# Way2Work Maryland Demonstration

## Final Implementation Evaluation Report

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## Acknowledgments

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## Acronyms

ACS           American Community Survey

ADHD          attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder

CRP           community rehabilitation provider

DORS          Department of Rehabilitation Services

IEP           individualized education program

IPE           individualized plan for employment

LSS           local school system

MIAT          Maryland Interagency Team

MIS           management information system

RAPTER®       Random Assignment, Participant Tracking, Enrollment and Reporting

RSA           Rehabilitation Services Administration

TA            technical assistance

UMD           University of Maryland

VR            vocational rehabilitation

WBLE          work-based learning experience

WIOA          Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

# Executive Summary

Way2Work Maryland (Way2Work) was a demonstration project for students with disabilities that involved evidence-based work-based learning experiences (WBLEs). The U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration awarded a grant to the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) to conduct Way2Work, and the University of Maryland oversaw implementation and provided training and technical assistance. DORS and the University of Maryland staff designed the Way2Work model to enhance and further customize the education and employment services that DORS and its partners usually offered to high school students with disabilities to improve their college and career readiness. Way2Work provided students opportunities to identify their interests and build their skills to inform their education and employment plans. This report describes the implementation of Way2Work and presents findings on Way2Work participants' service use. It also summarizes findings on participants' satisfaction with selected Way2Work service components, differences in service use across local school systems, and lessons learned from the implementation.

DORS and the University of Maryland offered Way2Work services to high school students about two years before their graduation from 2017 to 2020 using a randomized controlled trial design in eight Maryland local school systems. Building on the foundation of usual services for youth offered by DORS, Way2Work offered the following service components to participants:

1. **Early referral to DORS.** A referral to DORS allowed transitioning students to access foundational pre-employment transition services. The Way2Work model emphasized early engagement with DORS so participants could access these services while enrolled in high school and with enough time to engage in exploratory WBLEs.

2. **Multiple work experiences.** Arranging multiple individualized work experiences for youth was a primary feature of Way2Work. Work experiences could include WBLEs supported by a community rehabilitation provider or paid work through an employer. Way2Work intended participants to have at least three work experiences during their involvement in the program, including one employer-paid position.

3. **Enhanced service collaboration.** In each local school system, staff from four partners in Way2Work—DORS, the University of Maryland, the school, and community rehabilitation providers—collaborated frequently and consistently through a Maryland Interagency Team to improve communication and accelerate problem-solving on behalf of Way2Work participants.

## Key findings

Mathematica's implementation study identified the following:

- Way2Work achieved its goal of enrolling 400 students. Despite initial challenges in the first of two enrollment cohorts, local school systems and University of Maryland staff became more efficient at recruitment and enrollment procedures in the second cohort.

- The students who enrolled in Way2Work were generally similar across the group that received Way2Work services and the comparison group that received usual services. Participants were more frequently male and White, and they were more likely to report having attention-deficit or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Nearly half had worked at a paid job in the past year. Participants differed between the treatment and control groups in their parents' or guardians' relationship status, receipt of DORS services, and previous employment experience.

- About 1 in 10 participants (12 percent) engaged with DORS before enrolling in Way2Work.

- Way2Work staff referred most participants to DORS (94 percent), and nearly all (97 percent) had a match to a community rehabilitation provider. Around one-quarter of participants used work readiness training, instruction in self-advocacy, or job exploration counseling (all of which are pre-employment transition services).

- Most participants (92 percent) had at least one work experience during their participation in Way2Work, nearly three-quarters (74 percent) had at least two work experiences with at least one of them paid, and nearly half (44 percent) had at least three experiences with at least one of them paid. More than half of the work experiences occurred in three industries: accommodation and food services (22 percent), health care and social assistance (15 percent), and wholesale and retail trade (15 percent).

- Most unpaid and stipend-paid WBLEs were completed successfully or voluntarily (89 and 92 percent, respectively), as were more than half of paid WBLEs (67 percent).

- Way2Work staff valued the Maryland Interagency Team component as a key strategy for service coordination and cross-agency collaboration. Many local school systems planned to continue their Maryland Interagency Team after Way2Work ended.

- Almost all Way2Work participants (99 percent) completed the primary planning tool service, the Positive Personal Profile.

- Way2Work staff had contact with or on behalf of participants for 62 percent of program weeks, most commonly through consultations on the participants' behalf or in person.

- Way2Work services differed by some participant characteristics. In particular, higher rates of work experience measures were consistently observed for Cohort 2 (compared with Cohort 1), and differences were either inconsistent or negligible by sex, race, disability, and economic characteristics.

- Participants with employment experience in the 12 months before enrollment had higher rates of having three or more work experiences, one of which was paid, by 20 percentage points than those without such experiences.

- Local school systems had varying service delivery, particularly on the rates of DORS applications and having three or more work experiences, one of which was paid.

## Conclusion

Overall, DORS and the University of Maryland implemented the Way2Work model as designed, and participants received the model services as intended. The essential services offered to Way2Work participants included an early referral to DORS, a match to a community rehabilitation provider, opportunities for multiple work experiences, and numerous service collaboration activities. Should the Way2Work program impact participants' employment and education outcomes, it will likely be because of these model components. But because some participants assigned to the usual services group also had access to WBLEs, the impact evaluation must assess whether Way2Work participants received this component at higher rates than usual services participants.

# I. Introduction and background

The U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) awarded grants to state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies in 2016 to identify, implement, and evaluate evidence-based models for work-based learning experiences (WBLEs) in integrated settings for students with disabilities. VR agencies in five states received RSA awards: California, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Mathematica is the independent evaluator for the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) demonstration program, Way2Work Maryland (Way2Work), implemented by the University of Maryland (UMD). In this report, we present findings on UMD's experience in implementing Way2Work. We also describe Way2Work participants' use of services and WBLE outcomes during their enrollment in the program.

In this chapter, we provide background information on youth with disabilities and the challenges they face. We describe the evidence on the post-school outcomes of youth who receive work experiences during secondary school. We also highlight the role of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), VR agencies, and local service providers in addressing these challenges. We then give an overview of the Way2Work demonstration, the implementation environment, and the evaluation questions guiding this report.

## A. Transition-age youth with disabilities

Youth and young adults (those ages 14 to 24) face many challenges as they transition to adulthood. For youth with disabilities, the challenges are magnified. Compared with their non-disabled peers, youth with disabilities have poorer employment outcomes after high school, are more likely to live in poverty, and are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018; Cobb et al. 2013; Newman et al. 2011). Many youth with disabilities rely on the Social Security disability programs for income support, often into adulthood (Davies et al. 2009; Loprest and Wittenburg 2007; Martin et al. 2020). Research suggests that education and WBLEs, particularly during high school, can help youth with disabilities improve their long-term employment and postsecondary school outcomes (Fraker et al. 2014; Hemmeter et al. 2015; Luecking 2009). In general, a WBLE is an opportunity for students to experience adult job activities, receive mentorship, and participate in out-of-school workplace settings. WBLEs can enhance youth's soft skills such as communication, listening, and time management. WBLEs also offer students an opportunity to connect academic learning to real-world practice and enhance their self-esteem (Rogers-Chapman and Darling-Hammond 2013).

## B. WIOA and VR services for transition-age youth

State VR agencies in partnership with secondary schools are uniquely situated to help youth with disabilities obtain WBLEs and other services to improve their long-term employment and postsecondary education outcomes.

**WIOA and VR pre-employment transition services.** The federal-state VR program is the largest publicly funded program designed to provide services for individuals with disabilities interested in preparing for and engaging in competitive employment. Historically, VR eligibility required an individual to have a physical or mental impairment that constituted or resulted in a substantial impediment to employment. Eligible VR consumers sign a mutually agreed-upon individualized plan for employment (IPE) that specifies the services the VR agency will offer to the individual. These services may include, but are not limited to, rehabilitation counseling, assistive technology, job accommodations, job search and

placement assistance, education and training, and other services and support needed to achieve an employment goal.

However, VR agencies' roles in serving youth and students with disabilities have changed because of WIOA (P.L. 113-128). WIOA legislation, enacted in July 2014, consolidates and strengthens job training programs. Before WIOA, federal regulations limited VR agencies to serving students who were eligible for VR services. Under current legislation, VR agencies must allocate at least 15 percent of their federal matching grant funds to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities (RSA 2020). More specifically, WIOA allows agencies to provide these services to students who have not yet applied for VR but are potentially eligible for VR services. Pre-employment transition services include WBLEs and four other required services: job exploration counseling, transition or postsecondary education counseling, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy instruction. In many cases, VR agencies collaborate with community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) and secondary schools in offering these transition services.

WIOA has changed the composition of those receiving services from VR agencies. The proportion of youth and young adults ages 24 and younger participating in VR grew from 35 percent in the years before WIOA to 51 percent in 2018 (RSA 2020). That proportion is even larger when factoring in students with disabilities receiving pre-employment transition services after WIOA's passage.

## C. Way2Work's demonstration to improve youth outcomes focused on WBLEs

Way2Work is a five-year initiative in partnership with eight of Maryland's 24 local school systems (LSSs) to improve the career readiness of high school students with disabilities. DORS and UMD are the lead agencies for the program. Way2Work used a randomized design to explore three key features: (1) ensuring participants were referred to and engaged in DORS; (2) arranging multiple work experiences, including WBLEs and employer-paid positions; and (3) enhancing service collaboration across Way2Work's key partners (UMD, DORS, LSSs, and CRPs).

**Way2Work stakeholder roles.** Way2Work partner roles include direct service, technical assistance (TA), and program oversight. Selected LSSs received a two-year award to enroll students in the demonstration and provide services to students randomly assigned to the treatment group. LSS staff were responsible for implementing key aspects of the model, including facilitating the design and implementation of the participants' service plans, conducting career exploration activities, referring the participants to DORS and other providers, monitoring service coordination, and negotiating interagency barriers or conflicts to service provision. DORS authorized receipt and payment of work-based learning and other services, and it contracted with CRPs to provide participants with job development services and WBLEs. CRPs reached out to employers to establish strong community relationships with potential employers. UMD provided ongoing TA to LSSs on enrollment, work-based learning and employment strategies, and partnership development to ensure successful program implementation.

**Rationale for joining the RSA demonstration**. LSS, DORS, and UMD staff described several reasons for participating in the Way2Work demonstration. First, DORS had been interested in enhancing services for youth and building the capacity among local CRPs to provide pre-employment transition services, as required under WIOA. Each participating LSS applied to join the Way2Work demonstration, and many LSS staff described Way2Work as an opportunity to establish new CRP connections for their students. The Way2Work demonstration also aligned with UMD's history of research and innovation on evidence-

based WBLE programs for youth with disabilities and ongoing efforts to improve the academic and career success of students with disabilities (Luecking 2009; Luecking and Fabian 2000).

**Way2Work enrollment and service components.** The Way2Work program relied on LSSs to serve high school students with individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans and who were approximately two years from graduation. Eligible students were randomly selected to receive usual DORS transition services (as part of the usual services, or control, group) or Way2Work services (the treatment group); the latter group received services through graduation, or between 16 to 24 months (depending on their enrollment dates). This report uses the term *Way2Work participant* to identify students randomly assigned to the treatment group and thus offered Way2Work services. Usual services participants had access to CRP referrals for pre-employment transition and other services and WBLEs through DORS or school-sponsored transition services. DORS and UMD designed Way2Work to build on the usual services from DORS by providing Way2Work participants with (1) early engagement with DORS services and assignment to a CRP; (2) a minimum of three work experiences during the participant's involvement in Way2Work (the last two years of high school), one of which was employer paid; and (3) individualized services coordinated from an integrated team of professionals at their LSS, called the Maryland Interagency Team (MIAT). Additional services included supplemental educational and planning services. Way2Work participants could also receive other pre-employment transition services (such as self-advocacy instruction) if authorized by DORS. As highlighted in the program's logic model (Figure I.1), these Way2Work services supported participants in achieving positive transition outcomes, including employment, secondary school completion, postsecondary enrollment, and increased earnings. The program was also designed to decrease Way2Work participants' reliance on public income support, such as Supplemental Security Income. Way2Work staff began enrollment in September 2017 and provided services to participants through June 2020.

**Figure I.1. Way2Work's logic model**



| Inputs | Activities | Outputs | Outcomes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Short term** | **Long term** |
| VR counselors (DORS)<br><br>School staff (LSSs)<br><br>Technical assistance (University of Maryland)<br><br>Employment providers (CRP agencies)<br><br>State agency collaborators | Early referral to DORS, including authorization for pre-employment transition services<br><br>Receive interest inventory assessment and career planning services<br><br>Obtain multiple WBLEs<br><br>Participate in paid integrated employment<br><br>Receive individualized service coordination | DORS application and eligibility review<br><br>Assignment to CRPs<br><br>Receipt of pre-employment transition services<br><br>Customized placement in work experiences (paid and unpaid)<br><br>LSS contacts, referrals, collaborations, and application assistance on behalf of the student | Increased application and eligibility rate for DORS<br><br>Increased engagement with CRPs<br><br>Increased completion of work experiences (paid and unpaid)<br><br>Increased income<br><br>Increased expectations for long-term employment<br><br>Increased use of DORS pre-employment transition services<br><br>Stronger collaborative relationship between DORS, LSSs, CRPs, and other partners | Increase in the employment of youth and adults with disabilities<br><br>Increase in high school completion and graduation<br><br>Increase in enrollment in postsecondary education or training<br><br>Increase in individual income<br><br>Decrease in public income support |

## D. Way2Work's implementation environment

DORS and UMD implemented Way2Work in eight of Maryland's 24 LSSs (which correspond to counties) across urban and rural communities (Figure I.2). Hence, the demographics of students in the LSSs conducting Way2Work might differ from Maryland as a whole. Carroll, Charles, Harford, and Worcester County Public Schools participated in the first cohort of Way2Work, and Anne Arundel, Cecil, Frederick, and Washington County Public Schools joined the second cohort. To illustrate Maryland's overall transition environment, we summarize and compare Maryland's demographic and economic characteristics to the nation as a whole (Table I.1).

**Transition-age youth with disabilities in Maryland compared to the nation.** The percentage of transition-age youth (ages 14 to 18) in Maryland with disabilities was similar to the nation's rate overall, based on data from 2017 and 2018. However, the racial and ethnic identity of youth differs substantially. Youth identifying as White alone represented 51 percent of those in Maryland, compared with 68 percent for the nation. The proportion of youth in Maryland self-identifying as Black alone is more than twice the national proportion (31 percent versus 14 percent), and a smaller percentage of youth self-identified as Hispanic (13 percent in Maryland compared to 24 percent nationally).

**Economic and educational characteristics in Maryland compared to the nation.** Most Maryland youth ages 14 to 18 were enrolled in school (95 percent), a rate slightly higher than the national rate (94 percent). In 2017–2018, 15 percent of Maryland youth were employed, which is one percentage point less than youth nationally. The median family income for Maryland youth ($96,741) was substantially higher than the national average ($64,413), and the poverty rate (15 percent) was lower than the national rate (20 percent).

**Figure I.2. Maryland state map highlighting the Way2Work LSSs**
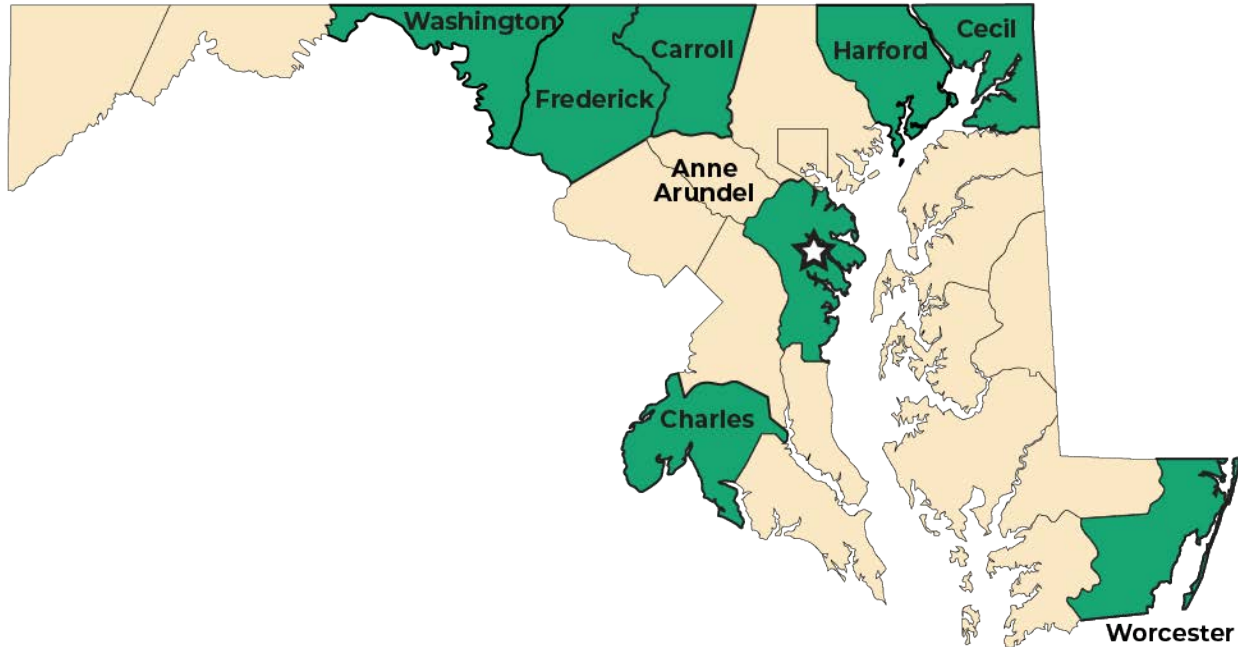


Note:    Eight LSSs (in green) participated in at least one cohort of Way2Work.

**Table I.1. Maryland and national demographic and economic characteristics, 2017 and 2018**

| | Maryland | Nation |
|---|---|---|
| Unweighted sample size | 119,303 | 6,404,579 |
| Population | 6,047,448 | 326,443,309 |
| Unemployment rate (%) | 4.9 | 5.1 |
| **Age distribution** | | |
| Ages 0–13 (%) | 17.1 | 17.4 |
| Ages 14–18 (%) | 6.3 | 6.5 |
| Ages 19–24 (%) | 7.6 | 8.0 |
| Ages 25–34 (%) | 13.7 | 13.8 |
| Ages 35–64 (%) | 40.1 | 38.5 |
| Ages 65 and older (%) | 15.1 | 15.8 |
| **Among population ages 14–18** | | |
| Race, White (%) | 50.6 | 67.7 |
| Race, Black (%) | 30.6 | 14.2 |
| Race, other (%) | 18.8 | 18.1 |
| Hispanic ethnicity (%) | 12.7 | 23.8 |
| Has disability (%) | 6.4 | 6.2 |
| In school (%) | 94.5 | 93.8 |
| Employed (%) | 14.9 | 16.2 |
| Neither employed nor in school (%) | 3.7 | 3.7 |
| Family income (mean) | $96,741 | $64,413 |
| Poverty rate (%) | 15.2 | 20.4 |

Source:   2017 and 2018 American Community Survey (ACS).

Note:      Estimates are population weighted using ACS population weights.

## E.   Way2Work implementation evaluation

RSA, DORS, and UMD are keenly interested in whether and how Way2Work achieved its goals and about participants' experiences with the program. To respond to the Way2Work program funder's information needs, UMD awarded a subcontract to Mathematica in June 2017 to conduct implementation (formative) and impact (summative) evaluations for Way2Work. This report focuses on Way2Work's implementation and addresses the following questions:

1. What were the main components of the Way2Work intervention?

2. What training and TA supports did Way2Work staff receive?

3. What were the characteristics of the Way2Work and usual services group participants?

4. Was Way2Work implemented as designed?

5. What were the service and work experiences of Way2Work participants?

6. What factors supported or challenged Way2Work implementation?

7. How did Way2Work staff improve the collaborative relationships between the DORS, LSSs, and other community partners?

**8.** What are the lessons learned from implementation?

We used a variety of administrative, survey, and interview data to address these questions. Appendix A provides details about the data sources, time frames for data collection, and analytic approach. Appendix B provides additional descriptive findings.

