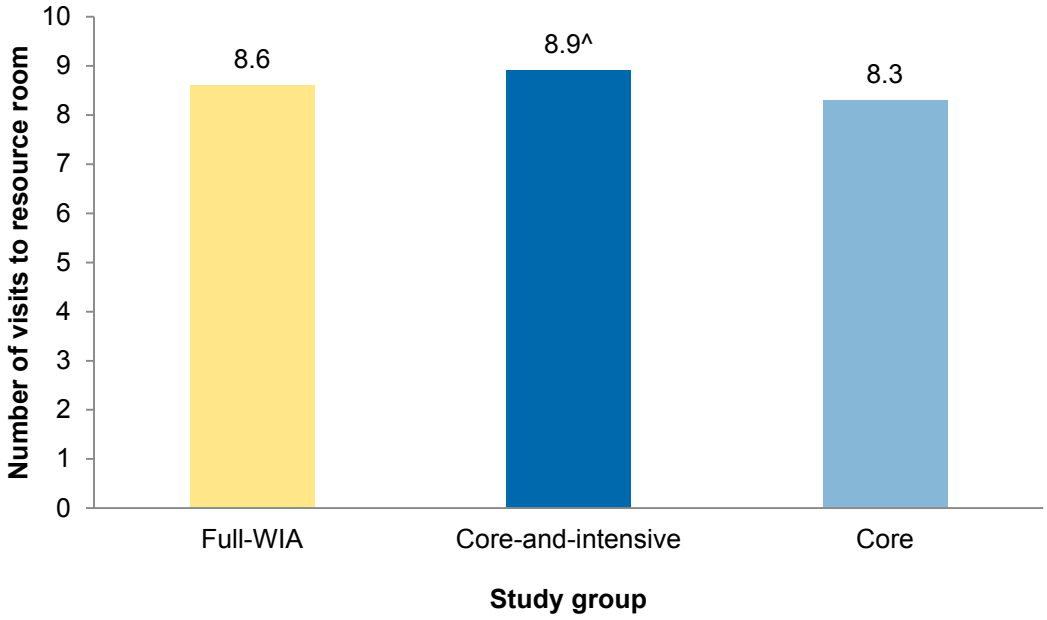
AJC = American Job Center.

The difference in total resource room use across study groups is partially explained by customers' use of resource rooms at American Job Centers. The full-WIA group was more likely than the core-and-intensive and the core group to use a resource room at an American Job Center (Figure IV.2). Seventy percent of customers in the full-WIA group used a resource room at an American Job Center, whereas 66 percent of customers in the core-and-intensive, and 63 percent of customers in the core group did so. Many customers reported using a resource room at an American Job Center as well as resource-room services elsewhere.

Core-and-intensive customers were more likely than full-WIA and core customers to use resource rooms at alternative locations. Among full-WIA customers, 34 percent used a resource room at an alternative location, compared to 41 percent of core-and-intensive customers and 37 percent of core customers (Appendix C, Table C.IV.1a).

Among customers who accessed a resource room at any location after random assignment, those in the core-and-intensive group used a resource room more than customers in the core group. Core-and-intensive customers used a resource room 8.9 times on average, whereas core customers used a resource room 8.3 times on average (Figure IV.3). The differences between the full-WIA group and the other two study groups were not significant.

Figure IV.3. Number of times used any resource room (among customers who used a resource room)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group used a resource room.

The difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

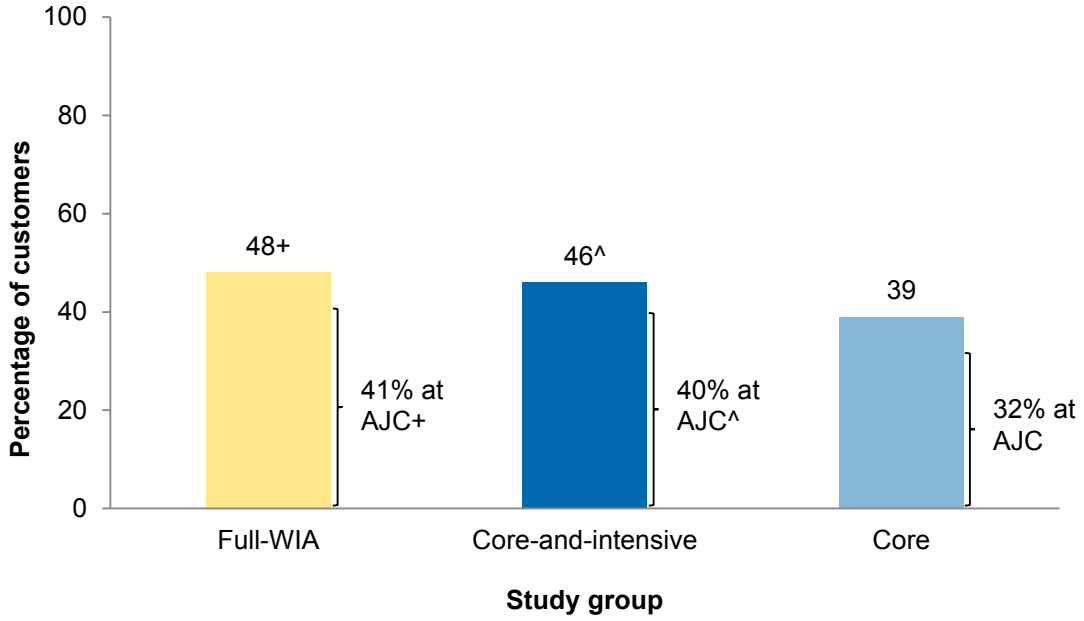
The difference between the full-WIA and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

C. Workshops attended

Workshops offered at American Job Centers provided instruction on job search and employment-related skills, such as how to apply for a job, develop a résumé, manage stress, and maintain employment. Depending on the local area, workshops could be categorized as either core or intensive services. The content and even duration of workshops that were categorized as core and intensive were fairly similar (D'Amico et al. 2015). Fifteen local areas provided both core and intensive workshops, 11 provided only core workshops, and 1 provided only intensive workshops.

In the 15-month period after random assignment, members of the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups were about equally likely to attend a workshop at any location, but both of these groups were more likely than core group members to attend workshops. Approximately 48 percent of full-WIA and 46 percent of core-and-intensive customers attended at least one workshop, whereas 39 percent of the core group attended at least one workshop (Figure IV.4). This pattern of workshop attendance was partially driven by full-WIA customers being more likely than core customers to attend workshops at an American Job Center. About 41 percent of full-WIA customers and 40 percent of core-and-intensive customers attended a workshop at an American Job Center, compared to 32 percent of customers in the core group (Figure IV.4).

Figure IV.4. Attended a workshop at an American Job Center or elsewhere (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

Neither of the differences (either attended a workshop at an AJC or attended a workshop anywhere) between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

AJC = American Job Center.

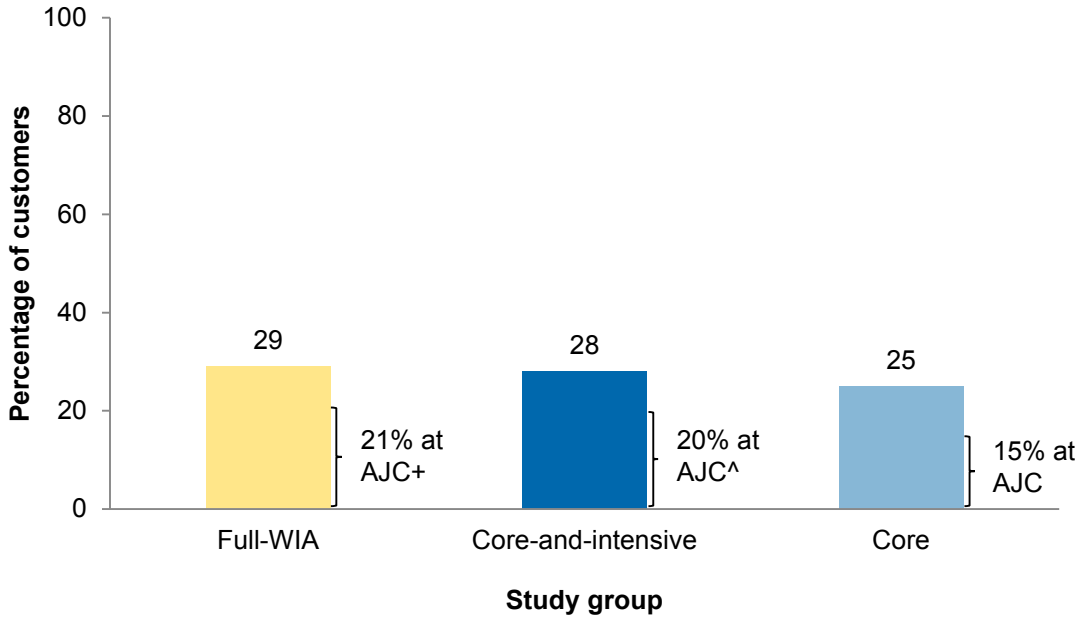
Rates of attending workshops elsewhere were similar across groups, ranging from 13 to 16 percent (Appendix C, Table C.IV.3a).

Customers who attended at least one workshop after random assignment attended about three workshops, on average (Appendix C, Table C.IV.2b); this did not differ significantly across study groups. Among just those customers who attended a workshop, customers in the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups were more likely than customers in the core group to attend workshops on appropriate job behavior, and full-WIA customers were more likely than core or core-and-intensive customers to attend a workshop on managing finances or preparing for assessments (Appendix C, Table C.IV.3b).

D. Job clubs attended

Job clubs provide an opportunity for customers to meet with other job seekers to discuss job leads and job search strategies. They are sometimes facilitated by an employment counselor. Ten local areas considered job clubs a core service, though two offered them as intensive services, and other local areas did not offer a job club (D'Amico et al. 2015).

Figure IV.5. Participated in a job club at an American Job Center or elsewhere (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

Neither of the differences (either participated in a job club at an AJC or participated in a job club anywhere) between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

AJC = American Job Center.

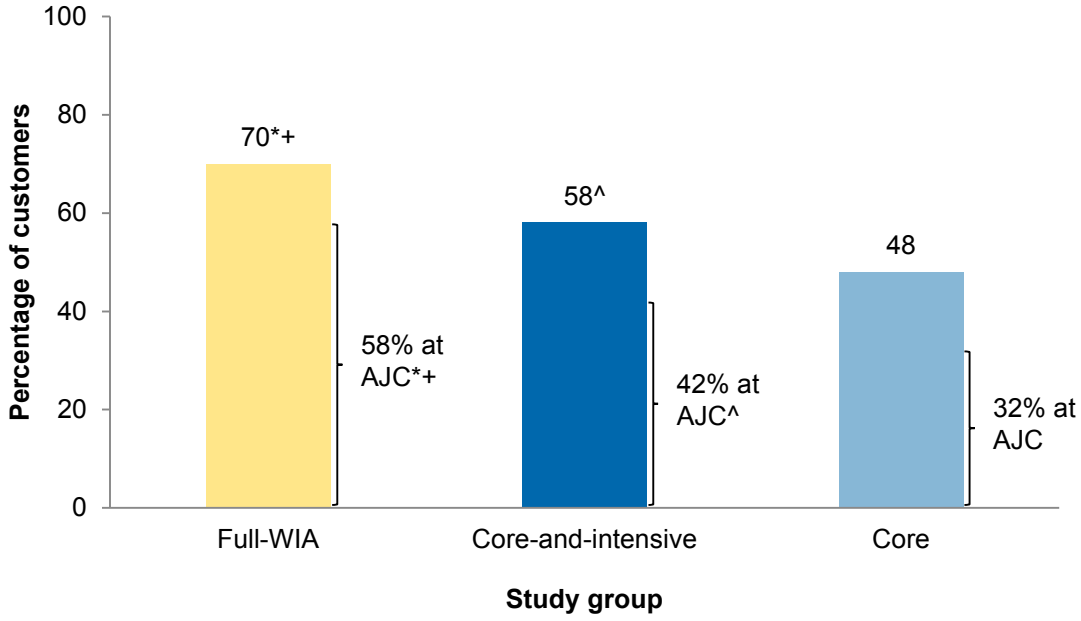
Survey results showed no differences in study groups' participation in any job club, either at an American Job Center or elsewhere, during the 15-month follow-up period. However, full-WIA and core-and-intensive customers were more likely than core customers to report participating in a job club at an American Job Center (Figure IV.5). Among all customers who participated in a job club, customers on average attended a job club session 3.3 to 3.8 times (Appendix C, Table C.IV.5b).

E. Assessments taken

Local areas offered formal assessments of skills, abilities, and aptitudes. The most frequently offered tests were the TABE and WorkKeys; others included Prove It!, Aztec, and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (D'Amico et al. 2015). Eight local areas provided access to online basic skills assessments to all customers as a core service, but in the other local areas these assessments were considered an intensive service.

Full-WIA customers were more likely than core-and-intensive and core customers to take an assessment at any location, and core-and-intensive customers were more likely than core customers to take an assessment at any location (Figure IV.6). Among the full-WIA group,

Figure IV.6. Took an assessment at an American Job Center or elsewhere (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

AJC = American Job Center.

70 percent of customers took an assessment at an American Job Center or elsewhere, compared to 58 percent of core-and-intensive customers and 48 percent of core customers.

These differences across study groups are explained by differences in the percentage of customers who took an assessment at an American Job Center. Full-WIA customers were more likely than core-and-intensive and core customers to take an assessment at an American Job Center, and core-and-intensive customers were more likely than core customers to take an assessment at a center. Fifty-eight percent of full-WIA customers reported taking an assessment at an American Job Center, whereas 42 percent of core-and-intensive customers and 32 percent of core customers reported doing so (Figure IV.6). Customers in each group were about equally likely to take an assessment at an alternative location (Appendix C, Table C.IV.4a).

Among customers who took an assessment, full-WIA customers were more likely to report taking a basic skills assessment, such as the TABE or WorkKeys, than core-and-intensive customers, who in turn were more likely to report taking a basic skills assessment than core customers. These differences are likely due to the fact that many local areas encouraged intensive service customers to take basic skills assessments and that entry into training programs and eligibility for training funding often required a minimum score on such an assessment.

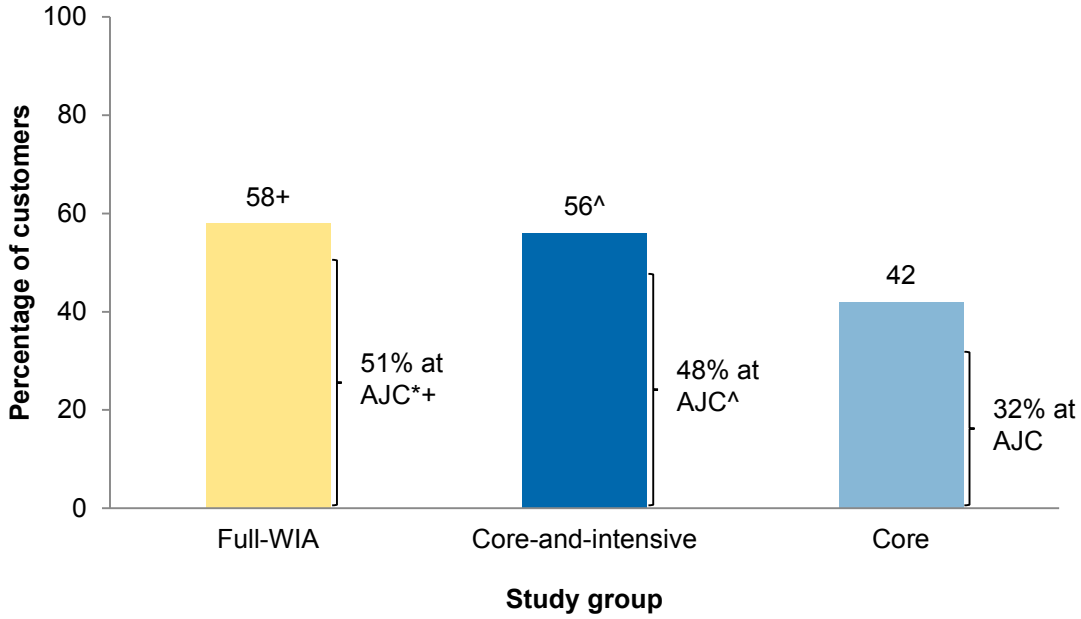
F. Receipt of one-on-one staff assistance

The heart of WIA intensive services was one-on-one assistance from employment counselors. Counselors would meet with customers to review the results of assessments, assist with customers' job search, develop a career and service plan for the customer, and provide referrals for additional services available at the center and elsewhere in the community. For those full-WIA customers who were interested in training, counselors determined whether they were eligible for training, reviewed training options, and worked with customers to select an eligible training provider. Counselors could help core-and-intensive customers select a training program and find funding for training elsewhere, but could not offer WIA funding for training. Counselors provided assistance in person and via telephone.

Some one-on-one assistance could also be provided as a core service. For example, customers could receive some light-touch one-on-one assistance from staff in the resource room on, for example, résumé development or how to use the labor exchange. Eight local areas conducted a triage assessment for all new customers before random assignment (D'Amico et al. 2015). Hence, core group members could receive some light-touch one-on-one assistance at the American Job Center, but were not offered more substantive meetings with a counselor to develop plans for careers or service receipt.

Full-WIA customers and core-and-intensive customers were more likely than core customers to receive one-on-one assistance at an American Job Center or elsewhere (Figure IV.7). The percentage of customers who received this one-on-one staff assistance did not differ significantly between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive group. Fifty-eight percent of full-WIA customers received one-on-one assistance, compared to 56 percent of the core-and-intensive customers and 42 percent of core customers.

Figure IV.7. Receipt of one-on-one staff assistance at an American Job Center or elsewhere (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.
Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.
* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.
^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.
+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.
AJC = American Job Center.

Differences across study groups in the receipt of any one-on-one assistance were largely driven by differences in the receipt of one-on-one assistance at American Job Centers (Figure IV.7). Full-WIA and core-and-intensive customers were more likely than core customers to receive one-on-one assistance from staff at an American Job Center. Differences across study groups in the receipt of one-on-one assistance from sources other than the American Job Center were not significant, with 12 to 14 percent of each group receiving such assistance.

Survey data suggest that full-WIA and core-and-intensive customers spent about half an hour more, on average, receiving one-on-one staff assistance from any source than core customers did (Table IV.3). On average, across all customers in the study group—counting those who did not receive staff assistance as receiving zero minutes—full-WIA customers reported receiving 35.3 minutes more one-on-one staff assistance than core customers, and core-and-intensive customers reported receiving 27.7 minutes more one-on-one staff assistance than core customers. Taking the average across only those customers who received any one-on-one assistance, full-WIA customers received about two and a half hours of assistance; in contrast, core customers received about two hours of assistance.

Table IV.3. Length of time spent receiving one-on-one staff assistance from the American Job Center or elsewhere

	Mean by study group		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Total time spent receiving one-on-one assistance (minutes)	79.9+	72.3^	44.7
Total time spent receiving one-on-one assistance among customers who received any one-on-one assistance (minutes)	150.0+	138.5	121.3

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. For the total time spent receiving one-one-one assistance among customers who received any one-on-one assistance, differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group received any one-on-one assistance.

Neither difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Among customers who received any one-on-one staff assistance, full-WIA and core-and-intensive customers participated in about one more session than core customers (Appendix C, Table C.IV.6b). Full-WIA and core-and-intensive customers who received one-on-one assistance received that assistance over an average of about six sessions; core customers who received one-on-one assistance did so over about five sessions.

Customers in all three study groups reported receiving more in-person sessions than phone sessions and reported that in-person sessions lasted longer on average than phone sessions (Appendix C, Table C.IV.6b). Among the full-WIA group, those who received one-on-one assistance reported receiving about four in-person sessions and two phone sessions. The average reported length of an in-person session for this group was 29.3 minutes; the average reported length of a telephone session was 11.4 minutes.

G. Receipt of supportive services

Supportive services consisted of in-kind and financial assistance to help customers succeed in their job search and training activities and to address barriers to employment (D'Amico et al. 2015). Funds could be used for ancillary training expenses, such as books, tools, and other supplies; transportation to training or job interviews; child care while in training or searching for a job; emergency services such as medical expenses or mortgage payments; and needs-related payments. Some local areas funded ancillary training expenses through an ITA, others counted them as supportive services.

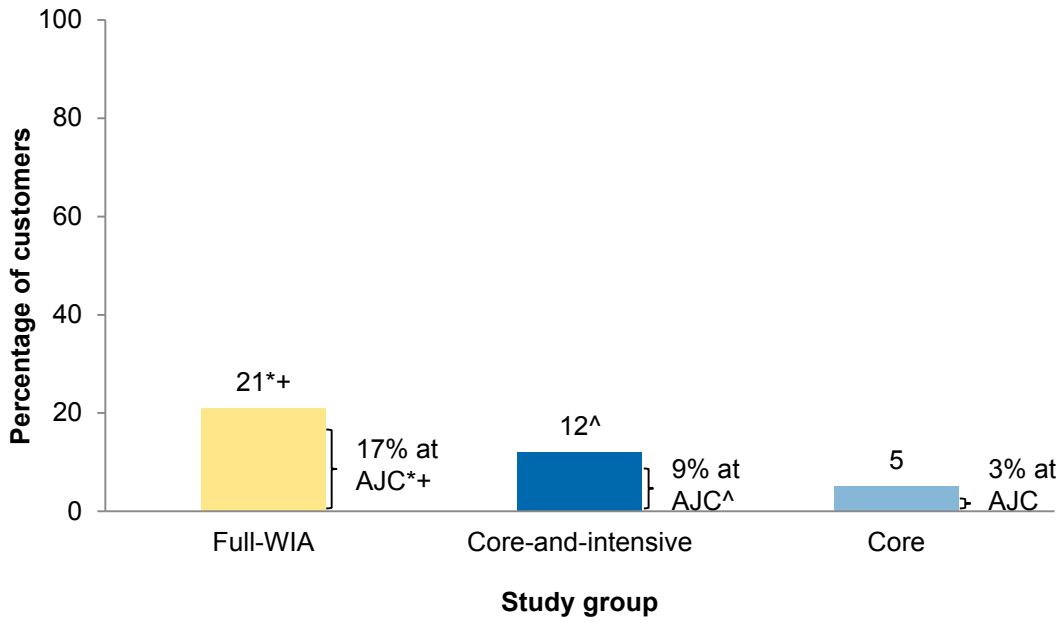
Local areas varied in their eligibility rules for supportive services and how much assistance they provided. Ten local areas provided supportive services only to customers receiving training or intensive services, and four provided supportive services only to customers receiving training. Nine local areas provided assistance to customers even if they did not receive intensive or training services, although this assistance was typically not more than a few hundreds of dollars. In all local areas, staff would refer customers to other community providers of supportive

services. Five local areas relied solely on these referrals and did not offer any WIA-funded supportive services (D'Amico et al. 2015).

Reflecting the fact that supportive services were often tied to training, full-WIA customers were more likely than the core-and-intensive customers to receive supportive services, who in turn were more likely to receive them than core customers (Figure IV.8). About 21 percent of customers in the full-WIA group received supportive services from either the American Job Center or elsewhere, whereas 12 percent of core-and-intensive and 5 percent of core customers did so.

These differences were driven by full-WIA customers being more likely to receive supportive services from an American Job Center than core-and-intensive customers, who were in turn more likely to receive supportive services from an American Job Center than were core customers. Some of the supportive services that customers reported as receiving from an American Job Center may have been funded by center partners and not by WIA. There were no differences in supportive service receipt from sources other than an American Job Center (Appendix C, Table C.IV.7a).

Figure IV.8. Receipt of supportive services from an American Job Center or elsewhere (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

AJC = American Job Center.

The most common intended use of supportive services received from any source among each group, as reported on the survey, was transportation, followed by clothes and uniforms and books (Appendix C, Table C.IV.7a). Among the full-WIA group, 15 percent reported receiving supportive services intended to help with transportation, 8 percent reported receiving funds to assist with clothing or uniforms, 8 percent reported receiving funds to help purchase books, and 7 percent reported receiving funds to help purchase tools or supplies. The use of funds by the core-and-intensive and core groups showed similar patterns, although fewer customers received each type of assistance. Full-WIA customers who received supportive services from an American Job Center received $1,004 on average, and core-and-intensive customers received similar amounts on average, according to financial data received from the local areas (Table IV.4); we do not have corresponding financial data for other sources of supportive services. Core customers who received supportive services received $691 on average, but this was a very small group.

Table IV.4. Amount of supportive services received from an American Job Center (among customers receiving supportive services from American Job Centers)

	Mean by study group		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Amount of supportive services received from the American Job Center among those who received it ($)	1,004	942	691

Source: Financial data supplied by local areas.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group received supportive services from an American Job Center.

No differences between study groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

H. Differences in service receipt by dislocated workers and adults

All local areas offered services tied to a customer's needs, irrespective of whether he or she was categorized as an adult or a dislocated worker, but the needs of adults and dislocated workers were often different. As discussed in Chapter III, on average, adults were more disadvantaged, were less educated, were younger, and had less work experience than dislocated workers. Given the differences between these two groups, one might expect to see differences in service receipt between them.

In general, the same patterns emerged for adults and dislocated workers across the three study groups as for the full sample (Table IV.5). Adults in the full-WIA group received more services than adults in the core-and-intensive group, who in turn received more services than adults in the core group. The same patterns hold for dislocated workers.

Although the general patterns across study groups were similar, one notable difference emerged between adults and dislocated workers' receipt of supportive services (Table IV.5, Figure IV.9). For both types of customers, the full-WIA group was more likely to receive supportive services from any source than was the core group, but the difference was significantly larger for adults (18 percent) than for dislocated workers (12 percent).

Table IV.5. Summary of differences in receipt of core, intensive, and supportive services, for adults and dislocated workers

Service received or accessed during the 15 months after random assignment	Customer type	Full-WIA versus core-and-intensive	Core-and-intensive versus core	Full-WIA versus core
Resource room	Adults	0	0	+
	Dislocated workers	0	0	+
Workshops	Adults	0	+	0
	Dislocated workers	0	0	+
Job clubs	Adults	0	0	+
	Dislocated workers	0	0	0
Assessments	Adults	+	+	+
	Dislocated workers	+	+	+
One-on-one assistance	Adults	+	+	+
	Dislocated workers	0	+	+
Supportive services	Adults	+	+	+§
	Dislocated workers	+	+	+§

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

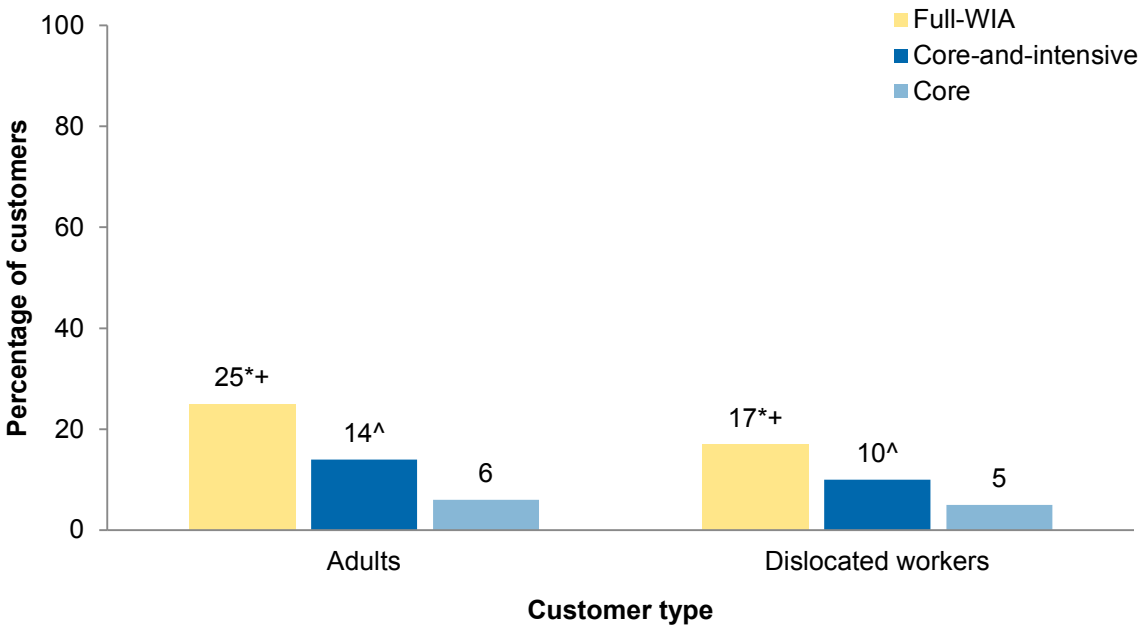
Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

0 indicates that the difference between the study groups is not statistically significant.

+ indicates a statistically significant positive difference between study groups in the receipt of a service at an American Job Center or elsewhere.

§ symbol indicates that the differences for adults and dislocated workers are significantly different from each other at the 5 percent level.

Figure IV.9. Receipt of any supportive services, for adults and dislocated workers (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

The difference between adults and dislocated workers in the differences for the full-WIA and core groups is statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Other differences in impacts for adults and dislocated workers are not statistically significant.

