

Issue BRIEF

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Youth Populations That Could Benefit from Employment Interventions



The U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy, along with many other stakeholders, is working to improve outcomes for youth ages 14 to 24 who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or are at risk of receiving SSI. Mathematica Policy Research is contributing to this effort—known as the SSI Youth Recipient and Employment Transition Formative Research project—in two ways. First, we are identifying promising programs and policies for youth with disabilities, including research questions for further study. Second, we are uncovering testable interventions for helping these youth make the transition to sustained, gainful employment.

POTENTIAL TARGET POPULATIONS

An important step toward improving outcomes for youth with disabilities is to identify which populations would most benefit from interventions designed to help these youth find and keep jobs. We considered three possible target populations, all of which overlap (Figure 1). For example, some youth SSI recipients may participate in non-Social Security Administration (SSA) programs, and so a program that targeted youth in non-SSA programs would also include youth SSI recipients.

- **Youth SSI applicants, awardees, and recipients.** These youth can be identified using administrative records from SSA, as SSA has done for its Youth Transition Demonstration.
- **Youth participating in non-SSA programs.** These youth include those receiving SSI and those at risk of receiving SSI. This population can be found through state and local administrative records other than SSA’s administrative records. Possible sources include records from vocational rehabilitation (VR), Medicaid, special education, workforce, and other programs.
- **Other youth with disabilities.** Some youth—those receiving SSI and those at risk of receiving SSI—might not have any connection to a state or local program, but they could be identified in other ways, potentially through outreach and screening.

RELATED DOCUMENT

Potential Strategies to Improve the Employment Outcomes of Youth SSI Recipients:

<https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/publications/potential-strategies-to-improve-the-employment-outcomes-of-youth-ssi-recipients>

Potential populations of SSI youth to target for interventions

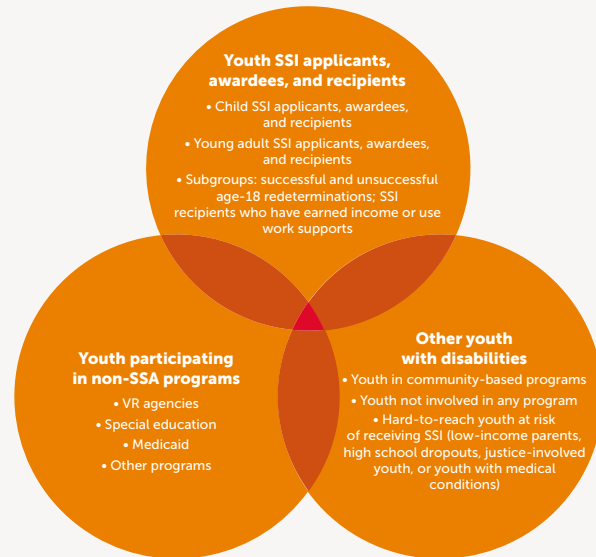


Figure 1

APPROACH

Matching a target population to an intervention involves three methodological considerations:

1. *Size:* are there enough youth in the population to receive intervention services?

Target populations can vary in size, particularly by location. So an important question to ask is whether the geographic area has enough potentially eligible youth to test an intervention. For example, community-based approaches to addressing the needs of youth SSI recipients would likely work best in areas with many potentially eligible youth.

2. *Individual characteristics:* what are the population's acute and long-term service needs?

The characteristics and program involvement of each target population differ, making it necessary to consider various intervention designs. For SSI recipients, their potential needs might vary based on age, particularly

for those nearing the age-18 redetermination. Also, youth's participation in services such as VR might signal their interest in employment—which could affect the intervention and evaluation designs as well as the outcomes.

3. *Identification:* how do we identify and reach the target population?

The approach selected to reach the target population might depend on whether policymakers can identify prospective youth from administrative records or from some other source via a screening tool. If youth cannot be identified in administrative records, policymakers might need a special process to screen potentially eligible youth to receive the intervention.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of the approach chosen, an effective intervention must be appropriate for the target population. A good strategy for ensuring this is to match the target populations mentioned in this brief with the promising interventions listed in our earlier report (see the link under “Related document”).

For more information, contact Todd Honeycutt, senior researcher, Mathematica Policy Research, at thoneycutt@mathematica-mpr.com.

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