## F. Report organization

The remainder of the report is organized as follows. In Chapter II, we provide background on Way2Work's organizational structure, LSSs involved in the intervention, the Way2Work services, other DORS services available to participants, how Way2Work services differed from usual services, and UMD TA. In Chapter III, we present Way2Work's approach to student outreach, recruitment, and enrollment in the program. In Chapter IV, we report on participants' early engagement with DORS, assignment to CRPs, and receipt of pre-employment transition services. In Chapter V, we describe WBLE services and use. We summarize Way2Work service coordination, such as collaborations, referrals, and application assistance provided on behalf of the program participants in Chapter VI. We also describe MIAT service roles and experiences. In Chapter VII, we identify differences in Way2Work implementation by selected participant characteristics and LSS locations. We describe lessons learned about the Way2Work implementation and key takeaways and implications for the impact evaluation in the final two chapters (Chapters VIII and IX).

# II. Way2Work organizational structure and services

Way2Work's organizational structure and services built on DORS's usual services and employed similar professional staff, but with an emphasis on more intensive partner collaboration and service delivery. This chapter describes the roles of selected UMD, DORS, LSS, and CRP staff, whom we refer to collectively as Way2Work program staff. We also describe Way2Work intervention services and UMD's training and TA role.

## A. Way2Work management and program staff

Way2Work's staffing model relied on existing roles and partnerships but required more specific service delivery and collaboration on behalf of Way2Work participants (Table II.1). After enrolling students into Way2Work, UMD and DORS collaborated with local LSSs to match a CRP to Way2Work participants for services. Each LSS used grant funds to hire implementation specialists to coordinate local activities and partner with school transition specialists to oversee case management and data collection activities for Way2Work participants.

**UMD.** Several UMD staff contributed to the development and implementation of Way2Work.

> **Key features of Way2Work**
>
> - DORS funded Way2Work services and UMD oversaw program implementation and monitoring.
>
> - LSS staff coordinated data management and participant services.
>
> - CRPs engaged employers, secured WBLEs for participants, and provided pre-employment transition services.
>
> - Relative to usual services, the primary components of Way2Work included actively referring participants to DORS, assigning them to a CRP, and offering them multiple WBLE opportunities.
>
> - MIATs in each LSS met monthly to discuss and monitor each Way2Work participant's progress and to coordinate services.
>
> - UMD led ongoing training, TA, and professional development activities to ensure fidelity to the service model and consistent implementation across LSSs.

Way2Work had two principal investigators within UMD's Center for Transition and Career Innovation in the Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education. They provided general oversight of the project and communicated with federal project officers. They also supported LSSs and CRPs to implement the model with fidelity. Selected staff from UMD, including a project director and recruitment specialist, conducted enrollment and random assignment (we describe these activities in Chapter III). Finally, four UMD staff served as technical assistants to individual LSSs.

**DORS.** While the UMD team oversaw Way2Work implementation, DORS funded the Way2Work services and monitored service provision by CRPs and LSSs. DORS staff managed services to both Way2Work and usual services participants. A DORS statewide transition specialist served as DORS's Way2Work project coordinator and worked closely with UMD and LSSs to implement and coordinate the program; that person also communicated with RSA. Within each DORS region, which comprises a number of LSSs, regional directors oversaw the staff and services for their counties. Finally, designated DORS transition counselors within each region worked with the student population, either full or part time, in addition to working with an adult population, depending on region size. These DORS transition counselors worked with students in both the Way2Work and usual services groups, along with others who did not enroll in the evaluation. The DORS counselors were the VR point of contact for Way2Work

participants. They served as liaisons with the school and CRPs to facilitate services, including pre-employment transition services. They also attended the monthly MIAT meetings.

**Table II.1. Way2Work and usual services staff members**

| Way2Work program staff | Responsibilities | Way2Work services | Usual services |
|---|---|:---:|:---:|
| UMD | UMD staff oversaw implementation, training, and TA for the Way2Work program. They attended collaborative interagency meetings on behalf of Way2Work participants. | ✓ | |
| DORS | As the funder of Way2Work, DORS staff oversaw participant assignments and payments to CRPs in addition to those for the usual services caseload. They attended collaborative interagency meetings on behalf of Way2Work participants. | ✓ | ✓ |
| LSS implementation specialist | The implementation specialist coordinated weekly data collection effort across Way2Work program staff. Staff could also prepare student interest and skill documentation before assignment to a CRP and plan collaborative interagency meetings on behalf of Way2Work participants. | ✓ | |
| LSS transition specialist | The transition specialist oversaw transition services for both Way2Work and usual services participants. Staff could also prepare student interest and skill documentation before assignment to a CRP and plan and facilitate collaborative interagency meetings on behalf of Way2Work participants. | ✓ | ✓ |
| CRPs | CRP staff established WBLEs for both Way2Work and usual services participants, but Way2Work participants were expected to receive three WBLEs, with at least one being paid. CRP staff attended collaborative interagency meetings on behalf of Way2Work participants. | ✓ | ✓ |

**LSSs.** UMD and DORS requested interested LSSs to submit grant proposals to participate in the Way2Work program. UMD and DORS reviewed all proposals with the assistance of the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education. Selected LSSs contributed an implementation specialist and a transition specialist to oversee the data management and coordination of services on behalf of participants. These staff also assisted with student outreach and recruitment and referred interested students and families to UMD for enrollment.

1. **Implementation specialist.** As a Way2Work grant-funded, part-time position, the implementation specialist served as the LSS-level project manager for Way2Work and only worked with Way2Work participants. The implementation specialist's responsibilities included working with Way2Work participants to prepare or update documentation of their interests and skills; collecting and entering weekly service data from relevant partners such as CRPs, school staff, and employers into the program's data management system; preparing for interagency meetings; helping partners solve problems as challenges arose; and assisting with quarterly reporting to DORS. The office location of this staff person was often the LSS's central office.

2. **Transition specialist.** Building on an existing role within the LSSs, Way2Work identified a transition specialist in each LSS to oversee transition support services for Way2Work participants. Unlike implementation specialists, transition specialists worked with both Way2Work and usual services participants as well as other students. Typically, transition specialists connect with all

students with an IEP from sixth grade to age 21. However, the Way2Work program included participants with Section 504 plans, requiring the transition specialists to include those students on their caseloads. In this role, the transition specialist activities with Way2Work participants included updating documentation of the participant's interests and skills, scheduling and facilitating the monthly interagency meeting, and connecting Way2Work participants with CRPs and other service providers.

**CRPs.** CRPs are nongovernment organizations that offer services to people with disabilities and local employers to identify, initiate, and maintain employment. CRP agencies typically provide a range of services, such as pre-employment transition services, job coaching, career assessments, and supported employment services. DORS contracts with CRPs as direct service providers; as such, they offered services to both Way2Work and usual

> *"If they [participants] wish to work… it's my responsibility to take the relationships that I've built with employers and then see where there's a match, and then assist them in securing that job, their dream job."*
>
> —CRP

services participants. Typically, DORS assigns its consumers to individual CRPs, but Way2Work matched participants and CRPs based on participants' individual interests and skills as well as CRP interest. Once matched, CRP staff met with the participant and parent or guardian, using LSS staff's documentation as a guide to discuss the participant's unique interests, preferences, goals, and learning challenges.

The involvement of CRPs with Way2Work participants mirrored the CRPs' usual approach to services for DORS consumers who are students. CRP staff work directly with DORS consumers to offer individualized job development and coaching, and they place students in WBLEs. CRPs maintain lists of employers from previous collaborations and use methods such as Google searches or word of mouth to identify potential employers for their consumers. When a CRP identifies a potential employer, staff meet face-to-face with the employer to discuss work experience opportunities. Although the employer has no incentives to participate, CRPs market these partnerships as an opportunity for businesses to acquire additional staff and provide mentorship to local youth. CRPs also offer on-site support after employer placements, if needed. For example, consumers might rely on CRP staff to navigate the job environment, such as resolving conflicts with other employees or communication with employers. CRPs also communicate with and educate employers about the employment needs of this younger population. In general, CRP job development activities and procedures were similar for Way2Work and usual services participants; however, Way2Work expected participants to receive three WBLE placements during their participation, whereas most similar DORS consumers received only one.

## B.    Description of Way2Work services

UMD designed Way2Work services to build on the same components as DORS's usual services for students and youth with disabilities while engaging students in DORS services more quickly, increasing the number of WBLEs, and enhancing the collaboration between staff in partnering agencies relative to the usual services model (Table II.2). Way2Work offered participants more opportunities for work experiences that aligned with their unique interests and skill sets and informed their employment and postsecondary education goals. It also provided a consistent structure for cross-agency collaboration that emphasized individualized services along with training, TA, and advice from other partners to overcome service provision challenges. In this section, we describe Way2Work services and how they differed from usual services.

**Table II.2. Description of usual services compared with Way2Work services**

| Service component | Usual services | Way2Work services |
|---|---|---|
| **Early referral to DORS** | | |
| DORS referral | Students with an IEP or 504 plan can receive a DORS referral based on their transition plan. However, there is no systematic referral support. | LSS and DORS staff encouraged early engagement by referring Way2Work participants to DORS and reaching out to participants to monitor and foster involvement. |
| Authorization for pre-employment transition services | Students referred to DORS can receive authorization for five pre-employment transition services: job exploration counseling, counseling on comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training, self-advocacy training, and WBLEs. | Way2Work had the same usual services, though Way2Work staff monitored participants' progress. |
| CRP assignment | DORS refers students to CRPs, as needed and when deemed appropriate, for pre-employment transition or other services. | Matching a participant to a CRP was a requirement of Way2Work participation. CRP staff met with the participant and completed documentation to discuss skills and identify WBLE areas of interest. |
| Engagement with VR | Student engagement in DORS is uncommon, and there is no systematic mechanism to assist usual services students with applications to DORS. | LSS staff encouraged and assisted participants with formal DORS applications to receive services. |
| **Multiple WBLEs** | | |
| WBLEs | DORS's goal is for students to have one WBLE before exiting high school. | Way2Work had a goal of three WBLEs for participants, with at least one experience that had wages paid by the employer. Unpaid WBLEs might include a DORS-provided stipend for the student if the CRP had applied for and been approved for funding. WBLEs were to be customized to the participant and aligned with his or her interests, skills, and documented goals. |
| **Service collaboration** | | |
| Positive Personal Profile[a] | Not available, though similar assessments may be available through LSSs. | Participants completed a Positive Personal Profile after enrollment that was administered by LSS transition specialists. |
| MIAT | Not available; however, some LSSs conduct similar meetings for students. | LSSs conducted monthly MIAT meetings with representatives from the LSS, DORS, local CRPs, and UMD; MIAT members coordinated services and discussed each participant's activities and engagement. Way2Work participants were matched to CRPs at this meeting, and the team could troubleshoot issues or service barriers. |

[a] The Positive Personal Profile is an interest and strengths-based inventory that guides Way2Work service delivery.

### 1. Early referral to DORS

For transitioning students with disabilities, a referral to DORS allows the student to access foundational pre-employment transition services. For this reason, the Way2Work model emphasized early engagement with DORS so that participants could have access to these services early in high school and with enough time to engage in exploratory WBLEs. In addition to WBLEs, this section highlights the steps Way2Work and usual services participants took to engage with DORS and describes the pre-employment transition services they might receive.

**DORS referral.** For DORS to authorize a student for pre-employment transition services, the agency has a referral system that allows it to assess the student's needs. Although a student age 14 and older with an IEP or a Section 504 plan can receive a DORS referral, there is no systematic referral support for students and families to complete and submit the necessary paperwork. Families of transitioning students often do not follow through with the referral paperwork for several reasons, such as competing priorities or confusion about the services' potential advantages. The Way2Work model addressed this issue by providing support and encouragement to students and families to ensure they completed the DORS referral process as an essential first step to improve outcomes for transitioning students.

**Authorization for pre-employment transition services.** DORS can authorize a student to receive pre-employment transition services after assessing a student's referral. Students with disabilities, including those with an IEP, a Section 504 plan, or a documented disability, are eligible for pre-employment transition services. Students can leverage such services to advocate for themselves, gain employment experience, and prepare for life after high school. DORS offers four primary pre-employment transition services (Table II.3). (A fifth required service, WBLEs, is described in further detail below as a specific component of Way2Work services.) DORS authorizes CRPs and other agencies to offer these services to referred students in small-group or one-on-one counseling sessions. Pre-employment transition services are the same for Way2Work and usual services participants. Though active VR consumers can receive these services (meaning that they applied to DORS and DORS assessed them as eligible), students do not have to be VR consumers to receive them.

**Table II.3. Pre-employment transition services, other than WBLEs**

| Service | Description |
|---|---|
| Job exploration counseling | Counseling about occupations and industries, information and assessments to assist participants with setting career goals |
| Counseling on postsecondary education opportunities | Guidance on postsecondary education and training opportunities; information and advising on college, trade, and technical schools; assistance with applications and financial aid |
| Workplace readiness training | Job seeking guidance and soft skills training needed for work, assistance with resumes and interview skills, training in how to interact with employers and coworkers |
| Instruction in self-advocacy | Training on how to plan and pursue future goals and assert for one's interests; might include training on individual rights, disability disclosure, self-determination, and accommodations requests |

**CRP assignment.** Once DORS authorizes a student for pre-employment transition services, it identifies a local CRP to ensure delivery of the services as needed, though not all authorized students are assigned to a CRP. The Way2Work model established a goal of matching all participants to CRPs to ensure the

efficient delivery of pre-employment transition services that met participants' needs, built their skills, and refined their employment and education interests. LSS staff worked with participants to complete the Positive Personal Profile to inventory the participant's skills and interests and also asked if the participant and family had a preference of CRP. At local MIAT meetings, teams discussed the information contained in the profile to identify a CRP that would create a good match, such as a CRP that had community contacts aligned with the participant's interests or particular expertise in a skill set the participant wanted to develop.

**Engagement with VR.** Students who wish to access services beyond pre-employment transition services, such as career, training, or transportation services, must apply to DORS for VR services. DORS reviews their applications to determine eligibility. If DORS assesses applicants as eligible, students can then receive the same range of VR services as VR consumers after completing an IPE. The IPE outlines the steps and strategies that counselors and consumers agree to pursue specific to competitive employment or postsecondary outcomes. DORS also provides consumers who receive Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance with financial education counseling, as needed, to inform them on how work and earnings might affect their benefits. For Way2Work participants, LSS staff assisted with their applications to VR, though these applications were not a requirement of the program.

## 2. Multiple work experiences

Work-based learning is a central component of Way2Work. Way2Work's goal was to ensure each participant had three work experiences during his or her involvement in the program, including one experience paid by an employer. Way2Work participants could access WBLEs in several ways. For example, DORS sponsors a summer youth employment program that offers general employment opportunities for students with disabilities. Way2Work was designed to be more intensive and intended for participants to connect with multiple WBLEs that aligned with participants' interests and skills. CRPs could directly arrange and support WBLEs, but paid work arranged by the participant also counted toward Way2Work's goal. Participants used work experiences to develop important soft skills and practical skills, expand their professional networks, and assess their own capacity for and interest in a given career.

**Types of work experiences.** Way2Work offered four types of work experiences: unpaid WBLEs, WBLEs with a DORS-paid stipend, paid WBLEs, and paid work.

- **WBLEs.** Way2Work included three types of WBLEs: unpaid, paid by a DORS stipend, and paid by an employer. Unpaid WBLEs could include volunteer experiences, job shadows, internships, and school-sponsored WBLEs. Participants received pay for the other two types of WBLEs, either by DORS through a stipend or by the employer directly. CRP staff arranged and monitored all WBLEs other than those that were school sponsored, including establishing a workplace agreement with an employer. Workplace agreements specified the WBLE duration, students' work schedule, learning objectives, on-site workplace readiness training needs, and expectations for participants' performance, such as abiding by company rules and policies and performing duties as assigned. WBLEs had to have a minimum of 8 work hours and no more than 20 hours per week. DORS and UMD intended for work experiences to last for six to eight weeks, although one LSS adapted these procedures, reducing its WBLE requirement to three weeks.

- **Paid work.** Unlike WBLEs, paid work included any employment that the participant obtained without direct CRP involvement. Though CRP staff could provide guidance to participants, if needed, paid work did not require workplace agreements or on-the-job follow-up supports on the part of CRP

staff. The program did not designate any minimum requirements for these experiences, though it intended paid work as an outcome for participants.

### 3. Service collaboration

LSS, CRP, UMD, and DORS staff collaborated to plan and connect Way2Work participants with services and supports to increase their transition success. Much of the service collaboration planning occurred through each LSS's MIAT.

**Planning and assessment tools.** LSS and CRP staff used required and optional planning and assessment tools to gather information on Way2Work participants' interests, goals, employment preferences, and workplace support needs. Staff who provide usual services also rely on planning tools; however, the Positive Personal Profile was a required tool for Way2Work participants. The optional planning tools included the Individual Career Development Plan and Individual Support Plan.

**MIAT service coordination.** UMD required each LSS to form an MIAT to collaborate on Way2Work participants' services and supports. MIAT member composition varied but typically included LSS, DORS, and CRP staff; UMD technical assistants; and representatives from other agencies that served transition-age youth with disabilities, such as state and local workforce centers and developmental disability agencies. MIAT members met monthly to discuss and monitor service activities, including ongoing contacts, cross-agency collaborations, referrals to other agencies, and application assistance, provided on behalf of Way2Work participants. MIAT members did not discuss nor monitor the activities of usual services students.

## C. Training and TA

UMD's training and TA were integral to Way2Work. UMD staff led ongoing training and TA efforts for Way2Work service providers to ensure consistent implementation of the service model across LSSs. UMD's team included transition specialists, experts in VR counseling, and researchers with experience conducting WBLE project initiatives for transition-age youth with disabilities. The section below highlights UMD's activities in this area.

**Kickoff and onboarding activities.** At the beginning of the demonstration, UMD staff provided training to staff from DORS, participating LSSs, and CRPs giving an overview of the intended Way2Work model, including navigating the DORS enrollment process and how to tease out participants' interests during the development of the Positive Personal Profile. Additionally, UMD conducted training on family engagement and customizing WBLEs to match participants' skills and interests. When the second cohort of LSSs started, UMD held an orientation for new CRPs that included implementation lessons learned during the first cohort.

**Monthly calls with LSSs and integrated TA.** UMD assigned a technical assistant to each LSS for individualized technical support on Way2Work implementation. The UMD technical assistants also attended and contributed to MIAT coordination activities monthly. UMD staff conducted monthly TA calls with LSS staff to discuss program operations, progress updates, and cross-site challenges. In March 2020, UMD staff turned to phone calls in place of in-person TA activities because of COVID-19.

**TA to CRPs.** UMD staff offered training to CRP staff about WBLE development and outreach to employers, including professional development sessions on individualized employment and TA to

address specific Way2Work participants. These trainings and TA may have improved all CRP services, including those received by the usual services group.

**Fidelity checklist and monitoring.** To monitor the Way2Work implementation, UMD staff developed a fidelity checklist to track participants' receipt of key services. UMD and LSS staff used the checklist to monitor implementation as either not implemented, partially implemented, or implemented to identify areas for improvement in the implementation model.

**Way2Work networking meetings**. UMD held periodic networking meetings specifically for LSS stakeholders and annual networking meetings for all Way2Work stakeholders, including LSS, DORS, and CRP staff. During the networking meetings, Way2Work program staff from each LSS interacted collectively and in small groups to share lessons learned and discuss strategies for securing WBLEs and improving participants' outcomes. UMD staff facilitated large-group and break-out session discussions on interagency collaboration, employer outreach, job development, student and family experiences, and sustainability after the end of Way2Work.

## III. Way2Work outreach, recruitment, and enrollment

Although Way2Work outreach and recruitment were initially challenging, LSS and UMD staff learned from their experiences, improved outreach strategies, and met the overall enrollment target. This section describes how the Way2Work team conducted outreach and recruitment, the enrollment process, special enrollment considerations, and enrolled students' characteristics.

### A. Way2Work outreach and recruitment

LSS staff used multiple strategies and outreach events to market and promote Way2Work to potentially eligible students and referred any interested students to the UMD enrollment staff.

**Outreach procedures.** LSS staff conducted outreach and recruitment for two cohorts, the first beginning in September 2017 and the second beginning in July 2018. The transition specialists from each LSS used school records to identify potentially eligible participants and pulled the family's contact information. Eligible participants were high school students with either an IEP or a 504 plan who were approximately two years from predicted graduation (planning to graduate with a high school diploma or certificate in 2019 or 2020 for each respective cohort). LSS staff first sent an outreach mailing to the eligible students in their catchment areas to inform students and their families about Way2Work, describe the program, and invite them to contact UMD for more information. The outreach mailing did not promise or guarantee access to Way2Work services before the random assignment process. After the outreach mailing, LSS staff conducted follow-up recruitment by phone and through informational outreach events. Once students or families expressed interest in Way2Work, LSS staff referred them to UMD staff for enrollment and random assignment. With the second cohort, LSS staff repeated this outreach and recruitment process by mailing a batch of invitations to eligible participants the next school year (over the summer of 2018) as a new cohort of juniors became eligible.

