



## PATHWAYS CLEARINGHOUSE: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Since 2018, the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse has conducted a systematic review of research on interventions designed to improve employment and training outcomes for individuals with low incomes. Through a comprehensive search strategy, the Pathways Clearinghouse team has examined over 8,000 manuscripts and identified research on 221 interventions for review.

Key takeaways from the review of this research include the following:

- **The evidence suggests that 38 percent of the examined interventions improved outcomes in at least one domain of interest to the Pathways Clearinghouse.** Twenty-seven percent of the examined interventions improved employment, 24 percent increased earnings, and 14 percent reduced public benefit receipt.
  - For most of the remaining interventions, there was no evidence showing that they improved outcomes. In part, this was because some studies of interventions did not assess outcomes in every domain of interest and, in part, because some studies were unable to demonstrate the effect of an intervention on outcomes.
  - Interventions were more likely to increase employment and earnings in the short term than in the long term.
  - Only 16 percent of interventions had statistically significant evidence indicating that they worsened any participant outcomes. Moreover, more than one third of these—6 percent—were classified as having unfavorable

### What Is the Pathways Clearinghouse?

People who run programs for job seekers with low incomes need evidence on the interventions and strategies that can help their clients succeed in the labor market. Others need this evidence, too – including those making decisions on how to best allocate public resources and those seeking to expand the existing knowledge base.

To provide reliable, accessible information about what works to help job seekers find and keep gainful employment, the Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation at the Administration for Children & Families launched the Pathways Clearinghouse. The Pathways Clearinghouse is built on a foundation of rigor, credibility, and accessibility.

The Pathways Clearinghouse identifies interventions that aim to improve employment outcomes, reduce employment challenges, and support self-sufficiency for people with low incomes. The Pathways Clearinghouse systematically evaluates and summarizes the evidence of their effectiveness.

### How can decision makers use this synthesis report?

Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can use this report to learn more about the interventions and services examined by the Pathways Clearinghouse. This includes the interventions' findings, the populations served, and the research designs used.

impacts due solely to increases in public benefit receipt, which (as discussed below) may coincide with improvements in employment and earnings.

- **Most interventions contained a mix of services aimed at increasing participants' skills, helping them find or keep jobs, and assisting them in overcoming or managing barriers to employment.** On average, interventions included seven services. Sixteen of 221 interventions included only one service, while one intervention had fifteen different services.
  - Interventions most commonly focused on education and training (40 interventions), work and work-based learning (31 interventions), and services to help workers find jobs (26 interventions).
- **Interventions typically served people who predominantly identified as women and racial or ethnic minorities and lived in urban areas.** On average, interventions focused on samples in which 47 percent of people were Black, 21 percent were Hispanic or Latino, and 68 percent were female. In addition, the research included strong representations of recipients of public benefits and single parents.

## The Pathways Clearinghouse systematic review

The Pathways Clearinghouse is powered by a systematic review of relevant research. Systematic reviews make it easier to learn from and apply research findings by identifying the most rigorous and relevant evidence and summarizing it in a variety of ways. The goal of a systematic review is to take stock of all existing evidence on a particular question or topic by (1) adopting a transparent, comprehensive search strategy to identify studies and (2) applying predetermined criteria to rate the quality of the evidence presented in each study and to characterize findings in a consistent way. Trained reviewers identify, categorize, and assess studies and summarize their findings in order to convey concisely all relevant information to diverse audiences.

The Pathways Clearinghouse includes studies that:

1. Quantitatively estimated an intervention's impacts by comparing outcomes observed among a group of individuals who received an offer of intervention services—the intervention group—and a group that did not—the comparison group;
2. Examined the effects of an intervention for people ages 16 and older with low incomes;
3. Estimated the effects of an employment or training intervention, implemented in the United States or Canada, on outcomes related to employment or earnings;
4. Were published or made publicly available in 1990 through 2019 and in English.\*

In the Pathways Clearinghouse's first searches for relevant research, which took place in the fall of 2019 and summer 2020, the review team gathered over 8,000 manuscripts. Trained staff screened the manuscripts to identify eligible studies. In total, 360 manuscripts contained research eligible for review. Those manuscripts included 315 studies. (Multiple manuscripts may describe results from the same study, such as with an interim and final report on the same evaluation.) Trained reviewers then assessed the studies by using predetermined criteria, with the central goal of determining the extent to which findings from the studies could be considered to reliably represent the impact of the intervention.\*\* Of the 315 studies, reviewers assigned 195 a quality rating of high or moderate, meaning that we can be at least somewhat confident in the study findings. The high- and moderate-rated studies represented a total of 147 unique interventions.