V. RECEIPT OF TRAINING SERVICES

Training services were the last of the three tiers of services offered by the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Training was offered only to customers who met local area-specific eligibility requirements, had received services from both the core and intensive services tiers, and were unable to find a job that led to self-sufficiency. Local areas offered occupational skills training, upgrading, or retraining and could offer adult basic education if combined with other training services. A few local areas also offered entrepreneurial training.

To maximize customer choices, WIA required most training services to be funded through ITAs, vouchers that customers could use to procure training from a variety of approved providers. Some study local areas allowed customers to participate in a range of training programs using an ITA, whereas others narrowed customers' training options to those geared toward particularly high-growth occupations. Most local areas also offered on-the-job training, in which a portion of customers' wages were subsidized as they learned skills while working; on-the-job training was not funded through ITAs. In addition, training could be customized for current or prospective employees at a specific business.

During the study, program staff were permitted to offer training services funded by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs to customers randomly assigned to the full-WIA group, subject to any usual local area policies, but not to customers in the core and core-and-intensive groups. Hence, they offered training to full-WIA customers who were interested in training, met the local area criteria for training eligibility, and completed a set of required activities before their training plan was approved, just as they would have in the absence of the study. Program staff were not permitted to offer WIA-funded training to members of the core-and-intensive and core groups.

Key findings

- The availability of WIA-funded training significantly increased the proportion of customers who enrolled in a training program during the 15 months after random assignment by 13 to 16 percentage points. It increased the average number of hours in training by 93 to 113 hours.
- Slightly less than one-third of full-WIA customers enrolled in WIA-funded training and less than one-half of full-WIA customers enrolled in training funded by any source. On average, full-WIA group members who enrolled in training spent about 660 hours in training over about 28 weeks.
- When WIA funds for training were not available because of the study, just less than one-third of customers enrolled in training, which they paid for themselves or by using funds from sources other than WIA.
- About 17 percent of full-WIA customers were still enrolled in training during the fifth quarter after random assignment, suggesting that the 15-month follow-up period is too short to estimate the full impact of training.
- Trainees in the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups were significantly more likely to choose a vocationally oriented training program and significantly less likely to choose an educational program than trainees in the core group.
- Trainees in the full-WIA group were more likely than trainees in the core group to complete a training program and more likely to earn a credential.

Customers in all three study groups could access training funded by other sources, including Federal Pell Grants, other government grants or programs, or the customers' own funds. In fact, WIA required that customers use other publicly available funds before WIA funds were used for training. During the study, employment counselors also could offer one-on-one guidance to customers in the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups on how to apply for other sources of funds to finance training.

In this chapter, we discuss differences across the three study groups in the receipt of training and the characteristics of training received. In this study, *training programs* are any courses designed to teach a customer occupational or basic skills to help the customer succeed in the labor market. This definition includes vocational training, which teaches a customer skills for a specific job or prepares him or her for an occupation, and educational programs, which include any adult basic education or literacy activities, GED preparation, English as a second language programs, and postsecondary general education courses. We begin by discussing how enrollment in training varied across study groups (Section A), then delve deeper into the characteristics of training programs chosen by study participants (Section B). Next, we analyze the rates at which customers completed training programs and received credentials (Section C) and how customers paid for training (Section D). We conclude with a discussion of differences in training outcomes for adults and dislocated workers (Section E).

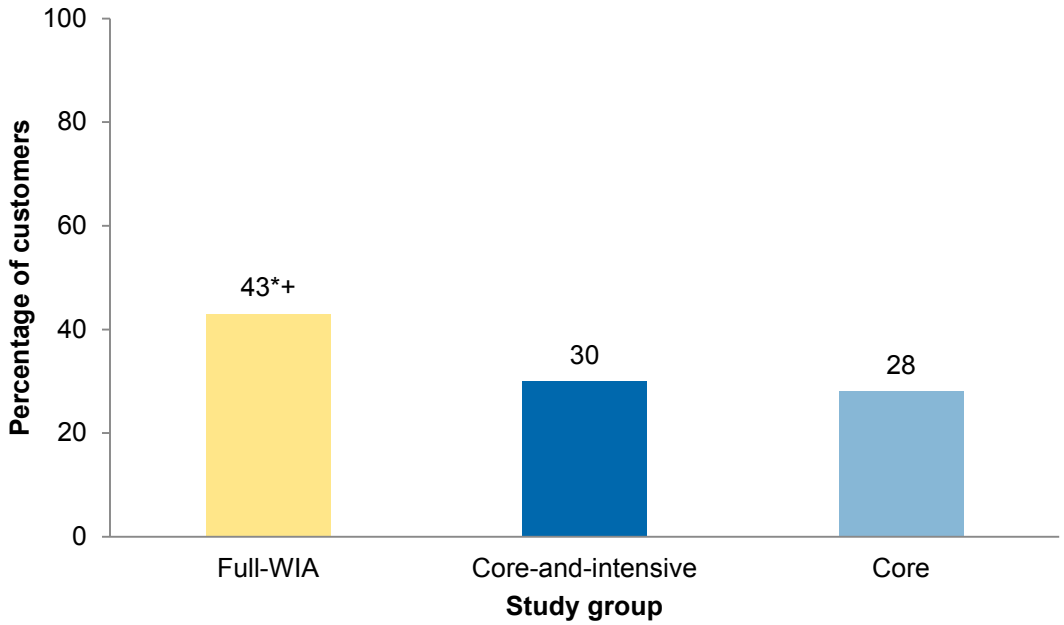
A. Enrollment in training

In the 15 months after random assignment, less than one-half of customers who were assigned to the full-WIA group (and hence had access to all services the programs usually provide) enrolled in training funded by either WIA or another source (Figure V.1). Among full-WIA customers, 43 percent reported enrolling in any training program during the 15-month follow-up period. Some customers assigned to the full-WIA group might not have been interested in training or might not have been interested enough to complete all the activities required to be approved for an ITA or other WIA-funded training, such as researching occupations and training programs (D'Amico et al. 2015). Other full-WIA customers might have not received WIA-funded training because they did not meet their local area's training eligibility criteria. For example, in nearly all local areas, customers who did not achieve a minimum TABE score or have a high school diploma or GED certificate could not receive funding through the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs for training (D'Amico et al. 2015).

Although core-and-intensive and core customers could not receive WIA-funded training during the follow-up period, many enrolled in a training program funded by another source in the 15 months following random assignment (Figure V.1). Thirty percent of customers in the core-and-intensive group and 28 percent of customers in the core group reported enrolling in a training program during this period.

Even though some customers in each group enrolled in training, customers in the full-WIA group were 13 percentage points more likely than customers in the core-and-intensive group, and 16 percentage points more likely than customers in the core group, to receive training. These findings suggest that although customers served by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs have access to outside sources of training, these alternatives did not fully replace WIA-funded training.

Figure V.1. Participation in training funded by any source (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

The difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

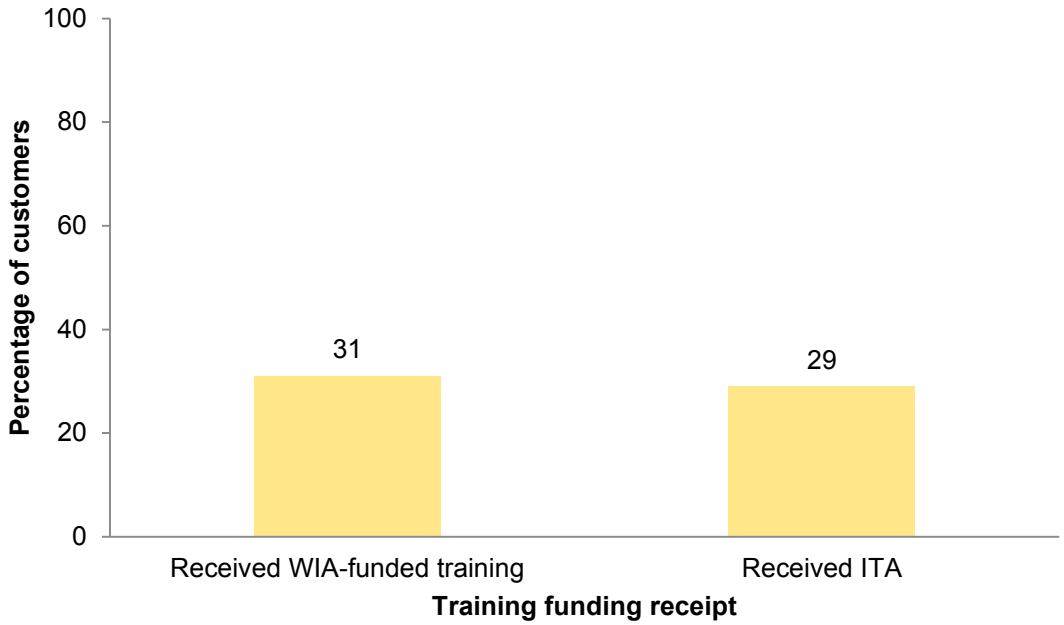
+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

The estimated difference in training rates between core-and-intensive and core customers is not statistically significant. Although employment counselors discussed training options with 46 percent of customers in the core-and-intensive group (Appendix C, Table C.IV.6a) and might have helped core-and-intensive customers enroll in and find funding for training as part of providing intensive services, our findings suggest that such assistance did not have large effects on enrollment in training. Core customers motivated to enroll in training likely obtained information on training programs from other sources.

Most full-WIA customers who enrolled in training enrolled in a WIA-funded training program. According to the WIASRD data, about 31 percent of all customers in the full-WIA group used WIA funds, at least in part, to pay for training, and 29 percent of the full-WIA group received an ITA (Figure V.2, see Section D for further details).[6]

[6] Customers in the core and core-and-intensive groups were not eligible to receive training funded by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs; however, some might have received training funded by other WIA funding streams, such as National Emergency Grants. Mastri et al. (2015) documents that less than 3 percent of customers in these study groups received WIA funding for training according to the WIASRD.

Figure V.2. Receipt of WIA-funded training and ITAs by full-WIA customers



Source: WIA Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) covering service receipt over about 15 months after random assignment.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

ITA = Individual Training Account.

Consistent with the higher enrollment in training, customers in the full-WIA group enrolled in more training programs and spent more time in training than customers in the core-and-intensive or core groups (Table V.1). The average customer in the full-WIA group participated in 0.6 training programs over the follow-up period, participated in training for 12.2 weeks, and received 283 hours of training (using zero for customers who did not enroll in training in the averages). In contrast, the average core customer participated in only 0.4 training programs, participated in training for 9.5 weeks and received 170 hours of training.

Table V.1. Number of training programs and length of training (all customers)

	Mean for all study group members		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Number of training programs enrolled in	0.6*+	0.4	0.4
Number of weeks spent in training	12.2*	8.7	9.5
Number of hours spent in training	283*+	190	170

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Focusing on customers who enrolled in training, trainees in each study group enrolled in a similar number of programs and spent a similar number of total hours in training during the 15-month follow-up period (Table V.2). On average, a full-WIA customer who enrolled in training attended 1.3 programs, participated in training for 28.3 weeks, and received 663 hours of training during the 15-month follow-up period. There were no significant differences across study groups in the number of training programs or total hours spent in training reported by trainees.

Table V.2. Number of training programs and length of training (trainees)

	Mean for trainees by study group		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Number of training programs enrolled in	1.3	1.3	1.4
Number of weeks spent in training	28.3+	29.2^	34.5
Number of hours spent in training	663	649	638

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group received training.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

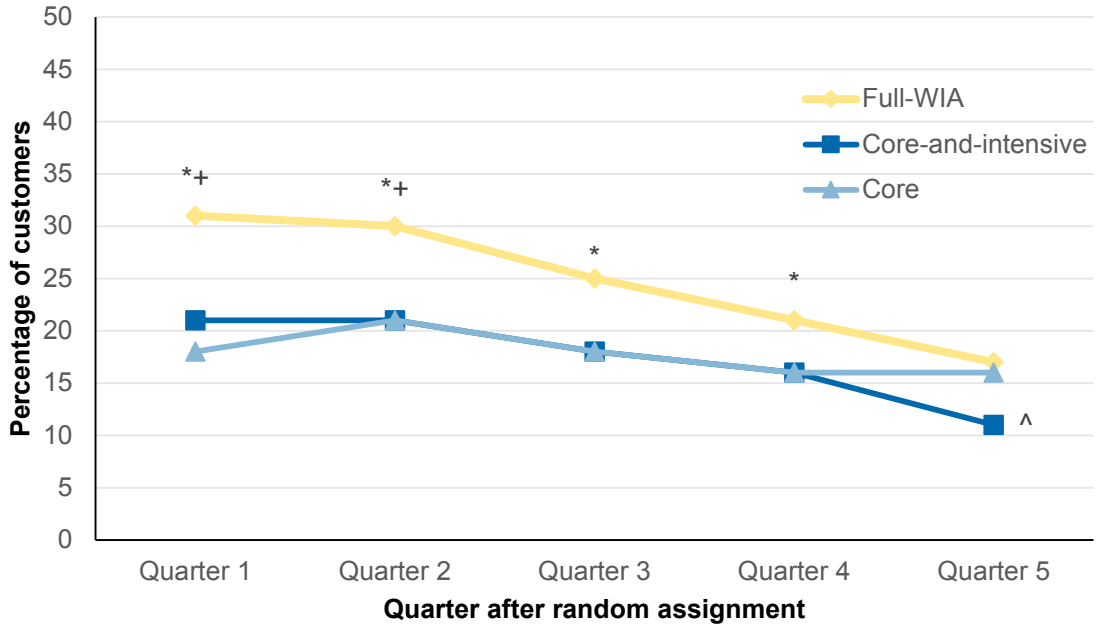
^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Although estimated differences in the number of hours spent in training are not statistically significant, trainees in the core group spread their training over significantly more weeks than trainees in the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (Table V.2). Trainees in the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups spent on average 28.3 to 29.2 weeks in training, compared with an average of 34.5 weeks for trainees in the core group. This suggests that customers in the core group might have selected longer training programs that required less of a weekly time commitment. This explanation is consistent with our finding that the average core customer was more likely than the average full-WIA or core-and-intensive customer to have a job while they were enrolled in a training program (Chapter VI; Appendix C, Table C.VI.3).

Rates of training participation were highest, and differences across groups in these rates were largest, in the first quarter after random assignment (Figure V.3). Both participation rates and differences in rates across study groups typically decreased over time. In the first quarter after random assignment (Quarter 1), 31 percent of full-WIA customers were enrolled in a training program. In this quarter, full-WIA customers were 11 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in training than core-and-intensive customers and 14 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in training than core customers. In Quarter 5, by contrast, 17 percent of full-WIA customers, 11 percent of core-and-intensive customers, and 16 percent of core customers were enrolled in training. For Quarter 5, only the estimated difference in enrollment rates between the core and core-and-intensive groups is statistically significant.

Figure V.3. Participation in training by quarter after random assignment (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Consistent with patterns of training enrollment by quarter, trends in training participation suggest that customers enrolled in training fairly soon after they were randomly assigned (see the box detailing the number of weeks between random assignment and training enrollment). Across all study groups, the average customer who enrolled in training started his or her first program slightly less than one quarter after random assignment (Appendix C, Table C.V.2b). The median time between random assignment and training enrollment was somewhat shorter: 7.6 weeks for the full-WIA group, 4.1 weeks for the core-and-intensive group, and 1.9 weeks for the core group. The lag in starting training among the full-WIA customers likely reflects the time required to meet the local areas' training eligibility requirements, including researching and selecting a training program and securing funding. Across all three groups, the often limited

Number of weeks between random assignment and enrollment in a training program (trainees)

Average number of weeks
Full-WIA group: 11.6 weeks
Core-and-intensive group: 12.5
Core group: 12.3

Median number of weeks
Full-WIA group: 7.6 weeks
Core-and-intensive group: 4.1
Core group: 1.9

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month survey.

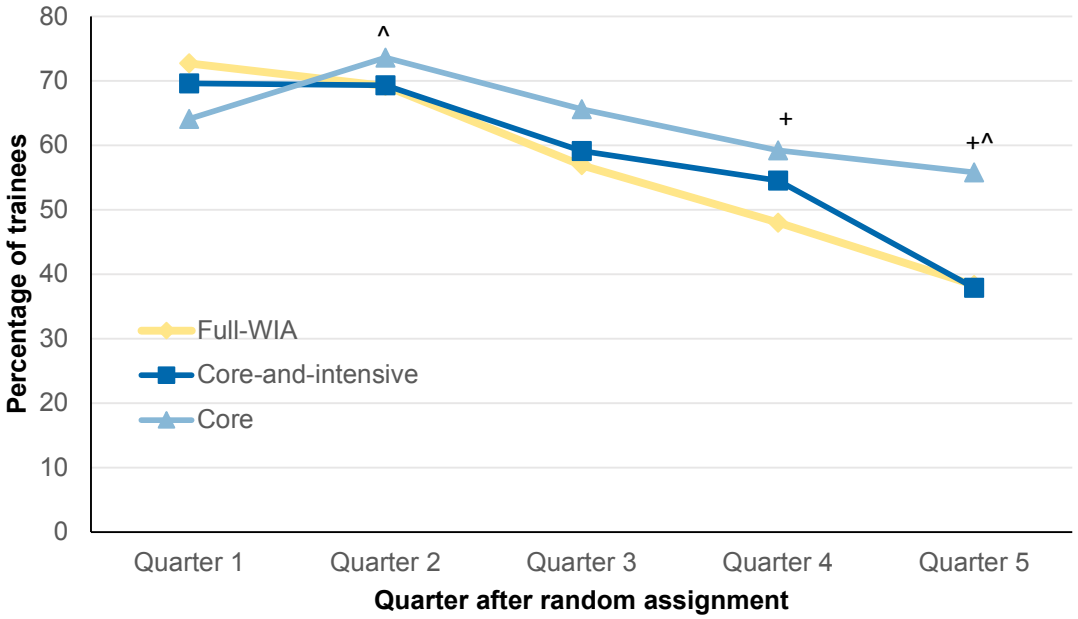
Notes: Statistical significance was not assessed for differences in medians. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

start dates of training programs, especially those offered at community colleges, could also contribute to the lag between random assignment and the beginning of training.

Many trainees were still participating in a training program in the final months of the 15-month follow-up period (Figure V.4). Although enrollment was highest in the first two quarters following random assignment, almost half of the trainees in all study groups were still enrolled in a training program four quarters after random assignment. Furthermore, in the fifth quarter after random assignment, 38 percent of full-WIA trainees, 38 percent of core-and-intensive trainees, and 56 percent of core trainees were enrolled in training. On average, customers who enrolled in a training program but left that program before our survey left their first program 31.4 to 34.4 weeks after random assignment, approximately the middle of the 15-month follow-up period (Appendix C, Table C.VI.3).

The timing of training enrollment and participation suggests that the 15-month horizon of this report might be too short to see the full impacts of group assignment on employment and earnings. By the end of the interim follow-up period, customers could either still be in training or could not yet have found jobs that exploit their new skills. A longer follow-up horizon, which will be provided by the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation's subsequent 30-month follow-up report, is thus required to determine the impact of access to WIA-funded training on many key outcome variables.

Figure V.4. Participation in training by quarter after random assignment (trainees)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group received training.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

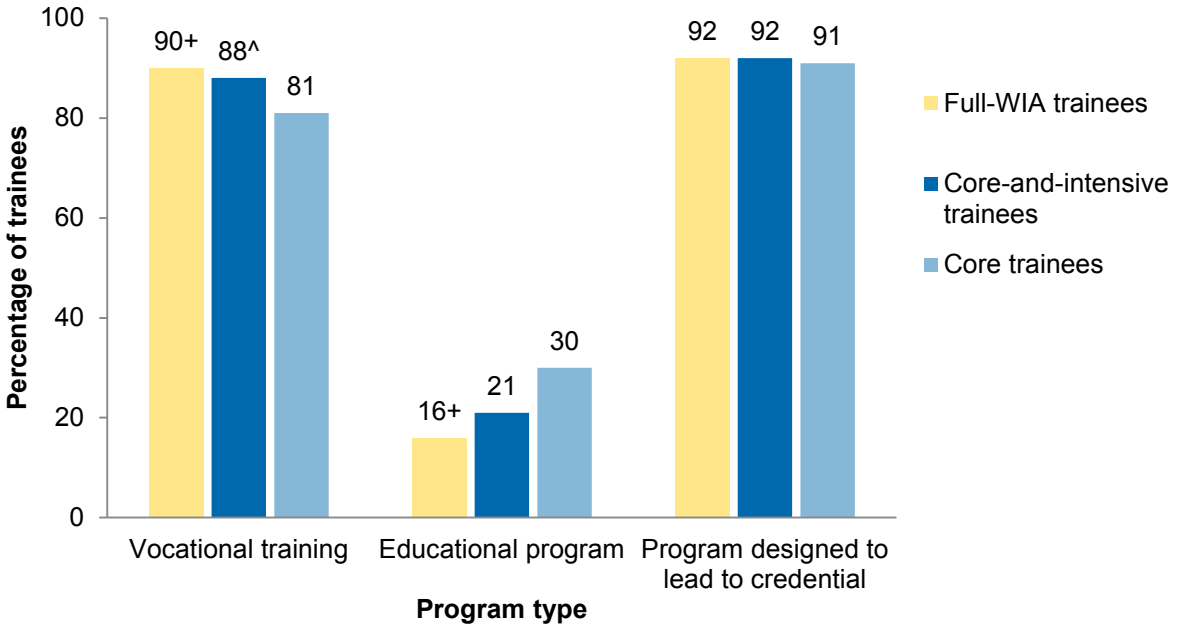
+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

B. Characteristics of training programs

The characteristics of the training programs selected by customers in the different study groups might have varied for two key reasons. First, access to funding for training through the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs could have expanded the number and types of programs that customers could afford. Second, counseling or other services might have shaped the particular programs chosen by customers. For example, customers in the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups often took assessments and discussed the results of these tests with WIA-funded employment counselors. These assessments and subsequent discussions could have guided customers to specific types of training programs.

Although trainees in all study groups were more likely to choose vocationally oriented training programs over educational programs, trainees in the core group were the least likely to enroll in vocational programs (Figure V.5). Only 81 percent of core trainees enrolled in a vocationally oriented training program, compared with 90 percent of full-WIA trainees and 88 percent of core-and-intensive trainees. Conversely, core trainees were more likely than other trainees to enroll in educational programs, although the estimated difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is not statistically significant. Despite these differences, trainees from all study groups chose training programs that could lead to a credential (such as a certificate or diploma) equally often (Figure V.5). Between 91 and 92 percent of trainees in each study group enrolled in at least one such program.

Figure V.5. Enrollment in different types of training programs (trainees)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Trainees could enroll in multiple programs of different or the same type. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group received training.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

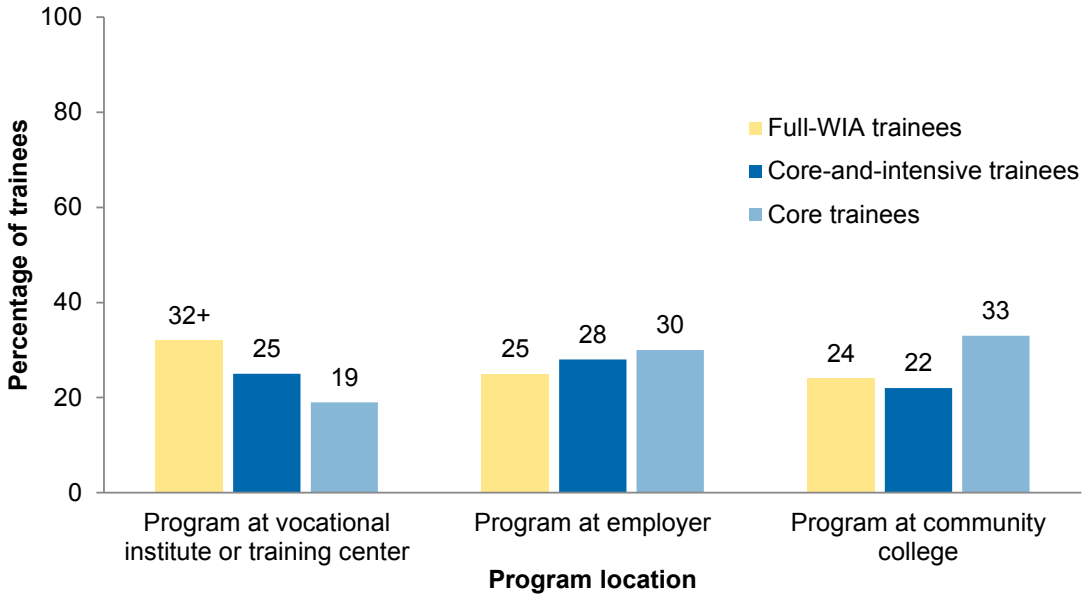
^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Full-WIA customers used on-the-job training funded by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs infrequently. About 2 percent of all customers in the full-WIA group, and about 5 percent of trainees in the full-WIA group, enrolled in a WIA-funded on-the-job training program (Appendix C, Tables C.V.3a and C.V.3b). However, some study local areas focused more on on-the-job training than others (D'Amico et al. 2015). According to the WIASRD, eight study local areas provided no on-the-job training opportunities to full-WIA group members. In six study local areas, more than 15 percent of trainees participated in on-the-job training. These figures understate the extent to which on-the-job training was provided to the full population of WIA adults and dislocated workers because those customers who were identified by a business for an on-the job training slot were excluded from the impact study (Mastri et al. 2015).

Some differences also occurred across study groups in the types of organizations that provided training to customers (Figure V.6). Three categories of providers—vocational institutes or training centers, employers, and community colleges—were most commonly reported as providing training across the three study groups. But trainees in the full-WIA group received training at a vocational institute or training center more often than trainees in the core group. Trainees in the core group were also more likely to report participating in an online training program compared with trainees in the full-WIA group and reported receiving training at a community-based organization, senior center, or other nonprofit more often than trainees in the core-and-intensive group (Appendix C, Table C.V.6). Other differences across groups are statistically insignificant.

Figure V.6. Enrollment in training at common provider types (trainees)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Percentages do not add up to 100 because (1) some customers enrolled in multiple training programs and (2) customers enrolled in programs provided by community-based organizations, on-line providers, and other providers. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group received training.

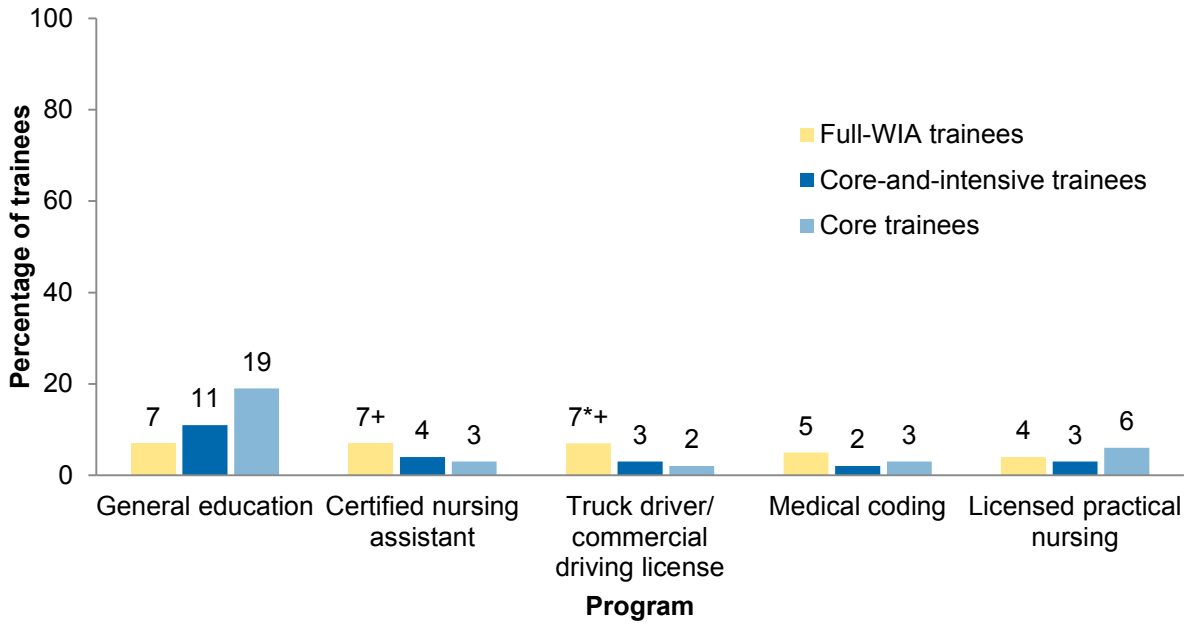
None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

On the whole, customers in the full-WIA group enrolled in a similar set of training programs as customers in the other study groups, but there were a small number of notable differences (Figure V.7). Trainees in the full-WIA group were more likely to enroll in a certified nursing assistant program compared with trainees in the core group and more likely to enroll in a truck driving or commercial driver's license program compared with trainees in both the core-and-intensive and core groups. Other estimated differences are not statistically significant.