> **Key findings**
> - Way2Work achieved its goal of enrolling 400 students.
> - The project randomly assigned half of the enrollees to Way2Work and half to usual services as intended.
> - Despite initial challenges, LSS staff became more efficient and successful with enrollment during the second cohort.
> - At enrollment, Way2Work and usual services participants more frequently were male and White, reported having attention-deficit or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and were not DORS consumers. Nearly half had worked at a paid job in the past year.
> - Most characteristics of Way2Work and usual services participants were similar at enrollment, with the exception of parent or guardian relationship status, participants' receipt of DORS services, and participant employment experience.

**Outreach and recruitment successes.** Staff experiences with outreach and recruitment varied by LSS. For instance, a staff member reported that its evening information and recruitment event was "hugely successful" in urban areas, filling 80 percent of the LSS's enrollment slots in the first night and the remaining slots at a second event. Staff attributed this success to the sizeable pool of eligible students. In more rural areas, standalone evening outreach events resulted in comparatively fewer enrollments because of low attendance. However, staff in these LSSs changed their approaches by connecting with potentially eligible students and families at existing events, such as college and career fairs, Parent Teacher Association meetings, and back-to-school nights. In addition to giving brief presentations at school events

and providing marketing materials for students to bring home to their families, this approach led to more successful recruitment efforts in these areas.

Similarly, experiences also differed by enrollment cohort, with the recruitment process occurring faster in the second cohort. A UMD staff member reflected that this change resulted from staff learning the process and procedures during Cohort 1 and becoming more efficient. Additionally, an LSS staff member reported that interest in the program had increased over time. Although recruiting for Cohort 1 was difficult, she noted that "by the time Cohort 2 came around, people were very excited about it, and we had to turn folks away, so we met our numbers in the very first night when we had planned three nights of opportunities for families to come out."

**Outreach and marketing challenges.** Part of the later recruitment efficiency built on the initial marketing challenges. In one LSS, staff noted that some families were confused by the number of agencies in the original marketing materials. Although UMD oversaw Way2Work, this reported confusion from families led the recruitment team to revise its marketing materials to emphasize how the program broadened existing DORS services. In another LSS, staff reported that a few families declined to participate because of the study's randomized controlled trial design; they were unwilling to participate in data collection activities as usual services group members. Recruiting staff reflected that "[explaining] to families that there was a 50-50 chance…was probably the most difficult part for me…. To share this wonderful project and then say, 'Oh, but there's a chance that your son or daughter isn't going to be in these enhanced services, but it's okay, you'll get the usual services,' that was a little hard." One way that staff overcame this hesitation was to focus not on the chance of losing the opportunity of receiving enhanced services but instead on highlighting the benefit of DORS pre-employment transition services for which students were still eligible for as a part of usual services.

## B. Enrollment and random assignment process

After a potentially eligible student or family expressed interest, LSS staff referred the family to UMD staff to conduct enrollment. UMD staff randomly assigned students and families who consented to participate into one of two groups: treatment (Way2Work services) or control (usual services). LSS staff only received a list of individuals randomized into the treatment group. This approach ensured that LSS staff were not aware of the students who either did not enroll or were assigned to usual services. We describe the enrollment and random assignment process in greater detail in Figure III.1 and the discussion that follows. Additional information about the data and systems used during the enrollment process is in Appendix A.

**Confirming eligibility.** Before engaging with the family, UMD staff confirmed that the referred student was eligible to participate. In addition to being two years from predicted graduation, students not already enrolled in another evaluation in Maryland involving youth with disabilities were eligible to participate.[1] UMD staff reached out to inform interested families of their eligibility and set up a time to proceed with enrollment.

**Students' assent and parents' consent.** To conduct enrollment, UMD staff arranged an in-person meeting with the students and at least one parent or guardian. The Way2Work evaluation required that all

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[1] Another transition-oriented demonstration project, Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income, or PROMISE, was ongoing in the state of Maryland at the same time as Way2Work. For confidentiality, only UMD staff were allowed to cross-reference lists of potentially eligible students with enrolled PROMISE participants.

students enroll with a parent or guardian to provide legal consent to participate in the study. Way2Work also required the students' assent, a critical step in conducting ethical research with minors and respecting the individual choices of those without legal autonomy. During the meeting, UMD staff offered information about Way2Work verbally and in handouts, such as copies of the consent forms and a document with answers to frequently asked questions. When a student and parent or guardian had no further questions, UMD staff requested verbal permission or consent. The legal adult completed and signed a hard-copy consent form. Way2Work required students and their families to provide consent to enroll in Way2Work. Those who did not enroll could continue to access usual services that DORS offered students. Also, students who did not assent could reconsider later in the enrollment period if they and their family changed their minds about enrollment.

**Figure III.1. Way2Work enrollment and random assignment process**

| Step 1 |
|---|
| UMD staff confirmed student's eligibility. |

| Step 2 |
|---|
| UMD met with interested student and parent or guardian. |

| Step 3 |
|---|
| Parent or guardian completed consent form and student provided assent. |

| Step 4 |
|---|
| UMD staff reviewed consent form for completeness and entered into the MIS. |

| Step 5 |
|---|
| MIS data were automatically validated. |

| Step 6 |
|---|
| Parent or guardian and student completed baseline survey. |

| Step 7 |
|---|
| MIS assigned student to Way2Work treatment group or usual services group. |

| Step 8 |
|---|
| UMD staff notified student and family of random assignment status and eligible services. |

MIS = management information system.

**Random assignment.** When the parent or guardian and student consented and assented, respectively, UMD staff reviewed the consent form for completeness and entered the information into the Random Assignment, Participant Tracking, Enrollment, and Reporting, or RAPTER®, system, Mathematica's web-based management information system (MIS). The MIS validation process prevented UMD staff from progressing if they skipped critical pieces of information, such as the student's name or date of birth. The consent form captured necessary demographic details on both the student and enrolling parent or guardian, such as name, date of birth, contact information, and the parent or guardian's relationship. After UMD staff entered the data, the MIS automatically checked to ensure it had not already captured the student's information, a mechanism to prevent reenrollments (occurring, for example, if a family was disappointed with or had forgotten an earlier assignment to usual services). This step included a manual check to ensure the enrolling family did not have other enrolled members (outlined in more detail later).

After the automatic and manual checks in the MIS ensured the family had not previously enrolled, UMD staff asked the parent or guardian and student to provide supplemental information through the computer-based, self-administered baseline survey. The survey was brief (5 minutes for parents, 10 minutes for students) and collected data on students' characteristics, including demographics, employment experiences, goals, and expectations, which were essential benchmarks for the evaluation.

After UMD staff successfully submitted the baseline survey, they would navigate back to the MIS and the system instantly assigned students to participate in either the Way2Work or usual services group. Mathematica built an algorithm in the MIS to stratify random assignment by LSS. Staff could not access the algorithm string, which ensured they could not predict or influence individual random assignment outcomes. After random assignment, UMD staff notified students and families verbally about their placement into the Way2Work or usual services group and outlined the services they were eligible to receive. For participants assigned to usual services, UMD staff provided the appropriate application forms for the student and family to enroll in DORS. Families could either complete applications on the spot or take them home and return them later. Finally, all families received a $50 gift card for completing the enrollment process, regardless of the random assignment outcome.

## C. Special enrollment considerations

Way2Work altered its random assignment guidelines for siblings. UMD staff assigned any families with multiple eligible participants in a single household (including siblings, step-siblings, half-siblings, or other non-relative students) to the same intervention group. This process minimized the potential for contamination, in which enrollees from one group receive the services intended for enrollees in the other. UMD staff used the validation check built into the MIS to monitor sibling enrollment. First, UMD staff asked the student and family if other eligible students lived in the same household. If so, UMD staff entered the sibling's information and confirmed if the sibling had already enrolled. If already enrolled, the MIS automatically assigned the new enrollee to the same group and designated that enrollee as a non-research case. Otherwise, the enrollment would proceed as typical. The MIS flagged five enrollees as having an eligible sibling enrolled in the demonstration.

## D. Enrollment and random assignment results

Way2Work exceeded its enrollment goal of 400 participants by 1, and the random assignment process was effective, producing two groups (Way2Work and usual services) with similar characteristics.[2] In the following section, we describe enrollment data for each LSS, present the results of random assignment, and compare the attributes of Way2Work enrollees to the usual services group.

**LSS enrollment.** The enrollment target for each LSS depended on the size of the eligible pool of students and ranged from 25 to 79 enrolled participants (Table III.1). The total for these individual targets summed to 412 to account for the unpredictability of the random assignment strings. Three LSSs met or exceeded their enrollment target, and all other LSSs were within five enrollments of their target. Enrollments into Cohort 1 ran from September 2017 to February 2018 (Table III.2). The pace of enrollments for Cohort 1 reflected the time needed to ramp up outreach and recruitment to students, as well as determining which methods were most successful for different LSSs. Cohort 2 enrollment began in July 2018 and concluded in January 2019. More than half of the Cohort 2 enrollments occurred during the summer (July and

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[2] One Way2Work participant moved out of Maryland and two passed away during the evaluation period. These three cases were withdrawn.

August 2018), followed by a steady enrollment pace through the end of the calendar year. Teams could utilize lessons learned during the first cohort of enrollments to streamline recruitment techniques, and LSSs identified students who would age into being eligible for the second cohort to prepare their outreach case lists in advance.

**Table III.1 Way2Work recruitment efforts and enrollment, by LSS and cohort**

| LSS | Recruitment goal | Number of students contacted | Number of Way2Work participants | Number of usual services participants | Enrolled Way2Work participants as a percentage of all contacted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | **412** | **536** | **200** | **201** | **37.3** |
| Anne Arundel County Public Schools | 54 | 53 | 26 | 26 | 49.1 |
| Carroll County Public Schools | 79 | 117 | 38 | 38 | 32.5 |
| Cecil County Public Schools | 25 | 27 | 11 | 12 | 40.7 |
| Charles County Public Schools | 54 | 61 | 28 | 29 | 45.9 |
| Frederick County Public Schools | 54 | 70 | 24 | 25 | 34.3 |
| Harford County Public Schools | 79 | 92 | 41 | 38 | 44.6 |
| Washington County Public Schools | 25 | 37 | 11 | 12 | 29.7 |
| Worcester County Public Schools | 42 | 79 | 21 | 21 | 26.6 |
| **Cohort 1** | **202** | **268** | **94** | **95** | **35.1** |
| Carroll County Public Schools | 54 | 82 | 25 | 25 | 30.5 |
| Charles County Public Schools | 54 | 61 | 28 | 29 | 45.9 |
| Harford County Public Schools | 51 | 64 | 26 | 28 | 40.6 |
| Worcester County Public Schools | 43 | 61 | 15 | 13 | 24.6 |
| **Cohort 2** | **225** | **268** | **106** | **106** | **39.6** |
| Anne Arundel County Public Schools | 54 | 53 | 26 | 26 | 49.1 |
| Carroll County Public Schools | 25 | 35 | 13 | 13 | 37.1 |
| Cecil County Public Schools | 25 | 27 | 11 | 12 | 40.7 |
| Frederick County Public Schools | 54 | 70 | 24 | 25 | 34.3 |
| Harford County Public Schools | 28 | 28 | 15 | 10 | 53.6 |
| Washington County Public Schools | 25 | 37 | 11 | 12 | 29.7 |
| Worcester County Public Schools | 14 | 18 | 6 | 8 | 33.3 |

Source:   University of Maryland recruitment records and Way2Work MIS.

**Table III.2. Way2Work enrollment, by calendar month and year**

| Enrollment month | Total number of participants | Number of Way2Work participants | Number of usual services participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | **401** | **200** | **201** |
| **Cohort 1** | **189** | **94** | **95** |
| September 2017 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| October 2017 | 43 | 25 | 18 |
| November 2017 | 63 | 29 | 34 |
| December 2017 | 39 | 20 | 19 |
| January 2018 | 30 | 14 | 16 |
| February 2018 | 11 | 5 | 6 |
| **Cohort 2** | **212** | **106** | **106** |
| July 2018 | 81 | 42 | 39 |
| August 2018 | 37 | 19 | 18 |
| September 2018 | 20 | 11 | 9 |
| October 2018 | 35 | 20 | 15 |
| November 2018 | 21 | 8 | 13 |
| December 2018 | 15 | 4 | 11 |
| January 2019 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Source: Way2Work MIS.

**Enrollee characteristics.** Most characteristics of Way2Work and usual services participants were similar at enrollment, with the exception of parent or guardian relationship status, participants' receipt of DORS services, and participant employment experience (Table III.3). The participants' demographic characteristics were largely similar (no more than five percentage points difference) between the Way2Work and usual services groups, suggesting that random assignment procedures were successful.

Participants were more frequently male, 16 years old, and White (non-Hispanic). The enrollee's parent or guardian had most often attained a postsecondary degree, and for the majority, English was the only spoken language in the household. The most common disability condition was attention-deficit disorder (ADD) or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and roughly half of the conditions were identified between kindergarten and fifth grade. Three-quarters of participants received special education services or had an IEP.[3] About one-third were eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch in the 12 months before enrollment (underscoring the families' limited means), and 13 percent of participants received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits because of a disability.

During the baseline survey, participants were asked about their expectations for the future. More than three-quarters of participants expected to achieve a postsecondary degree, to complete technical or trade school, or to be living on their own or with a spouse or partner. Nearly all (99 percent) participants

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[3] Though IEP or Section 504 plan status was a requirement of enrollment into Way2Work, enrollment data for these statuses do not sum to 100. Enrolling students and parents were asked to self-report whether the student had an IEP or Section 504 plan at the time of enrollment, and not all families may have been aware of their student's special education status.

expected they probably or definitely would be working at age 25. Finally, 69 percent of participants rated their current health as very good or excellent.

Despite these similarities between Way2Work and usual services participants, a few characteristics showed differences greater than five percentage points between groups. Parent or guardian relationship status differed between the Way2Work and usual services groups; parents or guardians in the Way2Work group were less likely to be married (10 percentage points difference). Additionally, about 16 percent of participants received DORS services at the time of enrollment, but Way2Work participants received DORS services at enrollment at a rate that was 7 percentage points higher than usual services participants.

Employment experiences also differed for participants at the time of enrollment. In particular, Way2Work participants consistently had higher rates of employment and weekly hours worked than did usual services participants, including work with pay at any time in the past year (by nine percentage points). Way2Work participants also had higher rates of employment at the time of enrollment (by 12 percentage points). These employment differences between Way2Work and usual services groups could be associated with differences in participation rates for some services and outcomes, in a positive or negative direction; the impact report (Mann et al. 2021) explores this issue more fully. Experiences during the past year working in an unpaid job (8 percent overall) and working at a school-sponsored work-based learning activity (13 percent overall) were more similar across groups.

**Table III.3. Characteristics of Way2Work and usual services participants at enrollment**

| Variable | Way2Work services group | Usual services group | Percentage point difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of participants** | **200** | **201** | |
| **Demographics (%)** | | | |
| **Sex** | | | |
| Male | 66.0 | 61.0 | -5.0 |
| Female | 34.0 | 39.0 | 5.0 |
| **Age** | | | |
| 15 or younger | 3.0 | 2.5 | -0.5 |
| 16 | 62.0 | 62.7 | 0.7 |
| 17 | 23.5 | 20.9 | -2.6 |
| 18 | 2.5 | 5.0 | 2.5 |
| 19 or older | 9.0 | 9.0 | 0.0 |
| **Race** | | | |
| Black | 31.5 | 31.3 | -0.2 |
| White | 64.0 | 65.2 | 1.2 |
| Other | 8.5 | 10.4 | 1.9 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 4.5 | 6.0 | 1.5 |
| **Grade level** | | | |
| Junior[a] | 93.5 | 93.0 | -0.5 |
| Other | 6.5 | 7.0 | 0.5 |
| **Parent/guardian characteristics (%)** | | | |
| English is only spoken language in responding parent/guardian household | 94.5 | 94.0 | -0.5 |
| **Highest completed education level of responding parent/guardian** | | | |
| Less than high school | 5.5 | 6.5 | 1.0 |
| High school graduate (or equivalent) | 21.5 | 18.4 | -3.1 |
| Postsecondary degree | 72.0 | 74.1 | 2.1 |
| Unknown | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| **Relationship status of responding parent/guardian** | | | |
| Single | 15.0 | 8.0 | -7.0 |
| Married | 63.5 | 73.6 | 10.1 |
| Separated or divorced | 20.5 | 17.4 | -3.1 |
| Unknown | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| **Condition and service receipt (%)** | | | |
| **Has ever been identified as having** | | | |
| ADD or ADHD | 60.0 | 58.2 | -1.8 |
| Autism spectrum disorder | 23.5 | 26.4 | 2.9 |
| Emotional or behavioral disorder or emotional disturbance | 22.5 | 22.4 | -0.1 |

Table III.3 (*continued*)

| Variable | Way2Work services group | Usual services group | Percentage point difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hearing impairment | 4.5 | 4.0 | -0.5 |
| Specific learning disability | 29.5 | 29.4 | -0.1 |
| Intellectual disability | 17.5 | 11.9 | -5.6 |
| Speech or communication impairment | 27.0 | 23.9 | -3.1 |
| Physical or orthopedic impairment | 9.5 | 10.0 | 0.5 |
| Visual impairment | 8.0 | 9.5 | 1.5 |
| Other | 28.5 | 26.9 | -1.6 |
| **When disability or condition was first identified** | | | |
| Birth | 4.0 | 5.0 | 1.0 |
| Before kindergarten | 29.5 | 27.4 | -2.1 |
| Kindergarten to grade 5 | 51.0 | 51.2 | 0.2 |
| Grade 6–8 | 9.5 | 10.0 | 0.5 |
| Grade 9–2 | 1.5 | 4.5 | 3.0 |
| Receives special education services or has an individualized education program | 78.0 | 73.1 | -4.9 |
| Has a Section 504 plan | 19.5 | 24.4 | 4.9 |
| Received free/reduced-price school lunch in past 12 months | 33.0 | 29.9 | -3.1 |
| Received Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits in past 12 months | 13.0 | 13.4 | 0.4 |
| Was receiving services from DORS | 19.0 | 12.4 | -6.6 |
| **Employment (%)** | | | |
| Worked at a job or business with pay any time in the past year | 46.5 | 37.8 | -8.7 |
| Worked at a job or business without pay any time in the past year | 9.5 | 6.5 | -3.0 |
| Currently working | 30.0 | 17.9 | -12.1 |
| Participant attended a school sponsored work-based learning activity | 14.0 | 12.4 | -1.6 |
| **Hours per week worked at most recent job in the past year (%)** | | | |
| 0 hours or did not work | 45.0 | 57.2 | 12.2 |
| Fewer than 10 hours | 19.5 | 15.4 | -4.1 |
| 10–20 hours | 19.0 | 16.4 | -2.6 |
| 21–30 hours | 11.5 | 6.0 | -5.5 |
| More than 30 hours | 5.0 | 5.0 | 0.0 |
| **Expectations and health (%)** | | | |
| **Highest level of schooling the participant anticipates completing** | | | |
| Less than high school | 1.0 | 1.5 | 0.5 |
| High school graduate (or equivalent) | 21.5 | 17.4 | -4.1 |
| Postsecondary degree | 68.5 | 64.7 | -3.8 |
| Technical or trade school | 9.0 | 16.4 | 7.4 |

Table III.3 (*continued*)

| Variable | Way2Work services group | Usual services group | Percentage point difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Where participant anticipates living at age 25** | | | |
| With a parent/guardian, sibling, or other relative | 19.0 | 18.9 | -0.1 |
| On his/her own or with a spouse or partner | 79.5 | 78.1 | -1.4 |
| Other | 1.5 | 3.0 | 1.5 |
| **How likely participant thinks he/she will be working at a paid job at age 25** | | | |
| Definitely or probably will | 99.0 | 98.0 | -1.0 |
| Definitely or probably will not | 1.0 | 2.0 | 1.0 |
| **Participant's self-reported health** | | | |
| Excellent or very good | 70.0 | 67.7 | -2.3 |
| Good | 25.5 | 24.4 | -1.1 |
| Fair or poor | 4.5 | 8.0 | 3.5 |
| **Other (%)** | | | |
| **LSS** | | | |
| Anne Arundel | 13.0 | 12.9 | -0.1 |
| Carroll | 19.0 | 18.9 | -0.1 |
| Cecil | 5.5 | 6.0 | 0.5 |
| Charles | 14.0 | 14.4 | 0.4 |
| Harford | 12.0 | 12.4 | 0.4 |
| Frederick | 20.5 | 18.9 | -1.6 |
| Washington | 5.5 | 6.0 | 0.5 |
| Worcester | 10.5 | 10.4 | -0.1 |
| **Way2Work cohort** | | | |
| Cohort 1 | 47.0 | 47.3 | 0.3 |
| Cohort 2 | 53.0 | 52.7 | -0.3 |

Source:   Way2Work baseline survey.