\* Although this report summarizes studies available through 2019, the Pathways Clearinghouse continues to review new studies as they become available. Tables and figures in this report draw on data available as of April 2021.

\*\* In Figure A.1, we give details on the process for identifying relevant research. For more details on the criteria used to assess studies and interventions, see the Pathways Clearinghouse protocol: Rotz, Dana, Emily Sama-Miller, and Paul Burkander (2020). Protocol for the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse: Methods and Standards. OPRE Report #2020-44, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## What outcomes did studies measure?

The Pathways Clearinghouse team reviewed each intervention’s impacts on 10 groups of labor market outcomes, called outcome domains.<sup>1</sup> Outcome domains are defined by type of outcome—employment, earnings, public benefit receipt, and education and training—and time period—short-term, long-term, or very long-term. There is a single education and training domain that includes outcomes assessed any time after the intervention. For example, a person’s current employment status and the number of weeks worked over the past year are both employment outcomes, whereas hourly wages and monthly earnings are both earnings outcomes.

To date, the Pathways Clearinghouse team has catalogued information on 2,110 findings, examining the impacts of the 147 interventions evaluated by one or more studies with a high or moderate study quality rating (Table 1). Employment and earnings were the most commonly studied outcomes. About three-quarters of the 147 interventions included findings related to public benefit receipt.

Short- and long-term findings were similarly common, but very long-term findings were fairly rare. The Pathways Clearinghouse team catalogued very long-term findings of any outcome type for only 17 interventions.

## Did interventions improve labor market outcomes?

**Table 1.** Number of interventions with findings in the Pathways Clearinghouse, by outcome domain

	Short-term	Long-term	Very long-term	Any time period, by outcome
Employment	123	104	12	127
Earnings	121	111	13	132
Public benefit receipt	89	92	15	107
Education and training	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	47
Any outcome, by time period	130	116	17	147

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

n.a. = not applicable.

### Key Pathways Clearinghouse terms

An **intervention** is a specific bundle of services or policies implemented in a given context. Interventions are defined based on the services offered to the intervention group, but not offered to the comparison group.

A **manuscript** is a publication or unpublished research document. Manuscripts may discuss more than one study (for example, a manuscript might have examined the impacts of two interventions). Likewise, more than one manuscript may have described the same study (for example, an interim and final report on the same evaluation).

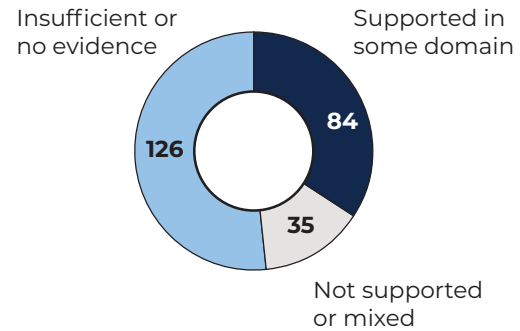
A **study** is an analysis of a distinct implementation of an intervention. More than one study may examine the same intervention.

An **outcome domain** is a group of related outcomes. The Pathways Clearinghouse team uses 10 outcome domains: short-term employment, long-term employment, and very long-term employment; short-term earnings, long-term earnings, and very long-term earnings; short-term public benefit receipt, long-term public benefit receipt, and very long-term public benefit receipt; and education and training. The Pathways Clearinghouse defines short-term as within 18 months after study participants were randomly assigned or first offered services, long-term as between 19 and 60 months (5 years) after, and very long-term as more than 60 months after random assignment or the first offer of services.

<sup>1</sup> Not all studies included outcomes from each of the ten outcome domains.

Each intervention received an effectiveness rating in each domain for which research evidence was available, summarizing the extent to which the intervention improved outcomes in that domain. No intervention received the rating of well-supported, which is the strongest possible effectiveness rating, in any domain. However, 84 interventions (38 percent) received the next strongest rating of supported in at least one domain (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> Thirty-five of 221 interventions (16 percent) showed definitive evidence of unfavorable impacts on outcomes in at least one domain. However, 24 of these 35 interventions also received a supported rating in another domain, suggesting some interventions may improve outcomes in one domain while harming those in another.<sup>3</sup> The remaining interventions did not have enough evidence to assess how they affected outcomes in any domain.