Figure V.7. Enrollment in top five training programs (trainees)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, an sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group received training.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

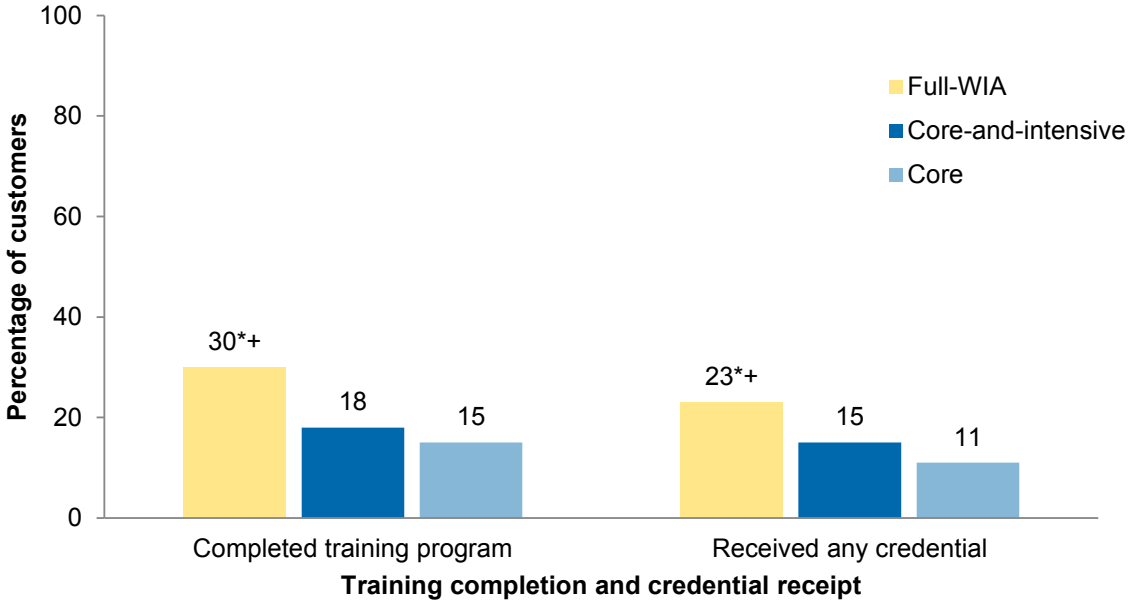
None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

C. Completion of training and receipt of credentials

In addition to being more likely than other customers to enroll in a training program, customers in the full-WIA group were more likely than those in the core-and-intensive or core groups to complete a training program and receive a credential—a diploma, certificate, or license—for doing so (Figure V.8). Thirty percent of full-WIA customers completed a training program during the 15 months after random assignment, compared with 18 percent of core-and-intensive customers and 15 percent of core customers. Likewise, 23 percent of full-WIA customers reported receiving a credential by completing a training program during the 15-month follow-up period, compared with 15 and 11 percent of core-and-intensive and core customers, respectively.

Figure V.8. Completion of a training program and receipt of a credential for completing a training program (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.
Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.
* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.
Neither difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.
+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Differences in program completion and credential attainment stem from differences in these outcomes for vocational, rather than educational, programs (Table V.4). Full-WIA customers were more likely than core-and-intensive or core customers to complete a vocational program and more likely to receive a credential by completing a vocational program; rates of completion and credential receipt were also higher for the core-and-intensive group than the core group. Twenty-seven percent of full-WIA customers completed a vocational training program, compared with 16 percent of core-and-intensive customers and 12 percent of core customers; 21 percent of the full-WIA group received a credential by completing a vocational program, compared with 14 percent of core-and-intensive customers and 9 percent of core customers. Conversely, the extent to which customers completed and received credentials from education programs varied little across study groups. In all study groups, 4 percent of customers completed an educational program, 1 to 2 percent of customers received a high school diploma or GED certificate, and 2 percent of customers received a postsecondary diploma.

Among customers who enrolled in training, trainees in the full-WIA group were more likely than trainees in the core group to complete a training program and more likely to earn a credential (Figure V.9). Differences in program completion rates between the full-WIA and core groups likely arose because of differences in both dropout rates and in the share of trainees who were still enrolled in a training program at the end of the 15-month follow-up period. Full-WIA trainees were 17 percentage points less likely to be enrolled in a training program in the fifth quarter after random assignment compared with core trainees (Figure V.4). Full-WIA trainees were also less likely than core trainees to drop out of a training program, although the

Table V.4. Completion of training programs and receipt of a credential for vocational and educational programs (all customers)

	Mean for all study group members		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Vocational programs			
Completed a vocational program (%)	27*+	16^	12
Received credential by completing a vocational program (%)	21*+	14^	9
Education programs			
Completed an educational program (%)	4	4	4
Received high school diploma or GED by completing an educational program (%)	1	2	1
Received postsecondary degree by completing an educational program (%)	2	2	2

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

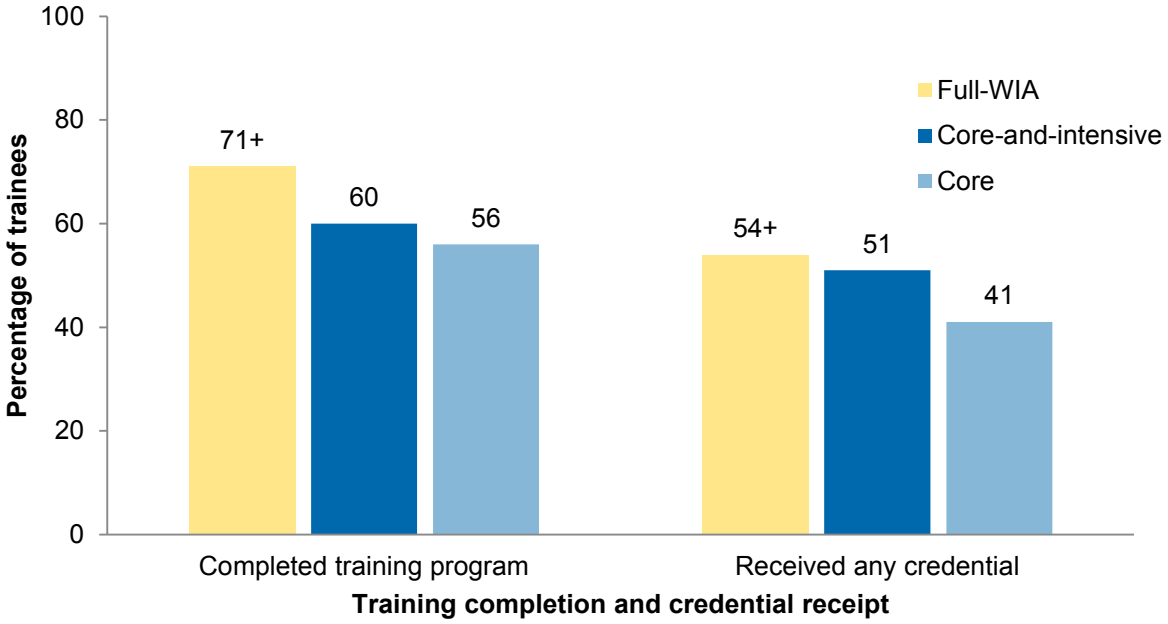
* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

GED = General Educational Development certificate.

Figure V.9. Completion of a training program and receipt of a credential for completing a training program (trainees)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group received training.

Neither difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Neither difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

6 percentage point difference between the groups in rates of dropout is not statistically significant (Appendix C, Table C.V.2b). These differences might result from differences in funding across study groups but could also be the product of the additional counseling that full-WIA customers received from local area staff to select training programs, enroll in programs, and complete programs (see Chapter IV).

D. Funding of training programs

As mentioned in Section A, most full-WIA customers who enrolled in training used WIA funds to do so. According to the WIASRD data, about 31 percent of the full-WIA group used WIA funds, at least in part, to pay for training (Figure V.2). Comparing this to the 43 percent of full-WIA customers who enrolled in any training program, we can estimate that about 12 percent of customers in the full-WIA group received training funded by a source other than the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.[7]

Most customers who received WIA-funded training paid for all or part of this training using an ITA, according to the WIASRD (Table V.5). Ninety percent of full-WIA customers who received WIA-funded training received an ITA. Another 5 percent of full-WIA customers who participated in WIA-funded training participated in on-the-job training (Appendix C, Table C.V.3b). The remaining customers in the full-WIA group received training provided under contracts by the local areas or via contracts with employers.

When staff approved customers for an ITA, they were typically approved for the estimated cost of their selected training program or for the local area maximum for an ITA, whichever was lower. The value of the ITAs granted to full-WIA customers varied from only a couple of hundred dollars to more than $8,000; the average ITA was $3,490 and the median was $3,000 (Table V.5). Customers did not always spend any or all of their ITAs. Some decided not to enroll in training, did not complete the program, or did not spend all available funds for books or supplies. It might also be that customers had not yet spent the full value of their ITAs at the time we received data on ITA expenditures but would eventually do so. On average, customers in the full-WIA group who received an ITA spent $3,029, and the median customer spent $2,695, about 90 percent of the median ITA value.

Customers in the core-and-intensive and core groups did not obtain financing from other sources to fully offset their lack of access to ITAs. Trainees in these groups were not significantly more or less likely than trainees in the full-WIA group to receive Pell Grants (Figure V.10); 13 to 17 percent of trainees received a Pell Grant across all three study groups. Furthermore, although trainees in the core group were more likely to report receiving employer funding for their training than trainees in the full-WIA group, less than 4 percent of trainees in all groups received this funding (Appendix C, Table C.V.8b). Full-WIA customers were at least as likely to obtain funding from most other funding sources as the other study groups. For example, 8 percent of full-WIA trainees reported receiving funding for training from a state employment agency, compared with less than 1 percent of trainees in the other two study groups

[7] Findings from the survey suggest that a much lower proportion of full-WIA customers received training funded by WIA than the WIASRD indicates (Appendix C, Table C.V.8a). It is likely that some survey respondents incorrectly recalled the source of their training funding or were otherwise unaware of the sources of funds received for training.

Table V.5. Characteristics of ITAs received by full-WIA trainees

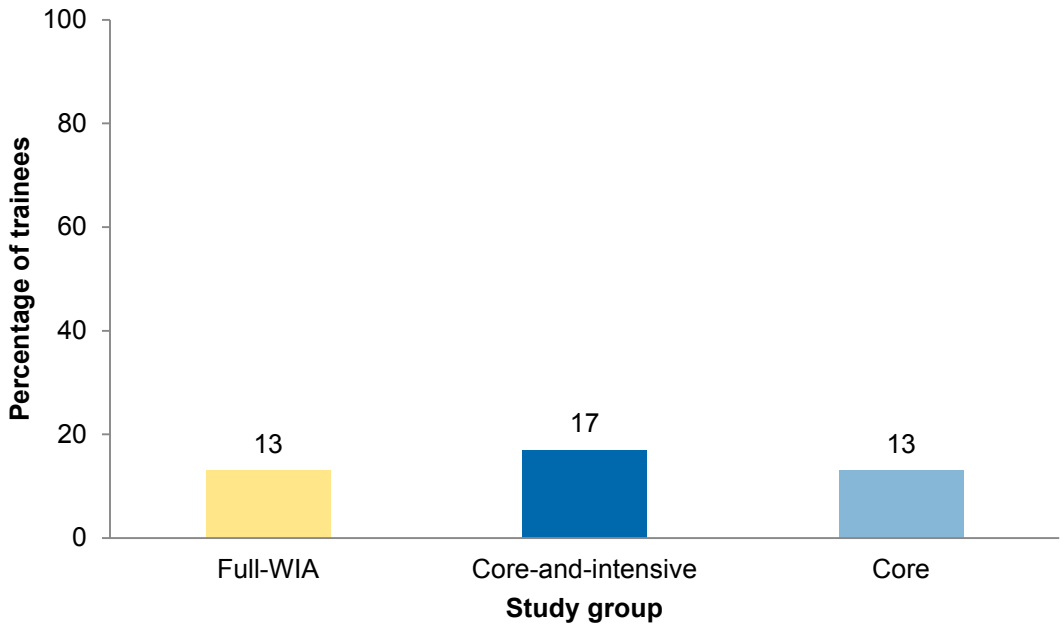
ITA characteristic	
Among customers who received WIA-funded training	
Received an ITA (%)	90
Among customers who received an ITA	
Value of ITA ($)	
Average	3,490
5th percentile	695
Median	3,000
95th percentile	8,000
Amount of ITA spent ($)	
Average	3,029
5th percentile	0
Median	2,695
95th percentile	8,000

Source: WIA Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) covering service receipt over about 15 months after random assignment and financial data collected from local areas.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

ITA = Individual Training Account.

Figure V.10. Receipt of Pell Grants (trainees)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group received training.

The difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

The difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

The difference between the full-WIA and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

(Appendix C, Table C.V8.b).[8] Such differences might be the result of increased referrals to training services by employment counselors after customers in the full-WIA group had their eligibility for training assessed.

Although the median cost of training programs was roughly similar across study groups (see the box on total cost of training), trainees in the full-WIA group paid a smaller fraction of training costs compared with trainees in the core-and-intensive and core groups (Figure V.11). Fifty-nine percent of trainees in the full-WIA group reported paying nothing out of pocket for training, 14 and 18 percentage points more often than trainees in the core-and-intensive and core groups, respectively. Conversely, 20 percent of trainees in the full-WIA group reported paying the full cost of their training program, 18 to 22 percentage points less often than trainees in the other study groups. This suggests that when customers did not have access to WIA funding, they were unable to totally replace it with funding from other sources and supplemented it with their own funds.

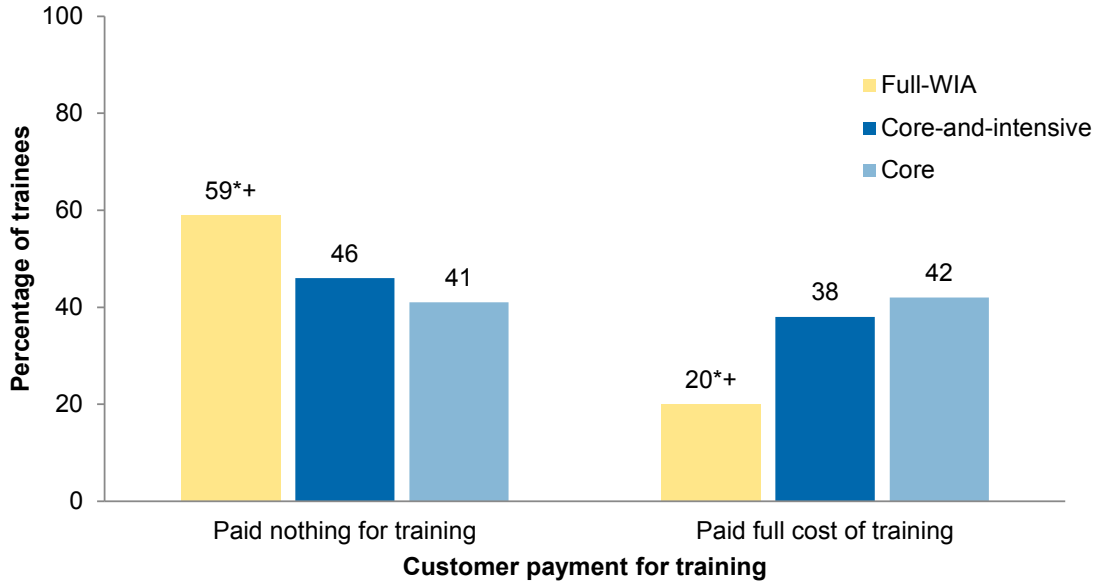
Total cost of all training programs enrolled in (trainees)

Median program cost
Full-WIA group: $4,500
Core-and-intensive group: $4,000
Core group: $4,800

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month survey.

Notes: Statistical significance of differences was not assessed.

Figure V.11. Payment for training (trainees)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group received training.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Neither difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

[8] This difference might also reflect the survey respondents' inability to distinguish funding from American Job Centers from funding from state employment or unemployment agencies.

E. Differences in receipt of training by adults and dislocated workers

Impacts of access to WIA-funded services might vary between adults and dislocated workers. For example, adults might be less likely to be eligible for WIA-funded training because of more limited educational achievement. This could make differences in training rates across study groups smaller for adults than for dislocated workers. Conversely, adults might need more from training because of their shorter work histories and younger ages. We thus explored whether rates of training enrollment, and any differences in those rates across study groups, were different for adults and dislocated workers.

Adults in the full-WIA group were less likely to enroll in training funded by any source during the 15-month follow-up period than dislocated workers in the full-WIA group—40 percent compared with 50 percent—although the estimated difference is not statistically significant (Figure V.12). According to the WIASRD, 30 percent of adults and 35 percent of dislocated workers in the full-WIA group received WIA-funded training (see the box on receipt of WIA-funded training; Appendix D, Table D.V.3a and Appendix E, Table E.V.3a). But, again, the estimated difference between adults and dislocated workers is not statistically significant.

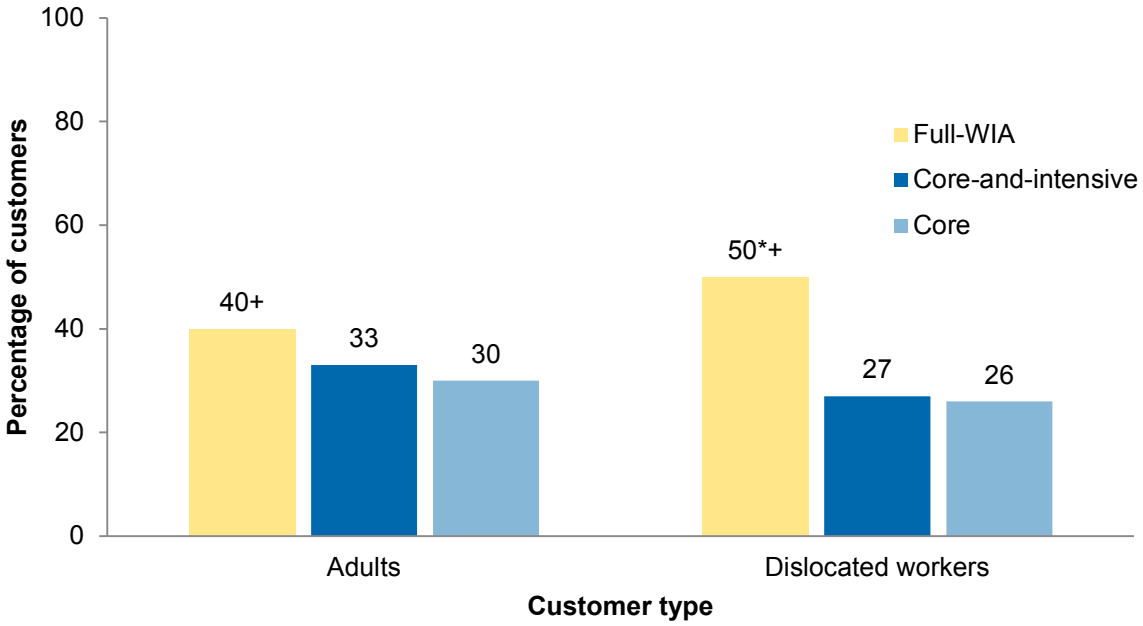
Receipt of WIA-funded training by all customers in the full-WIA group

Adults: 30 percent
Dislocated workers: 35 percent
All full-WIA customers: 31 percent

Source: WIA Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) covering service receipt over about 15 months after random assignment.

The patterns across study groups in training enrollment were similar for adults and dislocated workers, but the evidence suggests that the magnitude of the differences were smaller for adults (Figure V.12). Adults in the full-WIA group were 6 percentage points more likely to enroll in a training program than adults in the core-and-intensive group, but the estimated difference is not statistically significant. For dislocated workers, this difference was 23 percentage points and is statistically significant. Likewise, adults in the full-WIA group were 10 percentage points more likely to enroll in training than adults in the core group, and dislocated workers in the full-WIA group were 24 percentage points more likely to enroll in training than dislocated workers in the core group; both of these differences were significant. However, the differences between the adult and dislocated workers in these differences across study groups are not statistically significant. Training completion and credential attainment exhibited the same general patterns across study groups for both adults and dislocated workers (Appendix D, Table D.V.2a and Appendix E, Table E.V.2a).

Figure V.12. Enrollment in training funded by any source, separately for adults and dislocated workers (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Neither difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

No differences in impacts between adults and dislocated workers are significant at the 5 percent level. For example, the impact of the availability of training on enrollment in training for adults is not significantly different than the impact for dislocated workers.

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VI. IMPACTS ON EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT

The central goal of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs is to help customers succeed in the labor market. In this chapter, we examine whether WIA-funded training and intensive services were successful in meeting that goal. We focus on the impacts of the services on employment, earnings, and the quality of the jobs customers obtained.

As in the rest of this report, in this chapter, we consider the impacts on customers over only the first 15 months (or first 5 quarters) after random assignment. This time period is likely too short to assess the full effectiveness of these services, especially training. As discussed in Chapter V and further in this chapter, as of the fifth quarter after random assignment, many customers had only recently completed or were still participating in training, so the full impacts of training on earnings and other employment outcomes might not yet be realized. Customers could also be still receiving intensive services at 15 months after random assignment. As a result, the 30-month survey findings will be important for assessing the longer-term impacts of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

We begin this chapter by comparing the employment-related outcomes of the full-WIA group with those for the core-and-intensive group, which provides the estimated impact of the availability of WIA-funded training (Section A). We then compare the outcomes of the core-and-intensive group with those for the core group—the estimated impacts of the availability of WIA

Key findings

- The availability of WIA-funded training did not increase earnings or employment rates in the 15 months after random assignment, but it is too early to assess its long-run impacts.
  - Full-WIA group customers were less likely to be employed and earned less than the core-and-intensive group customers in each quarter after random assignment, but the differences are not statistically significant. The poorer labor market outcomes were expected because the full-WIA group customers were more likely to be enrolled in a training program and hence had less time for employment.
  - Full-WIA customers' earnings in the fifth quarter after random assignment were similar to those of core-and-intensive customers. Many customers in all three study groups were still in training at this time, and others had only recently finished training. We will examine longer-term impacts with data from the 30-month survey and administrative data on earnings.
  - The jobs obtained by full-WIA customers were on average less likely than those obtained by core-and-intensive customers to offer fringe benefits such as health insurance.
- Our estimates suggest that the availability of WIA-funded intensive services increased earnings and employment in the fifth quarter after random assignment.
  - Core-and-intensive customers earned about $600, or 17 percent, more than core customers in the fifth quarter after random assignment. This estimate is statistically significant at the 5 percent level but does not meet the stricter threshold for significance when adjusting for multiple comparisons.
  - The most recent jobs held within the follow-up period by core-and-intensive and core customers were similar, except the core-and-intensive customers were more likely to have jobs that offered fringe benefits.
- The availability of both WIA-funded training and intensive services increased employment in the fifth quarter after random assignment, but this did not translate into an increase in earnings in that quarter.
- The pattern of earnings impacts were broadly similar for adults and dislocated workers, but the evidence suggests that the impacts (both positive and negative) are somewhat more pronounced for dislocated workers.

intensive services (Section B). Next we present the comparison of the full-WIA group with the core group—the estimated impacts of the availability of both training and intensive services (Section C). Within each of Sections A, B, and C, we first describe whether the availability of the services increased Quarter 5 earnings, a summary measure of the key ways in which the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs can affect customers' labor market experiences. We then separately examine the extent to which any observed impacts on earnings come from differences in the proportion of customers who were employed or from differences in wage rates and then examine other job characteristics among those who found employment. We then describe how customers' occupations matched the training programs they completed (Section D). Finally, we present impact estimates on employment outcomes separately for adults and dislocated workers (Section E).

A. Impacts of the availability of WIA-funded training

Three key findings from Chapters IV and V are important for interpreting the impacts of the availability of WIA-funded training.

First, full-WIA customers were more likely to enroll in training than were core-and-intensive and core customers; and this group also made more use of the resource rooms, took more assessments, and received more supportive services. Hence, the availability of WIA-funded training did not just lead to more training but also to more use of other services.

Second, participating in training takes a lot of time; hence, we expected negative impacts of the availability of training in the first quarters after random assignment, as training displaced employment. We found that full-WIA customers who enrolled in training spent about 28 weeks and 663 hours in training (Chapter V), and hence had less time available for employment. Because full-WIA customers were more likely than the other study group customers to participate in training, we expected that they would have lower earnings and employment rates early in the follow-up period, as has been found in past studies of WIA and other training programs (Heinrich et al. 2008; Andersson et al. 2013; Card et al. 2015). If WIA-funded training is effective, then the full-WIA group should eventually have greater earnings than the core-and-

Comparing the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups

- This contrast examines the impact of the availability of WIA-funded training compared to a situation in which only core and intensive services are available:
  - Full-WIA customers were eligible for WIA-funded training if they would have been eligible in the absence of the study. They were also eligible for core and intensive services.
  - Core-and-intensive customers were not eligible for WIA-funded training but were eligible for core and intensive services.
- The differences in service receipt that underpin the impacts on earnings and employment include:
  - Full-WIA customers were more likely than core-and-intensive customers to enroll in training.
  - Most full-WIA customers' training was funded by WIA rather than other sources.
  - Full-WIA customers also made more use of other services than core-and-intensive customers, including the resource room, assessments, and supportive services.

intensive group. In previous studies, the crossover point at which employment and earnings for customers with access to training exceed employment and earnings for those without this access has varied by the program and population but can be as short as one quarter and as long as several years (Heinrich et al. 2008; Card et al. 2015).

Third, even though WIA-funded training was available to customers in the full-WIA group, only 31 percent of full-WIA customers enrolled in WIA-funded training. The impacts on those who *enrolled* in WIA-funded training would be larger in magnitude (whether positive or negative) than the impacts on all full-WIA customers reported in this section. We estimate that the magnitude of the impacts on those who enrolled in WIA-funded training would be about three times the impacts of the availability of WIA-funded training reported in this section. The intuition for multiplying by three is that we assume any impacts of the availability of training are created entirely by the approximately one-third of full-WIA customers who participated in WIA-funded training. However, this is probably an upper bound because, as discussed in Chapter IV, full-WIA customers were not only more likely than members of the core-and-intensive group to participate in WIA-funded training, they were also more likely to visit resource rooms, take assessments, and receive supportive services. (Appendix A in the technical supplement provides more details.)

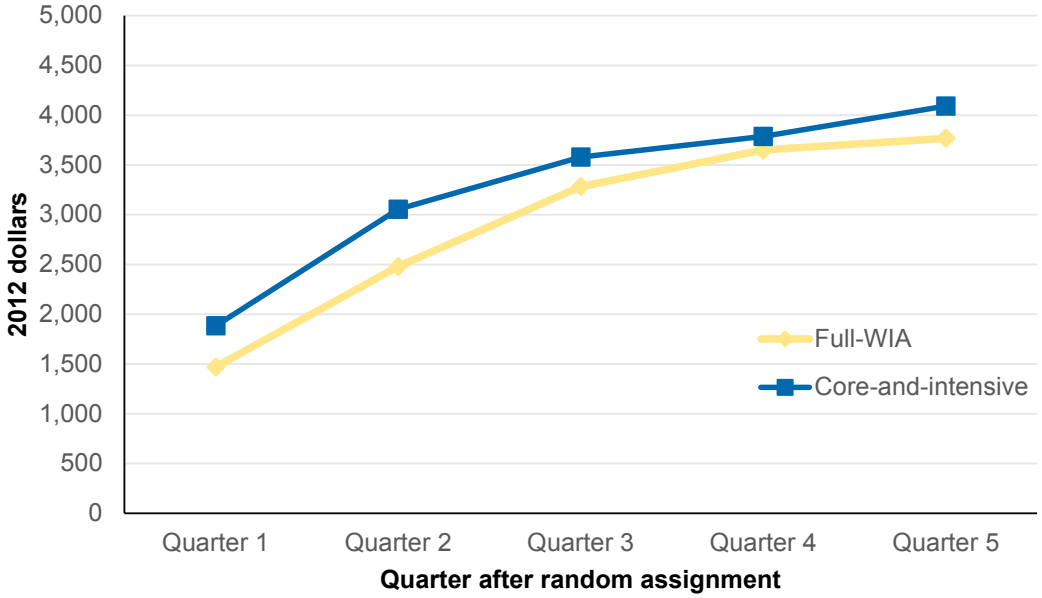
1. Earnings

The availability of WIA-funded training did not lead to an increase in earnings in any of the first five quarters after random assignment (Figure VI.1). Full-WIA customers' earnings were lower on average than core-and-intensive customers' earnings throughout the 15-month follow-up period, although the differences are not statistically significant. Full-WIA customers earned an average of $1,469 in quarter 1 compared to $1,884 for the core-and-intensive group, but this difference of -$415 is not statistically significant. (These averages include zero earnings for customers without jobs.) Earnings for both groups increased substantially over the 15-month follow-up period, but the estimated impacts trend downward over time. As of quarter 5, the full-WIA group earned $3,767 on average compared to $4,089 for the core-and-intensive group; this difference (-$322) is also not statistically significant.