[a] Two participants in this grade level group were seniors at the time of enrollment.

# IV. Way2Work service use: Early referral to DORS and pre-employment transition services

A primary aim of Way2Work was to accelerate participants' referrals and engagement with DORS to receive job development and work-based learning services. Way2Work participants could also receive other services in addition to those specific to Way2Work to potentially contribute to their short-term or long-term outcomes. The primary services most relevant for the Way2Work evaluation are pre-employment transition services other than WBLEs (a specific service for the Way2Work model covered separately). This chapter describes participants' engagement with DORS and receipt of pre-employment transition services.

## A. Early engagement with DORS

LSS staff referred participants to DORS soon after their enrollment in Way2Work to apply for pre-employment transition and other VR services. Because LSSs had established relationships with DORS and some students sought services from DORS before the start of Way2Work, about 1 in 10 (12 percent) of Way2Work participants had some type of involvement with DORS before enrolling in Way2Work. We describe the program's referrals to DORS, authorization for pre-employment transition services, assignment to CRPs, and application and eligibility for DORS services.

> **Key findings**
>
> - About 1 in 10 participants (12 percent) engaged with DORS before enrolling in Way2Work.
> - Way2Work referred most participants (94 percent) to DORS.
> - DORS authorized pre-employment transition services for most Way2Work participants (78 percent).
> - Nearly all participants (97 percent) involved with DORS had a match to a CRP assignment.
> - Around one-quarter of participants used work readiness training, instruction in self-advocacy, or job exploration counseling (all of which are pre-employment transition services).

**Early referral to DORS after Way2Work enrollment.** LSS staff and MIAT members made a concerted effort to reach out to participants and their families to refer them to DORS after enrollment for pre-employment transition services and VR consumer services as appropriate. The program referred most participants (94 percent) to DORS, nearly half (45 percent) within 30 days of enrollment.

**Authorization for pre-employment transition services after enrollment.** DORS counselors can authorize pre-employment transition services after determining participants' needs. In Maryland, students with IEPs or 504 plans typically meet with DORS counselors and families to discuss pre-employment transition services, and students can agree to services if interested. Most Way2Work participants (78 percent) received an authorization for pre-employment transition services, with 11 percent receiving authorization within 30 days of Way2Work enrollment.[4] Several LSS and DORS staff mentioned that delays could occur during the DORS engagement process. Staff in one LSS noted that it took more than a year for at least one parent to meet with the VR counselor and sign the necessary forms for the student to receive WBLEs.

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[4] This proportion is lower than the actual number of participants receiving DORS-related services. LSS staff might not have been consistent in populating this information into their MIS.

**Table IV.1 Early engagement with DORS among Way2Work participants**

| | Percentage receiving service | Percentage receiving service within 30 days of enrollment | Number who received the service |
|---|---|---|---|
| Referred to DORS | 94.0 | 44.5 | 188 |
| Authorized for pre-employment transition services | 78.5 | 11.0 | 157 |
| Matched to CRP | 97.0 | n.a. | n.a. |
| Applied to DORS | 25.0 | 2.5 | 50 |
| Eligible for DORS | 16.5 | 1.0 | 33 |

Source:   Way2Work baseline survey and Way2Work MIS.

Note:   N = 200 Way2Work participants. Twenty-four participants had DORS involvement before enrolling in Way2Work.

n.a. = not applicable.

**Assigned to CRP.** Most Way2Work participants (97 percent) were matched to 1 of 33 participating CRPs after enrolling in Way2Work. Once matched, the CRP met with the participant and parent or guardian to discuss the participant's unique interests, job preferences, goals, and learning challenges. Participants needed to connect with a CRP to receive DORS-authorized pre-employment transition services, including WBLEs, as deemed appropriate by a DORS counselor.

**Applications to DORS and eligibility.** One in four Way2Work participants submitted a formal application to DORS for VR services, and DORS found 17 percent eligible for services (an eligibility rate of 66 percent). A small percentage of participants (3 percent) applied to DORS within 30 days of enrollment.

## B.   Pre-employment transition services other than WBLEs

As discussed in Chapter II, Way2Work participants could receive four pre-employment transition services, other than WBLEs, from DORS while they were students. Pre-employment transition services are intended to prepare students for employment, transition from high school, and postsecondary education opportunities. DORS authorizes CRPs and other agencies to provide these services to students in small-group or one-on-one counseling sessions. Several CRP staff said that they typically offer pre-employment transition services in multiple sessions that span six to eight hours over no more than a two-month period. DORS requires CRPs that offer pre-employment transition services to document their service activities, dates of service provision, hours of services provided, location of service, and summary of results or recommendations. Because of COVID-19, the governor of Maryland issued a stay-at-home order in March 2020. DORS suspended in-person services, including assessments and training, and many CRP staff in Maryland were furloughed in early and mid-2020. During that time, most pre-employment transition services (including WBLEs) were delayed or paused, and staff did not conduct face-to-face service activities.

Here, we summarize Way2Work participants' use of pre-employment transition services after enrollment in Way2Work, as recorded in the MIS on a weekly basis by implementation specialists (Table IV.2). Some of these participants might have used pre-employment transition services before enrolling in Way2Work, as suggested by Table IV.1 and DORS staff; that usage is not reflected in these statistics. We

describe Way2Work participants' WBLE use, a primary focus of Way2Work, in the next chapter (Chapter V).

**Job exploration counseling.** About one-quarter of Way2Work participants (23 percent) received job exploration counseling services. Job exploration counseling typically included efforts to discover participants' interests, skills, and strategies for pursuing employment goals. On average, Way2Work participants who received job exploration counseling received it for two weeks.

**Table IV.2 Use of pre-employment transition services other than WBLEs during the intervention**

| | Percentage receiving service | Average number of weeks receiving service for those who received the service |
|---|---|---|
| Job exploration counseling | 22.5 | 2.0 |
| Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary education | 11.0 | 2.2 |
| Workplace readiness training | 25.0 | 3.2 |
| Instruction in self-advocacy | 22.5 | 2.8 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note:   N = 200 Way2Work participants. LSS and CRP staff recorded pre-employment transition services for each week in which they occurred. We report the average number of weeks when at least one service episode is noted for a given week.

**Counseling on postsecondary education opportunities.** Among the services reported in Table IV.2, Way2Work participants least frequently received counseling on postsecondary education. About 1 in 10 participants (11 percent) received these services, which could involve college orientations, information about training programs, and counseling about accommodations in a college setting compared to secondary school. Among Way2Work participants who received counseling on postsecondary education, Way2Work staff reported that participants received slightly more than two weeks of this service on average. It is possible the information in the MIS might not contain complete information about participants' involvement with this service; the assigned CRPs reported this information and might not have known about these services received through other DORS vendors. DORS contracts with other agencies, such as colleges and the Workforce in Technology Center in Baltimore, for pre-employment transition services, which might explain the relatively low percentage of Way2Work records for this service.

**Workplace readiness training.** One in four Way2Work participants (25 percent) received workplace readiness training for an average of three weeks each. These services included assisting participants with completing job applications, writing resumes, and building confidence for interviews. Work readiness also included soft skills training, such as communication, listening, and time management. As one CRP reported, there is "tremendous success" when work readiness is provided before a WBLE because the CRP staff can answer participants' questions about job expectations and address their social skills.

> "*The biggest success with pre-employment transition services has been seeing students develop self-confidence and soft skills. It's a cliché, but nothing breeds success like success. And these kids [in Way2Work] are set up from the beginning of these WBLEs for success.*"
>
> —CRP

**Instruction in self-advocacy training.** Slightly less than one-quarter (23 percent) of Way2Work participants received instruction in self-advocacy, which included training to help participants build confidence and independent living skills, such as public speaking. According to one CRP staff, self-advocacy instruction is an integral part of its work readiness program because giving students the tools to self-advocate will help them in their future. Overall, Way2Work participants who used self-advocacy training received slightly less than an average of three weeks of this service.

# V. Way2Work service use: Work experiences

WBLEs and paid work experiences were key components of the Way2Work service model. In this chapter, we combine qualitative and quantitative data to describe the implementation of work experiences in Way2Work. We describe the number, intensity, timing, and patterns of work experiences for Way2Work participants; the characteristics of work experiences, including types of industries and job titles, along with earnings; and participants' and Way2Work program staffs' satisfaction with the WBLEs component.

## A. WBLE implementation

Way2Work participants had access to four types of work experience, and early implementation activities highlighted a few difficulties in the model that UMD and DORS adjusted in the first six months. In this section, we describe WBLE implementation activities and types of work experiences, CRP procedures, and the adjustments to the initial work experience requirements to fit the Way2Work population.

**Work experience types.** Way2Work participants could engage in four types of work experiences: unpaid WBLEs, stipend-paid WBLEs, paid WBLEs, and paid work. *Unpaid WBLEs* typically included limited-duration job shadows or internships. To increase participants' interest in unpaid WBLEs, DORS introduced the *stipend-paid WBLE* option

> **Key findings**
>
> - Most participants (92 percent) had at least one work experience during their participation in Way2Work.
>
> - Nearly three-quarters of participants (74 percent) had at least two work experiences, at least one of them paid, and almost half (44 percent) had at least three work experiences, at least of them paid.
>
> - Participants in Cohort 2 had more experiences than those in Cohort 1.
>
> - More than half of the work experiences occurred in three industries: accommodation and food services (22 percent), health care and social assistance (15 percent), and wholesale and retail trade (15 percent).
>
> - The majority of unpaid and stipend-paid WBLEs were completed successfully or voluntarily (89 and 92 percent, respectively), as were more than half of paid WBLEs (67 percent).

about six months after the program began. For CRPs that opted into the stipend program, DORS offered funds to pay student stipends (at minimum wage, or $10.10 per hour).[5] The DORS stipend program was an important tool because many CRPs found getting employers to pay for WBLEs "was really difficult unless they were actually looking at the individual as someone they would hire." However, many CRPs did not initially or ever participate in the stipend program because their agencies needed additional liability insurance to be approved to receive the stipend funds as part of their cooperative agreements. As a result, some Way2Work participants received services from CRPs that did not offer the stipend. For *paid WBLEs*, the employer determined the wages and duration of the learning experience and paid the wages. Finally, *paid work* included any employment experiences that did not have a signed WBLE agreement, and CRPs were therefore not contracted to directly support or monitor the experience. As previously noted, Way2Work participants could pursue paid work on their own during the Way2Work intervention.

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[5] This stipend was available to all students assigned to CRPs that opted into the stipend program, including those not participating in Way2Work.

Initially, DORS and UMD required that WBLEs last from six to eight weeks. One LSS adapted this service requirement in its grant application to reduce the minimum WBLE duration to three weeks, which aligned with its existing service model. After encountering difficulty in enticing participants to engage in WBLEs during the academic year, DORS subsequently shortened the minimum length of WBLEs for Way2Work to four weeks, which allowed more flexibility for participants to engage in multiple WBLEs.

**CRP procedures.** CRPs conducted outreach to employers to secure WBLEs for participants. For all WBLEs, CRPs used the Positive Personal Profile to align participants' interests with employment opportunities. CRPs also used a workplace agreement document to outline the participant's and employer's expectations, including the number of weeks and hours per week.

Some CRPs adjusted their usual practice model to address the needs of Way2Work participants. In Maryland, many CRPs use a person-centered planning model that includes 40 hours of discovery planning with consumers before starting a work experience. However, this approach was not considered appropriate for the participants in Way2Work because the Way2Work model provided participants with hands-on exploratory experience through multiple WBLEs instead of intensive discovery planning. Similarly, once a participant obtained a WBLE, CRPs were initially required to have in-person, on-site interactions and check-ins with participants for about one-quarter of their working schedule so that the CRP could be reimbursed for their services. CRPs expressed frustration that DORS reimbursement payments for Way2Work did not reflect the same pace and level of effort as their usual job development service model and did not necessarily align with the wider range of Way2Work participant needs compared with the typical VR consumer. To address these concerns, DORS changed the follow-up requirement to be less intensive and more flexible, and UMD provided training to these CRPs to clarify the program's intent and emphasis on multiple WBLEs as part of a discovery process.

## B. Number, duration, and timing of work experiences

The majority of Way2Work participants engaged in work experiences while enrolled in the program. This section provides details on the frequency and duration of work experiences by type of experience and multiple work experiences. We also summarize data on the timing of WBLEs and paid work and detail other WBLE usage characteristics.

**Number and duration of work experiences.** Most Way2Work participants (92 percent) had at least one work experience during the intervention, with the first one occurring about six months after enrollment on average (Table V.1). The average number of experiences per participant was just under three, with each experience lasting 60 days on average. Many WBLEs occurred during the summer months because parents and participants were more focused on academic demands during the school year. School academic and extracurricular schedules might explain the length of time between enrollment and first work experience for some participants.

**Unpaid work experiences.** Fewer than half of participants (44 percent) had an unpaid WBLE; however, unpaid WBLEs had the longest average duration (93 days) compared to other WBLE types (Table V.1). Most participants with unpaid WBLEs had one experience; however, a few participants had three or more (Figure V.1). CRPs found that participants and parents varied in their receptivity to unpaid experiences. One CRP staff reported, "One of the most surprising things I found is how willing students are in having a nonpaid WBLE." On the other hand, a few CRP staff reflected on how some participants and families were not interested in unpaid experiences but were enticed by paid or stipend-paid WBLEs.

**Table V.1. Work experiences for Way2Work participants**

| | Percentage of all participants | Average number of experiences per participant | Average duration of experience (days) | Average time between enrollment and start of first experience (days) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Any type of work experience | 92.0 | 2.5 | 59.8 | 189.6 |
| Any WBLEs | 87.0 | 1.9 | 64.3 | 213.6 |
| Unpaid | 44.0 | 0.7 | 93.2 | 182.4 |
| Stipend paid | 53.5 | 1.0 | 41.0 | 241.4 |
| Paid | 23.5 | 0.3 | 67.6 | 202.5 |
| Paid work | 43.5 | 0.6 | 44.1 | 279.2 |
| At least two WBLEs or paid work (with at least one paid) | 73.5 | n.a. | n.a. | 316.8 |
| At least three WBLEs or paid work (with at least one paid) | 44.0 | n.a. | n.a. | 398.3 |

Source:   Way2Work baseline survey and Way2Work MIS.

Note:   N = 200 Way2Work participants. Paid experiences include paid WBLEs, stipend-paid WBLEs, and paid work. One participant secured paid work before Way2Work enrollment.

n.a. = not applicable.

**Stipend-paid WBLEs.** Slightly more than half of participants (54 percent) had a stipend-paid WBLE. These were the shortest-duration WBLEs on average (41 days; Table V.1). Participants with stipend-paid WBLEs most frequently received two stipend-paid work experiences (Figure V.1).

*"The benefit of having the stipends [is that] students do not want to work if they're not being paid, for the most part. We had much more engagement from students once we offered the stipends than before we did."*

—Staff from CRP that offered DORS-funded stipend

**Paid WBLEs**. About one-quarter of participants (24 percent) obtained a paid WBLE; these lasted slightly more than two months per experience on average (Table V.1). Of participants with paid WBLEs, most had one experience (Figure V.1). CRPs described some participants as motivated to accept paid experiences because of the financial incentive.

**Paid work.** Just under half of Way2Work participants (44 percent) engaged in paid work outside of a WBLE during their involvement with the program (Table V.1). On average, these experiences lasted 44 days, with the first experience occurring about nine months after enrollment. Most participants with paid work had one experience of this type (Figure V.1).

**Multiple work experiences.** Many Way2Work participants achieved the program's goal of completing multiple WBLEs. Nearly three-quarters of participants (74 percent) had at least two WBLEs or paid work experiences with at least one paid, and 44 percent of participants achieved Way2Work's benchmark goal of participating in three or more WBLEs with at least one paid (Table V.1). Many Way2Work program staff said securing

*"We consider it a significant success when WBLEs turned into paid jobs. And that happened a fair amount."*

—UMD staff

three WBLEs for a participant was difficult during the school year because many participants focus on academic courses and graduation requirements during their last two years of school.

**Figure V.1. Number of work experiences for Way2Work participants**
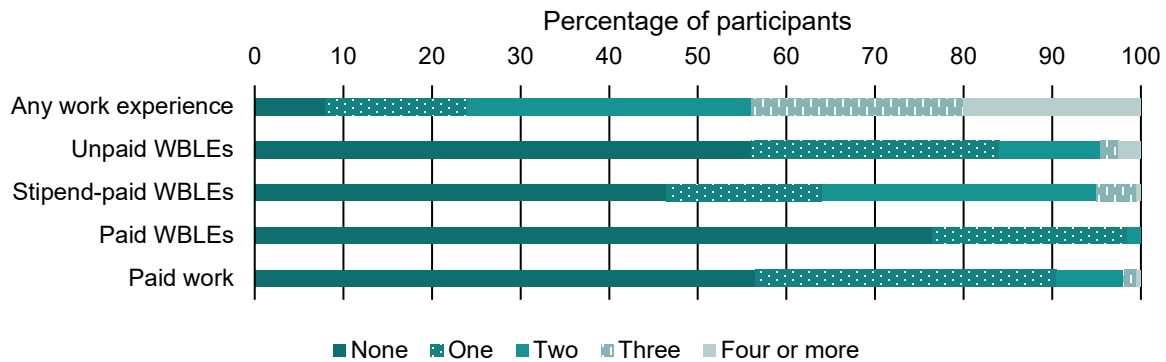


Source: Way2Work MIS.

Note: N = 200 Way2Work participants. Figure shows the percentage of participants with the number of experiences for each experience type. Source data can be found in Appendix Table B.2.

**Sequences of work experiences**. The Way2Work model did not require participants to follow a particular sequence for their work experiences. Analyses (not shown) found that the order in which types of WBLEs and paid work occurred varied and did not reveal any common patterns in the sequences.

**Number and type of work experiences by cohort and academic year**. The number of work experiences varied by Way2Work cohort and academic year of participation and increased from the first to second year of implementation for each cohort. Excepting the first academic year for Cohort 1, stipend-paid WBLEs were the most common type of experiences for both cohorts. Cohort 1 had a higher rate of paid WBLEs and work than Cohort 2, though Cohort 2 had more work experiences overall (Table V.2).

**Table V.2. Number of work experiences, by cohort and year**

| | Number of unpaid WBLEs | Number of stipend paid WBLEs | Number of paid WBLEs | Number of paid work | Percentage of total paid WBLEs and work |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 148 | 190 | 50 | 110 | 32.1 |
| **By cohort and year** | | | | | |
| Cohort 1—academic year 2017/2018 | 12 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 48.7 |
| Cohort 1—academic year 2018/2019 | 47 | 59 | 13 | 42 | 34.2 |
| Cohort 2—academic year 2018/2019 | 50 | 53 | 10 | 26 | 25.9 |
| Cohort 2—academic year 2019/2020 | 39 | 70 | 18 | 32 | 31.4 |

Source: Way2Work MIS.

Note: N = 200 Way2Work participants. We categorize experiences based on their start date. One paid work experience occurred before July 1, 2017, and is therefore not reported in this table.

**Workplace agreements and WBLE completion status.** Establishing a workplace agreement for WBLEs and successfully completing the work experience are key metrics that shed light on whether these work experiences were implemented as intended. Nearly all Way2Work WBLEs with stipends (93 percent) and a majority of unpaid WBLEs (84 percent) and paid WBLEs (66 percent) had a workplace agreement (Table

> *"Students who go through Way2Work and VR are more prepared for next steps with employment than students who don't receive these services. They're also more prepared than students who only receive pre-employment transition services."*
>
> —DORS staff

V.3). By the end of each cohort's service period (June 30, 2019, for Cohort 1 and June 30, 2020, for Cohort 2), only a small number of unpaid and paid WBLEs (4 and 6 percent, respectively) were still ongoing, but 58 percent of paid work experiences were not reported as having ended.

Most completed unpaid and stipend-paid WBLEs were noted in the Way2Work MIS as ending successfully or voluntarily (89 and 92 percent, respectively), and more than half of paid WBLEs were, as well (67 percent). Although we cannot definitively determine from the Way2Work MIS, these overall completion rates and input from DORS staff suggest that participants' involvement in Way2Work could result in setting and following through on expectations in work environments.