**Figure 1.** Summary of intervention effectiveness



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.  
 Note: Twenty-four of 221 interventions fell into both the supported and the not supported or mixed categories, meaning they earned effectiveness ratings of "supported" in one or more domains, but "not supported" or "mixed support" in at least one other domain.

### Key Pathways Clearinghouse terms

An **effectiveness rating** summarizes the extent to which a given intervention improves a specific type of outcome, based on the existing evidence. The effectiveness rating indicates whether the intervention is likely to produce favorable results if faithfully replicated with a similar population and in a similar context.

- A **well-supported** effectiveness rating means that there is strong and consistent evidence that the intervention produces favorable results for a specific outcome domain.
- A **supported** effectiveness rating means that there is some evidence that the intervention improves outcomes in a specific domain.
- A **not supported** effectiveness rating means that there is some evidence that the intervention worsens outcomes in a specific domain, or that multiple studies of the intervention find only null impacts in a domain.
- A **mixed** effectiveness rating means that there is some evidence that the intervention improves outcomes in a given outcome domain, and some evidence that indicates it worsens outcomes in that domain.
- A finding of **insufficient evidence to assess support** indicates that, although at least one moderate- or high-rated study examined the intervention's impacts in a domain, the evidence did not warrant assigning any of the other ratings.
- A finding of **no evidence to assess support** indicates we did not find any studies that rated moderate or high that studied the intervention's effect on outcomes in a given outcome domain.

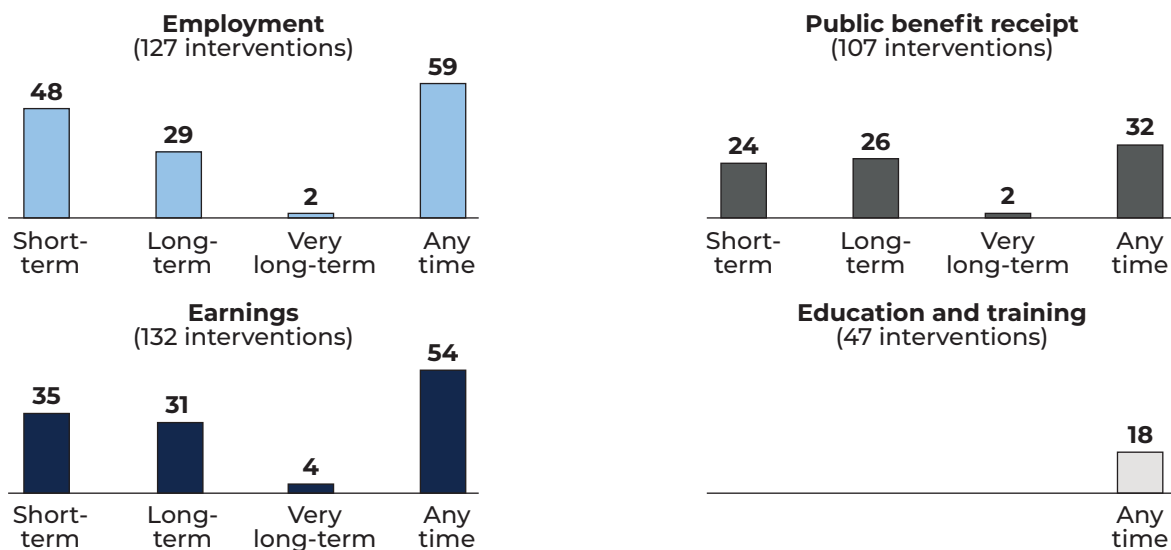
**Study quality ratings** show the Pathways Clearinghouse team's assessment of the quality or rigor of a study based on the way it was designed and executed. Studies could be rated as having high, moderate, or low study quality. Within a single study with multiple findings, the study quality may vary across findings. The study as a whole is assigned the highest rating received by any of the findings. For instance, if in a single study with two findings, one finding received a high study quality rating and the other received a moderate study quality rating, the study overall would receive a high study quality rating.

<sup>2</sup> The full list of supported interventions, and their domain-specific effectiveness ratings, appear in Table A.1. Each supported intervention is also profiled on the [Pathways Clearinghouse website](#).

<sup>3</sup> The Pathways Clearinghouse aimed to explore interventions that help people become more economically self-sufficient; therefore, it categorizes an intervention as supported in a public benefit receipt domain if it reduced benefit receipt.