2. Employment

The impacts on employment follow a similar pattern as those on earnings. The estimated impacts were negative early and decrease over time, but are not statistically significant for any quarter (Figure VI.2). Full-WIA customers were less likely to be employed in Quarter 1 (39 percent) than were core-and-intensive customers (46 percent), but the difference (7 percent) is not statistically significant. By Quarter 5, 68 percent of full-WIA customers were employed, which was similar to the employment rate among core-and-intensive customers.

Figure VI.1. Quarterly earnings for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (all customers)

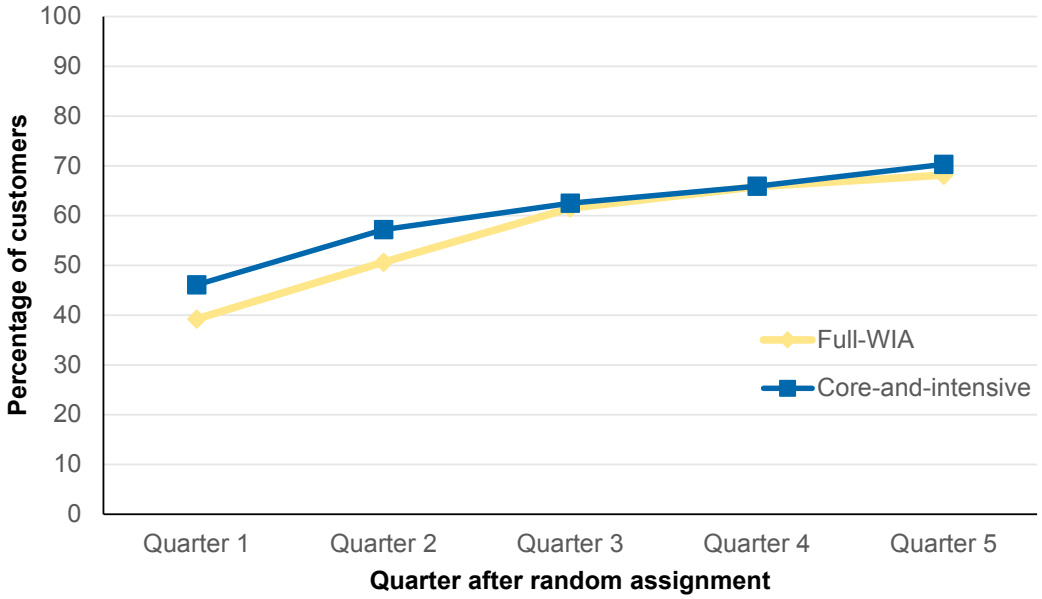


Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

Figure VI.2. Quarterly employment rates for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (all customers)



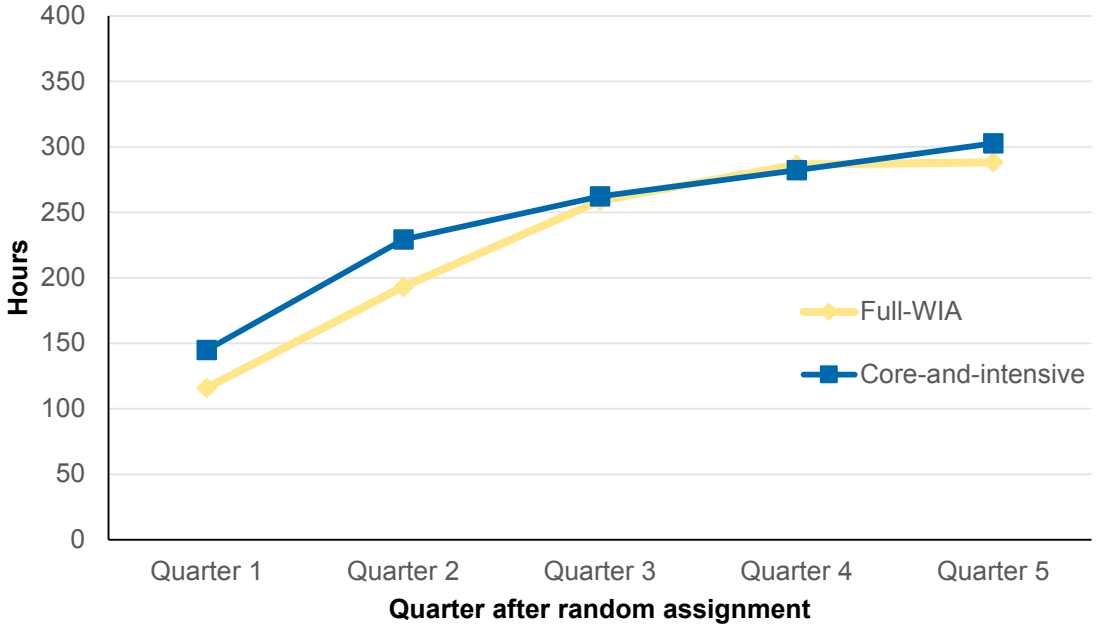
Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

The pattern of estimated impacts on hours worked (Figure VI.3) in each quarter is similar to the pattern of estimated impacts on employment rates (Figure VI.2). Full-WIA customers worked fewer hours than core-and-intensive customers in the first few quarters, although the differences are not statistically significant. By the final quarter, full-WIA customers worked only 14 fewer hours than core-and-intensive customers worked. We revisit hours worked per week among those who were employed as part of the Section A.3, on job characteristics.

Figure VI.3. Quarterly hours worked for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (all customers)



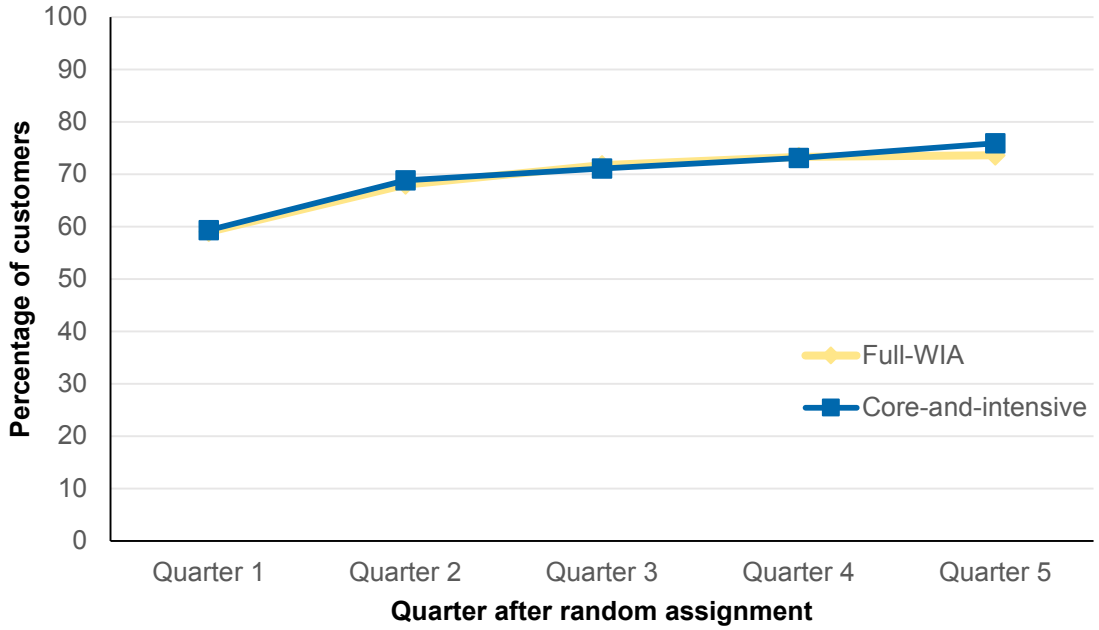
Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

The employment patterns show how increased participation in training for the full-WIA group displaced their employment in the earliest quarters after random assignment, as was expected. When we examined a measure of customers' engagement in productive activity—whether customers were either employed or in training in each quarter—we found customers in the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups were about equally likely to be in a productive activity over much of this period (Figure VI.4). Fifty-nine percent of customers in both groups were engaged in a productive activity in the first quarter. Full-WIA customers were more likely to be in training (as presented in the previous chapter) than core-and-intensive customers but less likely to be employed, and these effects offset one another almost exactly. By Quarter 5, about three-quarters of customers in both the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups were in a productive activity.

Figure VI.4. In productive activity for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

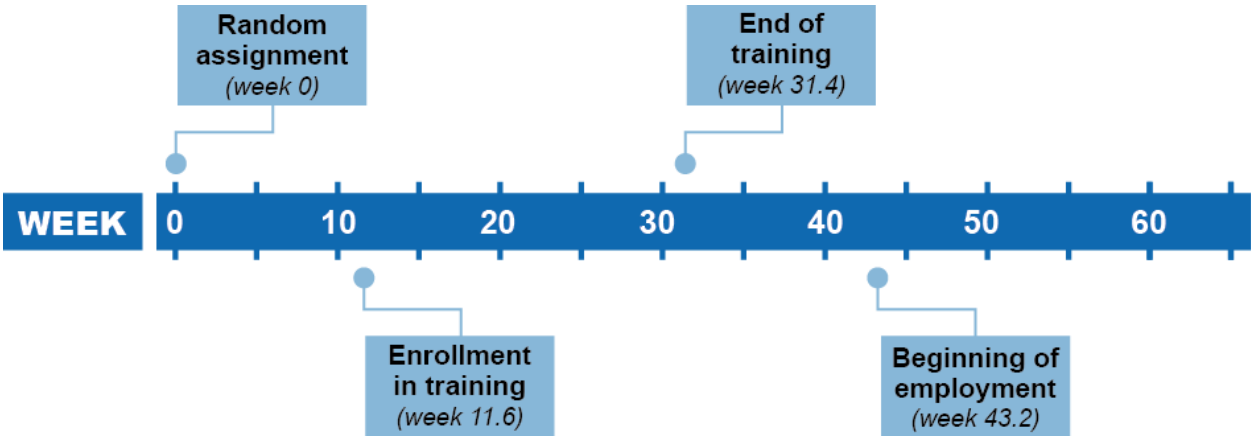
Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

The timing of training and the time it takes to find a job after training suggest that 15 months might not be a long enough period to judge the effectiveness of training. On average, full-WIA customers who had enrolled in a training program (and left it within the 15-month period) ended their participation in the program 31.4 weeks into the follow-up period (Figure VI.5). Those who ended training did not typically find employment until about 3 months (12.8 weeks) afterward. On average, a full-WIA customer who participated in training and then found a job started that job at 43.2 weeks after random assignment, in the fourth quarter after random assignment. However, 17 percent of full-WIA customers, 11 percent of core-and-intensive customers, and 16 percent of core customers were still in training in Quarter 5, and other customers were still looking for their first jobs after completing training. If the full-WIA group's earnings do eventually overtake those of the core-and-intensive group, the timing of training suggests we might expect this to occur during the second follow-up period, 15 to 30 months after random assignment.

Among those who participated in training, the timing of beginning and ending training and finding a job was similar for full-WIA and core-and-intensive customers (Table VI.1). About half (51 percent) of the full-WIA customers who participated in training and were employed in the follow-up period finished training before starting a job, and this was similar for the core-and-intensive group (47 percent). The number of weeks between the end of the first training program and start of the first job was also similar for the two groups (12.8 and 15.0 weeks for the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups, respectively).

Figure VI.5. Typical timeline for an average full-WIA group customer who participated in training and was subsequently employed



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: Unadjusted mean estimates for customers in the full-WIA group. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

Table VI.1. Timing of training completion relative to employment for full-WIA and core-and-intensive customers who had ended enrollment in at least one training program

	Mean for study group members	
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive
Among customers who ended enrollment in training within the 15-month follow-up period		
Weeks between random assignment and end of first training program	31.4	31.8
Among customers who ended enrollment in training during the 15-month follow-up period and were employed at any time during the 15-month follow-up period		
Completed training before getting a job (%)	51	47
Weeks between end of first training and start of first job, if completed training before getting job	12.8	15.0

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group ended enrollment in at least one training program.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

3. Characteristics of jobs among those who were employed

In addition to helping customers find employment, access to training could improve the quality of jobs customers obtain. In this section, we examine the characteristics—including pay rate and fringe benefits—of the job most recently held (or still held) for customers who were

employed at any point in the 15-month follow-up period.[9] We focus on the most recent job held within the 15-month follow-up because it provides the most insight into customers' future employment trajectory. In most cases, this was a job the customer still held in Quarter 5, but in some cases it was a job held earlier in the follow-up period. We obtained similar findings when we examined job characteristics across all jobs held by the customer in the follow-up period, not only the most recent.

Among customers who held at least one job, the jobs obtained by full-WIA customers were less likely to offer fringe benefits compared with those obtained by core-and-intensive customers, but in most other ways they were similar. For example, 83 percent of full-WIA customers who were employed were offered health insurance through their most recent jobs, compared with 88 percent of employed core-and-intensive customers, a statistically significant difference (Table VI.2). Full-WIA customers were also significantly less likely to receive pension or retirement benefits. However, full-WIA and core-and-intensive employed

Table VI.2. Characteristics of most recent job for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (employed customers)

	Means by study group	
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive
Hours worked per week	36.9	36.6
Employed full-time (35 or more hours per week, %)	68	71
Hourly wage rate ($)	12.63	13.12
Job offered (%)		
Any benefits	95	98
Health insurance	83*	88
Paid vacation	71	75
Paid holidays	72	81
Paid sick days	58	64
Any paid time off	80	88
Pension or retirement benefits	63*	70
Tuition assistance or reimbursement	34	37
Job classified as (%)		
Regular full- or part-time	75*	83
Self-employed or independent contractor	7	3
Temporary or day labor	9	9
On-call	8	4
Job at contractor	2	1
Unionized job (%)	9	8

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: Dollars are 2012 dollars. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group became employed.

*Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

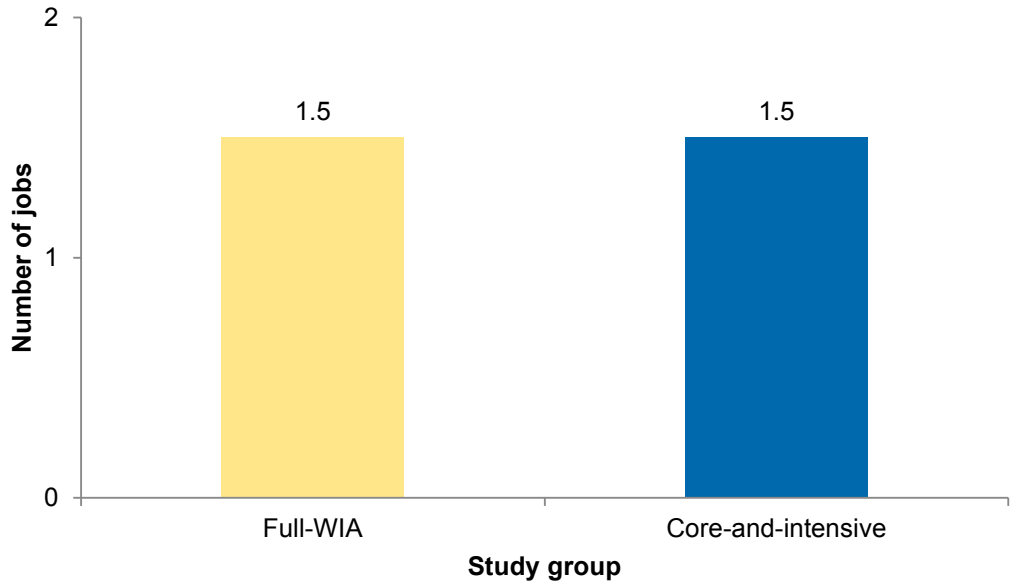
[9] Any differences between job characteristics for employed full-WIA customers and employed core-and-intensive customers could be because the availability of WIA-funded training affected customers' job characteristics, or because it affected which customers were employed. We cannot conclusively distinguish between these two effects. This consideration also applies to the comparisons between core-and-intensive and core customers' job characteristics and full-WIA and core customers' job characteristics.

customers both worked about 37 hours a week in their most recent jobs, and about two-thirds were employed full time (Table VI.2). Their hourly wage rates were similar: $12.63 an hour for full-WIA customers compared with $13.12 for core-and-intensive customers. These hourly wage rates were also similar to customers' average hourly wage rate ($13.07) in the last job they held before random assignment (see Table III.2).

Despite working similar hours on average, full-WIA customers were less likely than core-and-intensive customers to have a regular wage or salary job (Table VI.2). They were slightly more likely to be self-employed or to work as an independent contractor or on-call employee but these estimated differences are not statistically significant. Only about 8 or 9 percent of customers' most recent jobs were unionized, with no differences between the study groups in rates of unionization.

Full-WIA customers who were employed in the 15-month follow-up period held a similar number of jobs as core-and-intensive customers (Figure VI.6). In both groups, customers who were ever employed had 1.5 jobs on average during the 15-month follow-up period.

Figure VI.6. Number of jobs held since random assignment for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (employed customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group became employed.

The difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

Customers found employment in many different occupations, but there were not meaningful or statistically significant differences in occupations between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (Table VI.3). Full-WIA customers who were employed most commonly held jobs as a nursing, psychiatric, and home health aide; retail sales worker; motor vehicle operator; information and record clerk; or material moving worker; these five occupations accounted for about half of the jobs.

Table VI.3. Most frequently reported occupations of current or most recent job reported for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (customers employed in follow-up period)

	Mean for study group members	
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive
Occupation of current or most recent job (%)		
Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aide	14	8
Retail sales worker	12	10
Motor vehicle operator	10	6
Information and record clerk	7	10
Material moving worker	7	7
Material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing worker	6	7
Building cleaning and pest control worker	5	4
Other office and administrative support worker	3	5
Health technologists and technician	3	5
Financial clerk	4	4
Construction trades worker	3	2
Other personal care and service worker	3	2

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

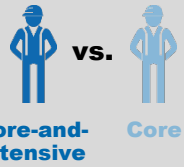
Notes: Occupations are categorized based on two-digit Standard Occupational Classifications. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group became employed.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

B. Impacts of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services

As discussed in Chapter IV, the core-and-intensive group was more likely than the core group to receive one-on-one counseling and received about 28 more minutes of counseling on average, whether it was delivered at an American Job Center or elsewhere. These customers were also more likely to use a resource room, attend workshops, take assessments, and receive supportive services. This section examines whether the availability of WIA-funded intensive services, which led to the increased receipt of both core and intensive services, translated into impacts on customers' employment-related outcomes.

Comparing the core-and-intensive and core groups



- This contrast examines the impact of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services (without training) compared to a situation in which only core services were available:
  - Core-and-intensive customers were not eligible for WIA-funded training but were eligible for WIA-funded core and intensive services.
  - Core customers were eligible for core services but not WIA-funded intensive or training services.
- The differences in service receipt that underpin the impacts on earnings and employment include:
  - The core-and-intensive group was more likely than the core group to receive one-on-one assistance—the key intensive service.
  - The core-and-intensive group was more likely than the core group to take assessments, participate in workshops, and use the resource room.

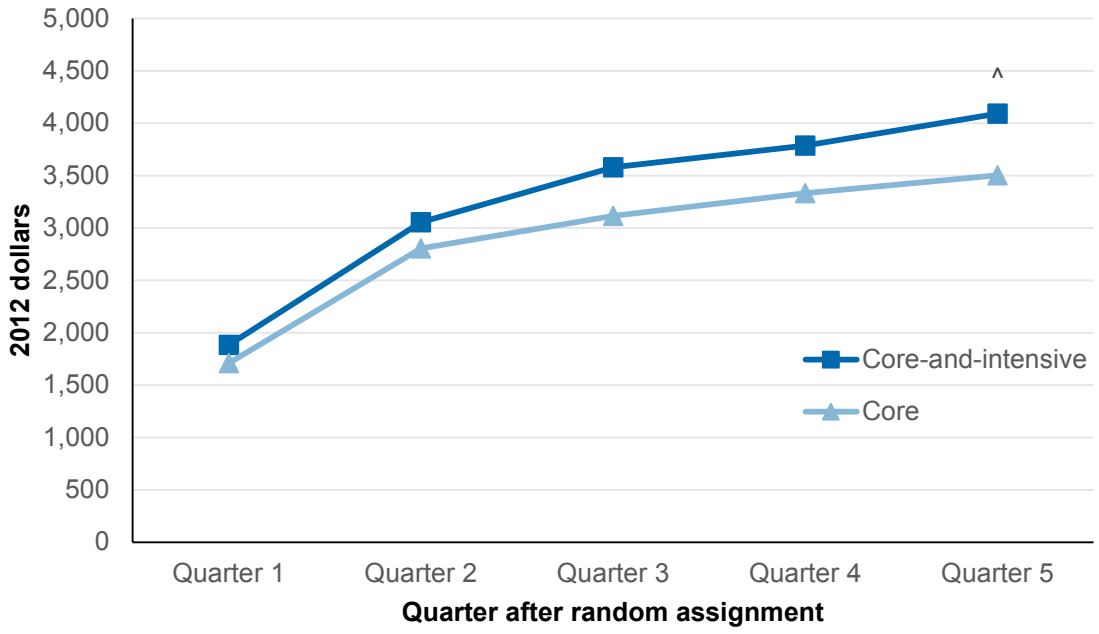
Unlike the case with training, we did not expect to see the receipt of intensive services leading to lower employment and earnings in the first few quarters after random assignment. Although participation in training is time consuming and hence likely to displace employment, receiving intensive services takes less time and hence is unlikely to displace employment.

1. Earnings

While not precisely estimated, the estimated impacts of the availability of intensive services on earnings are encouraging. On average, core-and-intensive customers earned more than core customers in each quarter after random assignment (Figure VI.7). Over the full 15-month follow-up period, the core-and-intensive group earned $16,392 on average compared with $14,461 for the core group, but the difference of $1,931 is not statistically significant.

The impact of the availability of intensive services on earnings in Quarter 5, our priority outcome, was about $600, or 17 percent. This estimated impact in Quarter 5 is statistically significant at the 5 percent level but does not meet the more stringent significance test that accounts for the fact that we made three comparisons on the same outcome, as described in Chapter II. Hence, it is more likely that the finding occurred by chance than if it met the more stringent criteria. Further data from administrative sources and the 30-month survey might enable us to make a more definitive judgment about the impact of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services.

Figure VI.7. Quarterly earnings for core-and-intensive and core groups (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

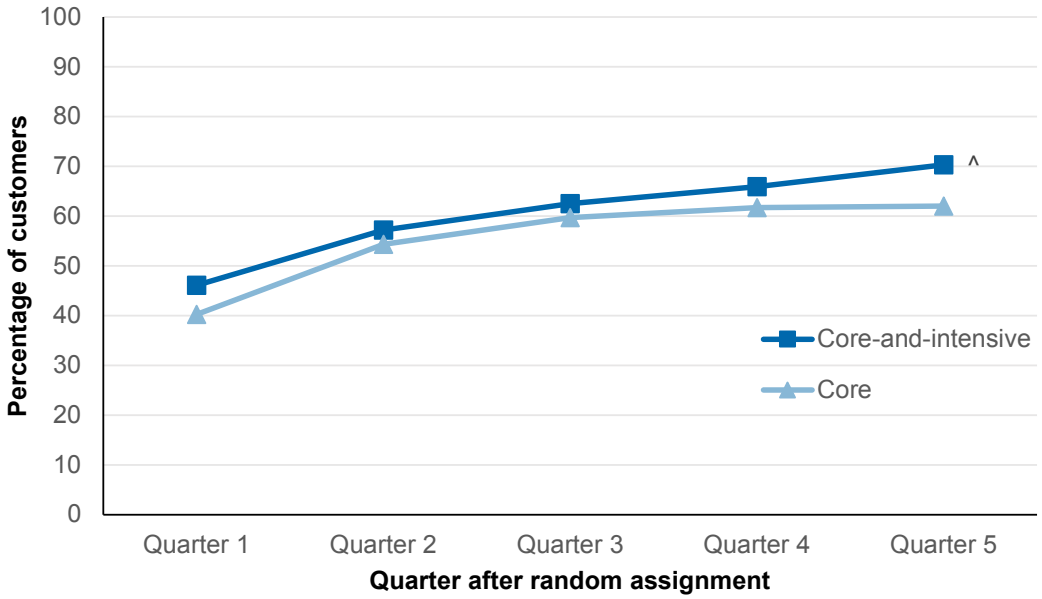
2. Employment

Differences in employment rates are consistent with the differences in earnings for core-and-intensive customers relative to core customers (Figure VI.8). The patterns over time are similar to the patterns for earnings. More core-and-intensive customers were employed in Quarter 5 (70 percent) than were core customers (62 percent).

Similar to the patterns in employment rates, core-and-intensive customers worked more hours than core customers worked (Figure VI.9). Core-and-intensive customers worked 303 hours per quarter in Quarter 5, which is about 10 percent more than core customers' 274 hours. The differences in hours worked are proportionally similar to the differences in employment rates as well.

The pattern of differences in the proportion of core-and-intensive and core customers who were engaged in a productive activity are consistent with the pattern of differences in their employment rates, except they are not statistically significant in any quarter (Figure VI.10).

Figure VI.8. Quarterly employment rates for core-and-intensive and core groups (all customers)

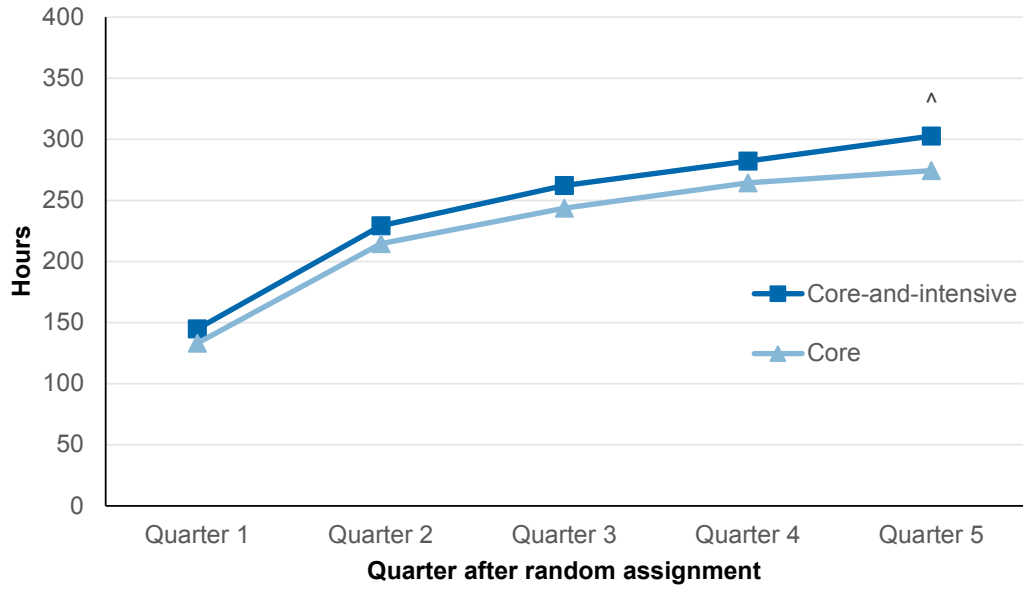


Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Figure VI.9. Hours worked for core-and-intensive and core groups (all customers)

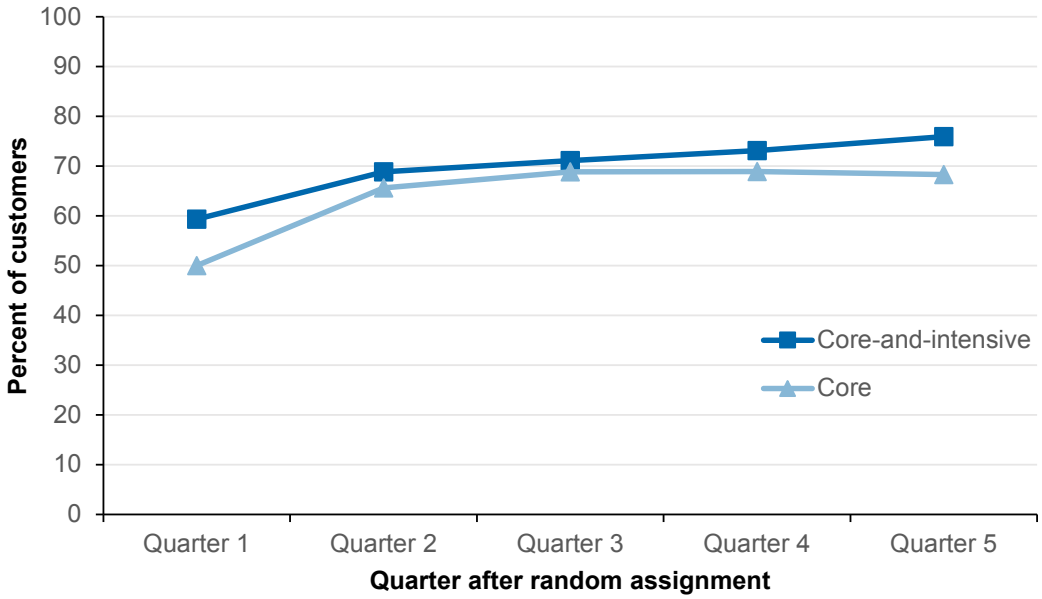


Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Figure VI.10. In productive activity for core-and-intensive and core groups (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

3. Characteristics of jobs among those who were employed

The jobs held by customers in the core-and-intensive and core groups had similar hours and wage rates. Among customers who held at least one job, customers in the core-and-intensive and core groups worked similar hours per week. About two-thirds of employed core-and-intensive and core group members were employed full time (Table VI.4). Their wages were also similar, averaging about $13 per hour; this wage rate is similar to their wage rate before random assignment (see Table III.2). This finding suggests that the impact of access to intensive services on earnings is explained by impacts on employment rates rather than differences in pay rates among those who find employment.