**Table V.3. Other features of work experiences**

| | Unpaid WBLEs | Stipend paid WBLEs | Paid WBLEs | Paid work |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of participants | 88 | 107 | 47 | 87 |
| Number of work experiences | 148 | 190 | 50 | 111 |
| Number with a workplace agreement | 124 | 176 | 33 | n.a. |
| Number ongoing (as of program end) | 6 | 0 | 5 | 66 |
| Number completed (as of program end) | 142 | 190 | 45 | 45 |
| Number completed successfully or voluntarily | 126 | 175 | 30 | n.a. |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note:     Program end dates are June 30, 2019, for Cohort 1 and June 30, 2020, for Cohort 2.

n.a. = not applicable.

## C.   Employment characteristics

This section considers selected characteristics of work experiences, including industry type, job titles, and earnings. These characteristics illustrate the variety of jobs obtained by participants and variation in weekly hours and wages by work experience type.

**Industries.** Industry refers to the type of business or firm where a person works. More than half of the Way2Work work experiences involved three industries: accommodation and food services (22 percent), health care and social assistance (15 percent), and wholesale and retail trade (15 percent; Table V.4). Accommodation and food services refer to hospitality and food production and sales; examples of participant roles include food preparation and sale along with laundry and maintenance services. Health care and social assistance include similar services but in health care settings. Participants had experiences ranging from physical therapy assistance, administration, maintenance, and customer service. Wholesale and retail trade industries refer to businesses that sell directly to the public or other retail companies.

Participants had roles such as assisting with sales and customer service, as well as inventory. Educational services had uptake rates of around 11 percent, as did art, entertainment, and recreation, and other services.

**Table V.4. Characteristics of work experiences**

| | Number of unpaid WBLEs | Number of stipend paid WBLEs | Number of paid WBLEs | Number of paid work | Percentage of total paid work and WBLEs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 148 | 190 | 50 | 111 | 100.0 |
| **Industry** | | | | | |
| Accommodation and food services | 18 | 15 | 22 | 57 | 22.4 |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation | 8 | 38 | 2 | 5 | 10.6 |
| Construction | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1.0 |
| Educational services | 27 | 21 | 4 | 3 | 11.0 |
| Health care and social assistance | 32 | 35 | 3 | 5 | 15.0 |
| Information, communications | 5 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 2.4 |
| Natural resources and mining | 5 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 3.2 |
| Other services | 25 | 9 | 4 | 11 | 9.8 |
| Professional, scientific, and technical services | 7 | 13 | 5 | 5 | 6.0 |
| Public administration | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1.6 |
| Wholesale and retail trade | 19 | 25 | 8 | 23 | 15.0 |

Source:    Way2Work MIS.

Note:       N = 200 Way2Work participants. Industries with fewer than five experiences omitted from the table.

**Common job titles**. A job title describes the tasks and activities an individual performs. We provide details on the most common Way2Work participants' job titles within each industry category in Table V.5.

**Table V.5. WBLE and paid work industries and common job titles**

| Industry and number of participants | Job titles | |
|---|---|---|
| Accommodation and food services (n = 112) | Bakery assistant | Dishwasher |
| | Barista | Food preparation worker |
| | Cashier | Food service worker |
| | Concession attendant | Laundry attendant |
| | Custodial assistant | Maintenance worker |
| | Customer service associate | Program assistant |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation (n = 53) | Administrative assistant | Landscaping assistant |
| | Animal care assistant | Park service assistant |
| | Art program assistant | Personal trainer assistant |
| | Camp assistant | Photography assistant |
| | Camp counselor | Program assistant |
| | Child care assistant | Senior center assistant |
| | Concession attendant | Soccer referee |
| | Custodial assistant | Teacher aide |
| | Customer service associate | Theater crew assistant |
| | Dance class assistant | |
| Educational services (n = 55) | Bookstore assistant | Office assistant |
| | Camp assistant | Program assistant |
| | Child care assistant | Sports coach assistant |
| | Custodial assistant | Store clerk |
| | Customer service associate | Teacher aide |
| | Library assistant | Youth sports assistant |
| | Museum assistant | |
| Health care and social assistance (n = 75) | Activities assistant | Health services assistant |
| | Administrative assistant | Laundry attendant |
| | Animal care assistant | Maintenance worker |
| | Child care assistant | Office assistant |
| | Custodial assistant | Personal care assistant |
| | Dietary aide | Personal trainer assistant |
| | Customer service associate | Physical therapy assistant |
| | Emergency room assistant | Security assistant |
| | Food preparation worker | Senior center assistant |
| | Food service worker | Warehouse assistant |
| | Grounds assistant | |
| Information, communications (n = 12) | Computer technician | Inventory assistant |
| | Custodial assistant | Library assistant |
| | Customer service associate | Photography assistant |
| | Graphic arts assistant | Warehouse assistant |
| Natural resources and mining (n = 16) | Customer service associate | Landscaping assistant |
| | Garden center assistant | Park service assistant |

| Industry and number of participants | Job titles | |
|---|---|---|
| Other services (n = 49) | Auto mechanic assistant | Graphic arts assistant |
| | Administrative assistant | Landscaping assistant |
| | Animal care assistant | Laundry attendant |
| | Barber assistant | Office assistant |
| | Auto mechanic assistant | Musician |
| | Car wash assistant | Personal trainer assistant |
| | Child care assistant | Program assistant |
| | Coffee shop assistant | Senior center assistant |
| | Custodial assistant | Stock clerk |
| | Customer service associate | Video production assistant |
| | Delivery driver | Warehouse assistant |
| | Garden center assistant | |
| Professional, scientific, and technical services (n = 30) | Auto mechanic assistant | Equipment repair assistant |
| | Barber assistant | Funeral home assistant |
| | Clinical lab assistant | Glass shop apprentice |
| | Computer technician | Graphic arts assistant |
| | Custodial assistant | Inventory assistant |
| | Customer service associate | Legal assistant |
| | Data assistant | Office assistant |
| | Engineering assistant | Web designer |
| Public administration (n = 8) | Campaign assistant | Office assistant |
| | Customer service associate | Security assistant |
| | Library assistant | Teacher aide |
| | Military recruitment assistant | |
| Wholesale and retail trade (n = 75) | Animal care assistant | Inventory clerk |
| | Aquarium shop assistant | Pharmacy assistant |
| | Bookstore assistant | Photo lab assistant |
| | Cashier | Program assistant |
| | Custodial assistant | Stock room assistant |
| | Customer service associate | Store clerk |
| | Floral assistant | Warehouse assistant |
| | Hair dresser assistant | |

Source: Way2Work MIS.

Note: N = 200 Way2Work participants and 499 WBLEs and paid work experiences.

**Weekly hours and earnings.** In work experiences where the participant received compensation (WBLEs with a stipend, paid WBLEs, and paid work), participants with stipend-paid WBLEs had the highest average weekly hours (16.5 hours). In comparison, unpaid WBLEs had a lower average (8.6 hours per week; Table V.6).

Among the Way2Work participants who completed paid WBLEs or paid work, the average hourly wage was similar ($10.66 and $10.22, respectively, in 2020 dollars), which was slightly above Maryland's minimum wage of $10.10 per hour in 2019.[6] Participants in paid WBLEs had average weekly earnings of $160, about $9.00 higher than participants with paid work.

**Table V.6. Weekly hours and wages for work experiences**

| | Unpaid WBLEs | Stipend-paid WBLEs | Paid WBLEs | Paid work |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of participants | 88 | 107 | 47 | 87 |
| Number of work experiences | 148 | 190 | 50 | 111 |
| Mean weekly hours | 8.6 | 16.5 | 15.0 | 14.7 |
| Mean hourly wages | n.a. | n.a. | $10.66 | $10.22 |
| Mean weekly earnings | n.a. | n.a. | $159.90 | $150.20 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note: Stipend-paid WBLEs included a wage of $10.10 per hour in 2019 and $11.00 per hour in 2020.

n.a. = not applicable.

## D.   Participant and staff satisfaction with WBLEs

For each completed WBLE, Way2Work staff and participants completed a satisfaction survey to characterize the quality of their experiences.[7] Table V.7 summarizes the survey results on 305 of 388 completed WBLEs (representing a survey response rate of 79 percent). The survey results were overwhelmingly positive.

**Participants' satisfaction with WBLEs.** Nearly all Way2Work participants who responded to the survey reported that their WBLEs were successful (99 percent). The survey included four items that a participant could rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree); a successful rating reflected those WBLEs with a summary score of 10 or higher across all four measures. Way2Work participants learned new skills as part of their WBLE, met their goals for the experience, and believed that their experience would help them make career decisions in the future (97 percent). Most reported having a positive experience (97 percent), although some participants might interpret a failed or incomplete WBLE as still a positive experience because they learned about career options or workplace settings they did not wish to pursue.

**Way2Work staff satisfaction with WBLE implementation.** The majority of Way2Work staff surveyed reported that the participants' WBLEs were successful (99 percent). Staff completed a survey similar to participants', with an additional question on employers; a WBLE had a successful rating with a summary score of 13 across all five measures. Almost all staff agreed or strongly agreed that participants had a

[6] Participants who participated in a WBLE with a paid stipend received minimum wage ($10.10 in 2019 and $11.00 in 2020).

[7] Participants with paid work did not complete this survey.

positive experience (98 percent) and assessed the WBLEs as helping youth make career decisions for the future (99 percent). Most Way2Work staff (99 percent) also viewed employers as meeting expectations for the WBLEs, an important aspect of the employers' future involvement.

**Table V.7. Way2Work participants and staff satisfaction with WBLEs**

| Measure | Percentage responding agree or strongly agree |
|---|---|
| **Way2Work participants** | |
| Met goals participant set out to accomplish | 97.0 |
| Will help make career decisions for the future | 97.0 |
| Learned new skills | 96.7 |
| Had a positive experience | 96.7 |
| Successful WBLE | 98.7 |
| **Staff** | |
| Met goals participant and staff wanted to accomplish | 97.4 |
| Will help youth make career decisions for the future | 99.3 |
| Youth learned new skills | 99.0 |
| Youth had a positive experience | 98.4 |
| Employer met their established expectations for their participation | 98.7 |
| Successful WBLE | 98.7 |

Source:   WBLE survey.

Note:   N = 305 surveys. For each survey question on satisfaction, participants and staff could respond strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Successful WBLE indicates those WBLEs with a score of 10 or higher for participants and a score of 13 or higher for staff (based on scoring each item from 1, or strongly disagree, to 4, or strongly agree).

## E.   CRP experiences implementing WBLEs

As the staff working most closely to identify and arrange WBLEs for participants, CRP impressions of successes and challenges provide insights on delivering WBLEs at the level required by the Way2Work service model.

**Implementation of WBLEs.** Overall, CRP staff believed that the process of finding and placing a Way2Work participant in a WBLE was similar to their strategies for any VR consumer. Some of the challenges were also similar. For example, CRP staff reported transportation was a barrier for participant engagement, particularly in rural areas with limited public transportation and access to personal vehicles. CRP staff also noted it was a challenge to secure jobs that involved heavy machinery because employers were concerned about liability issues. However, the critical difference between those that participated in Way2Work and usual services, from the CRP perspective, was that "the Way2Work caseload [had] more partnerships," and there was a "constant state of communication" between CRPs and other Way2Work partner agencies. In particular, the smaller caseload, combined with cross-agency collaboration, allowed staff to focus on individual participants in a way CRP staff could not for their other VR consumers.

> *"We provide the same services to students with enhanced services [Way2Work participants] and without... [and] provide the same quality of service. We're consistent in our approach."*
>
> —CRP staff

**CRP staff turnover.** Several LSS, DORS, and CRP staff indicated turnover at CRP agencies affected service provision in some LSSs. In one LSS, the CRP agency decided to end its contract with DORS. As a result, the LSS and DORS transferred Way2Work participants to a new CRP agency. These staffing changes and delays might explain the variation in work experience completion rates.

> *"Staff turnover remained an issue [for Cohort 2]. When someone left suddenly, that connection to the kid is lost and [the CRP agency] has to put in a new employment specialist and conduct a family meeting, reintroduce the person and start over."*
>
> —UMD staff

**Employer receptivity to Way2Work.** CRPs found that employers' receptivity to Way2Work or ability to take on interested participants varied. Because of some businesses' minimum age requirement, they did not consider younger participants. One CRP staff remarked that many businesses "don't want to be bothered" with taking on the burden of youth participants, some of whom were immature or needed to learn and practice professionalism. CRPs addressed this sentiment by emphasizing the opportunity to provide mentorship to local youth and help with the employer's workload. Employer familiarity with job development work can also be hugely beneficial. A DORS staff member noted that in an LSS where one CRP had operated for decades, local employers were much more familiar with these job development opportunities and had been well educated on the value of hiring people with learning and other disabilities. The representative explained, "I think because of that, they [employers] were maybe more willing to participate in some of these things than you might have found in other counties." Despite these many challenges, CRPs believed that they were "really successful in getting placements and also making sure that they were individualized placements."

# VI. Way2Work service use: Service collaboration

Service collaboration refers to the combined efforts of LSS, CRP, and DORS staff to plan for and connect Way2Work participants with the essential resources, services, and supports needed to achieve the intervention goals and promote participants' transition success. To ensure individualized service collaboration occurred, each LSS established a MIAT to plan and monitor participants' engagement and facilitate Way2Work service needs. This chapter summarizes how Way2Work program staff implemented the MIAT component and describes data on planning tools and service collaboration activities completed on behalf of participants. We also describe staff members' experience implementing the MIAT component.

> **Key findings**
>
> - Way2Work program staff praised the MIAT component as a key strategy for service coordination and cross-agency collaboration.
> - All Way2Work participants (99 percent) completed the primary planning tool service, known as the Positive Personal Profile.
> - Way2Work program staff had contact with or on behalf of participants for 62 percent of program weeks, most commonly through consultations or in person.
> - Most Way2Work participants received service support with other agencies and organizations, most commonly with DORS, CRPs, and employers.

## A. MIAT implementation

As described in Chapter II, the MIATs consisted of each LSS's transition specialist and implementation coordinator; regional DORS counselors; CRPs; UMD technical assistants; and other agencies contributing to services for Way2Work participants, such as American Job Centers or One-Stop Centers. MIAT members contributed different perspectives, information, and resources. Members focused solely on Way2Work participants and their goals, unlike typical school transition teams that generally address a broad range of transition issues for students with disabilities. This section describes MIAT activities and challenges to implementation.

**MIAT roles and activities.** During site visit interviews conducted for this evaluation, Way2Work program staff praised the MIAT as an important strategy for addressing challenges and ensuring participants' work experiences aligned with their interests and needs. MIATs helped solve problems and focused their efforts to ensure participants had successful work experiences. During monthly meetings, MIAT members used checklists to review Way2Work participants' progress, their accomplishments, required signatures, and other service needs. UMD technical assistants helped facilitate MIAT discussions and answered data reporting questions as needed. LSS staff updated CRPs on challenges that might affect the participant's engagement, such as a participant's academic struggles, need for tutoring, or lack of computer access. DORS representatives provided

> *"MIATs focus on individual students and their circumstances and how they might be supported to find and keep up and succeed in a work experience. It is not just getting together to chat about the difficulties in transition in general."*
>
> —UMD staff

updates on DORS policies of relevance to CRP operations and the Way2Work intervention. DORS staff also commented that monthly MIAT meetings provided valuable updates on participants after their referrals to DORS.

**Challenges and variation to MIAT implementation.** Respondents described a few challenges to the MIAT. One LSS staff reported that individual staff missing a MIAT meeting could potentially halt progress for some students because of the amount of coordination that occurs during the meetings.

Though MIATs were intended solely for Way2Work participants, a few LSSs coordinated "MIAT-like" interagency transition committees for all students (some of whom were in the study's usual services group). For example, in one LSS, the MIAT monthly meeting followed a more general transition team meeting that consisted of the same staff.

## B.  Way2Work planning tools

LSS and CRP staff used various assessments and planning tools to better understand participants' interests and employment goals. The planning tools for Way2Work included the Positive Personal Profile, the career development plan, and the individual support plan. This section describes the receipt of planning services by Way2Work participants. We also provide information on the time from enrollment to receipt of the planning service.

**Positive Personal Profile.** The Positive Personal Profile was the primary planning tool used by LSS staff during Way2Work to guide work experience planning. LSS staff administered the profile to identify participants' interests, work preferences, learning styles, job goals, and skills. CRPs also used the profile to plan for and align WBLEs with participants' interests. Almost all Way2Work participants (99 percent; Figure VI.1) had a completed Positive Personal Profile. Although the profile was intended only for Way2Work participants, a few LSS and DORS staff said they could be used with both Way2Work and usual services students if they received pre-employment transition services. These responses indicate Way2Work staff might have implemented the planning tool inconsistently.

**Figure VI.1. Planning tool use among Way2Work participants**
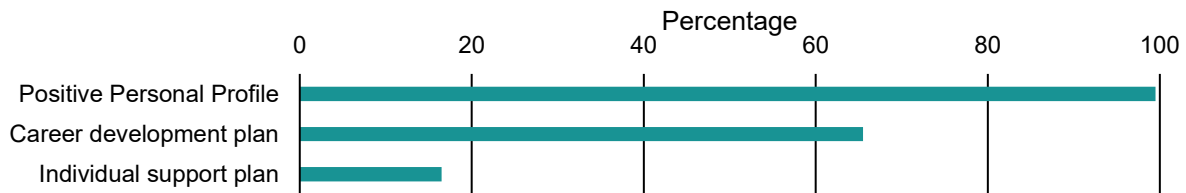


Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note:     N = 200 Way2Work participants. Statistics shown in Appendix Table B.3.

**Career development plan**. Career development plans are optional planning tools used by CRPs to assess participants' broad overarching goals. Two-thirds of Way2Work participants (66 percent) completed this plan. CRP staff reported that they found these tools as less useful than Positive Personal Profiles, which might explain their lower rate of use. One CRP staff noted that they preferred the profile because it focused more on the specifics of individual preferences to tailor experiences.

**Individual support plan.** Individual support plans are another optional planning tool that CRPs used to collect information on the personal preferences, medical concerns, worksite support needs, and communication preferences of Way2Work participants. Among the planning tools reported in Table VI.1, this document was the least frequently completed (17 percent). According to staff, few Way2Work participants required an individual support plan to inform workplace supports.

## C. Way2Work service coordination activities

MIAT members connected participants to resources and services to facilitate WBLE placement and transition success. During each monthly meeting, MIAT members discussed and monitored each student's needs and tracked Way2Work service receipt, including the number of staff contacts, collaboration efforts, referrals, and application assistance provided.

> *"Participants had a lot more eyes on them, a lot more attention being paid to them, and a lot more follow-up—so if somebody [a participant] was to fall out of consistent communication with us, we had all the resources possible to reconnect with them."*
>
> —CRP staff

This section summarizes Way2Work participants' receipt of these coordination services, as recorded in Way2Work MIS data (Table VI.1). We provide detailed information on types of service receipt in Appendix Table B.4.

**Table VI.1. Service coordination activities conducted by Way2Work program staff on behalf of participants**

| | Percentage of participants receiving the service | Average number of weeks receiving the service | Average percentage of participants' program weeks receiving the service |
|---|---|---|---|
| Contacts made with or on behalf of participants | 99.5 | 51.3 | 61.6 |
| Contacts with any agency or organization to support participants' goals | 99.5 | 31.6 | 38.0 |
| Agency referrals | 88.0 | 2.7 | 3.3 |
| Application assistance | 72.5 | 2.1 | 2.6 |

Source:  Way2Work MIS.

Notes:  N = 200 Way2Work participants.

**Contacts made with or on behalf of participants.** Way2Work program staff made multiple outreach contacts on behalf of nearly all participants (99 percent) during the intervention (Table VI.1). Contacts included communications with participants and consultations with members of the participant's support system, such as parents, employers, DORS, CRPs, or other service agencies. Way2Work program staff used contacts to stay informed about participants' progress and challenges meeting program goals. The most common contact methods included consultations on behalf of or to provide supports with the participant (33 percent of program weeks) and in-person meetings (conducted for 27 percent of a participant's program weeks) (Figure VI.2, Appendix Table B.4). On average, Way2Work staff contacted participants or their support systems at least weekly for 51 weeks during their involvement in Way2Work, or 62 percent of the weeks of participants' time in the program.