Interventions were most likely to be supported for improving employment and earnings outcomes (Figure 2). In particular, about 27 percent of interventions showed evidence of improving employment outcomes, and 24 percent showed evidence of improving earnings. The remaining interventions included in the Pathways Clearinghouse, however, do not show this evidence, because they did not examine these outcomes, examined them but received a low study quality rating, or examined them and did not find consistent evidence of improved outcomes.<sup>4</sup> A higher share of interventions with evidence on relevant outcomes show improvements in employment in the short run than in the long run. This could suggest that some interventions’ effects on employment fade as participants move from the short- to the long-term time horizon. (As shown in Table 1, few interventions were studied for very long-term outcomes, though the share of favorable findings in Figure 3 suggests this fade-out may continue into the very long run as well.) Interventions were less likely to demonstrate evidence of improving education and training or decreasing public benefit receipt, even after accounting for the smaller number of studies that examine these outcomes.

**Figure 2.** Number of supported interventions by outcome domain, out of 147 interventions



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: For education and training, there is a single domain in which outcomes could be measured at any time horizon. The total number of interventions for which the Pathways Clearinghouse assessed findings in each group of outcome domains are listed beneath the area name. The number of interventions with findings assessed in each specific outcome domain is shown in Table 1.

## How were interventions’ effectiveness ratings determined?

To determine if an intervention improved or worsened outcomes, the Pathways Clearinghouse team assessed research findings from studies that received a high or moderate study quality rating. After reviewing these findings, the team assigned effectiveness ratings based on the findings’ statistical significance (see box on statistical significance) and favorability (favorable or unfavorable). Interventions showing significant favorable impacts in a domain were classified as supported for that domain, while those showing significant unfavorable impacts or consistent null impacts across multiple studies were classified as not supported. Interventions with both significant favorable

### What is statistical significance?

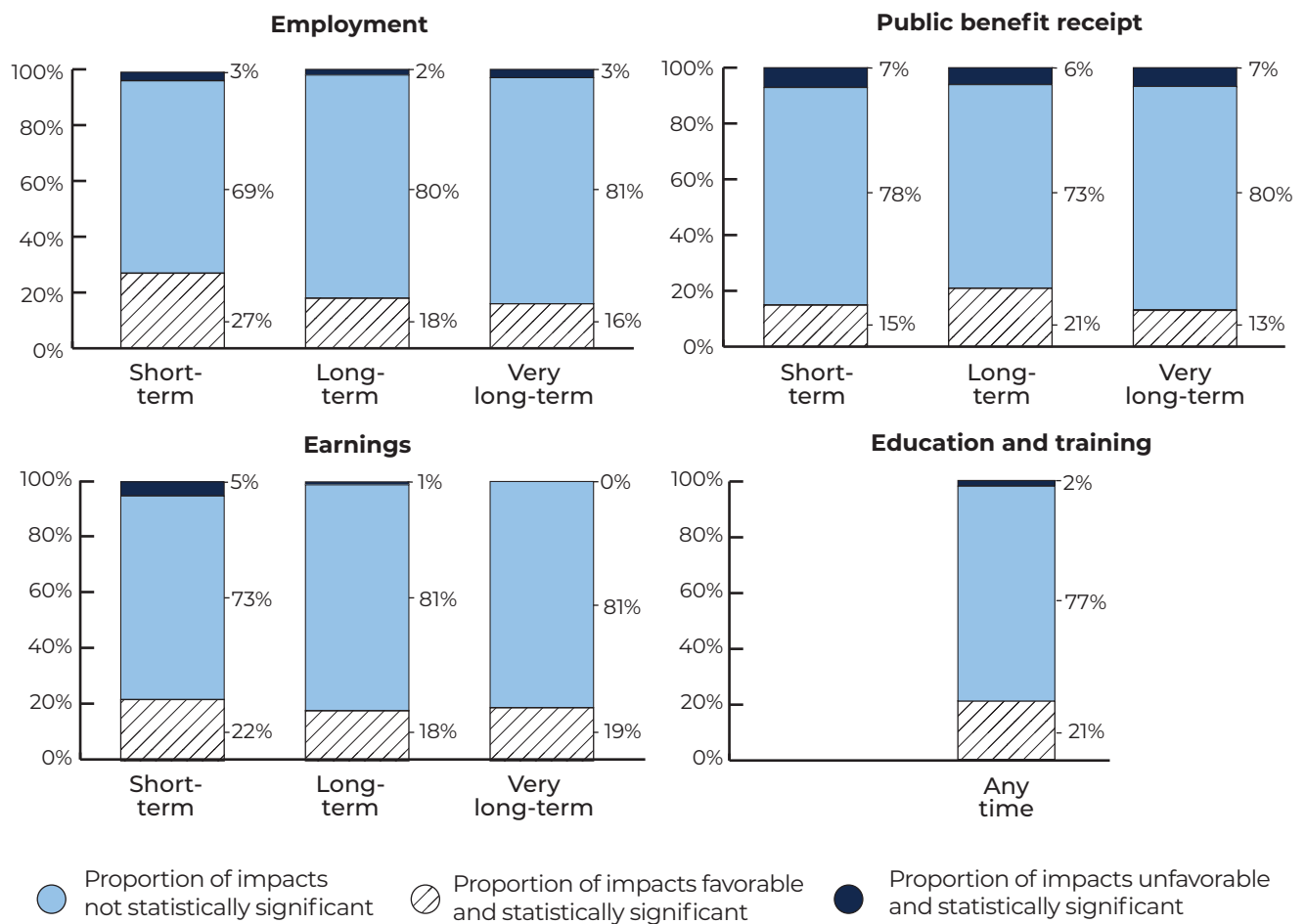
The Pathways Clearinghouse considers statistical significance to be support for the existence of an effect of an intervention. The Pathways Clearinghouse considers an effect estimate statistically significant if the *p*-value of a two-sided hypothesis test of whether the effect is equal to zero is less than 0.05. A *p*-value is the probability of observing an effect estimate as large or larger than the one observed, if there were no actual effect. Choosing a low threshold like this minimizes, while not eliminating, the likelihood that an intervention will be deemed helpful or harmful due to random chance.