Core-and-intensive customers' most recent jobs were more likely than those of core customers to offer fringe benefits. For example, 88 percent of core-and-intensive customers who were employed were offered health insurance through their jobs compared with 83 percent of employed core customers.

Table VI.4. Characteristics of most recent job for core-and-intensive and core groups (employed customers)

	Mean by study group	
	Core-and-intensive	Core
Hours worked per week	36.6	36.3
Employed full-time (35 or more hours per week, %)	71	66
Hourly wage rate ($)	13.12	12.92
Job offered (%)		
Any benefits	98	96
Health insurance	88^	83
Paid vacation (other than holidays)	75	72
Paid holidays	81^	75
Paid sick days	64^	54
Any paid time off	88	84
Pension or retirement benefits	70^	66
Tuition assistance or reimbursement	37^	30
Job classified as (%)		
Regular full- or part-time	83	82
Self-employed or independent contractor	3	7
Temporary or day labor	9	7
On-call	4	3
Job at contractor	1	2
Unionized job (%)	8	7

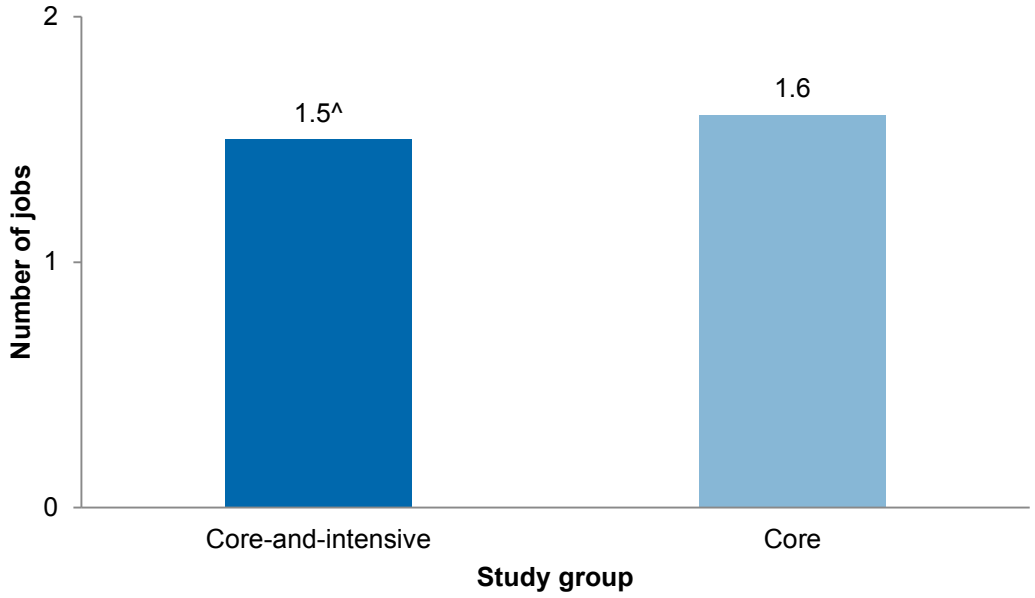
Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: Dollars are 2012 dollars. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group became employed.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Core-and-intensive customers who were employed during the follow-up period held fewer jobs on average than did core customers—a statistically significant but not large difference (Figure VI.11). Core-and-intensive customers who were ever employed held 1.5 jobs on average compared with 1.6 for core customers. This is driven by more core-and-intensive customers holding only one job: 67 percent of employed core-and-intensive customers held only one job compared with 60 percent of core customers (Appendix C, Table C.VI.6).

Figure VI.11. Number of jobs held since random assignment for core-and-intensive and core groups (employed customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group became employed.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Core-and-intensive and core customers who were employed had occupations that were broadly similar (Table VI.5). Core-and-intensive customers were about 6 percentage points less likely to have been employed in retail sales in their most recent jobs than were core customers, but there are few other notable differences.

Table VI.5. Most frequently reported occupations of current or most recent job reported for core-and-intensive and core groups (employed customers)

	Mean for study group members	
	Core-and-intensive	Core
Occupation of current or most recent job (%)		
Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aide	8	8
Retail sales worker	10^	15
Motor vehicle operator	6	7
Information and record clerk	10	10
Material moving worker	7	7
Material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing worker	7	5
Building cleaning and pest control worker	4	4
Other office and administrative support worker	5	5
Health technologists and technician	5	3
Financial clerk	4	3
Construction trades worker	2^	4
Other personal care and service worker	2	3

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: Occupations are categorized based on two-digit Standard Occupational Classifications. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group became employed.

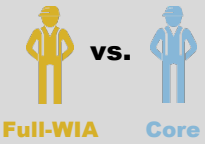
^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

C. Impacts of the availability of both WIA-funded training and WIA-funded intensive services

Comparing the average outcomes for the full-WIA group with the average outcomes of the core group provides an estimate of the combined effect of the availability of both training and intensive services compared with the availability of core services only. As shown in Chapters IV and V, the availability of WIA-funded training and intensive services not only increased participation in training and receipt of intensive services, it increased receipt of some core and supportive services as well.

By design, the differences between the outcomes of the full-WIA and core groups are equal to the sum of the differences between the outcomes of full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (as discussed in Section A) and the differences between the outcomes of the core-and-intensive and core groups (as discussed in Section B). In this section, we present estimates for all three study groups in the figures and tables to help illustrate the extent to which the impacts of the availability of WIA-funded training and WIA-funded intensive services are driven by training or intensive service availability, but we focus our discussion on comparisons between the full-WIA and core groups.

Comparing the full-WIA and core groups

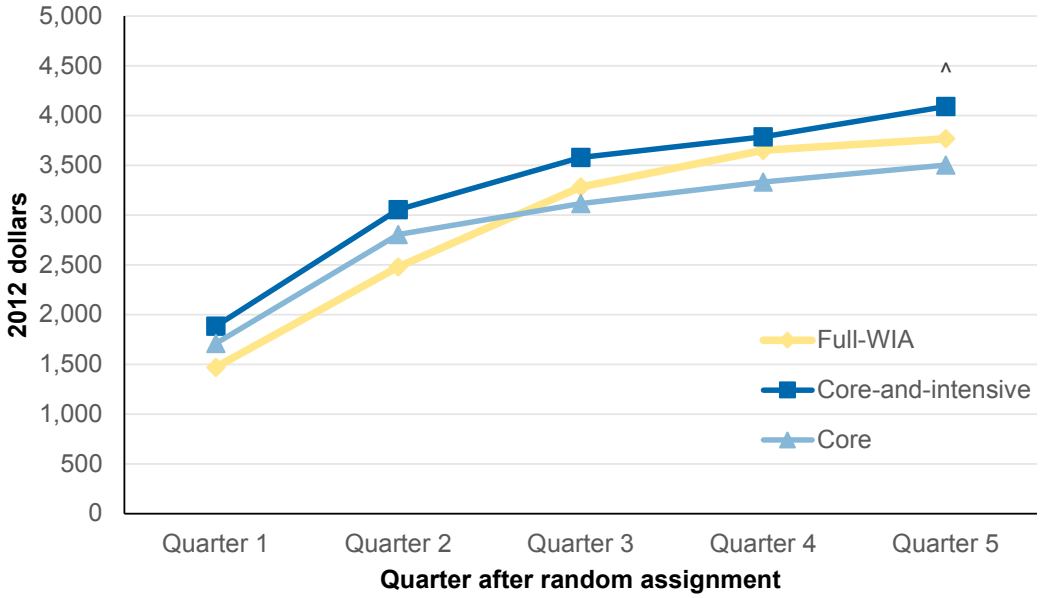


- This contrast examines the impact of the availability of WIA-funded training and intensive services compared to a situation in which only core services are available:
  - Full-WIA customers were eligible for WIA-funded training if they would have been eligible in the absence of the study. They were also eligible for WIA-funded core and intensive services.
  - Core customers were eligible for core services but not WIA-funded intensive or training services.
- The differences in service receipt that underpin the impacts on earnings and employment include:
  - Full-WIA customers were more likely than core customers to enroll in training.
  - Most full-WIA customers' training was funded by WIA rather than other sources.
  - Full-WIA customers were more likely to receive one-on-one assistance, take assessments, participate in workshops, use the resource room, and receive supportive services than core customers.

1. Earnings

The availability of both WIA-funded training and intensive services did not significantly increase average earnings in any of the first five quarters after random assignment (Figure VI.12). The full-WIA group earned about $300 more than the core group in Quarter 4 and about $250 more than the core group in Quarter 5, but for neither of those quarters is the impact estimate statistically significant.

Figure VI.12. Quarterly earnings for each study group (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

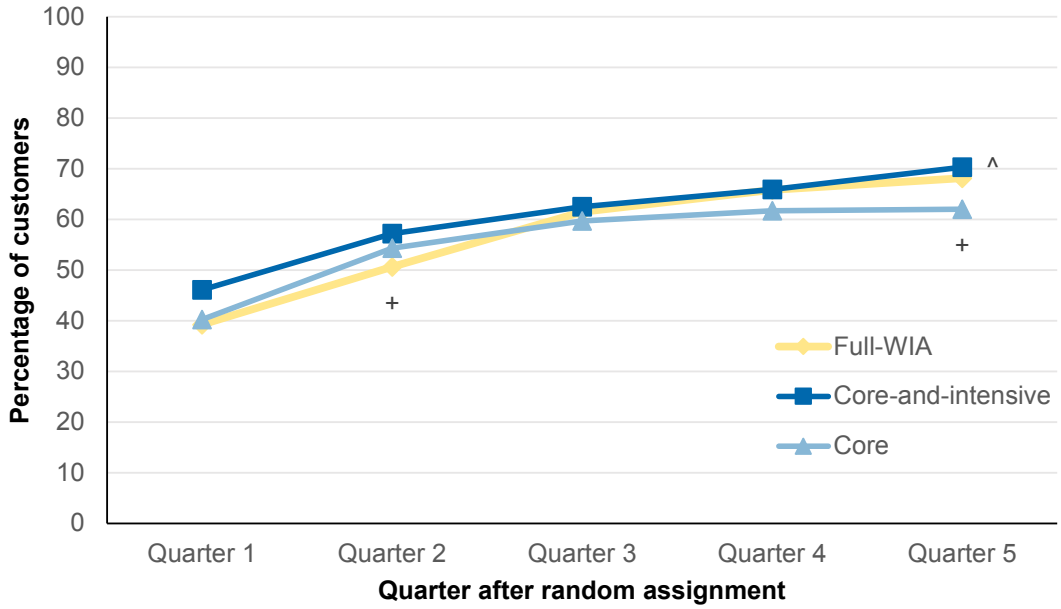
^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

2. Employment

Although their earnings are not significantly different, customers in the full-WIA group were significantly more likely to be employed in Quarter 5 than were core customers (Figure VI.13). Sixty-eight percent of the full-WIA group was employed, compared with 62 percent of the core group.

Figure VI.13. Quarterly employment rates for each study group (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

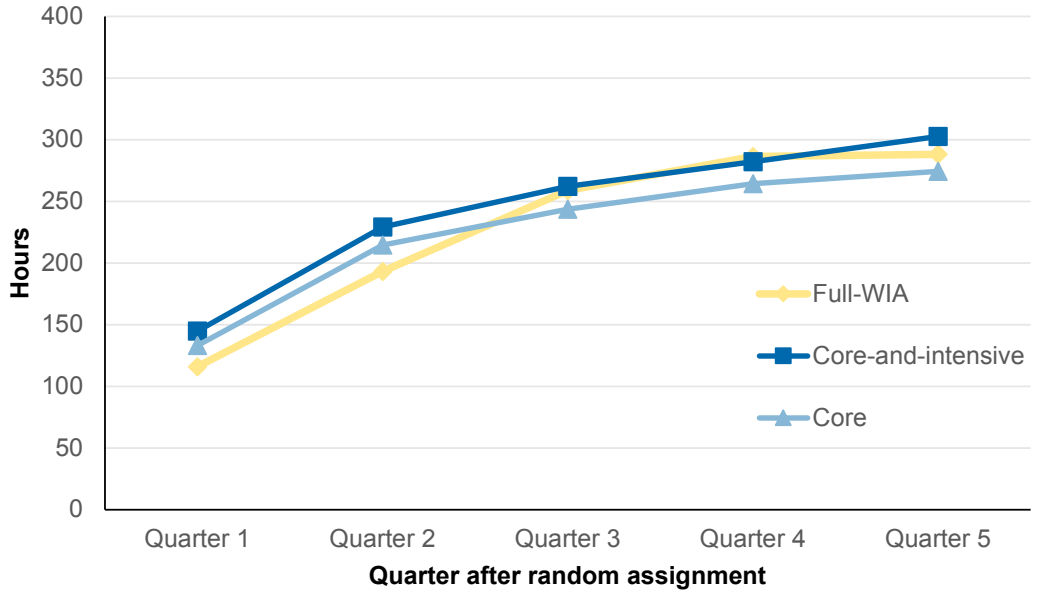
^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

\+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

The pattern of impacts on hours worked in each quarter is similar to the pattern of employment impacts, but, as of Quarter 5, the difference in hours worked between the full-WIA and core groups was not significant (Figure VI.14). Full-WIA customers worked about 288 hours in Quarter 5 compared with 274 for core customers.

Full-WIA customers were more likely than core customers to be in a productive activity throughout the follow-up period (Figure VI.15) but significantly so only in Quarter 1. In Quarter 1, full-WIA customers were more likely than core customers to be in training but slightly less likely than core customers to be employed. By the fifth quarter, the opposite was true: full-WIA customers were more likely than core customers to be employed but were slightly less likely to be in training. The difference in productive activity is not significant in Quarter 5, though.

Figure VI.14. Hours worked for each study group (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

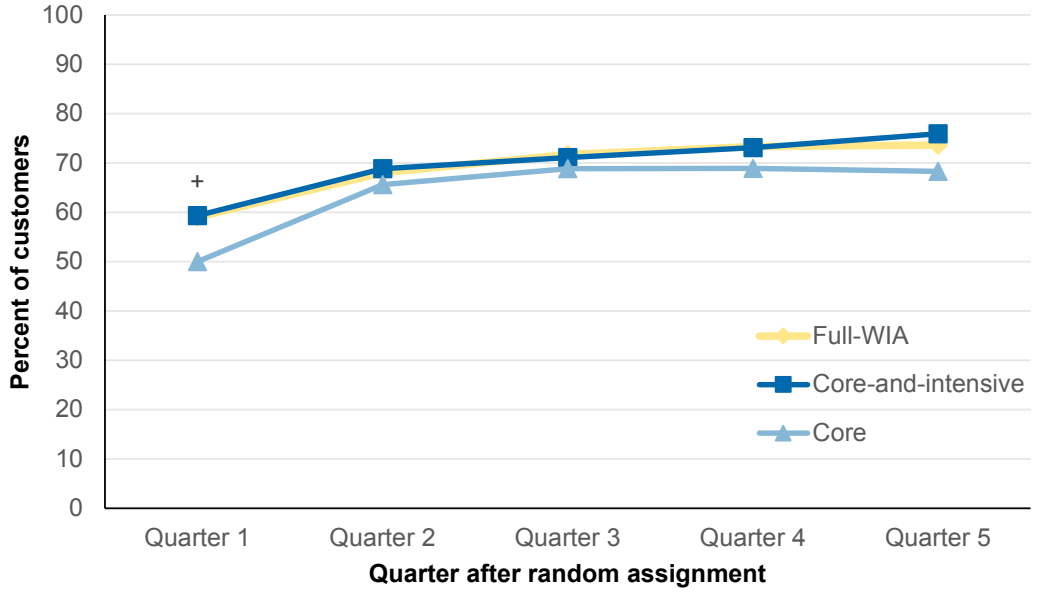
Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

Figure VI.15. In productive activity for each study group (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

3. Characteristics of jobs among those who were employed

Full-WIA customers who were employed at any point in the follow-up period held jobs that were broadly similar to those held by core customers (Table VI.6). Wage rates did not differ significantly between the groups ($12.63 per hour for full-WIA and $12.92 for core). Both full-WIA and core customers worked 36 or 37 hours per week, and they were about equally likely to be offered specific fringe benefits. The only notable difference is that full-WIA employed customers were about 5 percentage points more likely to hold jobs that were on-call and correspondingly less likely to hold regular full- or part-time jobs than core employed customers.

Table VI.6. Characteristics of most recent job for each study group (employed customers)

	Means by study group		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Hours worked per week	36.9	36.6	36.3
Employed full-time (35 or more hours per week, %)	68	71	66
Hourly wage rate ($)	12.63	13.12	12.92
Job offered (%)			
Any benefits	95	98	96
Health insurance	83*	88^	83
Paid vacation (not holidays)	71	75	72
Paid holidays	72	81^	75
Paid sick days	58	64^	54
Any paid time off	80	88	84
Pension or retirement benefits	63*	70^	66
Tuition assistance or reimbursement	34	37^	30
Job classified as (%)			
Regular full- or part-time	75*+	83	82
Self-employed or independent contractor	7	3	7
Temporary or day labor	9	9	7
On-call	8	4	3
Job at contractor	2	1	2
Unionized job (%)	9	8	7

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group became employed.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

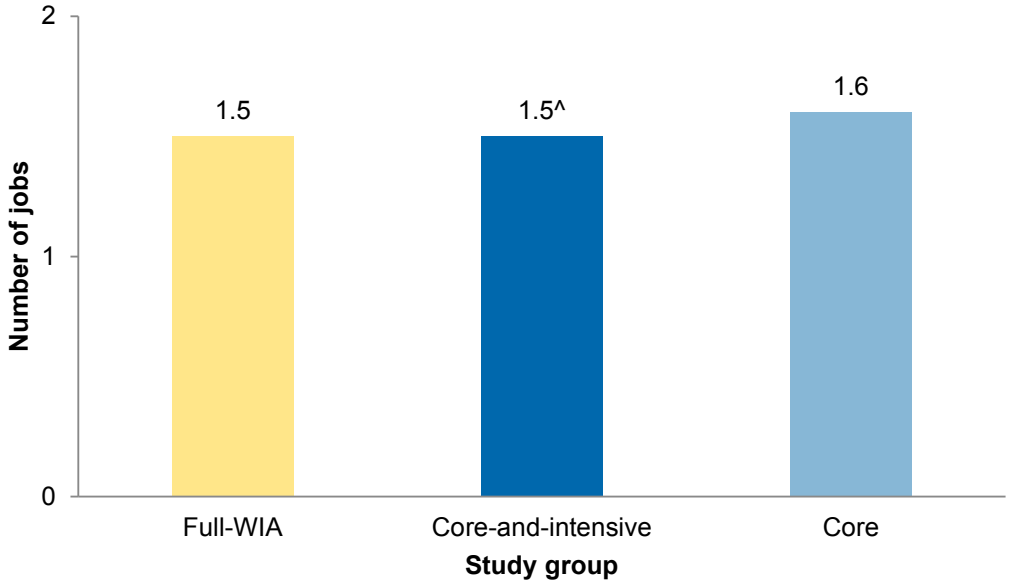
^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Full-WIA and core customers who were employed at some point during the 15-month follow-up period held about the same number of jobs on average (Figure VI.16). Underlying these estimates is the finding that full-WIA and core customers had similar distributions of the number of jobs held: 60 percent of each group held just one job, about 30 percent held two jobs, and the remainder held three or more (Appendix C, Table C.VI.6).

Full-WIA customers who were employed at some point during the follow-up period were about twice as likely to hold jobs as a nursing, psychiatric, and home health aide compared with core customers, but there are few other differences in the types of jobs held (Table VI.7).

Figure VI.16. Number of jobs held since random assignment for each study group (employed customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group became employed.

The difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

The difference between the full-WIA and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

Table VI.7. Most frequently reported occupations of current or most recent job reported for each study group (customers employed in follow-up period)

	Mean for study group members		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Occupation of current or most recent job (%)			
Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aide	14+	8	8
Retail sales worker	12	10^	15
Motor vehicle operator	10	6	7
Information and record clerk	7	10	10
Material moving worker	7	7	7
Material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing worker	6	7	5
Building cleaning and pest control worker	5	4	4
Other office and administrative support worker	3	5	5
Health technologists and technician	3	5	3
Financial clerk	4	4	3
Construction trades worker	3	2^	4
Other personal care and service worker	3	2	3

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: Occupations are categorized based on two-digit Standard Occupational Classifications. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group became employed.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

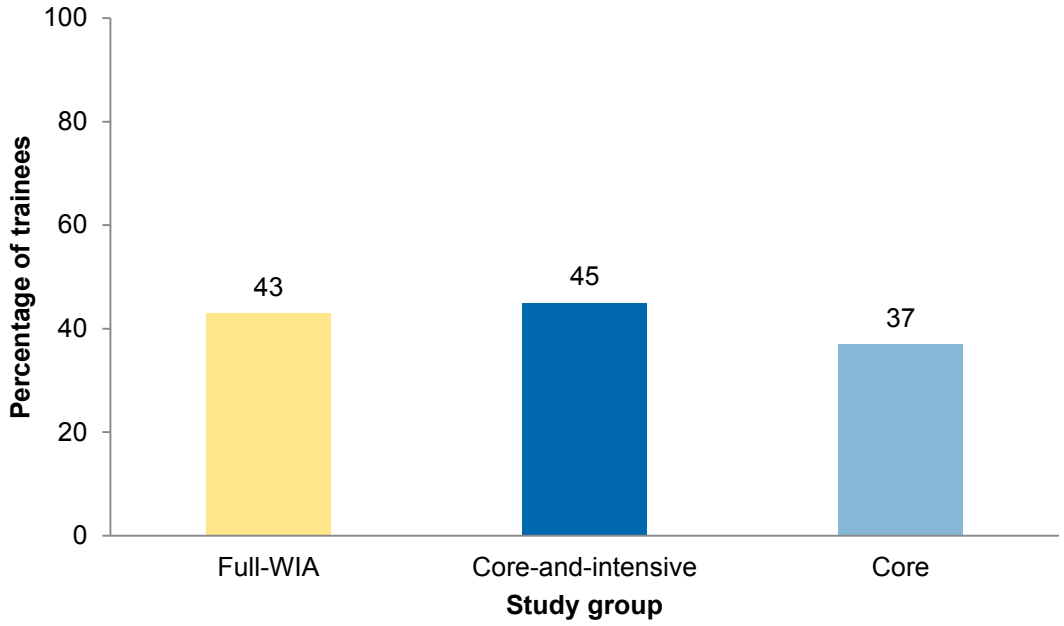
^ Difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

D. Relevance of training to subsequent occupation

Customers likely enrolled in training in hopes of better employment prospects. Our survey findings suggest that less than half of all customers who participated in training believed it helped them find employment during the 15-month follow-up period. Forty-three percent of full-WIA customers who enrolled in any training program reported that training helped them find employment (Figure VI.17). In comparison, 45 percent of core-and-intensive and 37 percent of core trainees believed training helped them find employment, although this difference is not statistically significant. In the rest of this section we explore in more depth how well the field of the training programs matched the job that customers obtained.

Figure VI.17. Believe found a job due to training (trainees)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group were trainees.

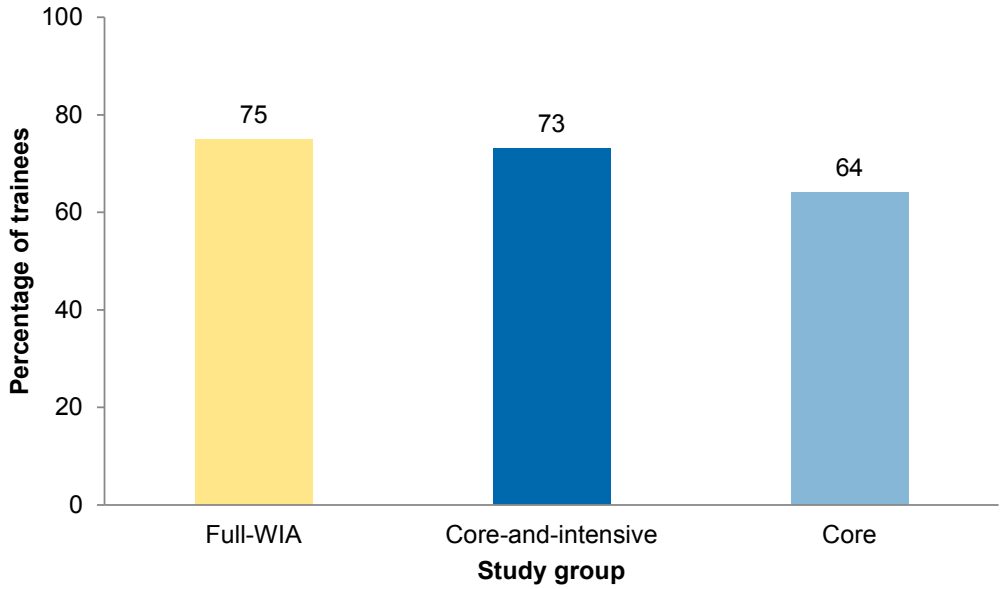
The difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

The difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

The difference between the full-WIA and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

In all three study groups, most customers who participated in training during the follow-up period were employed in Quarter 5 (Figure VI.18). Seventy-five percent of full-WIA trainees was employed in Quarter 5, and 73 percent of core-and-intensive trainees were employed in Quarter 5. Sixty-four percent of core trainees was employed in Quarter 5, but this is not statistically less than it is for full-WIA or core-and-intensive trainees.

Figure VI.18. Employment rate in quarter 5 (trainees)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.
Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group were trainees.
The difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.
The difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.
The difference between the full-WIA and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

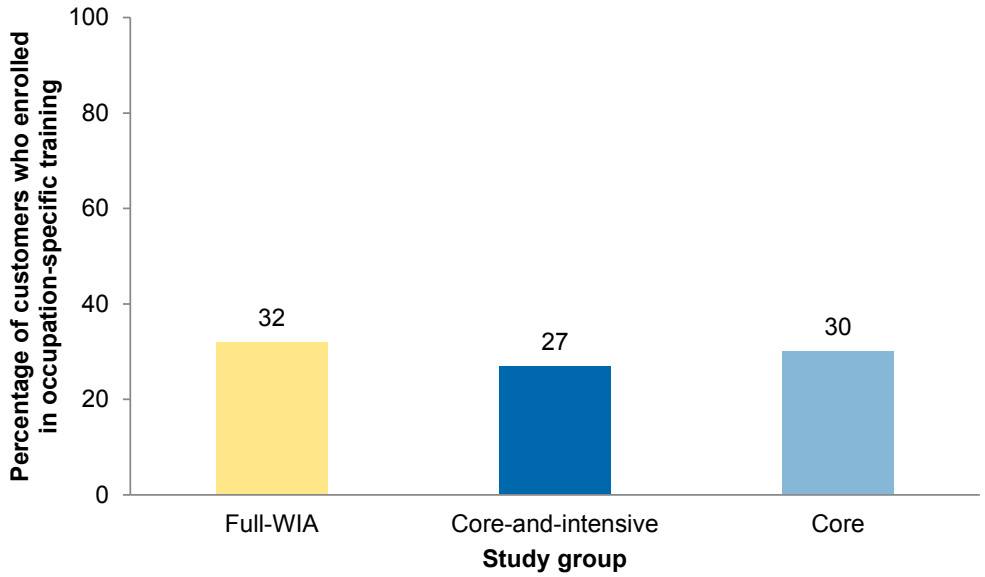
Some training programs provide general skills, such as community college classes toward an associate degree, but many vocational training programs provide skills intended to help customers find employment in specific occupations. For these more specific programs, we explored how well vocational training programs helped customers find employment in a related occupation.

Full-WIA customers were more likely to participate in training of all types than were core-and-intensive or core customers (Chapter V), but upon completing training, their subsequent jobs were not more likely to be in the field in which they trained. In all study groups, fewer than one-third of all customers who participated in training designed to prepare them for an occupation actually found a job related to that occupation: this was the case for 32 percent of such customers from the full-WIA group, 27 percent of such customers from the core-and-intensive group, and 30 percent of such customers from the core group (Figure VI.19). This finding corroborates customers' own beliefs about whether training helped them find employment. However, this result could possibly change when we examine a longer time period with the 30-month survey, as former training participants might become more settled in the labor market and find jobs in the occupations for which they trained.

Although few customers successfully used training as a means to change occupations, many more did change occupations during the 15-month follow-up period (Table VI.8). Between 39 and 43 percent of customers in each study group (including those who did and did not enroll in

training) found employment in occupations different from those they held before random assignment, and there were no significant differences between the study groups in this regard.