**Contacts with any agency or organization to support participants' goals.** Way2Work program staff contacted various federal, state, and local agencies to support participants' service needs. Way2Work collaborations included MIATs and other efforts to assist participants with service needs, work placements, and removal of barriers to success. Way2Work staff pursued contacts for nearly all participants (99 percent; Table VI.1). The most frequent types of agency-specific contacts were with DORS, CRPs, and employers (Figure VI.3, Appendix Table B.4). Way2Work staff involved other agencies or organizations less frequently, contacting postsecondary education institutions (25 percent of

participants) and American Job Centers (11 percent of participants) more often than others. Agency contacts identified by staff as other agencies, which were also frequent, included coordinating with staff within the LSS, such as teachers, other transition staff, or guidance counselors, as well as Job Corps and the Western Maryland Consortium.

**Figure VI.2. Percentage of program weeks that program staff made contact with or on behalf of participants, by contact type**
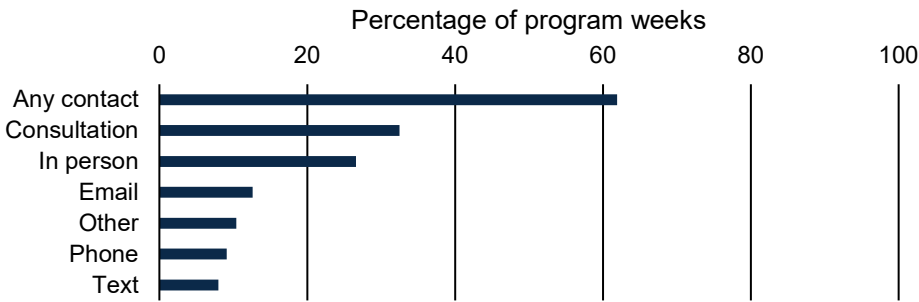


Source: Way2Work MIS.

Notes: N = 200 Way2Work participants. Percentages sum to more than 100 because participants could have multiple contact types.

**Figure VI.3. Contacts by Way2Work staff with any agency or organization to support participants' goals**
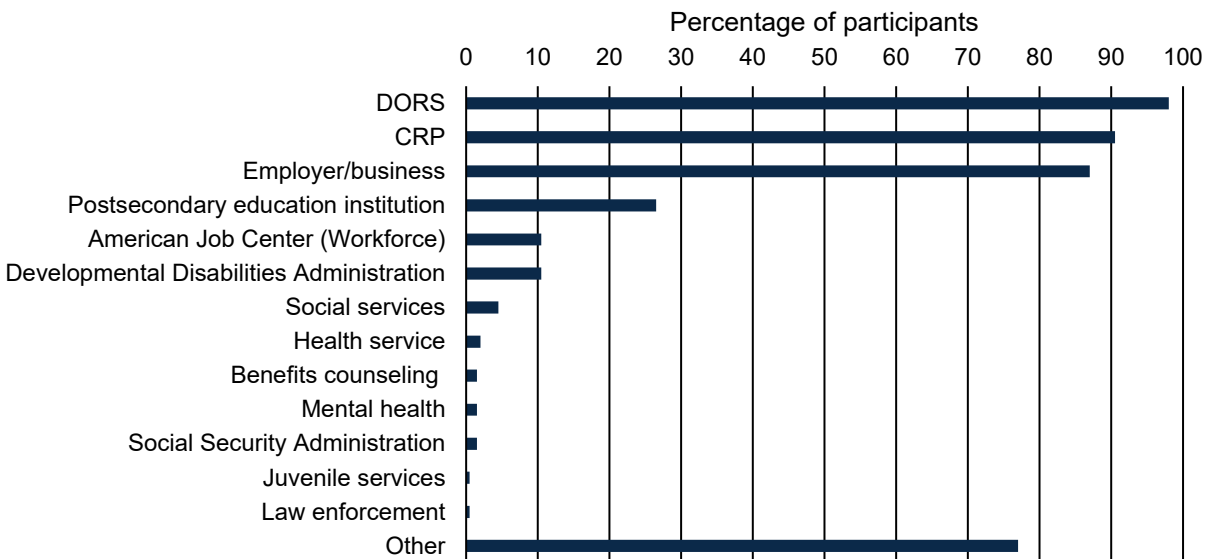


Source: Way2Work MIS.

Notes: N = 200 Way2Work participants. Percentages sum to more than 100 because participants could have more than one type of agency contact.

# VII. Way2Work service use by participant characteristics and LSS

Implementation and uptake of Way2Work services could differ by participants' individual characteristics, their LSS location, and CRP assignments. These variations provide essential insights for interpreting the program's potential impact and considering future implementation strategies. This chapter presents information about selected Way2Work services—those most representative of the Way2Work service model: DORS engagement, application for DORS services, and receipt of work experiences. We consider these service-related outcomes across participants' demographic and economic characteristics, LSSs, and CRPs.

> **Key findings**
>
> - Way2Work services differed for many of the participants' characteristics we assessed. In particular, higher rates of work experience measures were consistently observed for Cohort 2 (compared to Cohort 1), and differences were either inconsistent or negligible by sex, race, disability, and economic characteristics.
>
> - Participants with employment experience in the 12 months before enrollment had higher rates of having three or more work experiences, including one paid, than participants without such experiences.
>
> - LSSs had varying service delivery, particularly on the rates of DORS applications and having three or more work experiences, one of which was paid.

## A. Way2Work service use by participants' demographic and economic characteristics

We assessed Way2Work service use by participants' demographic characteristics (sex and race), enrollment cohort (early and late), disability (ADHD versus all other conditions), and economic characteristics (employment status and qualifying for free or reduced-price school lunch) (Appendix Tables B.5 and B.6). For ease of interpretation, we focus on differences between subgroups of five percentage points or more.

**Sex.** Males had rates of service receipt that were at least five percentage points higher than those of females on three of the selected Way2Work service measures: referrals to DORS, authorization for pre-employment transition services, and DORS applications (Figure VII.1).[8] Otherwise, differences between male and female participants remained under 5 percentage points.

**Race.** Way2Work participants had similar referral and application rates to DORS and uptake of at least one work experience, regardless of their race, but varied in their uptake of other selected Way2Work services (Figure VII.2).[9] Black participants had higher rates of authorization for pre-employment transition services, matching to a CRP, and having at least three work experiences with one paid (by seven, five, and five percentage points, respectively) than White participants.

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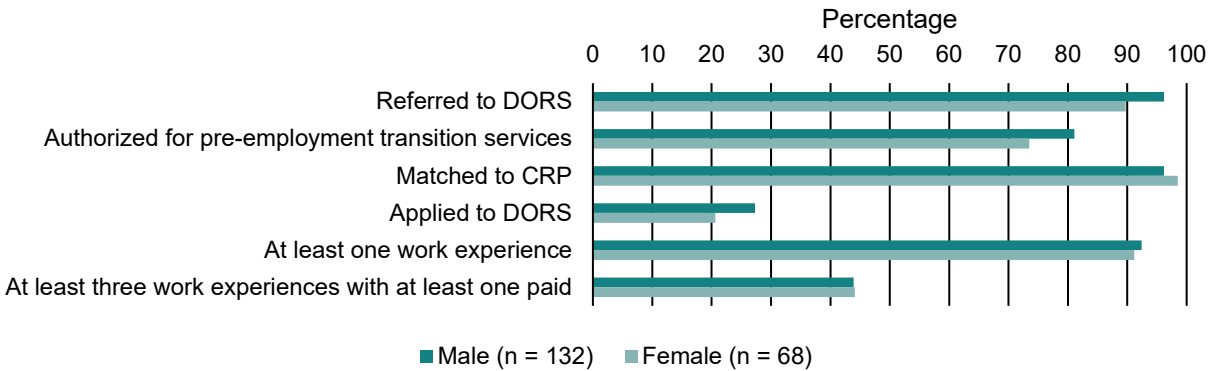[8] Figure VII.1 includes one participant who did not identify as either male or female, and was included with the male category.

[9] Figure VII.2 excludes a small sample (n = 17) of participants from other racial or ethnic groups.

**Figure VII.1. Selected Way2Work service use by sex**



Source:    Way2Work MIS.

Note:      N = 200 Way2Work participants.

**Figure VII.2. Selected Way2Work service use by race**
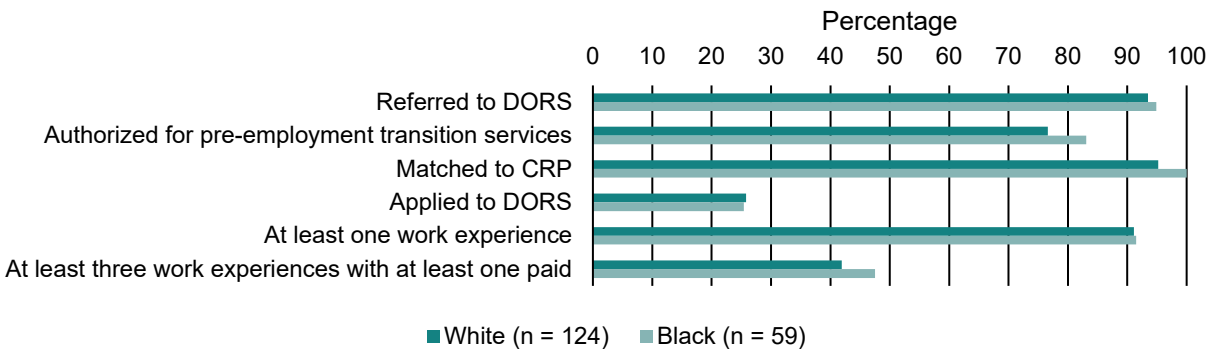


Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note:     N = 183 Way2Work participants. Seventeen participants from other race or ethnic categories omitted due to their small sample size.

**Cohort 1 versus Cohort 2.** Way2Work participants who enrolled in the second cohort had higher service receipt rates on three of the six selected Way2Work measures compared with early enrollees (Figure VII.3). Cohort 2 enrollees had higher referral rates for DORS (by 5 percentage points) than Cohort 1 enrollees, along with higher rates on both WBLE service benchmarks of at least one work experience (15 percentage points) and three work experiences, with at least one paid (by 11 percentage points). Cohort 1 enrollees had higher rates on just one measure, authorization for pre-employment transition services (by 21 percentage points).

> *"More students in the first cohort (as opposed to second) believed they did not need services. The kids would be sitting across the table from me, they would be like: 'Why I am here? I don't need this. There's nothing wrong with me.' And no matter how much we talked, we couldn't help them understand that they weren't there because there was anything wrong with them. They were there because we had something to offer them."*
>
> —DORS staff

**Figure VII.3. Selected Way2Work service use by enrollment cohort**
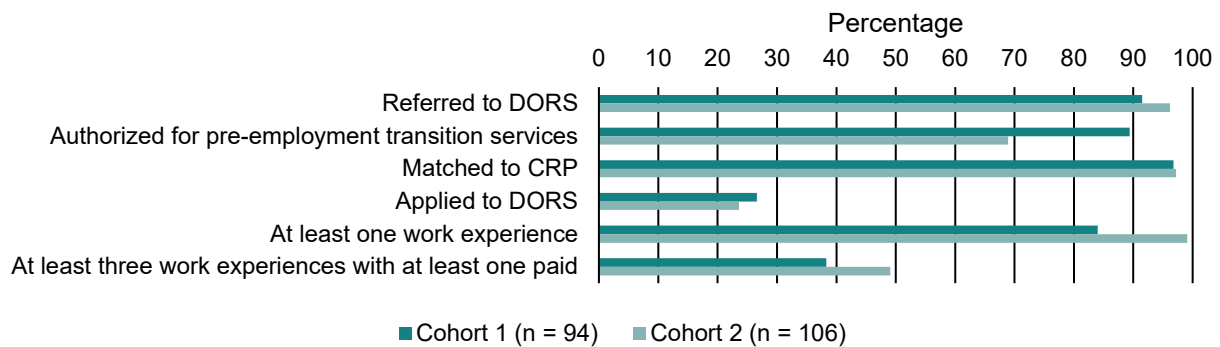


Source:   Way2Work MIS.
Note:       N = 200 Way2Work participants.

**Participants with ADHD compared with participants with other conditions.** Because ADHD was the most common disability category among Way2Work participants, we compared this group of participants with those with all other conditions. The two groups of participants had similar rates of Way2Work services, with three exceptions. Compared to their peers with other conditions, participants with ADHD had higher rates for at least three work experiences benchmark and referrals to DORS (by 11 and 5 percentage points, respectively; Figure VII.4). However, participants with other conditions had higher rates of applications for DORS (by 13 percentage points).

**Figure VII.4. Selected Way2Work service use by condition**
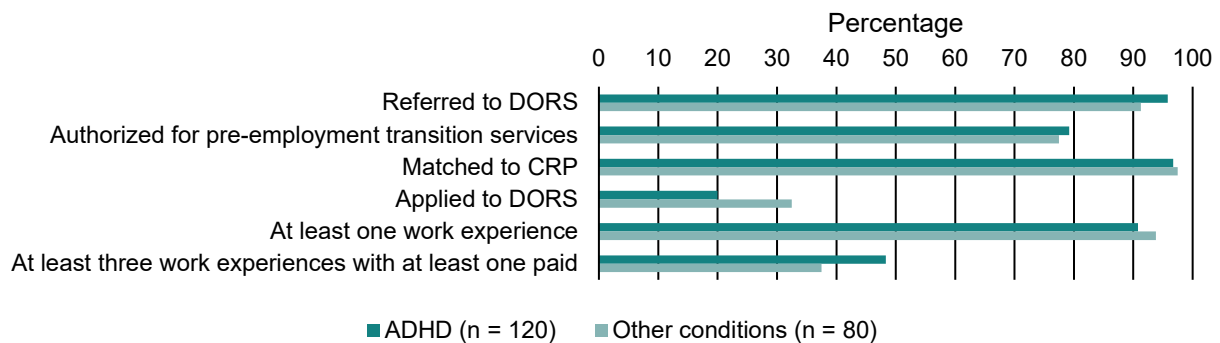


Source:   Way2Work MIS.
Note:       N = 200 Way2Work participants.

**Economic characteristics.** We assessed Way2Work participants' receipt of selected services by two economic characteristics, employment status in the 12 months before Way2Work enrollment and qualification status for free or reduced-price school lunch, that could influence earnings and other outcomes. Participants employed in the 12 months before Way2Work enrollment had rates of service receipt that were largely similar to those of their counterparts who had not worked recently (Figure VII.5). The exceptions were that participants with employment experience before enrollment had rates of DORS applications and having three or more work experiences, with one paid, that were 6 and 20 percentage

points higher, respectively, than those without such experience. These patterns are important given the differences in work experience between the Way2Work and usual services participants reported at baseline identified in Chapter III, and we examine them further in the impact evaluation for Way2Work (Mann et al. 2021).

**Figure VII.5. Selected Way2Work service use by recent employment experience at enrollment**
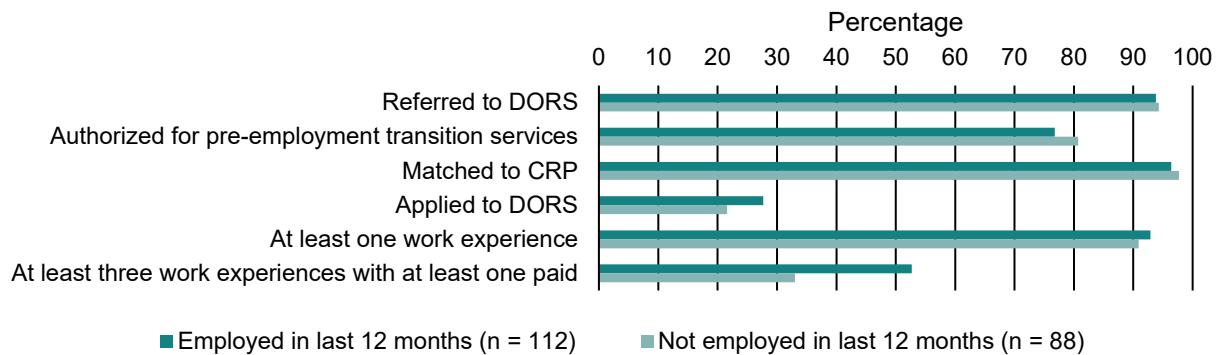


Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note:   N = 200 Way2Work participants.

Though participants who did not qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch at the time of enrollment had higher rates of participating in at least one work experience (by 6 percentage points), those who did qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch had higher rates of applications to DORS (by 6 percentage points; Figure VII.6). The two groups of participants had similar rates for other Way2Work service measures.

**Figure VII.6. Selected Way2Work service use by free or reduced-price school lunch qualification at enrollment**
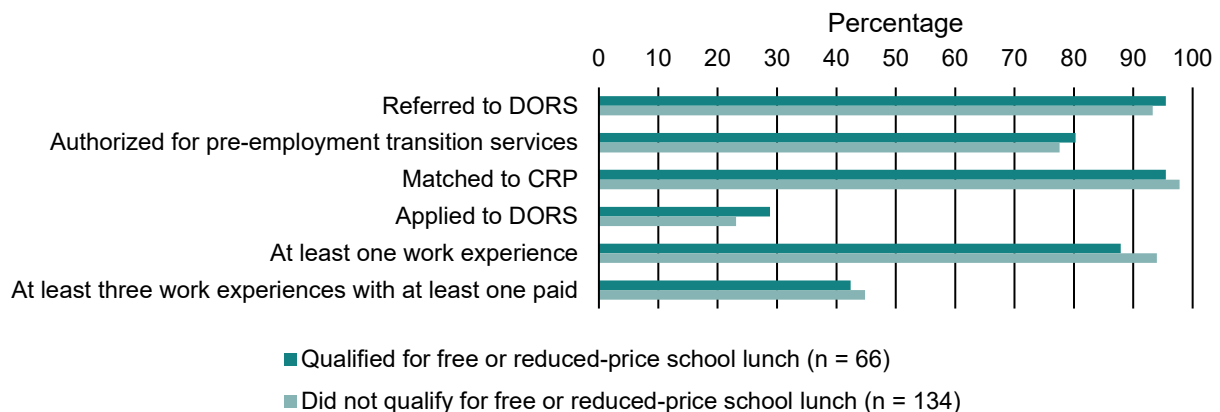


Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note:   N = 200 Way2Work participants.

## B. Selected Way2Work services by LSS

Uptake of many Way2Work services varied substantially across LSSs. In this section, we discuss the percentage of Way2Work participants in each LSS who received selected Way2Work services. The variation across LSSs suggests that local challenges and solutions, such as family socioeconomics, staff turnover, or relationships with local partners, along with different preferences for services, can influence individual interest in and take-up of services.

For some selected Way2Work service components, uptake was consistently high across all LSSs (Appendix Table B.7 through Appendix Table B.11). Nearly all participants had a referral to DORS and a match to a CRP, and within each LSS, more than three-quarters of participants had at least one work experience. However, there was substantial variation in service uptake rates for other services, including authorization for pre-employment transition services and DORS applications, as well as for the proportion of participants who had at least three work experiences with one unpaid (which ranged from 26 to 64 percent). These patterns suggest that the manner in which a participant's LSS implemented Way2Work might have affected access to and receipt of certain services but might not have affected participants' employment experiences. The impact evaluation will assess whether outcomes differed across LSSs.

# VIII. Lessons learned from Way2Work implementation

Way2Work program staff and partners experienced many successes and challenges in implementing the intervention. Their experiences and lessons learned can inform other state VR and local education agency staff interested in using similar intervention strategies to support secondary school students with disabilities. In this chapter, we highlight key implementation lessons we identified.

## A. Recruitment, outreach, and enrollment lessons

The initial steps to launch Way2Work involved identifying and enrolling potentially eligible students. Poor initial outreach results required staff to adopt multiple strategies to educate families about Way2Work and encourage enrollment to achieve their enrollment goals.

**Way2Work might have benefited from better marketing materials and DORS involvement during outreach events.** LSS staff reported a few challenges during the early stages of recruitment and outreach. One staff mentioned that Way2Work marketing materials were confusing to parents because they were unclear about the agency (LSS, DORS, or UMD) implementing the program. LSSs conducted outreach events; however, DORS staff did not attend the initial meetings, leaving some students and parents confused when DORS contacted them about the Way2Work services.

**Multiple outreach approaches improved recruitment and enrollment.** Way2Work staff addressed the poor initial enrollment by altering their engagement methods to better suit their local communities. Some LSSs emphasized outreach during back-to-school nights or college and career fairs. Others developed brief presentations to students and informational materials to educate students and families about the intervention. DORS VR counselors visited schools to speak with groups of eligible students. As implementation progressed, LSS staff learned, adapted, and became more efficient with recruitment, particularly in those LSSs that enrolled students in both cohorts.

## B. Lessons about offering and providing TA

Ongoing and intensive training and TA played a substantial role in Way2Work's implementation. The program incorporated technical assistants in each LSS, a service delivery checklist to support implementation, and in-person training and professional development sessions for all Way2Work program staff.

**A personalized and involved TA approach might be integral for replicating Way2Work.** Way2Work program staff found UMD's training and TA useful for guiding implementation. UMD coordinated statewide networking and training events and held targeted training for CRPs on customized employment.

---

**Key findings**

- Way2Work implementation might have benefited from more specific marketing and DORS involvement in outreach.

- A personalized and involved TA approach might be integral for replicating Way2Work.

- Way2Work participants were more interested in paid or stipend-paid WBLEs than unpaid WBLEs.

- Way2Work participants were satisfied with the WBLE component, but completing three WBLEs might be hard to achieve before high school graduation.

- The program's emphasis on collaboration promoted program implementation.

Each LSS had a UMD technical assistant who frequently met with LSS staff members, coordinated conference calls, attended MIAT meetings, and guided program implementation. Because UMD technical assistants were familiar with both the program as a whole and each LSS, they could encourage uniformity, troubleshoot challenges, and respond to specific and general TA needs. Other VR agencies implementing a model like Way2Work might consider a similar level of TA to support their programs.

> *"The team from UMD is just outstanding and they've been such an incredible support for our school district."*
>
> –LSS staff

**LSS staff could have benefited from additional training on data collection.** LSS staff were responsible for collecting Way2Work data weekly across multiple partners, including schools, CRPs, and employers. Some LSS staff reported challenges collecting data and using the program's case management data system. "I think one of the challenges was the amount of data we had to collect from CRPs," one LSS staff reported. "Some CRPs did very well, picked it up quickly. Others did not." Knowing how to capture atypical data points in the MIS was also a challenge. A few LSS staff said they were unsure about how to report WBLE data on participants who had obtained paid work independently or before they enrolled in Way2Work. UMD provided TA support to LSS and CRP staff to address this concern.

## C. Lessons about DORS engagement and pre-employment transition services

Many participants received DORS engagement and pre-employment transition services; however, many CRPs needed support connecting with participants and their high schools. Though most participants received authorization for pre-employment transition services, some were less motivated to follow through with DORS services.

**Way2Work fostered participant access and engagement with DORS, though not all participants formally applied for VR services.** Way2Work staff made a concerted effort to involve Way2Work participants with DORS, per the program model. Staff referred most Way2Work participants to DORS to obtain authorization for pre-employment transition services and assignment to a CRP. This high rate of engagement resulted in about one in five participants eventually applying for formal VR services during the program. This involvement might reflect the needs of participants who enrolled in Way2Work and the strength of the supports they received during the program. Staff at VR agencies implementing a program similar to Way2Work might not expect most participants to seek formal VR services. The impact evaluation will track the extent to which some participants might have applied for VR services after they graduated high school and finished Way2Work services. It will also document treatment (Way2Work) and control (usual services) group involvement to determine if Way2Work participants apply to VR at higher rates.

**CRPs varied in their preparedness to provide services to students.** Although many CRP staff were comfortable working with participants and their schools, some had not offered pre-employment transition services before participating in Way2Work. Thus, they were inexperienced in connecting with youth through school professionals and with arranging meetings with participants during their limited free time to deliver services.

> *"For CRPs, jumping right into a work-based learning experience is difficult because oftentimes you haven't yet had the opportunity to get to know that student."*
>
> —DORS staff

To assist staff who lacked experience, LSS staff, who more routinely interacted with the program's students, met with CRP staff and their participants as needed to help facilitate discussion about services

and employment goals. One CRP reflected, "I think [the students] were much more open with talking with [LSS staff] than they were with us."

**Some participants were not interested in the offer of pre-employment transition services**. According to program staff, some Way2Work participants were less motivated than others to engage in DORS services. For example, one participant refused to participate in any pre-employment transition services because she felt she did not need them. Other participants might have declined services because of schedule conflicts with school or extracurricular activities, such as Boy Scouts or college test preparation.

## D.    Lessons about offering work experiences

The Way2Work model focused on offering work experiences to students, and work was a key reason that high school students and their families signed up to participate in the intervention. Below, we present some important lessons around work experiences observed during program implementation.

**Way2Work participants were more interested in paid or stipend-paid WBLEs than unpaid WBLEs.** Because earning income was most important to many participants and their parents, unpaid WBLEs were less attractive than paid work to many participants. "I have not had even a handful of students who are interested in doing an unpaid work-based learning experience," said one DORS staff. "There is a lot of pushback." To encourage participants to accept unpaid WBLEs, DORS introduced a stipend program during Way2Work implementation, which removed the disincentive for participants to pursue unpaid WBLEs. Staff said stipend payments were important for encouraging students to take up an offer of a WBLE. The stipends also had the advantage of encouraging employers who might otherwise be reluctant to hire a participant for a WBLE. Nonetheless, many participants engaged in unpaid WBLEs. Other VR agencies considering a program similar to Way2Work might offer paid or stipend-paid work to encourage program participation.

**VR agency staff had challenges in securing three WBLEs or long-term work experiences for high school youth.** Because many participants' schedules were busy with academics, family obligations, and extracurricular activities, obtaining three WBLEs, including one paid, was an ambitious goal for some participants. Way2Work staff said many families were concerned about overburdening their children with activities and obligations, especially those students who needed to focus on obtaining a diploma. Parents also stepped in to postpone WBLEs when they thought their child needed a break, especially from paid employment, where the commitment seemed too long term. Though almost half of participants met the program's expectations for work experiences, completing three WBLEs might be particularly challenging for some participants because of the above concerns.

## E.    Lessons about partnerships and collaboration

Way2Work enhanced the partnerships and communication among DORS, CRP, and LSSs. It also helped build capacity among CRPs to deliver services and encouraged several LSSs to sustain their MIATs after the demonstration ended.

**The emphasis on collaboration promoted program implementation.** According to LSS staff, Way2Work was an eye-opening experience and illustrated the need for and benefit of collaboration between LSSs and other community partners for program services. Similarly, CRP staff became more involved with schools and familiar with school personnel and families because of their Way2Work involvement. DORS staff were more aware of barriers faced by staff from LSSs and CRPs. Because DORS representatives attended MIAT meetings and regularly coordinated with the UMD team, they knew about the ongoing obstacles to Way2Work implementation and could quickly address them. The success of these collaborations resulted in some LSS staff seeking ways to continue or expand the MIATs after the program ended.

> *"It [Way2Work] has brought us together as one team and given us the opportunity to work together as one team, so I think there's a huge benefit."*
>
> —LSS staff

**Way2Work promoted CRP capacity to serve students.** Through Way2Work, DORS increased the number of CRP agencies that offered pre-employment transition services, and CRP agencies expanded their direct services staff. One LSS staff said they only had one pre-employment transition service provider in their county before Way2Work but now have several.

# IX. Conclusion

DORS and UMD developed Way2Work to improve the career and postsecondary education readiness of high school students with disabilities. Way2Work included an early referral to DORS; authorization for pre-employment transition services; and assignment to a CRP that coordinated multiple WBLEs for participants, including unpaid, stipend paid, and employer paid. Participants could also pursue paid work separate from the learning experiences arranged by CRPs. Way2Work's service collaboration was an essential component of the program. Each LSS established a MIAT, which met monthly and facilitated program success by enhancing stakeholder partnerships and collaboration on the services provided to participants. Way2Work enhanced the communication and relationships between DORS, LSSs, and CRPs, allowing staff from DORS and CRPs to stay abreast of participants' academic progress or family issues. It also increased the capacity of CRP agencies to provide DORS-sponsored pre-employment transition services. UMD provided ongoing professional development training to Way2Work staff and assigned TA staff to each LSS to guide implementation. DORS completed the Way2Work intervention at the end of June 2020.

Overall, DORS and UMD implemented the Way2Work model as designed in the eight Maryland LSSs that signed up for the program. The students who enrolled in the treatment (Way2Work) and control (usual services) groups were similar along most characteristics, with some exceptions (most prominently employment experiences in the 12 months before Way2Work enrollment and prior involvement with DORS). Nearly all Way2Work participants engaged with DORS services. As intended, WBLEs were a central component of the Way2Work model, and many participants gained positive career learning experiences in various industries and occupations. Indeed, 92 percent of Way2Work participants had at least one work experience. About one-half of participants (44 percent) achieved the Way2Work goal of three work experiences with at least one paid by the employer. These statistics underscore the high interest of participants in working while in high school and their responses to the offer of these services through Way2Work. Also, participants and program staff gave high satisfaction ratings to the WBLE component. The MIAT component, which was often highlighted as a key benefit by program staff, brought all key service providers face-to-face and offered a forum to brainstorm and explore each participant's progress. In the next section, we conclude with implications for the impact evaluation, assess the risks of cross-over and contamination, and offer future replication suggestions.

## A.  Implications for impact evaluation

Three findings in this report have significant implications for the impact evaluation.

1. **Way2Work participants received the model services as intended.** The essential services offered to Way2Work participants included an early referral to DORS, a match to a CRP, opportunities for multiple WBLEs, and numerous service collaboration activities. Should the Way2Work program affect participants' employment and education outcomes, it will likely be due to these model components. However, because some participants assigned to the usual services group also had access to WBLEs, the impact evaluation must assess whether Way2Work participants received this component at higher rates than usual services participants.

2. **CRPs varied in their use of the DORS stipend program, which might have affected WBLE participation rates.** Not all CRPs administered the DORS stipend program for WBLEs. As a result, Way2Work participants assigned to those CRPs could not receive a stipend for their participation in WBLEs not paid by the employer. If DORS and CRPs had consistently implemented the stipend

program across all LSSs, participants might have had a higher rate of stipend-paid WBLEs (and, subsequently, a higher rate of multiple WBLEs).

3. **Approximately one-quarter of Way2Work participants received one or more pre-employment transition services other than WBLEs.** Pre-employment transition services other than WBLEs are not explicit components of the Way2Work model, but participants could have received them in tandem with their WBLEs. Nearly one-quarter of participants received one or more of these services, according to the program's administrative records. Because both Way2Work and usual services participant groups can receive these services, an important consideration will be to determine if the two groups' use of these services differed significantly. In theory, usual services participants should have lower rates because they did not receive early DORS engagement services. If Way2Work participants used pre-employment transition services at significantly higher rates, this service use might contribute to any observed Way2Work impacts.

## B. Risks of cross-over or contamination

If Way2Work services were provided to individuals who received usual services, there is a potential for cross-over effects or contamination in the Way2Work study that, if present, would weaken the potential for the program to generate positive impacts. Contamination could also occur if Way2Work program activities produced changes for the usual services group that affected their outcomes.

The evidence gathered for the implementation evaluation suggests that the potential for members of the usual services group to have received services that were similar to those provided by Way2Work was low. As mentioned, members of the usual services group had access to pre-employment transition services from CRPs and thus could obtain both WBLEs and a Positive Personal Profile. Staff reported that students do not typically engage with DORS and thus do not participate in three WBLEs while still in high school.

There was a greater potential for contamination to occur through the MIATs. Although all LSSs used the MIAT exclusively for Way2Work participants, two of the four LSSs that participated in site visits established interagency transition committees similar to the Way2Work MIATs. They coordinated services for all students with IEPs or 504 plans and discussed a broader range of transition issues. One interagency transition committee consisted of the same members as the Way2Work MIAT members, and the meeting took place after the regularly scheduled MIAT. Another LSS formed an interagency transition committee composed of members who differed from those on its MIAT; however, the coordination activities and committee rationale were similar. Thus, LSS staff might have applied what they learned from Way2Work to support participants who were part of the evaluation comparison group, but those participants would have been a part of a larger pool of students with IEPs and 504 plans and not received the attention that Way2Work participants received through the MIATs.

Another potential source of contamination pertains to CRPs. In a few LSSs, the CRPs served both Way2Work and usual services participants (some of whom could be enrolled in the study), and the CRPs' services were similar for both groups. Because Way2Work served as a demonstration, the lack of a firewall between CRPs that provided Way2Work services and those that provided usual services raises concerns that usual services participants might have benefited from the knowledge, skills, and abilities of CRP staff who were trained to provide customized Way2Work services, thereby reducing the potential for the Way2Work program to have impacts on outcomes.

Despite these concerns, our assessment is the risk for cross-over and contamination is low. Other LSS interagency transition committees' involvement with individual students was more general than the focus provided through the MIATs. Although the aforementioned CRP services were similar for both groups, the usual services participants did not have access to a dedicated interagency team that encouraged three WBLEs. Finally, UMD's TA focused exclusively on Way2Work staff and participants, though we acknowledge that this TA could have improved LSS, CRP, and DORS staff collaboration and ability to serve students who were not in the treatment group, including participants receiving usual services.

## C.  Suggestions for replication

The Way2Work model was unique to Maryland for several reasons, including the use of CRPs and UMD's integrated training and TA. VR agencies interested in developing interventions similar to Way2Work might consider the following implementation findings to plan their intervention.

**Think creatively about staffing a program like Way2Work.** Unlike many other state VR agencies, DORS contracts with vendors on employment and transition services for youth. This service model extended to Way2Work in the use of CRPs. Way2Work relied on a cadre of UMD technical assistants, each with a deep understanding of and familiarity with employment and disability; evidence-based practices for youth; and LSSs, CRPs, and DORS staff. UMD leadership and staff also had extensive research experience implementing previous demonstration projects for transition-age youth with disabilities. For these reasons, other VR administrators interested in replicating Way2Work might find it advantageous to identify appropriate and experienced staff and TA resources to design, tailor, and implement an intervention for their state or region.

**Include a pilot phase to provide staff time to practice and improve program operations.** The Way2Work program encountered a few challenges with outreach, data entry, and CRP staffing during the early months of implementation. VR agencies interested in replicating Way2Work components might include a pilot period of six months to one year. During a pilot period, staff can practice and refine protocols for outreach, enrollment, staffing, and collecting test data. A pilot phase can also enable VR agencies to understand participants' and staff members' (for example, VR transition counselors or CRPs) perceptions of the program innovations and use that information to improve service delivery.

**Expect to engage with families to improve communications and enhance program implementation.** Families' understanding of Way2Work and WBLEs influenced participation rates. Some families were confused about the role of DORS, and others had concerns about their child's receipt of unpaid WBLEs or the obligations for paid WBLEs. For these reasons, VR agencies interested in implementing a program like Way2Work might engage with families before and during the intervention to improve their understanding of program goals and activities. By actively engaging with parents, VR agencies could also learn about family preferences or schedule conflicts, address potential barriers to participation, and encourage student take-up of work experiences.

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# Appendix A

# Technical appendix

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Maryland's DORS received a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration to identify, implement, and evaluate evidence-based practices for providing WBLEs in integrated settings for students with disabilities. DORS partnered with UMD to implement a demonstration called Way2Work in 2017. Mathematica used a combination of evaluation methods to assess the implementation of Way2Work. This technical appendix provides details on the quantitative data collection and analyses, TA to support data collection, and qualitative data collection and analyses.

## A. Quantitative data sources and analyses

The evaluation draws on three types of quantitative data: enrollment data, case management data, and survey data. We summarize these data sources below and in Table A.1 and describe our approach to analyzing them.

**Table A.1. Data sources used for the implementation evaluation**

| Data source | Contribution to evaluation | Data collection period | Number |
|---|---|---|---|
| Way2Work MIS enrollment data | Way2Work enrollee random assignment enrollment information | At enrollment: September 9, 2017–January 11, 2019 | 401 records |
| Baseline survey | Way2Work enrollees' demographic, disability, education, and economic characteristics | At enrollment: September 9, 2017–January 11, 2019 | 401 responses |
| Way2Work MIS case management data | Records of each Way2Work participant's service receipt during the intervention | Throughout service delivery: November 6, 2017–June 30, 2020 | 16,570 records |
| WBLE survey | Way2Work participant and staff satisfaction with WBLEs | May 22, 2018–June 12, 2020 | 303 responses |
| Interviews with LSS, CRP, DORS, and UMD staff | Staff members' experiences with Way2Work implementation, WBLEs, MIATs, partnerships and collaboration, and lessons learned to date | Year 1 site visit: May 13-16, 2019 | 21 respondents |
| | | Year 2 phone interviews: April 23, 2020–May 6, 2020 | 20 respondents |

Source:   Way2Work baseline survey and Way2Work MIS.

### 1.  Enrollment data

**RAPTER® enrollment data.** Staff from UMD used its MIS to collect enrollment data from students and their parents or guardians (if the student was younger than 18) and conduct the random assignment. After a student and parent or guardian (if applicable) provided consent and assent to participate in the evaluation, UMD staff entered the student's consent form, demographic data, and contact information into its MIS. When the staff entered the required information and the student passed verification checks, the MIS routed to an online baseline survey to collect further information.

**Way2Work baseline survey.** We used a baseline survey to collect data via a self-administered web survey launched through the MIS. The survey followed the collection of active consent and preceded random assignment. The student and the parent or guardian used a computer or tablet to complete the survey. In some cases, UMD staff administered the survey verbally to accommodate a student's preferences. The online baseline survey took about 15 minutes to complete and collected information on the participants' demographic, family, and disability characteristics (such as type and severity); high

school enrollment and completion; employment and earnings; and Social Security disability program participation. The baseline survey also solicited information about participants' future goals and expectations, self-efficacy, and motivation. After the student and parent or guardian completed the baseline survey, the MIS performed the random assignment process, assigning the student to either the treatment group (the Way2Work services group) or the control group (who received usual DORS services).

## 2. Case management data

In addition to capturing enrollment data, LSS staff used the MIS to record and track service use for Way2Work participants from enrollment through high school graduation. The case management data in the MIS captured various facets of service use, such as engagement with DORS; service plan creation and modification; pre-employment transition service use; WBLE and paid work experience (PWE) events; and service coordination activities such as weekly participant contacts, partner collaborations, referrals, and application assistance activity. Each week, participating CRPs and employers sent information to an LSS staff member. The information each CRP sent aligned with the service receipt tracking fields in the MIS. The LSS staff received the data and then entered it into the MIS. Cohort 1 participants had case management data from between 16 and 22 months and cohort 2 participants from between 17 and 24 months.

## 3. Treatment group survey data on WBLEs

To document the quality of WBLEs, participants and the coordinating CRP staff completed a short survey at the end of each WBLE. The questions, which RSA developed with input from the WBLE demonstration grantees, assessed several features of a WBLE from both participants' and staff's perspectives. LSS staff accessed the WBLE survey through the MIS and printed digital copies for CRPs to administer offline. The survey asked participants to reflect on whether the experience met their goals, helped them make future career decisions, provided new skills, and was a positive experience. The CRP staff completed four similar items and also provided input on the employer's participation. The Mathematica evaluation team received 305 surveys for completed WBLEs (representing a 78.6 percent survey response rate).

## 4. Quantitative analysis approach

The quantitative analysis used descriptive statistics to characterize Way2Work engagement, WBLEs, and service receipt. Although 401 students enrolled in Way2Work—200 into the treatment group and 201 into the control group—the implementation evaluation focuses on the 200 treatment group participants who were eligible to receive Way2Work services. We report statistics for all treatment participants regardless of what services they received. Way2Work enrollment occurred in two waves. For the quantitative analysis, we observed Cohort 1 participants from enrollment through June 30, 2019; we observed Cohort 2 participants from enrollment through June 30, 2020. LSS staff reported data on DORS engagement and service planning for each participant even if that participant received Way2Work services before enrollment. LSS staff reported data on each participant based on his or her LSS at enrollment, even if the student relocated to a different LSS office during the demonstration (which occurred once). We report descriptive statistics—percentages, means, dollar amounts, counts, and durations (either in days or weeks)—depending on the research question addressed. Because the baseline information was collected for all enrollees and LSS staff collected and entered data into the MIS, the statistics derived contain almost no missing information that was available to Way2Work program staff. However, if missing or

other data were used in a special way to create certain statistics for a table, we mention that in the table note.

## B.   TA to support collecting enrollment, case management, and survey data

Mathematica provided training, resource materials, and TA on using the MIS and surveys to facilitate data collection. During the service receipt period, Mathematica used the data in the MIS to produce monitoring reports for UMD to inform implementation activities. The reports had a variety of purposes, such as describing enrollment trends, characterizing service use in real time, and highlighting missing or incomplete service records.