Figure VI.19. Found employment in an occupation related to training (customers who enrolled in occupation-specific training)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: Occupations are categorized based on two-digit Standard Occupational Classifications. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes. Differences between study groups cannot be interpreted as causal impacts because not all members of each study group were enrolled in occupation-specific training.

The difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

The difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

The difference between the full-WIA and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

Table VI.8. Whether jobs before and after random assignment differed (all customers)

	Mean for study group members		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Employed and most recent job is in different from occupation before random assignment (%)	42	43	39
Employed and most recent job is in same occupation as before random assignment (%)	18	19	16
Not employed in follow-up period or in five years before random assignment (%)	40	37	45

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey and WIA Gold Standard Evaluation study registration form.

Notes: Occupations are categorized based on two-digit Standard Occupational Classifications. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

The customer's job after random assignment was in the same occupation as the one before random assignment for between 16 and 19 percent of customers, with no significant difference across study groups. The remaining 37 to 45 percent of customers in each study group were either not employed in the follow-up period or had not been employed in the five years before random assignment; this percentage did not differ significantly across study groups.

E. Impacts on earnings and employment for adults and dislocated workers

We found some suggestive evidence that the magnitudes of the impacts on earnings were larger for dislocated workers than adults. Positive impact estimates were generally more positive for dislocated workers than adults, and negative impacts were generally more negative for dislocated workers than adults. In the fifth quarter, adults in the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups both earned about $3,600 (Table VI.9). Full-WIA dislocated workers earned $4,225 on average in Quarter 5 compared with $4,992 for core-and-intensive dislocated workers, a difference of $767, but this impact estimate is still not statistically significant, nor is it significantly different from the impact for adults. The estimated impact of the availability of intensive services is about $400 for adults and about $800 for dislocated workers, but again, these estimates are not statistically significant nor significantly different from each other. The same pattern of impacts and differences between adults' and dislocated workers' impacts holds for employment rates in Quarter 5, and these estimates are not statistically significant, either.

Table VI.9. Quarter 5 earnings and employment rates for adults and dislocated workers

	Mean by study group		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Earnings in Quarter 5[a] ($)			
Adults	3,610	3,581	3,187
Dislocated workers	4,225	4,992	4,186
Employed in Quarter 5[a] (%)			
Adults	68	67	63
Dislocated workers	71	77	63
Sample size			
Adults	**1,009**	**971**	**983**
Dislocated workers	**702**	**710**	**680**

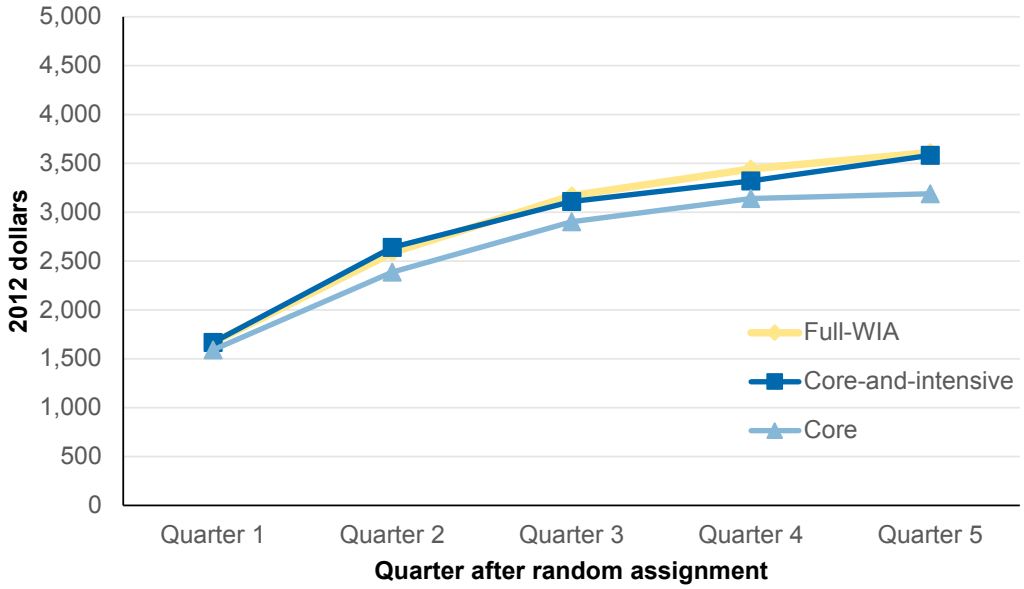
Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey and WIA Gold Standard Evaluation study registration form.

Notes: Dollars are 2012 dollars. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.
None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.
None of the differences between the full-WIA and core groups are not significant at the 5 percent level.
[a]None of the differences in impacts across complementary subgroups are significant at the 5 percent level.

What we found for Quarter 5 earnings is true across all five quarters—differences between the three study groups appear to be more pronounced for dislocated workers than for adults, but the impacts for dislocated workers are not statistically significant for most quarters (Figures VI.20 and VI.21). This is true for employment rates as well (Appendix C, Table C.VI.4).

Figure VI.20. Quarterly earnings among adults in all three study groups

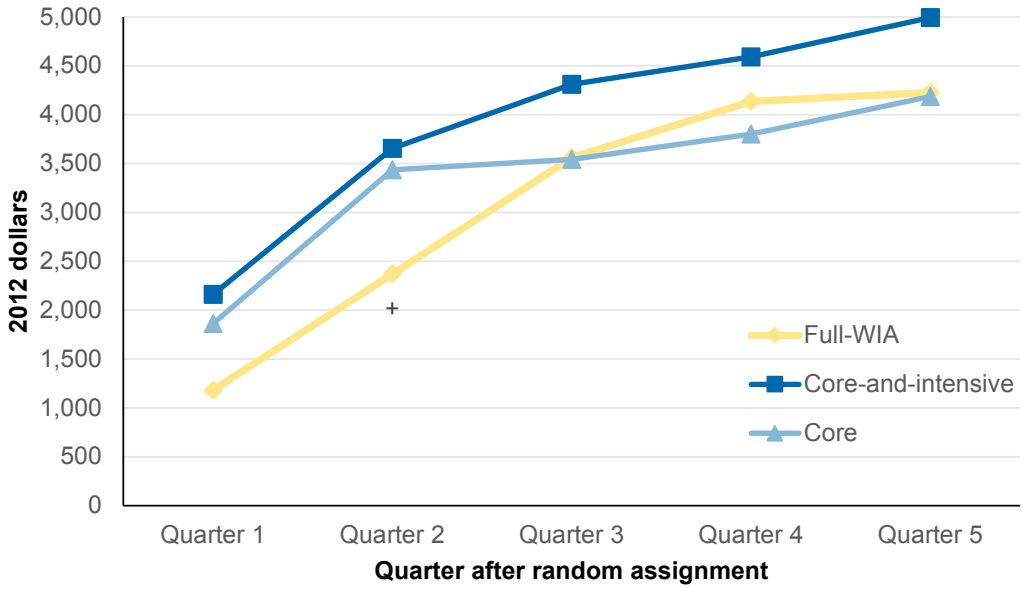


Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.
None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.
None of the differences between the full-WIA and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

Figure VI.21. Quarterly earnings among dislocated workers for all three study groups



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.
None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.
+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

One reason for the small impacts of training among adults is that the difference in the training rates between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive group was small for these customers (see Chapter V). Among adults, 40 percent of the full-WIA group participated in training; but 33 percent of the core-and-intensive group also participated in training. In contrast, among dislocated workers, 50 percent of the full-WIA group participated in training, much more than the 27 percent of the core-and-intensive group who participated in training.

Previous studies of the effectiveness of WIA-funded training have found larger long-term impacts on earnings of training for adults than for dislocated workers (Heinrich et al. 2008; Andersson et al. 2013). Heinrich et al. (2008) found that, for adults, training had increased earnings five quarters after participating in WIA-funded training and in subsequent quarters (see Table I.1). They found earnings impacts in the first quarter were negative for women and positive for men. For dislocated workers, in contrast, they found that training substantially decreased earnings five quarters after participating in WIA-funded training and had no effect (positive or negative) on earnings in later quarters. Andersson et al. (2013) found that training had a negative impact on earnings by Quarter 5 for both adults and dislocated workers, but it was a larger negative impact for dislocated workers, and the impact on earnings became positive for adults only in subsequent quarters.

Our short-term findings on the impacts of training in the first quarters after random assignment are broadly similar to those of these previous studies. The main difference is that, unlike Andersson et al. (2013) and Heinrich et al. (2008) (for women), we did not find a large significant negative impact of training on earnings for adults in the first quarters of the follow-up period. As discussed previously, the small impact we found was likely a reflection of the small difference in the training rates between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups. Heinrich et al. (2008) did not have data on the percentage of the comparison group that participated in training funded by sources other than WIA. Hence, we are unable to determine whether these differences across studies occurred because the differences in training rates differed between the studies.

Using data for the 30-month follow-up period, we will be better able to determine whether the long-term impacts of training from this study are similar to the long-term estimates from these other studies.

Our findings on the impacts of the availability of intensive services do differ from those found by Heinrich et al. (2008). (Andersson et al. [2013] did not examine the impact of intensive services.) Although we found similar impacts of intensive services on adults, we found larger impacts of intensive services on dislocated workers, although the estimated differences were not significant. In contrast, Heinrich et al. (2008) found larger impacts of intensive services on adults than on dislocated workers. These differences might be because (1) the comparison group used by Heinrich et al. (2008) differed from the customers in their study who received intensive services in ways they were unable to control for, (2) their study occurred in different locations, or (3) their study occurred at a different time.

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VII. IMPACTS ON HOUSEHOLD INCOME, RECEIPT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, AND OTHER OUTCOMES

An ultimate goal of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs is to help customers become more self-sufficient. The programs seek to do this directly by referring customers to other services in the communities or indirectly by increasing employment and earnings, which in turn could increase household income, reduce reliance on UI and public assistance, improve health, and reduce involvement with the criminal justice system. In this chapter, we present impact findings for several outcome measures that might be directly or indirectly affected by participation in the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. A future report will use administrative data not yet available to examine receipt of UI benefits.

The outcomes presented in this chapter are measured for either the year preceding the 15-month survey (about two to five quarters following random assignment) or the whole 15-month follow-up period. For example, we measured annual household income in the year before the 15-month survey and health insurance coverage from the time of random assignment until the administration of the 15-month survey. Thus, the programs might not yet have had time to have affected these outcomes. Furthermore, because statistically significant earnings impacts of intensive services did not emerge until Quarter 5 (Chapter VI), it is likely that impacts on other measures of self-sufficiency will not appear until after the 15-month follow-up period.

We begin this chapter by comparing outcomes for the full-WIA group with those for the core-and-intensive group, which provides estimates of the impact of the availability of training funded by the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs (Section A). Next, we compare the outcomes of the core-and-intensive and core groups, which provides an estimate of the impact of the availability of intensive services (Section B). We then compare the outcomes of the full-WIA and core groups, which provides an estimate of the combined effect of the availability of both training and intensive services (Section C). Finally, we conclude the chapter with a discussion of differences in impacts for adults and dislocated workers (Section D).

Key findings

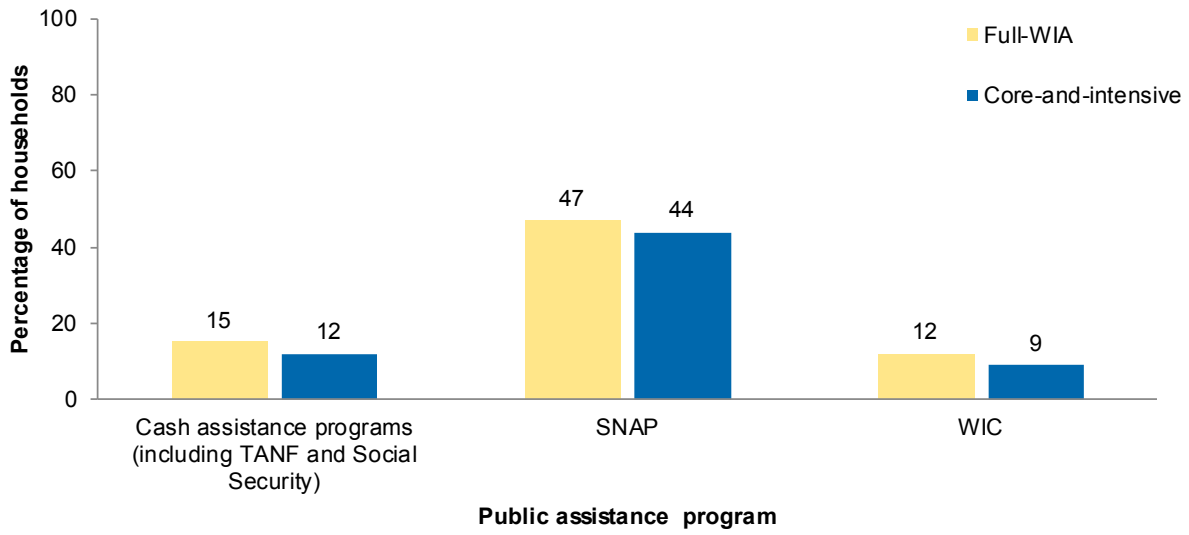
- Overall, the availability of intensive or training services funded by the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs did not significantly affect total annual household income.
- The evidence suggests that the availability of WIA-funded services did not affect customers' receipt of public assistance, health, health insurance coverage, or criminal activity within the 15-month follow-up period.
- The availability of WIA-funded training decreased total annual household income for dislocated workers but not for adults.

A. Impacts of the availability of WIA-funded training

Considering the effects of the availability of WIA-funded services on public assistance and total household income can help us to understand how the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs improved customer self-sufficiency. Examining impacts on public assistance allows us to assess whether the programs assist customers in becoming more financially independent. Total household income—mainly composed of a customer's earnings, earnings from others in their household (such as a spouse), transfers from government assistance programs, and UI benefits—also provides an overall measure of a customer's fiscal well-being.

The availability of training funded by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs did not significantly affect household receipt of public assistance (Figure VII.1). Customers in the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups were about as likely to receive cash assistance, SNAP, or WIC. Across both study groups, many customers received income from these programs. For example, 15 percent of full-WIA customers lived in a household in which someone received cash assistance, 47 percent lived in a household in which someone received SNAP, and 12 percent lived in a household in which someone received WIC. Estimated impacts of the availability of WIA-funded training on the *amount* of assistance received from cash assistance programs or SNAP are also statistically insignificant (Figure VII.2; we did not collect information on the value of WIC benefits).

Figure VII.1. Household receipt of public assistance for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (all customers)



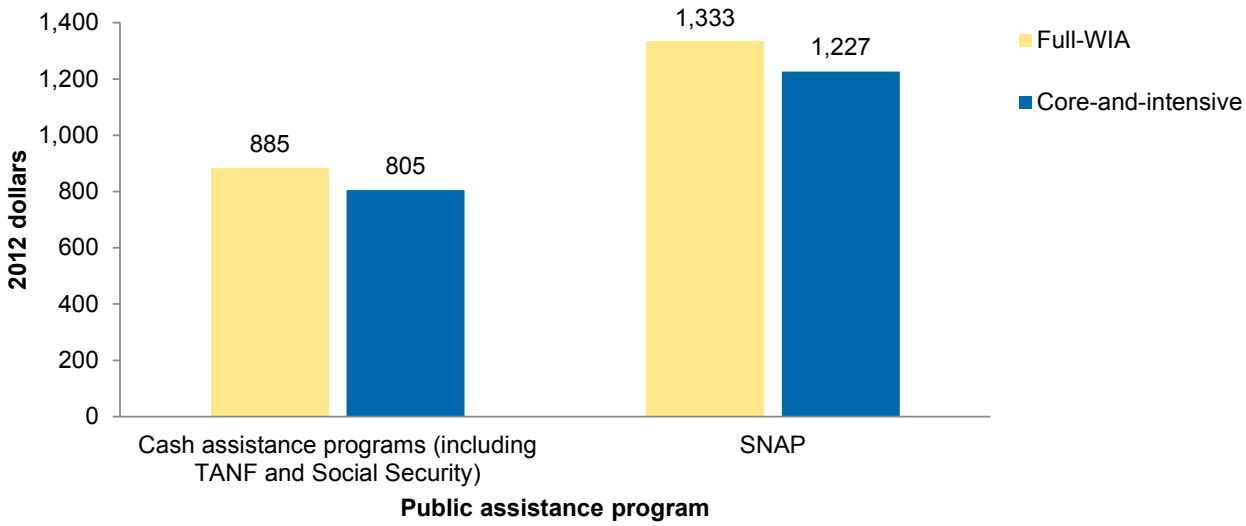
Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Figure VII.2. Amount of public assistance received in past year for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

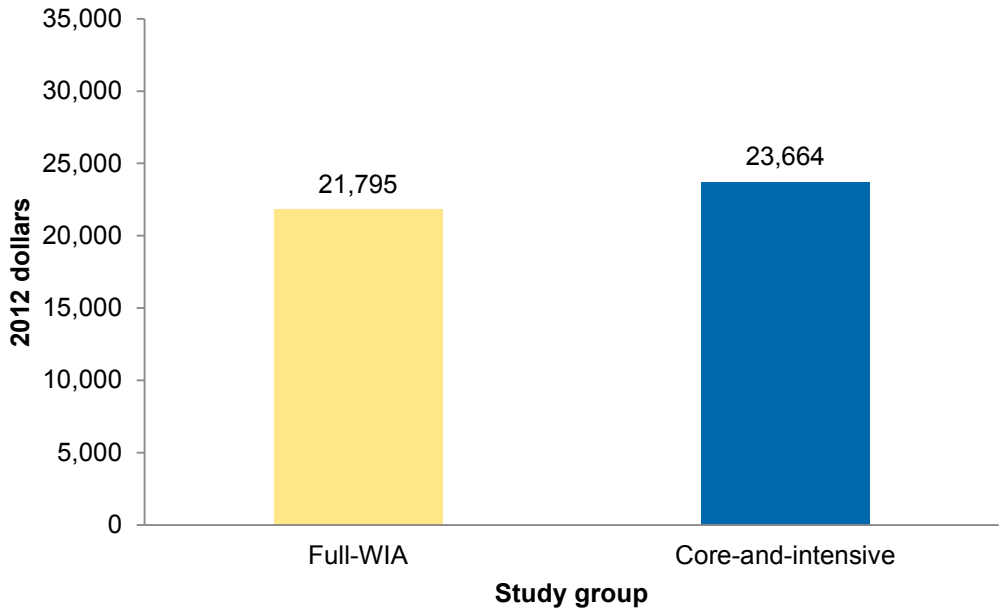
Neither difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Consistent with our finding that the availability of training funded by the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs did not significantly affect earnings during the interim follow-up period (Chapter VI), the availability of WIA-funded training did not significantly affect customers' total annual household income (all money received by all household members from employment, UI, or public assistance programs; Figure VII.3). Full-WIA customers reported an average household income of $21,795, compared with $23,664 for the core-and-intensive group. Like the observed decrease in earnings associated with the availability of WIA-funded training, this difference is not statistically significant, though it is substantively large. But, as with the earnings findings, it should be noted that these results reflect only short-term impacts; household income for one study group might increase relative to the other after the 15-month follow-up period.

Because success in the labor market can also affect outcomes beyond economic self-sufficiency, we further examined whether the availability of WIA-funded training affected customers' self-reported work-limiting health conditions, coverage by health insurance, and criminal activity. Our results provide little evidence that it did. We estimated no significant differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups in measures of health, health insurance, or criminal activity (Appendix C, Tables C.VII.2 and C.VII.3).

Figure VII.3. Total annual household income for full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

The difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

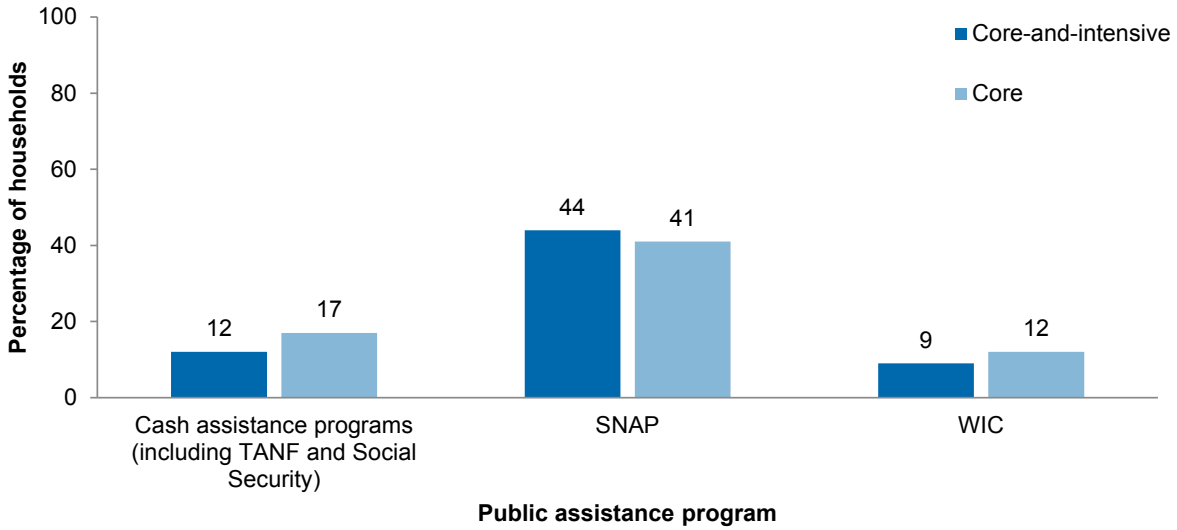
B. Impacts of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services

Despite our finding that the availability of WIA-funded intensive services increased earnings (Chapter VI), there is little evidence that the availability of intensive services funded by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs positively affected the overall financial well-being of customers in the year leading up to the 15-month follow-up survey. Customers in the core-and-intensive and core groups were about as likely to live in a household in which someone received benefits from SNAP, WIC, or cash assistance programs (Figure VII.4), and households received similar amounts of public assistance (Figure VII.5). Estimated differences in total annual household income are also not statistically significant for the two groups (Figure VII.6).

However, as noted earlier, we must be cautious in interpreting these findings. The positive impacts of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services on earnings were not observed until the fifth quarter after random assignment (Chapter VI). In contrast, our income and public assistance outcomes are measured for a full 12-month period, including Quarters 2 through 5 after random assignment. This difference in time horizon could explain the incongruence of the observed impacts of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services on quarterly earnings and total annual household income.

In addition, our results provide little evidence that the availability of intensive services funded by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs affected customers' health, health insurance coverage, or criminal activity (Appendix C, Tables C.VII.2 and C.VII.3).

Figure VII.4. Household receipt of public assistance for core-and-intensive and core groups (all customers)



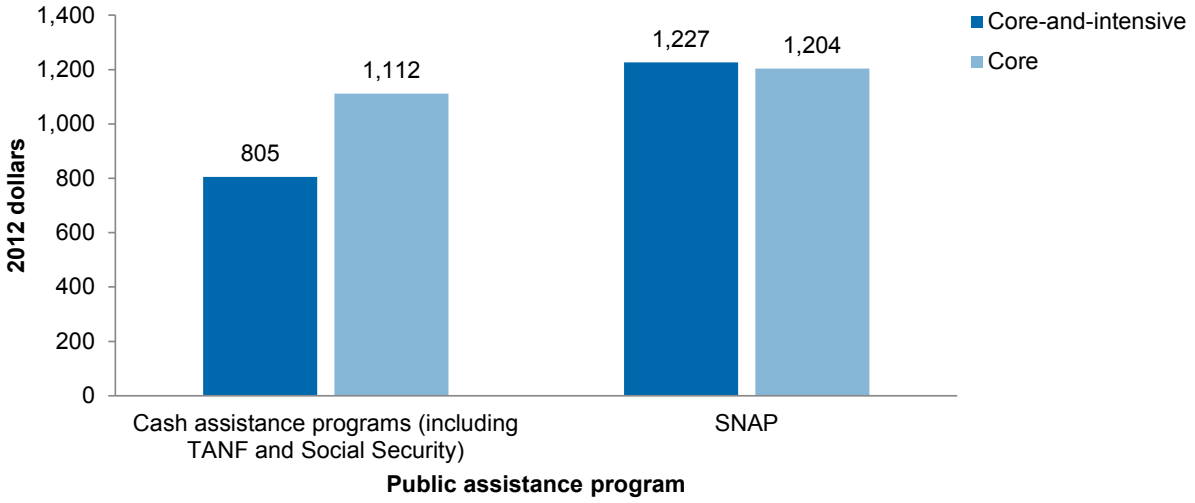
Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Figure VII.5. Amount of public assistance received in past year for core-and-intensive and core groups (all customers)



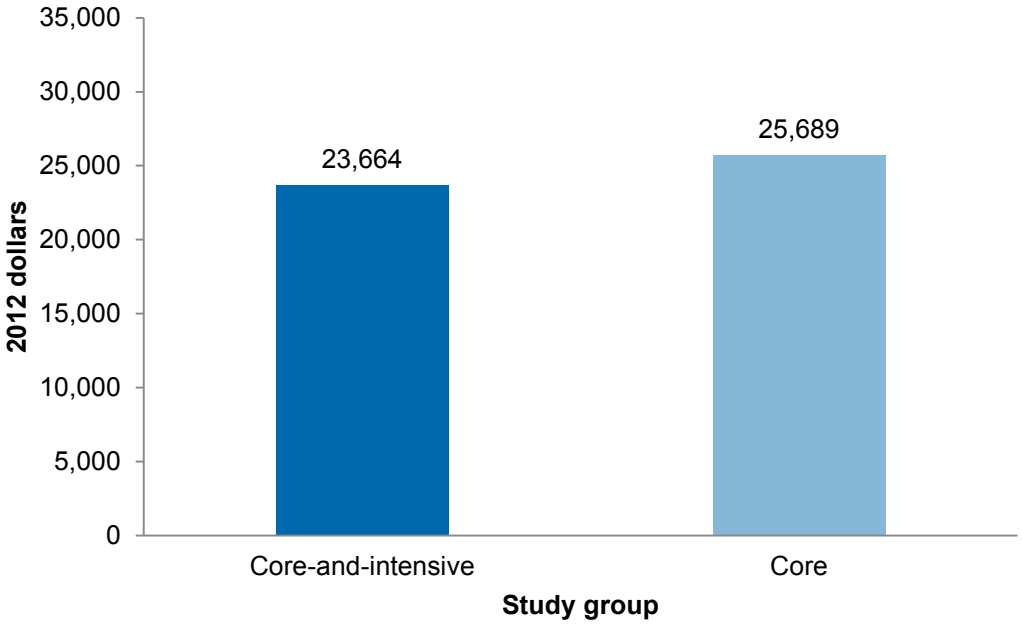
Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

Neither difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Figure VII.6. Total annual household income for core-and-intensive and core groups (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

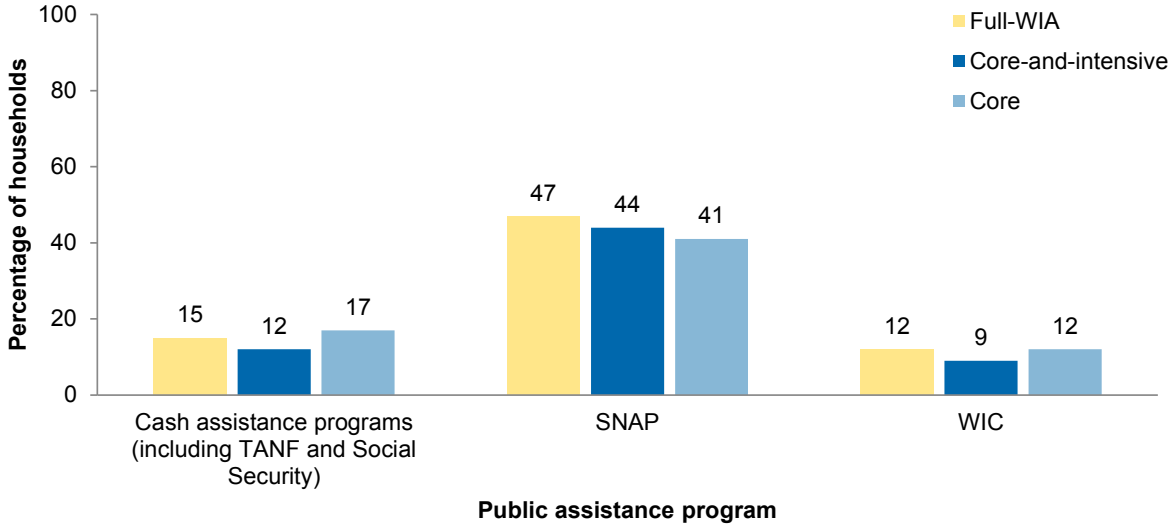
The difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

C. Impacts of the availability of both WIA-funded training and WIA-funded intensive services

By design, the impact of the availability of both WIA-funded training and WIA-funded intensive services will equal the sum of the impact of the availability of WIA-funded training (as discussed in Section A) and the impact of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services (as discussed in Section B). In this section, we present estimates for all three study groups in the figures and tables to help illustrate the extent to which the impacts of the availability of WIA-funded training and WIA-funded intensive services are driven by training or intensive service availability, but we focus our discussion on comparisons between the full-WIA and core groups.

We estimated no significant impacts on customers' well-being due to the availability of intensive and training services funded by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Customers in the full-WIA and core groups were about as likely to live in a household in which some member received public assistance (Figure VII.7), lived in a household receiving similar amounts of public assistance (Figure VII.8), and reported no significant differences in average total annual household income (Figure VII.9). However, like with earnings, the estimated impact on household income is substantively large, but it is not precisely estimated. In addition, we found no significant effect of the availability of WIA-funded training and intensive services on customers' health, health insurance coverage, or criminal activity (Appendix C, Tables C.VII.2 and C.VII.3).

Figure VII.7. Household receipt of public assistance for each study group (all customers)

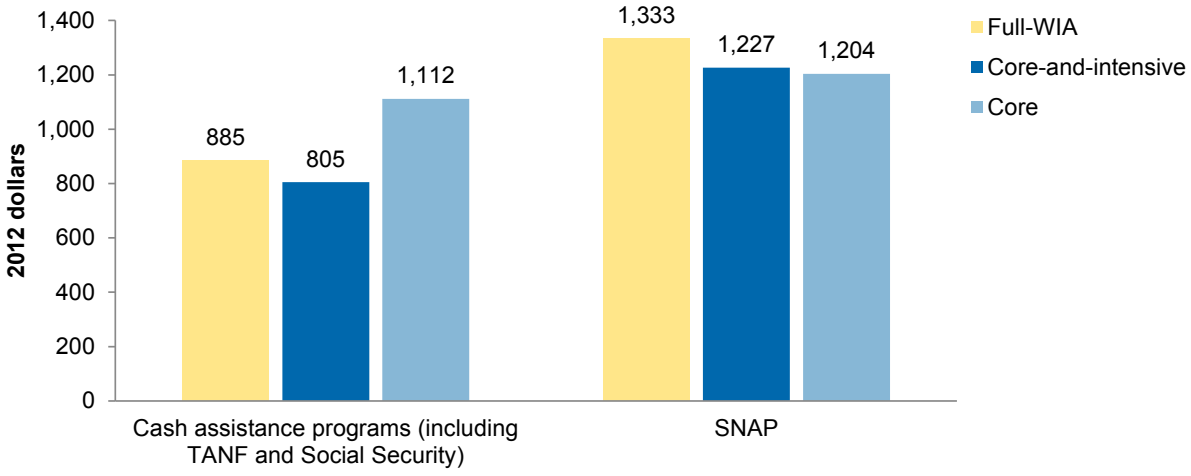


Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.
None of the differences between the core-and-intensive and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.
None of the differences between the full-WIA and core groups are significant at the 5 percent level.
SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Figure VII.8. Amount of public assistance received in past year for each study group (all customers)

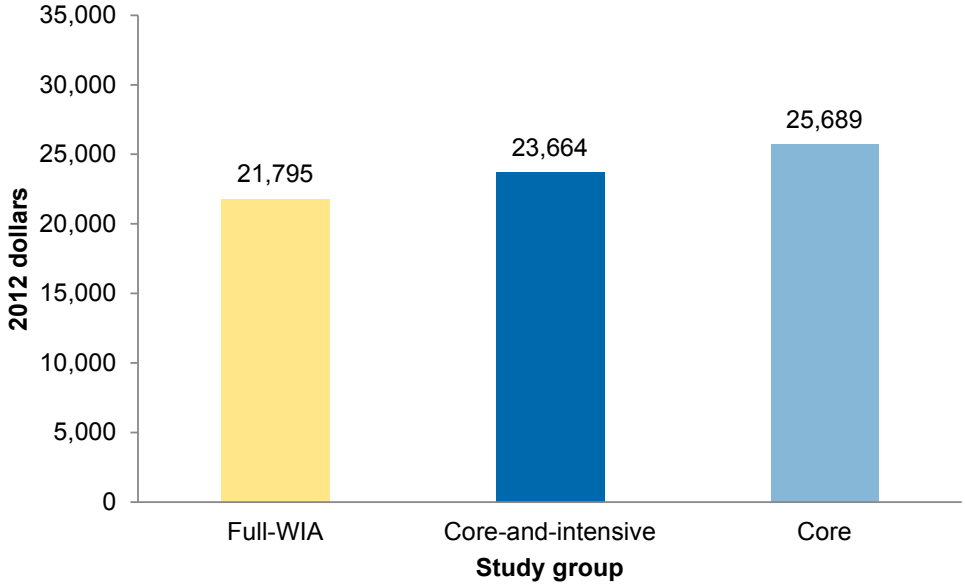


Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, p-values, and sample sizes.

Neither difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.
Neither difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.
Neither difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.
SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Figure VII.9. Total annual household income for each study group (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

The difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.
The difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.
The difference between the full-WIA and core groups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

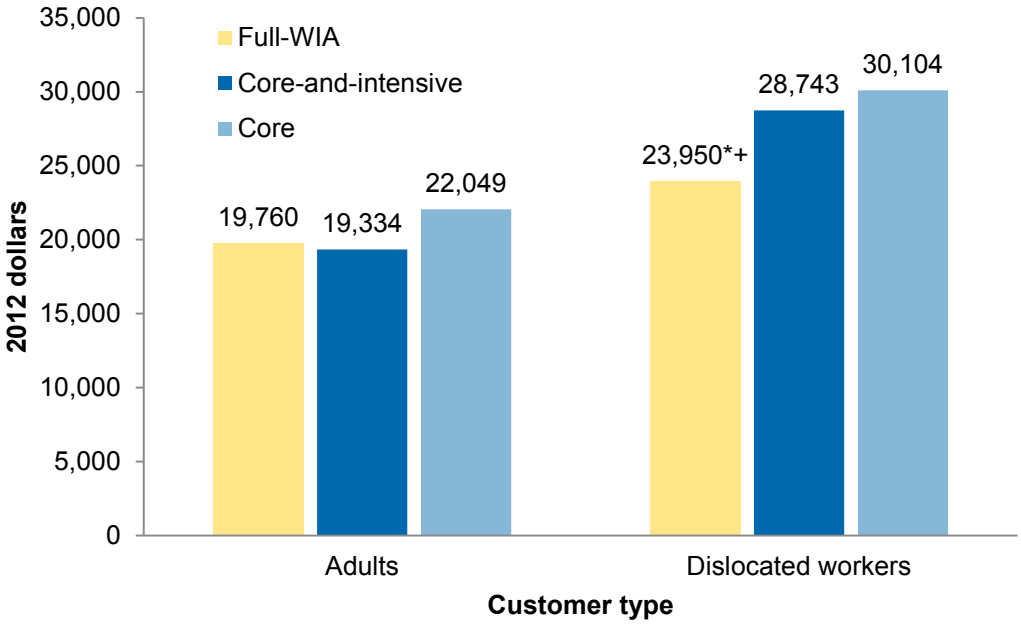
D. Impacts for adults and dislocated workers

Consistent with our findings for earnings, average total household income was significantly higher in each study group for dislocated workers than for adults (Figure VII.10). Across study groups, average total annual household income ranged from $23,950 to $30,104 for dislocated workers, compared with $19,334 to $22,049 for adults.

The availability of WIA-funded services had negative and statistically significant effects on household income for dislocated workers ut not for adults. Among dislocated workers, the availability of WIA-funded training (with or without WIA-funded intensive services) significantly decreased total annual household income, although the availability of intensive services alone did not significantly affect this outcome. In contrast, the availability of WIA-funded services did not significantly affect household income for adults. Although adults in the core group reported higher total annual household income than adults in either the full-WIA or core-and-intensive groups, the differences across study groups are not statistically significant.

Although these results suggest that the availability of WIA-funded training decreased the financial well-being of dislocated workers in the short run, they do not indicate the effect of this training in the long run. These estimates provide the impact of the availability of WIA-funded training only in Quarters 2 to 5 after random assignment. Because many more customers in the full-WIA group were enrolled in training during this period than were customers in the other study groups (Chapter V), they likely had not yet realized additional earnings and household income resulting from training.

Figure VII.10. Total annual household income, separately for adults and dislocated workers for each study group (all customers)



Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach, sensitivity analyses, and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

* Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Neither difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

The difference between adults and dislocated workers in the differences for the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Other differences in impacts for adults and dislocated workers are not statistically significant.

The availability of WIA-funded services had no impacts on the other outcomes discussed in this chapter for either dislocated workers or adults (Appendix D, Tables D.VII.1-D.VII.3 and Appendix E, Tables E.VII.1-E.VII.3). Compared with dislocated workers, adults were typically more likely to receive government assistance in the year before the 15-month follow-up survey, though differences are not always statistically significant. Adults in the core-and-intensive and core groups were also significantly more likely to be arrested during the 15-month follow-up period than dislocated workers in these study groups. But there are no notable differences in impact findings for the adults and dislocated workers for these and related outcomes.

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VIII. HOW IMPACTS DIFFERED BY CUSTOMER CHARACTERISTICS

Customers of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs have diverse backgrounds, with considerable variation in their work history, education, and demographic characteristics. Their different backgrounds can affect their experiences at American Job Centers and thus potentially the effectiveness of the services they receive. Assessing whether the impacts of the availability of WIA-funded services vary across customers of different types can help reveal which customer groups are especially well served by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and which customers may need different types of services than they were offered.

In this chapter, we examine the impact on earnings of the availability of WIA-funded training and intensive services for different subgroups of customers defined by their characteristics prior to random assignment. We focus on earnings in Quarter 5, at the end of the 15-month follow-up period, because this currently is our best summary indicator of the long-run impact of training and intensive services. Appendix F in the technical supplement to this volume provides estimated impacts by subgroup for other key outcomes.

We estimated impacts for subgroups defined by education, gender, race/ethnicity, age, and employment history. We selected these subgroups because they are policy relevant—the different customer subgroups are likely to face different employment barriers and hence have different service needs. Previous evaluations of employment and training programs have found the effectiveness of services differ by some of these characteristics (Card et al. 2015). Moreover, these subgroup designations are often used by program staff and policymakers to categorize customers for performance measurement reports (Social Policy Research Associates 2013). It is important to limit the number of subgroup analyses because the chances of finding spurious results in any one subgroup increase as the data are sliced in more and more ways.

Estimates of impacts within subgroups are imprecise. This is because the estimation of impacts for a particular subgroup (for example, males) uses only a subset of the data. Furthermore, statistical tests to gauge whether the estimated impacts differ across complementary subgroup categories (for example, across males and females) have limited statistical power. Hence, when the statistical tests show no differences in impacts between

Key findings

We have limited statistical power to estimate impacts by subgroup, and so the findings in this chapter are more exploratory. These findings include:

- Similar to the estimated impact for the full sample, the availability of WIA-funded training did not significantly affect Quarter 5 earnings for subgroups defined by education, gender, race/ethnicity, age, or employment history.
- The estimated impacts of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services on Quarter 5 earnings were generally positive, and some were statistically significant, for most of these subgroups. This is also similar to our findings for the full sample.
- The impact of the availability of both WIA-funded intensive and training services compared with core services alone was significantly positive for three subgroups: (1) men; (2) customers who were white, non-Hispanic; and (3) customers who did not work in the year prior to random assignment. Our estimates suggest that training did not have a large negative impact on Quarter 5 earnings for these subgroups; hence the positive impact of intensive services led to a positive impact of the availability of the two services together.

subgroups even if the estimates are quite different from each other, we cannot be sure these differences are meaningful. Thus, we consider the subgroup analyses in this chapter as exploratory.

In the rest of the chapter, we present the estimates of impacts by customer subgroup of the availability of WIA-funded training versus the availability of only intensive and core services (Section A), the availability of WIA-funded intensive services versus the availability of only core services (Section B), and the availability of both WIA-funded training and WIA-funded intensive services versus the availability of only core services (Section C).

A. How the impact of the availability of WIA-funded training differed by customers' characteristics

The estimated impacts of the availability of WIA-funded training for each of the 10 considered customer subgroups were similar to the full-sample impacts (Table VIII.1). As discussed in Chapter VI, we found that for the full sample, the full-WIA group earned an average of $322 less in Quarter 5 than the core-and-intensive group, but that this estimated difference is not statistically significant. For each of the 10 subgroups examined, we found no significant differences between the Quarter 5 earnings of the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups. All estimated

Table VIII.1. Impacts of the availability of WIA-funded training on Quarter 5 earnings by customer characteristic

Characteristic (at time of random assignment)	Mean by study group		Impact	Sample size[a]
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive		
Full sample	$3,767	$4,089	-$322	3,392
Education level				
Had received education beyond completion of high school or GED	$4,003	$4,845	-$841	1,353
Had not received education beyond completion of high school or GED	$3,555	$3,554	$0	1,984
Gender				
Women	$3,269	$3,673	-$403	2,011
Men	$4,551	$4,686	-$135	1,380
Race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	$4,678	$4,674	$3	1,518
Race/ethnicity other than white, non-Hispanic	$3,374	$3,796	-$423	1,862
Age				
Age 40 or younger	$3,844	$4,251	-$407	1,831
Age 41 or older	$3,652	$3,866	-$214	1,561
Employment history				
Worked in year before random assignment	$3,986	$4,648	-$662	1,225
Did not work in year before random assignment	$3,644	$3,780	-$136	2,158

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The means and impacts on earnings are in 2012 dollars. The technical appendices in an accompanying volume to this report provide more detail about the estimation approach and more estimates and *p*-values.

[a]Number of customers in the full-WIA and core groups.

None of the differences between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups are significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences in impacts between subgroups are statistically significant. For example, the impact of the availability of training (the difference between the full-WIA and the core-and-intensive groups) does not differ between men and women.

GED=General Educational Development certificate.

impacts are either negative (8 of 10 subgroups) or positive but very small (2 subgroups, each with impacts smaller than 1 percent). Additionally, we found that the estimated impacts of the availability of WIA-funded training do not differ significantly between the complementary subgroups (for example, the estimated impact for women did not differ significantly from that for men).

B. How the impact of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services differed by customers' characteristics

The positive impact of the availability of intensive services on Quarter 5 earnings found in the full sample (an increase of $586) is also evident for many subgroups of customers (Table VIII.2). The impact estimate of the availability of intensive services is positive for 9 of the 10 customer subgroups we examined and is statistically significant for 4 of the 10 subgroups. For most subgroups—except those defined by education—the impacts of intensive services on earnings in Quarter 5 are between about $500 and $600. Additionally, for all subgroup pairs, we found that the estimated difference in the impacts of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services between complementary subgroups (for example, male versus female) is statistically insignificant.

Table VIII.2. Impacts of the availability of WIA-funded intensive services on Quarter 5 earnings by customer characteristic

Characteristic (at time of random assignment)	Mean by study group		Impact	Sample size[a]
	Core-and-intensive	Core		
Full sample	$4,089	$3,503	$586*	3,344
Education level				
Had received education beyond completion of high school or GED	$4,845	$3,305	$1,540	1,336
Had not received education beyond completion of high school or GED	$3,554	$3,674	-$120	1,961
Gender				
Women	$3,673	$3,038	$635*	1,973
Men	$4,686	$4,155	$532	1,369
Race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	$4,674	$4,018	$657	1,519
Race/ethnicity other than white, non-Hispanic	$3,796	$3,337	$459*	1,817
Age				
Age 40 or younger	$4,251	$3,739	$512*	1,820
Age 41 or older	$3,866	$3,175	$691*	1,524
Employment history				
Worked in year before random assignment	$4,648	$4,150	$498	1,238
Did not work in year before random assignment	$3,780	$3,185	$595	2,100

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The means and impacts on earnings are in 2012 dollars. The technical appendices in an accompanying volume to this report provide more detail about the estimation approach and more estimates and *p*-values.

[a]Number of customers in the full-WIA and core groups.

*Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences in impacts between subgroups are statistically significant. For example, the impact of the availability of training (the difference between the full-WIA and the core-and-intensive groups) does not differ between men and women.

GED=General Educational Development certificate.

Although the estimated impacts by education level are both statistically insignificant, the pattern of estimates suggests that intensive services may have been more effective for more educated customers. Among customers with no more than a high school diploma or GED, core-and-intensive group customers earned about $120 less in Quarter 5 than core group customers, an estimate that is not statistically different from zero. Conversely, the availability of intensive services increased earnings by more than $1,500 in Quarter 5 for the more educated customers, although this is also not quite statistically significant (p=0.057). However, these findings are only suggestive, as we do not have sufficiently large sample sizes to conclude that the impact of intensive services differed between the two subgroups of customers defined by education.

C. How the impact of the availability of both WIA-funded training and intensive services differed by customers' characteristics

Although our estimated impact on Quarter 5 earnings of the availability of both WIA-funded training and WIA-funded intensive services compared to core services only is statistically insignificant within the full sample, some subgroup estimates of this impact are positive and statistically significant (Table VIII.3). In particular, we estimated that the availability of WIA-funded intensive and training services together increased the Quarter 5 earnings of three subgroups: (1) men, by $396; (2) customers who were white, non-Hispanic, by $660; and (3) customers who were not employed in the year before random assignment, by $459. Participation in training did not have a large negative impact on Quarter 5 earnings for any of these three subgroups (Table VIII.1). All other subgroup-specific estimates are statistically insignificant, with two negative and five positive. In each pair of subgroups, the difference in the impacts of the availability of both WIA-funded training and WIA-funded intensive services between the complementary subgroups (such as men versus women) is statistically insignificant.

Table VIII.3. Impacts of the availability of WIA-funded intensive and training services on Quarter 5 earnings by customer characteristic

Characteristic (at time of random assignment)	Mean by study group		Impact	Sample size[a]
	Full-WIA	Core		
Full sample	$3,767	$3,503	$264	3,374
Education level				
Had received education beyond completion of high school or GED	$4,003	$3,305	$699	1,337
Had not received education beyond completion of high school or GED	$3,555	$3,674	-$119	1,991
Gender				
Women	$3,269	$3,038	$231	2,002
Men	$4,551	$4,155	$396*	1,369
Race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	$4,678	$4,018	$660*	1,527
Race/ethnicity other than white, non-Hispanic	$3,374	$3,337	$37	1,835
Age				
Age 40 or younger	$3,844	$3,739	$105	1,855
Age 41 or older	$3,652	$3,175	$477	1,519
Employment history				
Worked in year before random assignment	$3,986	$4,150	-$163	1,237
Did not work in year before random assignment	$3,644	$3,185	$459*	2,130

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: The means and impacts on earnings are in 2012 dollars. The technical appendices in an accompanying volume to this report provide more detail about the estimation approach and more estimates and *p*-values.

[a]Number of customers in the full-WIA and core groups.

*Difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

None of the differences in impacts between subgroups are statistically significant. For example, the impact of the availability of training (the difference between the full-WIA and the core-and-intensive groups) does not differ between men and women.

GED=General Educational Development certificate.

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IX. HOW IMPACTS DIFFERED BY LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

The WIA Gold Standard Evaluation occurred at a time when, even though the Great Recession was officially over, unemployment was high. In 2012, the year in which most study participants were randomly assigned, the national unemployment rate was 8 percent. In contrast, the national unemployment rate fluctuated between 4 and 6 percent in 10 of the past 15 years. The policy relevance of this study's findings depends partly on whether they can be generalized to times when the United States' economy is stronger than it was during the study.

Understanding how the effectiveness of the programs varied by the local areas' unemployment rates will provide some suggestive evidence about whether we would have had different overall findings about the programs' effectiveness if they had been evaluated during a period of stronger economic performance. Unemployment in the study local areas varied considerably. In 2012, the unemployment rate in the local areas ranged from about 4 to 15 percent (see Figure III.2); the median unemployment rate in the study local areas was 8.5 percent. We created two equally-sized subgroups of local area: one defined by whether the area's 2012 unemployment rate was less than 8.5 percent (a low-unemployment area) and the other by whether the area's unemployment rate was 8.5 percent or more (a high-unemployment area).

In this chapter, we examine how the impacts of training and intensive services differed across the local areas grouped according to their local unemployment rates in 2012. As with the previous chapter, this analysis is more descriptive and less rigorous than those presented in earlier chapters. Differences across complementary subgroups of local areas in the impacts of service effectiveness might be because of unemployment rates, but other differences in policies or contextual factors that are correlated with the unemployment rate could also play a role. Moreover, sample sizes were not large enough to obtain precise estimates using subgroups of local areas.

We begin the chapter by discussing the potential role of the economy in service effectiveness (Section A) and then discuss the estimated impacts (Section B). Appendix G in the technical supplement to this volume provides estimated impacts by subgroup for other key outcomes not discussed here.

Key findings

- The availability of WIA-funded training did not increase earnings in either high- or low-unemployment local areas.
- We found some suggestive evidence that intensive services might be more effective in high-unemployment local areas than in low-unemployment local areas.
- Our evidence suggests that fewer intensive and training services were available from sources other than WIA in high-unemployment local areas.

A. Potential role of the economy in service effectiveness

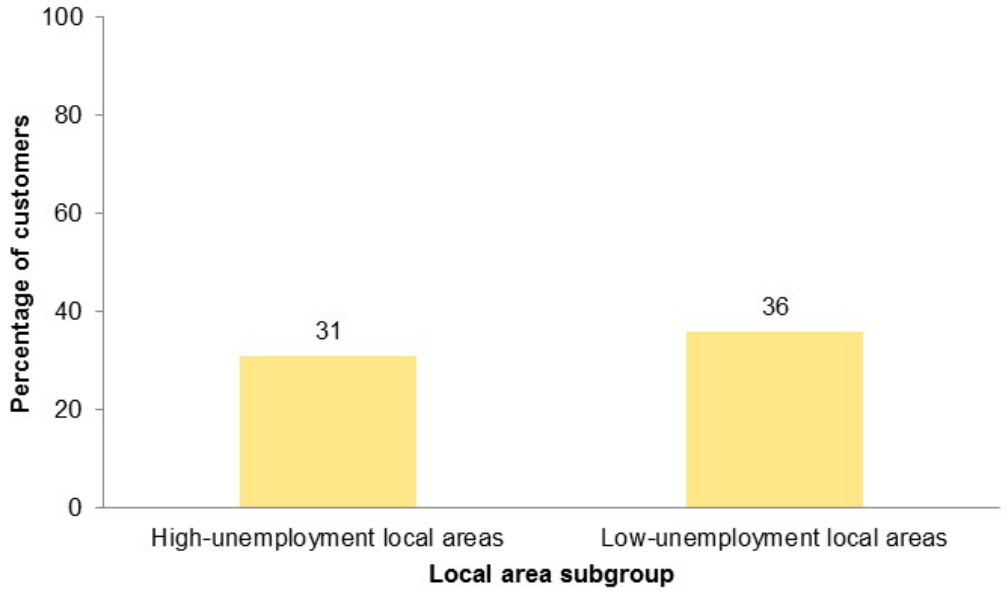
The state of the economy is likely one of the most important contextual factors affecting the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs over the course of this study. However, although there is consensus that the economy could affect the impact of the programs' services, there is little consensus on *how* they would be affected. On the one hand, a high unemployment rate might have made it harder even for program participants who have the necessary skills to find work and hence reduced the effectiveness of the services. On the other hand, a high unemployment rate could also have made it harder for those who were not receiving any kind of assistance to find work and could have made the receipt of intensive services and training even more effective. Prior empirical studies are inconclusive on whether workforce policies are more or less effective at times of high unemployment (Raaum et al. 2002; Kluve 2007; Lechner and Wunsch 2009; Card et al. 2015).

B. Differences in impacts across high- and low-unemployment local areas

The evidence suggests the following differences between subgroups of local areas with high unemployment rates and those with low unemployment rates.

- **Rates of participation in training for customers who had access to WIA-funded training or intensive services were similar in both local area subgroups.** About one-third of full-WIA group customers in both subgroups of local areas participated in WIA-funded training (Figure IX.1). Furthermore, about 43 or 44 percent of customers in the full-WIA group participated in training funded from any source and about 30 or 31 percent of customers in the core-and-intensive group participated in training (estimates are for high-unemployment and low-unemployment areas, respectively) (Table IX.1). Although more customers might have wanted to train where unemployment was high, we know from our implementation study that there was insufficient WIA funding to meet all the demand for training.
- **Our findings suggest that core customers, who did not have access to WIA-funded training or intensive services, were less likely to participate in training when they resided in high-unemployment local areas than when they resided in low-unemployment local areas.** In high-unemployment local areas, only 25 percent of core group customers participated in training (Table IX.1). In contrast, 34 percent of core group customers in low-unemployment local areas participated in training, although the difference across high and low-unemployment local areas (25 versus 34 percent) is not statistically significant. Yet, the training participation rate was more similar between core-and-intensive group members in each of the two subgroups of local areas (30 and 31 percent). This suggests that local area staff in high-unemployment local areas may have been particularly effective at helping intensive customers find non-WIA funded training.
- **Customers who did not have access to WIA-funded training or intensive services were also less likely to receive one-on-one assistance when they resided in high-unemployment local areas than when they resided in low-unemployment local areas.** Just as core customers were less likely to participate in training in high-unemployment local areas, they were also less likely to receive one-on-one assistance. In high-unemployment local areas, 39 percent of core customers received one-on-one assistance compared with

Figure IX.1. Full-WIA customers participating in WIA-funded training, by unemployment rate in local area



Source: WIA Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) covering service receipt over about 15 months after random assignment.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

The difference between subgroups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

Table IX.1. Means of key outcomes, by local area unemployment rate

	Mean by study group		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Earnings in quarter 5 ($)[a]			
High-unemployment local areas	3,258	3,896^	3,057
Low-unemployment local areas	4,726	4,480	4,407
Participated in any training program[b] (%)			
High-unemployment local areas	43*+	30	25
Low-unemployment local areas	44*+	31	34
Received one-on-one assistance[b] (%)			
High-unemployment local areas	57+	56^	39
Low-unemployment local areas	61+	57^	49
Number of customers in local areas with high unemployment rates	**818**	**821**	**804**
Number of customers in local areas with low unemployment rates	**898**	**863**	**865**

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: Dollars are 2012 dollars. High-unemployment local areas include those with a 2012 unemployment rate of 8.5 percent or more. Low-unemployment local areas include those with a 2012 unemployment rate of less than 8.5 percent. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach and more estimates and *p*-values.

* Within subgroup difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Within subgroup difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Within subgroup difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

[a]All differences in impacts across complementary subgroups are not statistically significant.

[b]The difference between complementary subgroups in the differences for the core-and-intensive and core groups is statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Other differences in impacts across complementary subgroups are not statistically significant.

49 percent of core customers in low-unemployment local areas (Table IX.1). The estimated difference is statistically significant. This could be because these services were more available in low-unemployment local areas or the core customers were more likely to access them in these areas.

- **The availability of WIA-funded training did not significantly affect earnings in either local area subgroup.** The impact of WIA-funded training was negative in high-unemployment local areas ($3,258 - $3,896 = -$638) and positive in low-unemployment local areas ($4,726 - $4,480 = $246), but both impact estimates are statistically insignificant and are not statistically significantly different from each other (Table IX.1).
- **The evidence suggests, but is not conclusive, that the impact of the availability of intensive services is larger in high-unemployment local areas than low-unemployment local areas.** When core-and-intensive group earnings are compared with those of the core group, the estimated impact of intensive services on earnings is large and statistically significant in high-unemployment local areas ($3,896 - $3,057 = $839) and small and statistically insignificant in low-unemployment local areas ($4,480 - $4,407 = $73) (Table IX.1). This evidence is not conclusive, because the difference between the impacts in the two subgroups ($839 versus $73) is not statistically significant. However, the difference between the two subgroups in the magnitude of the earnings impacts is consistent with the finding that the availability of WIA-funded intensive services made a bigger difference in the receipt of one-on-one assistance in high-unemployment local areas.
- **The impact of the availability of both WIA-funded training and intensive services was similar in both local area subgroups.** Just as in the full sample, the estimated impact of the availability of both WIA-funded training and intensive services is positive, but not statistically significant, in both subgroups when full-WIA customers are compared with core customers. The magnitude of the impact is similar between the two subgroups—$201 ($3,258 - $3,057) in high-unemployment local areas and $319 ($4,726 - $4,407) in low-unemployment local areas (Table IX.1).

X. HOW IMPACTS DIFFERED BY LOCAL AREA POLICIES

WIA gave local areas a great deal of flexibility on how to implement the Adult and Dislocated Workers programs, a flexibility that continues under WIOA. Our implementation study found that although all local areas offered a basic set of services, they varied in the specific services they offered, how they offered those services, and to whom they offered services (D'Amico et al. 2015). In particular, we found that local areas' policies varied in two important ways that influenced the services provided and the customers offered different services: (1) whether new customers to an American Job Center were first directed to use the resource room or instead were administered an enhanced intake that determined the services they were offered and (2) whether intensive services were offered primarily to customers interested in training or were offered to a broader set of customers. An understanding of differences in the relative effectiveness of these different policies can assist local areas in selecting the most appropriate policy.