Mathematica provided training to UMD and LSS staff on the MIS to administer enrollment and surveys and track ongoing service provision and use. On August 24, 2017, a member of the Mathematica team provided a full-day, in-person training for UMD staff on the enrollment process, including using the MIS and administering the baseline survey. The training provided background information on the evaluation's goals and structure and the importance of random assignment for the Way2Work evaluation. The training detailed each enrollment step from identifying eligible participants to random assignment. Attendees had opportunities to use a training version of the MIS and baseline survey to practice the enrollment and data entry processes. Mathematica provided example recruitment scripts that described the study and responded to various aspects of enrollment and participation, as well as example scripts for telling participants about their random assignment status, emphasizing the advantages in either scenario. Trainers encouraged staff to tailor the scripts to make them feel more personal and approachable to build rapport with students and families. Trainers also asked staff to role play the various stages of enrollment at the training, including giving personalized recruitment pitches and using mock random assignment outcomes to practice telling participants whether they were assigned to the Way2Work or usual services groups.

Additionally, half-day, in-person training events occurred on October 24–25 and November 8, 2017, to train Cohort 1 LSS staff in collecting and entering service tracking data. These trainings occurred again on September 18 and November 8, 2018, for Cohort 2 LSS staff. As needed, we set up virtual video conference trainings for staff who could not attend the initial in-person training or for later hires. In summer 2018, the Mathematica trainer provided additional virtual training activities to LSS staff to administer the newly launched WBLE survey. Staff accessed this survey through the MIS.

## C.   Qualitative data sources and analyses

In the spring of 2019 and 2020, Mathematica staff conducted in-person and phone interviews with LSS and CRP staff and UMD technical assistants to learn more about their experiences implementing Way2Work and providing services. We also interviewed DORS and UMD management about program goals and operations. In each selected LSS, we conducted one-on-one and small-group interviews with the LSS staff and at least one CRP representative. The composition of the small-group interviews varied by LSS and staff availability. In Table A.2, we summarize the LSS offices and key informants who participated in the interviews.

### 1.   Semistructured interviews

**In-person and virtual site visits.** Three Mathematica team members conducted in-person and telephone site visit interviews that lasted 60 to 90 minutes in May 2019 and in April and May 2020. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we performed all interviews by phone in April 2020. Before each site visit, we developed a semistructured interview guide that covered program implementation, the differences

between Way2Work and usual services, pre-employment transition services, WBLEs, program management, educational institutions, partnerships and collaboration, TA, the external context of the program, and lessons learned to date. In spring 2020, we revised the original semistructured interview guide to cover similar topics as the previous round, with an in-depth focus on service implementation progress. We recorded and transcribed all interviews.

The site visits involved staff and activities in six of the eight LSSs participating in the Way2Work demonstration. We included Charles and Washington in spring 2020, Cecil and Harford in spring 2020, and Anne Arundel and Carroll in both years. We selected these LSSs based on the observed variation in WBLE participation rates (as observed in Way2Work service delivery data). We also selected LSSs from each of the program's first and second enrollment cohorts. For each LSS, we attempted to speak with the LSS staff (both the transition specialist and Way2Work implementation specialist), along with at least one CRP; we also interviewed several DORS staff, including regional directors, counselors, and supervisors (Table A.2). In addition to staff in each LSS, we spoke with several UMD management and TA staff.

**Table A.2. Summary of interview participants, by LSS**

| | Site visit(s) | | LSS staff | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LSS | 1 | 2 | Transition specialist | Way2Work implementation specialist | CRP representative(s) | DORS staff | UMD technical assistants |
| Anne Arundel | X | X | X | X | X | X[a] | X |
| Carroll | X | X | X | X | X[b] | X[a] | X |
| Cecil | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Charles | X | | X | X | X | X[c] | X |
| Harford | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Washington | X | | X | X | X | | X |

[a] We interviewed the DORS regional director for this LSS.

[b] We interviewed four representatives from two CRPs in this LSS.

[c] We interviewed a DORS supervisor in this LSS.

In spring 2019, we also observed UMD training events attended by all Way2Work stakeholders and MIAT meetings in two LSSs (on April 24 and May 16). These training and MIAT meetings included LSS staff, DORS counselors and supervisors, UMD management and staff, and CRPs.

**Site visit interview questions.** Before each site visit, we developed a semistructured interview guide that covered program implementation, the differences between Way2Work and usual services, pre-employment transition services, WBLEs, program management, educational institutions, partnerships and collaboration, TA, the external context of the program, and lessons learned. The following are examples of questions included in the interview guide:

- How does Maryland DORS usually provide services?

- For each Way2Work component, how do Way2Work services differ from usual services?

- How much and what kind of TA was provided to improve fidelity?

- How did LSS and UMD staff conduct outreach and enrollment to potentially eligible students?

- How closely has the implementation of Way2Work adhered to the program model?

- How many WBLEs were arranged, and of what quality?

- Which Way2Work components were more likely to be delivered, and why?

- Did later Way2Work enrollees receive services different than early applicants received?

- How were pre-employment transition services being provided?

- How did Way2Work partners work together to provide services?

- What were the successes and challenges in implementing the Way2Work components?

- How satisfied were Way2Work participants with their services?

- What are the lessons learned about implementing Way2Work?

**2. Qualitative analysis approach**

We transcribed all interview data, used NVivo software to organize data, and created an analytic coding rubric to identify interest categories and review interview transcripts based on the semistructured interview protocols. Two staff performed a reliability check by coding a subset of interviews and refining the coding rubric. After coding all interviews, the staff who coded the data wrote analytic summaries based on key themes that emerged from the qualitative data. A second staff person reviewed their summaries for completion and accuracy. We used themes and findings to address the evaluation questions in this implementation report. Finally, we synthesized qualitative case management data on participants' WBLEs to produce a summary of common job titles by tasks and industry.

## D. Additional descriptive statistics on Way2Work implementation

The tables in Appendix B contain more detailed statistics on Way2Work services for participants from enrollment through June 30, 2020. The first table breaks down weekly service receipt events—including contacts, collaborations, referrals, and assistance with applications—by type. The remaining tables provide service receipt information by LSS. The information in the LSS-related tables mirrors statistics reported in other tables but is reported by LSS.

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# Appendix B

# Supplemental tables

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**Table B.1. Way2Work CRPs and number of participants served, by county**

| CRP | Number of participants |
|---|---|
| **Anne Arundel County Public Schools** | |
| Advantage Psychiatric | 5 |
| Humanim | 8 |
| Providence Center | 2 |
| The Arc | 4 |
| Work Opportunities Unlimited | 7 |
| **Carroll County Public Schools** | |
| Change, Inc. | 3 |
| Goodwill | 11 |
| MOSAIC Community Services | 3 |
| STEP | 7 |
| Target Community & Educational Services, Inc. | 4 |
| The Arc | 8 |
| No CRP | 2 |
| **Cecil County Public Schools** | |
| Frederick County Public Schools[a] | 1 |
| The Arc | 3 |
| Transcen | 6 |
| No CRP | 1 |
| **Charles County Public Schools** | |
| Life | 9 |
| Melwood | 9 |
| New Horizons | 10 |
| **Frederick County Public Schools** | |
| Community Living | 4 |
| Community Options | 1 |
| Goodwill | 10 |
| Scott Key Center | 5 |
| The Arc | 4 |
| **Harford County Public Schools** | |
| Abilities | 5 |
| Humanim | 17 |
| The Arc | 14 |
| Transcen | 4 |
| No CRP | 1 |
| **Washington County Public Schools** | |
| Goodwill | 4 |
| The Arc | 7 |

| CRP | Number of participants |
|---|:---:|
| **Worcester County Public Schools** | |
| Abilities | 3 |
| Bay Area | 5 |
| St. John's | 4 |
| Worcester County Developmental Center | 6 |
| Worcester County Public Schools | 1 |
| No CRP | 2 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

[a] One Way2Work participant moved from Cecil County to Frederick County during the evaluation period.

**Table B.2. Counts of work experiences**

| | All | | Unpaid WBLEs | | Stipend-paid WBLEs | | Paid WBLEs | | Paid work | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| None | 16 | 8.0 | 112 | 56.0 | 93 | 46.5 | 153 | 76.5 | 113 | 56.5 |
| 1 | 32 | 16.0 | 56 | 28.0 | 35 | 17.5 | 44 | 22.0 | 68 | 34.0 |
| 2 | 64 | 32.0 | 23 | 11.5 | 62 | 31.0 | 3 | 1.5 | 15 | 7.5 |
| 3 | 48 | 24.0 | 4 | 2.0 | 9 | 4.5 | n.a. | n.a. | 3 | 1.5 |
| 4 or more | 40 | 20.0% | 5 | 2.5 | 1 | 0.5 | n.a. | n.a. | 1 | 0.5 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note:      N = 200 participants

n.a. = not applicable.

**Table B.3. Planning tool use**

|  | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Initial Positive Personal Profile developed | 99.5 |
| Initial completion of an individual career development plan | 65.5 |
| Individual support plan (as needed) | 16.5 |

Source: Way2Work MIS.

Note: N = 200 participants.

**Table B.4. Detailed weekly service receipt activities**

| Measure | Percentage ever receiving the service | Average number of weeks receiving the service | Average percentage of program weeks receiving the service |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Contacts** | | | |
| **Any contact** | 99.5 | 51.3 | 61.9 |
| In person | 99.0 | 21.8 | 26.6 |
| Phone | 86.5 | 7.6 | 9.1 |
| Email | 93.0 | 10.7 | 12.5 |
| Text | 68.5 | 6.9 | 8.0 |
| Consult | 99.5 | 27.0 | 32.5 |
| Other | 86.5 | 9.3 | 10.4 |
| **Contacts with other agencies or organizations** | | | |
| **Any contacts** | 99.5 | 31.6 | 38.3 |
| American Job Center (Workforce) | 10.5 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Benefits counseling (work incentive counseling) | 1.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| CRP | 90.5 | 18.0 | 21.8 |
| Developmental Disabilities Administration | 10.5 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| DORS | 98.0 | 14.0 | 17.0 |
| Employer/business | 87.0 | 14.0 | 16.9 |
| Health service | 2.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Juvenile services | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Law enforcement | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Mental health | 1.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Postsecondary education institution | 26.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 |
| Social Security Administration | 1.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Social services (foster care, housing, etc.) | 4.5 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Other | 77.0 | 5.2 | 6.2 |
| **Referrals** | | | |
| **Any referrals** | 88.0 | 2.7 | 3.3 |
| American Job Center (Workforce) | 3.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Benefits counseling (work incentive counseling) | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| CRP | 66.0 | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| Developmental Disabilities Administration | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Employer/business | 35.5 | 1.6 | 1.9 |
| Health service | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Juvenile services | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

| Measure | Percentage ever receiving the service | Average number of weeks receiving the service | Average percentage of program weeks receiving the service |
|---|---|---|---|
| Law enforcement | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Mental health | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Social Security Administration | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Social services (foster care, housing, etc.) | 4.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Other | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **Application assistance** | | | |
| **Any application assistance** | 72.5 | 2.1 | 2.5 |
| American Job Center (Workforce) | 3.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Benefits counseling (work incentive counseling) | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| CRP | 3.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Developmental Disabilities Administration | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| DORS | 15.0 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Employer/business | 67.5 | 1.9 | 2.2 |
| Health service | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Juvenile services | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Law enforcement | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Mental health | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Postsecondary education institution | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Social Security Administration | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Other | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note:     N = 200 participants.

**Table B.5. Selected Way2Work service use, by personal characteristics at enrollment**

| Measure | All | Male | Female | Race, White | Race, Black | Cohort 1 | Cohort 2 | ADHD | Other conditions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of participants | 200 | 132 | 68 | 124 | 59 | 94 | 106 | 120 | 80 |
| Referred to DORS (%) | 94.0 | 96.2 | 89.7 | 93.5 | 94.9 | 91.5 | 96.2 | 95.8 | 91.3 |
| Referred to DORS within 30 days (%) | 67.5 | 65.9 | 70.6 | 68.5 | 69.5 | 74.5 | 61.3 | 65.8 | 70.0 |
| Authorized for pre-employment transition services (%) | 78.5 | 81.1 | 73.5 | 76.6 | 83.1 | 89.4 | 68.9 | 79.2 | 77.5 |
| Matched to CRP (%) | 97.0 | 96.2 | 98.5 | 95.2 | 100.0 | 96.8 | 97.2 | 96.7 | 97.5 |
| Applied to DORS (%) | 25.0 | 27.3 | 20.6 | 25.8 | 25.4 | 26.6 | 23.6 | 20.0 | 32.5 |
| Found eligible for DORS services (%) | 16.5 | 17.4 | 14.7 | 18.5 | 13.6 | 11.7 | 20.8 | 14.2 | 20.0 |
| Had at least one work experience (%) | 92.0 | 92.4 | 91.2 | 91.1 | 91.5 | 84.0 | 99.1 | 90.8 | 93.8 |
| Had at least three work experiences, with at least one paid (%) | 78.0 | 75.0 | 83.8 | 75.8 | 79.7 | 62.8 | 91.5 | 82.5 | 71.3 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note:   One participant who did not identify as male or female was combined with the male category. We omitted 17 participants classified as other race from the table. In all, 12 percent of Way2Work participants had DORS involvement before their enrollment.

**Table B.6. Selected Way2Work services use, by economic characteristics at enrollment**

| Measure | All | Employed in last 12 months | Not employed in last 12 months | Qualifies for free or reduced-price school lunch | Does not qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of participants | 200 | 112 | 88 | 66 | 134 |
| Referred to DORS (%) | 94.0 | 93.8 | 94.3 | 95.5 | 93.3 |
| Referred to DORS within 30 days (%) | 67.5 | 67.9 | 67.0 | 62.1 | 70.1 |
| Authorized for pre-employment transition services (%) | 78.5 | 76.8 | 80.7 | 80.3 | 77.6 |
| Matched to CRP (%) | 97.0 | 96.4 | 97.7 | 95.5 | 97.8 |
| Applied to DORS (%) | 25.0 | 27.7 | 21.6 | 28.8 | 23.1 |
| Found eligible for DORS services (%) | 16.5 | 20.5 | 11.4 | 18.2 | 15.7 |
| Had at least one work experience (%) | 92.0 | 92.9 | 90.9 | 87.9 | 94.0 |
| Had least three work experiences, with at least one paid (%) | 44.0 | 52.7 | 33.0 | 42.2 | 44.8 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

Note:   In all, 12 percent of Way2Work participants had DORS involvement before enrollment.

**Table B.7. Selected Way2Work service use, by LSSs**

| Measure | All | Anne Arundel | Carroll | Cecil | Charles | Frederick | Harford | Washington | Worcester |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of participants** | 200 | 26 | 38 | 11 | 28 | 24 | 41 | 11 | 21 |
| Referred to DORS (%) | 94.0 | 100.0 | 92.1 | 90.9 | 92.9 | 91.7 | 92.7 | 100.0 | 95.2 |
| Authorized for pre-employment transition services (%) | 78.5 | 11.5 | 84.2 | 90.9 | 89.3 | 83.3 | 95.1 | 90.9 | 85.7 |
| Matched to CRP (%) | 97.0 | 100.0 | 94.7 | 90.9 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 97.6 | 100.0 | 90.5 |
| Applied to DORS (%) | 25.0 | 0.0 | 15.8 | 0.0 | 10.7 | 8.3 | 63.4 | 90.9 | 14.3 |
| Found eligible for DORS services (%) | 16.5 | 0.0 | 15.8 | 0.0 | 3.6 | 8.3 | 34.1 | 81.8 | 4.8 |
| Referred to DORS within 30 days (%) | 67.5 | 34.6 | 86.8 | 36.4 | 78.6 | 66.7 | 75.6 | 63.6 | 61.9 |
| Had at least one work experience (%) | 92.0 | 100.0 | 94.7 | 100.0 | 89.3 | 95.8 | 82.9 | 100.0 | 85.7 |
| Had at least three work experiences, with at least one paid (%) | 44.0 | 57.7 | 26.3 | 63.6 | 39.3 | 54.2 | 48.8 | 45.5 | 33.3 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

**Table B.8. Early engagement with DORS and VR case status, by LSS**

| | Number of participants | Percentage referred to DORS | Percentage authorized for pre-employment transition services | Percentage applied to DORS | Percentage found eligible for DORS services |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All LSSs** | 200 | 94.0 | 78.5 | 25.0 | 16.5 |
| Anne Arundel | 26 | 100.0 | 11.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Carroll | 38 | 92.1 | 84.2 | 15.8 | 15.8 |
| Cecil | 11 | 90.9 | 90.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Charles | 28 | 92.9 | 89.3 | 10.7 | 3.6 |
| Frederick | 24 | 91.7 | 83.3 | 8.3 | 8.3 |
| Harford | 41 | 92.7 | 95.1 | 63.4 | 34.1 |
| Washington | 11 | 100.0 | 90.9 | 90.9 | 81.8 |
| Worcester | 21 | 95.2 | 85.7 | 14.3 | 4.8 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

**Table B.9. Work experience information, by LSS**

| | Number of participants | Number of unpaid WBLEs | Number of stipend-paid WBLEs | Number of paid WBLEs | Number of paid work | Average hours worked per week at an unpaid WBLE | Average hours worked per week at a stipend-paid WBLE | Average hours worked per week at a paid WBLE | Average hours worked per week at paid work | Average wage at a paid WBLE | Average wage at paid work |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All LSSs** | 200 | 148 | 190 | 50 | 111 | 8.6 | 16.5 | 15.0 | 14.70 | $10.66 | $10.22 |
| Anne Arundel | 26 | 21 | 20 | 17 | 12 | 8.7 | 11.9 | 11.5 | 13.8 | $10.65 | $10.70 |
| Carroll | 38 | 31 | 20 | 11 | 12 | 13.9 | 11.7 | 21.3 | 13.8 | $10.83 | $9.68 |
| Cecil | 11 | 2 | 15 | 3 | 7 | 9.5 | 15.5 | 17.7 | 17.6 | $10.30 | $8.15 |
| Charles | 28 | 5 | 47 | 4 | 13 | 12.2 | 27.7 | 25.0 | 18.8 | $10.50 | $10.47 |
| Frederick | 24 | 10 | 37 | 0 | 19 | 8.6 | 10.5 | n.a. | 10.1 | n.a. | $10.60 |
| Harford | 41 | 36 | 24 | 10 | 28 | 6.8 | 12.5 | 8.2 | 12.7 | $10.69 | $10.56 |
| Washington | 11 | 31 | 15 | 2 | 4 | 3.3 | 13.6 | 11.3 | 14.5 | $11.11 | $8.47 |
| Worcester | 21 | 12 | 12 | 3 | 16 | 12.8 | 18.5 | 21.7 | 20.8 | $10.25 | $10.35 |

Source: Way2Work MIS.

Note: Stipend-paid WBLEs were paid at $10.10 in 2019 and at $11.00 in 2020.

n.a. = not applicable.

**Table B.10. Planning tool use, by LSS**

| | Number of participants | Percentage with a Positive Personal Profile | Percentage with an individual career development plan | Percentage with an individual support plan |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All LSSs** | 200 | 99.5 | 65.5 | 16.5 |
| Anne Arundel | 26 | 100.0 | 11.5 | 0.0 |
| Carroll | 38 | 97.4 | 97.4 | 0.0 |
| Cecil | 11 | 100.0 | 90.9 | 0.0 |
| Charles | 28 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 96.4 |
| Frederick | 24 | 100.0 | 37.5 | 0.0 |
| Harford | 41 | 100.0 | 61.0 | 0.0 |
| Washington | 11 | 100.0 | 9.1 | 54.5 |
| Worcester | 21 | 100.0 | 85.7 | 0.0 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

**Table B.11. Service delivery activities, by LSS**

| | Number of participants | Average percentage contacted in a week | Average number of agency contacts in a week | Average number of agency referrals in a week | Average number of application assistance events in a week |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All LSSs** | 200 | 61.6 | 38.0 | 3.3 | 2.6 |
| Anne Arundel | 26 | 61.7 | 26.7 | 1.4 | 2.2 |
| Carroll | 38 | 55.6 | 30.8 | 1.3 | 2.0 |
| Cecil | 11 | 61.1 | 57.1 | 2.0 | 3.6 |
| Charles | 28 | 80.8 | 41.9 | 3.3 | 2.8 |
| Frederick | 24 | 38.3 | 35.4 | 8.1 | 2.5 |
| Harford | 41 | 57.5 | 41.4 | 2.5 | 3.5 |
| Washington | 11 | 69.6 | 48.7 | 1.6 | 1.8 |
| Worcester | 21 | 80.2 | 43.5 | 6.9 | 1.7 |

Source:   Way2Work MIS.

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