In this chapter, we examine how the effectiveness of the availability of WIA-funded training and intensive services differed for subgroups of local areas defined by whether they adopted these two policies. Although our findings are not conclusive, they provide the best evidence we have of how the effectiveness of the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs varied with key policy factors.

The findings we present in this chapter describe associations between impacts and policies. They are not conclusive because, although differences in impacts across complementary subgroups of local areas could be a result of the specific policy being examined, they could also result from other differences across local areas in policies, customers, or context. To explore these other potential differences between the subgroups of local areas, we compare the local areas that did and did not adopt each policy along three dimensions: (1) the characteristics of customers in the subgroups of local areas; (2) the geographic, economic, and size characteristics of the local areas (such as region, number of exiters, urbanicity, the unemployment rate, size, and funding level); and (3) the availability of other services in the community, measured by the

Key findings

- We find no conclusive evidence about whether services were more effective for local areas that used an enhanced intake or those that did not.
  - Full-WIA customers in local areas that did not offer an enhanced intake were 14 percentage points more likely to participate in WIA-funded training than full-WIA customers in local areas that offered an enhanced intake.
  - Some weak evidence suggests that intensive services were more effective in local areas that offered an enhanced intake, but the difference in impacts across the two subgroups of local areas is not significant.
- Likewise, we find no conclusive evidence about whether services were more effective in local areas that offered intensive services to a broad group of customers or primarily to those interested in training.
  - Nearly one-half of full-WIA customers in local areas that offered intensive services primarily to customers interested in training did not participate in training in the 15 months after random assignment, suggesting an unmet demand for training.

percentage of core group members who received one-on-one assistance and the percentage of core group members who participated in training during the follow-up period. In addition to these factors that we take into account, other characteristics that we did not measure might have led to a spurious correlation between impacts and policies.

Sample sizes were not large enough to obtain precise estimates using subgroups of local areas. Only 8 local areas offered enhanced intake services, and only 10 local areas offered intensive services primarily to those interested in training. Hence, consistent with the goal of presenting the best evidence available even when it is not conclusive, in this chapter we sometimes discuss differences in estimates that are large but not statistically significant.

As we did in the previous two chapters, we focus on impacts on earnings at the end of the 15-month follow-up period, in the fifth quarter after random assignment (Quarter 5), as our main indicator of the effectiveness of the services. We also present data on participation in training and receipt of one-on-one assistance—a summary measure of the receipt of intensive services—to explore the reasons for any differences in earnings impacts. Appendix H in the technical supplement to this volume provides estimates of the impacts on other outcomes for the subgroups of local areas discussed in this chapter.

In conducting the analysis for this chapter, we used a different weighting scheme than employed in the analysis underlying the findings in the rest of the report. This weighting scheme enabled us to examine the impacts of services in the *average local area* in our study that offered a specific policy rather than impacts on the *average program customer*. This is appropriate given the focus in this chapter on associations between local area policies and service effectiveness. Appendix A of the technical supplement to this volume provides more details about the weights used in our main analysis and in the local area subgroup analysis.

In the rest of this chapter, we present estimates of the impacts of services for subgroups of local areas defined by whether they offered an enhanced intake to all new American Job Center customers (Section A) and by whether they primarily focused intensive services on customers interested in training (Section B).

A. How impacts differed by local areas' use of an enhanced intake

Local areas in the study took two different approaches to serving customers when they first arrived at an American Job Center. In 18 of the 28 local areas in the study, new customers to the American Job Centers were informed about the availability of core services and encouraged to use the center's resource room. Intensive services were not offered until a customer explicitly asked for them or a staff member observed that the customer needed more staff assistance to find a job.

Concerned that customers who lacked computer, language, or basic skills or who faced multiple barriers to employment would be unlikely to find a job independently, 8 of the 28 local areas in the study provided an assessment, or *enhanced intake*, to all new customers. New customers assessed as likely to be successful searching for a job on their own were encouraged to use the resource room and other core services independently. Other customers were offered staff-assisted core or intensive services.

In addition, the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in 2 local areas nearly exclusively served customers interested in training. In these local areas, new customers were sent directly to a staff member who discussed training options with them. For this analysis, we considered these 2 local areas to belong in the same group as those that did not offer an enhanced intake. (The results are similar if they are included in the group of local areas with an enhanced intake.) Thus, in total, our primary analysis is based on 8 enhanced intake local areas and 20 local areas that did not provide enhanced intakes.

1. Differences in local area characteristics

The demographic characteristics of customers served in local areas that offered enhanced intake services were similar to those of the customers in local areas that did not offer enhanced intake services (Table X.1). For example, on average, about 76 percent of customers served by each subgroup of local areas had a high school credential or less and 75 percent were employed in the five years before random assignment. Although we found that local areas with enhanced intake services served slightly more dislocated workers (42 percent, compared with 37 percent), this difference is not statistically significant.

Despite these similarities, we found some differences in local area characteristics between the two subgroups, although these differences could be due to small subgroup sizes. The enhanced intake local areas were more likely than their counterparts to be in Region 1 and less likely to be in Regions 3, 4, and 5. The enhanced intake local areas were also much larger (this difference is statistically significant), but this finding was largely due to New York City's inclusion as one of the 8 enhanced intake local areas. Consistent with this finding, the enhanced intake local areas tended to have higher funding levels ($7.3 million on average, compared with $5.8 million), though the difference is not significant. There were no subgroup differences in the percentages of local areas located in high unemployment areas.

Finally, we found only small differences in the availability of other reemployment services in the two sets of local areas, measured by the services received by the core group during the follow-up period. About 11 percent of core customers in local areas with an enhanced intake and 12 percent of core customers in local areas without an enhanced intake received one-on-one assistance during the 15-month period, a difference that is not statistically significant. The training rate for the core group was somewhat lower for the local areas offering enhanced intake (29 percent compared with 34 percent), but this difference is not statistically significant.

Table X.1. Characteristics of local areas with and without an enhanced intake

Characteristic	Local areas with an enhanced intake	Local areas without an enhanced intake	Difference
Customer characteristics at random assignment			
Dislocated worker (%)	42	37	5
Black, non-Hispanic (%)	32	37	-4
Hispanic (%)	9	12	-2
Age 51 or older (%)	20	22	-2
High school diploma, GED, or less education (%)	76	76	0
Employed in five years before random assignment (%)	75	75	-1
Average hourly wage in most recent job[a] ($)	13.76	14.49	-0.72
Local area characteristics at random assignment			
Region (%)			
1	38	5	33*
2	13	10	3
3	13	30	-18
4	13	20	-8
5	13	25	-13
6	13	10	3
Unemployment rate greater than 8.5 percent (%)	50	50	0
Average share of local area classified as urban (%)	74	79	-5
Number of exiters in 2012	35,178	1,881	33,297*
Funding level in 2012 ($ millions)	7.3	5.8	1.5
Intensive services offered to a broad set of customers (%)	75	60	15
Services received by the core group during the follow-up period (%)			
One-on-one counseling	11	12	-1
Training	29	34	-5
Number of local areas	**8**	**20**	**28**
Number of customers in study sample served by local areas	**1,436**	**3,633**	**5,069**

Sources: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation study registration form, WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey, and D'Amico et al. (2015).

Notes: Dollars are 2012 dollars. Means and differences are calculated weighting each local area equally. Accordingly, the estimates pertain to the characteristics of the average local area in the study that adopted each policy.

[a]Respondents employed in the five years before random assignment.

*Significantly different from zero at the 5 percent level.

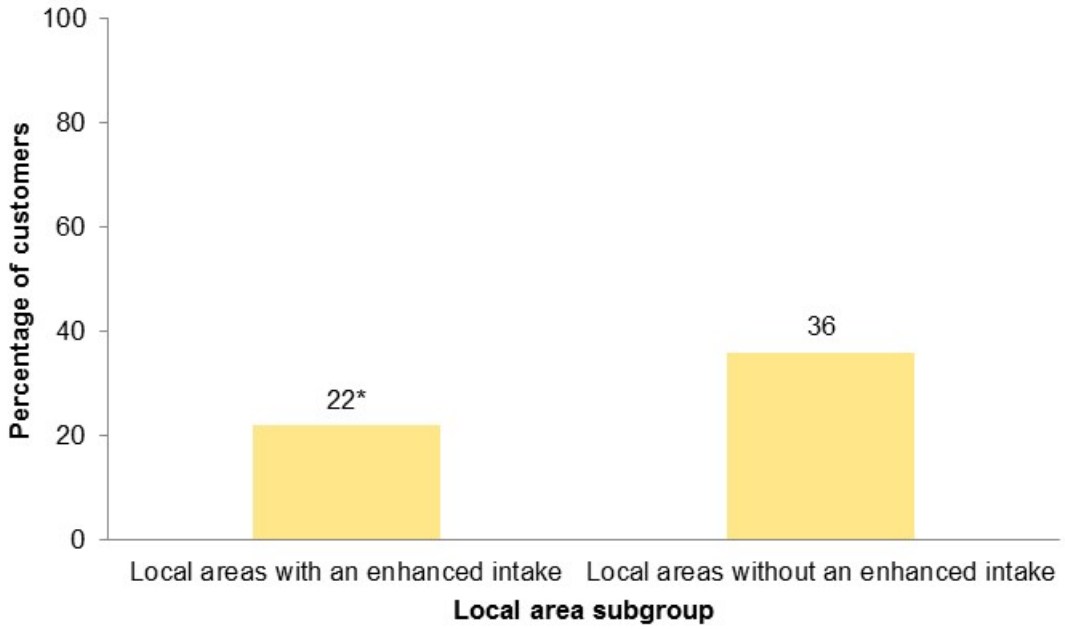
GED = General Educational Development certificate.

2. Differences in service provision

Local areas that administered an enhanced intake provided WIA-funded training to a smaller percentage of customers than did local areas without an enhanced intake (22 versus 36 percent) (Figure X.1). This 14 percentage point difference is statistically significant. This finding corroborates reports by local area staff interviewed for the study that local areas with an enhanced intake had less funding for training because administering the enhanced intake used resources that were then unavailable for training (D'Amico et al. 2015).

The pattern of service receipt across the three study groups was similar in the two subgroups of local areas. Members of the full-WIA group were significantly more likely to participate in training funded by any source than members of the core-and-intensive group in both subgroups of local areas (Table X.2). Members of the core-and-intensive group were more likely to receive one-on-one staff assistance than members of the core group in both subgroups of local areas. The differences across study groups in service receipt did not vary significantly across the two subgroups of local areas.

Figure X.1. Full-WIA customers participating in WIA-funded training, by local areas' use of an enhanced intake



Source: WIA Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) covering service receipt over about 15 months after random assignment.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

*Difference between subgroups is significant at the 5 percent level.

Table X.2. Means of key outcomes, by local areas' use of an enhanced intake

	Mean by study group		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Earnings in Quarter 5[a] ($)			
Local areas with an enhanced intake	3,707	3,819^	3,223
Local areas without an enhanced intake	4,539	4,263	4,213
Participated in any training program[a] (%)			
Local areas with an enhanced intake	39*+	28	29
Local areas without an enhanced intake	48*+	32	34
Received one-on-one assistance[a] (%)			
Local areas with an enhanced intake	53*+	50^	42
Local areas without an enhanced intake	60+	58^	46
Number of customers in local areas with an enhanced intake	**482**	**475**	**479**
Number of customers in local areas without an enhanced intake	**1,234**	**1,209**	**1,190**

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: Dollars are 2012 dollars. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach and more estimates and *p*-values.

[a]None of the differences in impacts between subgroups are statistically significant. For example, the impact of the availability of training (the difference between the full-WIA and the core-and-intensive groups) does not differ between men and women.

* Within-subgroup difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Within-subgroup difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Within-subgroup difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

3. Differences in impacts

Our findings provide no clear policy direction on whether local areas should use an enhanced intake, although some weak evidence suggests that providing intensive services was more effective in local areas with an enhanced intake:

- **The availability of WIA-funded training did not have an impact on earnings in either local area subgroup.** The earnings of the full-WIA group were not significantly different than the earnings of the core-and-intensive group in either subgroup (Table X.2). The impact of WIA-funded training was small and negative ($3,707 - $3,819 = -$112) in local areas with an enhanced intake and small and positive in the local areas without an enhanced intake ($4,539 - $4,263 = $276). The estimated impacts in the two subgroups of local areas (-$112 and +$276) are not statistically different.
- **The availability of intensive services increased earnings in local areas with an enhanced intake but not in local areas without an enhanced intake.** In local areas with an enhanced intake, core-and-intensive customers earned $596 more on average than core customers ($3,819 - $3,223), a difference that is statistically significant. In local areas without an enhanced intake, core-and-intensive customers earned about the same as core customers ($4,263 versus $4,213). However, the estimated difference between the impacts in the two subgroups ($596 versus $50) is not statistically significant.

- **The availability of both WIA-funded training and intensive services did not have a significant impact on earnings in either local area subgroup.** The estimated impact of training and intensive services together is $484 ($3,707 - $3,223) in local areas with an enhanced intake and $326 ($4,539 - $4,213) in local areas without an enhanced intake (Table X.2). Neither estimated impact is statistically significant, nor is the difference in the impacts across the two local area subgroups statistically significant.

Even though we found no differences across these two local area subgroups, an enhanced intake could have made a difference to customers who were not in our study. For example, it could be that an enhanced intake led to some customers being found eligible for intensive services—and hence participating in the study—who would not have received these services in the absence of the enhanced intake.

B. How impacts differed by how local areas focused intensive services

All local areas offered WIA-funded intensive services, but they differed in the customers they targeted. In 10 of the 28 local areas in the study, WIA-funded intensive services were offered primarily to customers who were interested in training (D'Amico et al. 2015). Staff in these local areas reported that they used this model because most customers who asked for WIA services were interested in training. Intensive services for customers interested in training typically included determining eligibility for WIA-funded training, working with customers as they selected an appropriate training program, and supporting customers during training. During the study, these local areas were instructed to offer intensive services not related to training—such as job search assistance and case management—to customers assigned to the core-and-intensive group and hence ineligible to receive WIA-funded training. Counselors were also permitted to assist core-and-intensive customers to obtain funding for training from other sources.

The remaining 18 local areas in the study offered WIA-funded intensive services to a broad group of customers, including many who were not interested in or eligible for training (D'Amico et al. 2015). For customers who were not interested in training, intensive services typically included assistance in job search and case management.

1. Differences in local area characteristics

Local areas that offered intensive services to a broad set of customers and those that did not were similar along many characteristics. None of the characteristics listed in Table X.3 differed significantly between these two subgroups. Some notable differences—though not statistically significant—are that local areas that offered intensive services more broadly had customers with a lower wage rate in the jobs they held before random assignment and were in communities with a slightly higher unemployment rate. The core group members were less likely to participate in training in local areas that offered intensive services more broadly (30 percent) than they were in local areas that focused on offering intensive services primarily to customers interested in training (37 percent), although this difference is also not significant. It is surprising that this difference is not larger given that, by definition, nearly all the customers in the study in the local areas that offered intensive services less broadly were interested in training.

Table X.3. Characteristics of local areas that did or did not offer intensive services to a broad set of customers

Characteristic	Local areas offering intensive services broadly	Local areas offering intensive services primarily to customers interested in training	Difference
Customer characteristics at random assignment			
Dislocated worker (%)	39	39	0
Black, non-Hispanic (%)	34	38	-4
Hispanic (%)	9	14	-5
Age 51 or older (%)	23	18	5
High school diploma, GED, or less education (%)	75	76	-1
Employed in five years before random assignment (%)	76	74	2
Average hourly wage in most recent job[a] ($)	13.90	14.95	-1.05
Local area characteristics at random assignment			
DOL Region (%)			
1	11	20	-9
2	17	0	17
3	28	20	8
4	11	30	-19
5	22	20	2
6	11	10	1
Unemployment rate greater than 8.5 percent (%)	56	40	16
Average share of local area classified as urban (%)	75	83	-8
Number of exiters in 2012	15,017	4,873	10,143
Funding level in 2012 ($ millions)	6.0	6.7	-0.7
Services received by the core group during the follow-up period (%)			
One-on-one counseling	12	11	1
Training	30	37	-7
Number of local areas	**18**	**10**	**28**
Number of customers in study sample served by local areas	**3,475**	**1,594**	**5,069**

Sources: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation study registration form, WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey, and D'Amico et al. (2015).

Notes: Dollars are 2012 dollars. Means and differences are calculated weighting each local area equally. Accordingly, the estimates pertain to the characteristics of the average local area in the study that adopted each policy.

[a]Respondents employed in the five years before random assignment.

GED = General Educational Development certificate.

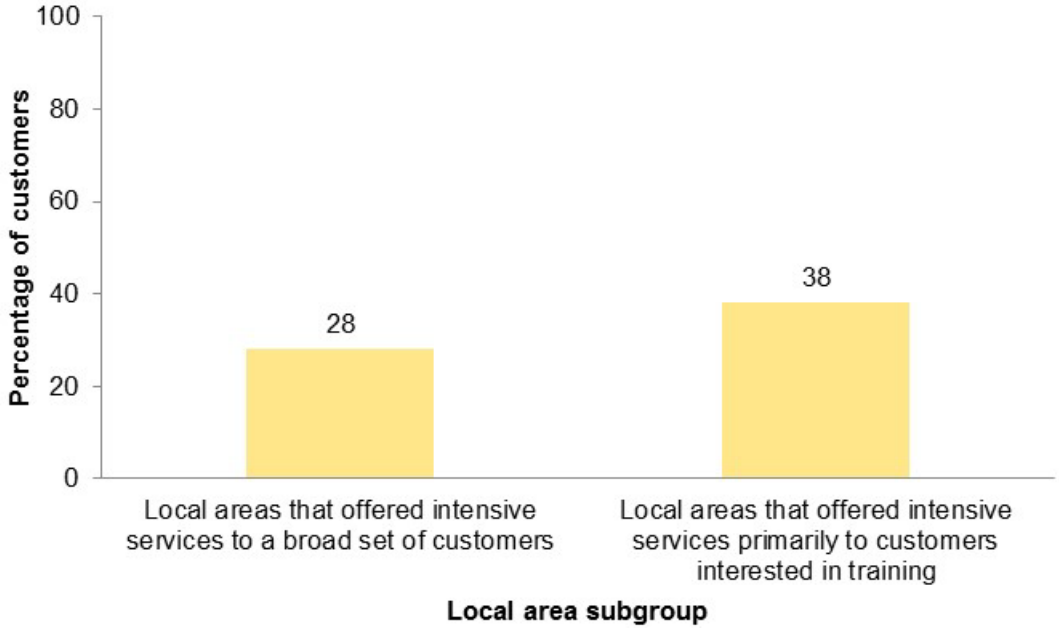
2. Differences in service provision

Customers in local areas that targeted intensive services to customers interested in training were more likely to participate in WIA-funded training than were customers in local areas that provided intensive services to a broader set of customers, but the difference is not statistically significant. Although 38 percent of full-WIA customers participated in WIA-funded training in local areas that targeted intensive services to customers interested in training, only 28 percent of full-WIA customers did so in local areas that offered intensive services to a broader set of customers (Figure X.2). This is consistent with the relative emphasis the two subgroups of local areas placed on training.

Even in local areas that reported they served primarily customers interested in training, nearly half of the customers in the full-WIA group (48 percent) did not participate in training (Table X.4). This could have been because customers were found ineligible for training (after they were enrolled in the study), did not complete all the activities required to receive funding for training, decided not to participate in training, or had not yet begun training at the time of the 15-month survey. In some cases, the local area might have run out of funding for training.

The pattern of receipt of training and one-on-one assistance across the three study groups was similar in each subgroup of local areas (Table X.4). Full-WIA customers participated in training more than the core-and-intensive customers in both subgroups of local areas. Core-and-intensive customers received more one-on-one assistance than core customers in both subgroups of local areas.

Figure X.2. Full-WIA customers participating in WIA-funded training, by how local areas focused intensive services



Source: WIA Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) covering service receipt over about 15 months after random assignment.

Notes: The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach and more estimates, *p*-values, and sample sizes.

The difference between subgroups is not significant at the 5 percent level.

Table X.4. Means of key outcomes, by how local areas focused intensive services

	Mean by study group		
	Full-WIA	Core-and-intensive	Core
Earnings in Quarter 5[a] (2012 dollars)			
Local areas provided intensive services to a broad set of customers	4,479+	3,950	4,043
Local areas offered intensive services primarily to customers interested in training	3,980	4,470	3,727
Participated in any training program[a] (%)			
Local areas provided intensive services to a broad set of customers	41*+	29	30
Local areas offered intensive services primarily to customers interested in training	52*+	34	37
Received one-on-one assistance[b] (%)			
Local areas provided intensive services to a broad set of customers	60*+	56^	45
Local areas offered intensive services primarily to customers interested in training	54+	55^	44
Number of customers in local areas that provided intensive services to a broad set of customers	**1,165**	**1,153**	**1,157**
Number of customers in local areas that primarily offered intensive services to customers interested in training	**551**	**531**	**512**

Source: WIA Gold Standard Evaluation 15-month follow-up survey.

Notes: Dollars are 2012 dollars. The technical supplement to this report provides more detail about the estimation approach and more estimates and *p*-values.

* Within-subgroup difference between the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

^ Within-subgroup difference between the core-and-intensive and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

+ Within-subgroup difference between the full-WIA and core groups is significant at the 5 percent level.

[a]The difference between subgroups in the differences for the full-WIA and core-and-intensive groups is statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Other differences in impacts across complementary subgroups are not statistically significant.

[b]All differences in impacts across complementary subgroups are not statistically significant.

3. Differences in impacts

Our findings present no clear policy direction on whether local areas should offer intensive services to a broad set of customers or target them to customers interested in training:

- **The availability of WIA-funded training did not significantly increase earnings in either local area.** In local areas that offered intensive services to a broad set of customers, the estimated impact on the availability of training is positive ($4,479 - $3,950 = $529), but not statistically significant (Table X.4). In contrast, in local areas that primarily offered intensive services to customers interested in training, the estimated impact of the availability of training on earnings is negative ($3,980 - $4,470 = -$490), but also not statistically significant. The impacts of the availability of training are significantly different between the two subgroups of local areas. This suggests that at least the timing of any impacts of training

on earnings could differ between the two subgroups of local areas. A longer term follow-up is needed for more conclusive findings.

- **Our estimates suggest that intensive services increased earnings in local areas that targeted them to customers interested in training, but the estimate is not significant.** In local areas that offered intensive services to a broad group of customers, core-and-intensive customers earned $93 less than the core customers ($3,950 - $4,043). In contrast, in local areas that offered intensive services primarily to customers interested in training, members of the core-and-intensive group earned on average $744 more than customers in the core group ($4,470 - $3,727),[10] although this difference is not statistically significant (Table X.4). The impacts of intensive services, although quite different in the two subgroups of local areas, are not significantly different from each other.
- **The availability of training and intensive services together had a positive impact on earnings in local areas that offered intensive services to a broad set of customers.** The availability of training and intensive services led to a statistically significant estimated increase in earnings of $437 ($4,479 - $4,043) in local areas that offered services to a broad set of customers (Table X.4). The availability of training and intensive services also led to a positive impact on earnings in local areas that targeted intensive services to customers interested in training ($254), but this impact is not statistically significant, nor statistically different from the impact in the local areas that offered intensive services to a broader set of customers.

[10] Stated impacts are not always exactly equal to the numbers compared due to rounding.

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XI. DISCUSSION

The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are two of the largest public workforce development programs in the United States, so it is important to understand whether the services they provide are effective. This report presents the estimates of the effectiveness of intensive and training services provided by these programs in the first 15 months—or five quarters—after customers were randomly assigned (just after they were found eligible for intensive services). This final chapter discusses the main conclusions from this report.

It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of training

The availability of WIA-funded training, compared with a situation in which only intensive services were available to customers, did not increase earnings or employment in the 15 months after random assignment**.** In fact, customers in the full-WIA group, who had full access to program services, earned less and were less likely to be employed than members of the core-and-intensive group in each of the five quarters after random assignment, although the differences between study groups were not statistically significant in any quarter. Moreover, the jobs obtained by full-WIA customers were on average less likely than those obtained by core-and-intensive customers to offer fringe benefits such as health insurance.

These findings on the impacts of training were unsurprising. We expected that training would have a negative impact in early quarters because customers enrolled in training have less time for employment. Full-WIA customers who enrolled in training spent on average about 660 hours in training over about 28 weeks. Moreover, 17 percent of the full-WIA customers, 11 percent of core-and-intensive customers, and 16 percent of core customers were still in training in the fifth quarter after random assignment. And even those who had completed training within the 15-month follow-up period might not yet have benefited from any earnings or employment boost from their training. Prior studies have found that the impact of training on earnings becomes positive at different times for different populations, but typically these studies have found that the impact becomes positive in the fifth quarter after starting the program or later or not at all (Heinrich et al. 2008; Andersson et al. 2013). For these reasons, five quarters is too short a time period to judge whether training was effective.

The evidence suggests that intensive services were effective

Our findings suggest that intensive services, when offered as a standalone service without training, were effective at increasing earnings and employment. The impact of the availability of intensive services on earnings in Quarter 5, our priority outcome, was about $600, or 17 percent. This estimated impact in Quarter 5 is statistically significant at the 5 percent level but does not meet the more stringent significance test that accounts for the fact that we made three comparisons on the same outcome. The average earnings, employment rate, and number of hours worked of the core-and-intensive group were higher than those of the core group in each of the five quarters of the follow-up period, but only statistically significantly in the fifth quarter. In addition, the jobs held by core-and-intensive customers were more likely than the jobs held by core customers to offer fringe benefits. Unlike the case for training, we expected to observe any impact of intensive services within five quarters because receiving intensive services requires less time than training and hence is less likely to prevent customers from working.

It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of the availability of both training and intensive services

Just as five quarters is too short a period to judge the effectiveness of training, it is also too short a period to judge whether the availability of both WIA-funded training services and intensive services was more effective than when neither of these services was available. However, we found some evidence that the availability of both training and intensive services together increased employment, though not earnings, in Quarter 5.

We estimated the impacts of the availability of program services, which are likely smaller than the impacts of receiving the services

We estimated the impact of the availability of services and not the receipt of services. These two impacts will differ because customers did not always take up services that the programs offered. For example, less than one-third of the full-WIA group enrolled in WIA-funded training. Similarly, not all members of the core-and-intensive group received intensive services. The impact of actually receiving the service is likely to be larger than the impact of the availability of those services. Hence, the impact on earnings of enrolling in training was likely more negative than our estimate and the earnings impact of receiving intensive services was likely more positive than our estimates.

We estimated the impact of the availability of program services compared with a situation in which customers could receive services in the community

Training and services similar to WIA-funded intensive services were available to all customers in our study from other programs. We found that core-and-intensive and core customers enrolled in training funded from other sources, albeit at lower rates than the full-WIA group. Similarly, some core customers received services similar to WIA-funded intensive services funded by other sources. If customers in our study had not received these other services, our estimates would likely be larger. However, our estimates address the important policy question: what is the impact of WIA-funded services over and above those available in the community.

Our findings might have differed if the programs had been evaluated when the economy was stronger or program funding greater

The study occurred at a time of high unemployment and declining WIA funding. Although the recession was officially over when the study began, the national unemployment rate was still above 8 percent during 2012, the year in which most study participants were randomly assigned. In this same year, funding for the programs was the lowest it had been in more than a decade.

We do not know what the estimated impacts would have been if the economy had been stronger. Some weak evidence from a comparison of impacts between local areas with relatively high and low unemployment rates suggests that the impacts of training do not differ much with the unemployment rate, but the impacts of intensive services might be lower in a strong economy.

In addition, we do not know whether the services would be more effective if funding had been higher. However, local area administrators we spoke to for the implementation study reported that the reduction of funding led to the closing of some American Job Centers and the shortening of opening hours for others. It also led to a reduction in the number of career counselors and fewer funds expended on training and supportive services.

Our findings are still relevant under WIOA

Although we studied the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs as they were operated under WIA, the findings are still relevant under WIOA. WIOA reauthorized the programs and changed neither the basic set of services that the local areas offered nor who was eligible to receive them. In addition, many of the important changes explicitly introduced by WIOA reflected changes the local areas were already making under WIA. The findings of this study are also relevant to other workforce programs that provide training, employment counseling, and other employment services to populations similar to the ones served by the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

A forthcoming report will provide more definitive evidence

A forthcoming report will discuss the estimates of the effectiveness of the programs based on following the study participants for another 5 quarters for a total of 10 quarters, or 30 months, after random assignment. The report will use findings from both the 30-month follow-up survey and administrative data on earnings, employment, and receipt of unemployment compensation benefits from the National Directory of New Hires. It will also present a benefit-cost analysis.

The next impact report will address whether the availability of WIA-funded training starts to increase earnings and employment in Quarters 6 through 10 as those who participated in training have more time to reap its benefits. It will also assess whether the positive impacts of intensive services found in Quarter 5 persist in the subsequent quarters and whether the availability of both training and intensive services boost employment and earnings in these later quarters. Finally, it will also examine whether any positive benefits of the services on earnings are large enough to cover the costs of the services.

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