<sup>4</sup> In particular, supported interventions accounted for 46 percent and 41 percent of all interventions with high- or moderate-quality evidence on employment and earnings outcomes, respectively.

and significant unfavorable impacts in the same domain received a rating of mixed support.<sup>5</sup> Other interventions were classified as having insufficient evidence to assess support if the evidence about an intervention's impact in a domain was inconclusive, or no evidence to assess support if no study of the intervention assessed outcomes in a given domain. In Figure 3, we present the share of findings in each domain that were (1) statistically significant and favorable, (2) statistically significant and unfavorable, and (3) not statistically significant.

The majority of findings examined by the Pathways Clearinghouse team were statistically insignificant. Stated another way, the findings did not provide strong evidence that an intervention either increased or decreased outcomes (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Share of findings from interventions reviewed by the Pathways Clearinghouse that are favorable, unfavorable, and not statistically significant, by outcome domain



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: For education and training, there is a single domain in which outcomes could be measured at any time horizon. Percentages shown may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

<sup>5</sup> This could occur if, for instance, two studies of the same intervention found the opposite result, with one showing statistically significant improvement and one showing statistically significant worsening of an outcome in the same domain. It could also happen within a single study, if the study examined multiple outcomes in the same domain and found different results, for example, a statistically significant increase in receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and a statistically significant decrease in receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

The percentage of insignificant findings ranged from 69 percent of findings in the short-term employment domain to 81 percent of findings in the long-term earnings and very long-term earnings and employment domains. Despite the large number of statistically insignificant effects, the share of favorable, statistically significant impacts ranged from 13 to 27 percent across domains.

Out of all the outcome domains, findings were most likely to be favorable and statistically significant and least likely to be insignificant within the short-term employment domain. This pattern could indicate that short-term employment outcomes were most responsive to the interventions under study. However, the pattern might result, at least in part, from some intervention services, such as apprenticeships or transitional jobs, that directly provided short-term employment opportunities.

Statistically significant and unfavorable findings were most common in the public benefit receipt domains (Figure 3). (The Pathways Clearinghouse considered reductions in public benefit receipt to be favorable, and increases to be unfavorable.) As with the short-term employment domain, the pattern might result in part from the design of the interventions, or even that some interventions were achieving their short-term goals of improving overall participant income. For example, if some states or programs required individuals to work as a precondition to receiving benefits, a program that increased the employment of public benefit recipients could also have increased the share of participants receiving benefits, at least in the short-term. In fact, the Pathways Clearinghouse team found that 8 of the 18 interventions with evidence of worsening outcomes in the short-term public benefit domain were also supported in the short-term earnings or short-term employment domains.

### What services did interventions provide (and how did they provide them)?

The Pathways Clearinghouse team broke each intervention down into its component services, using a list of 25 common employment-related services (Figure 4).<sup>6</sup> The team selected the 25 services based on those catalogued in related systematic reviews and expert feedback.

**Figure 4.** Services included in Pathways Clearinghouse interventions



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

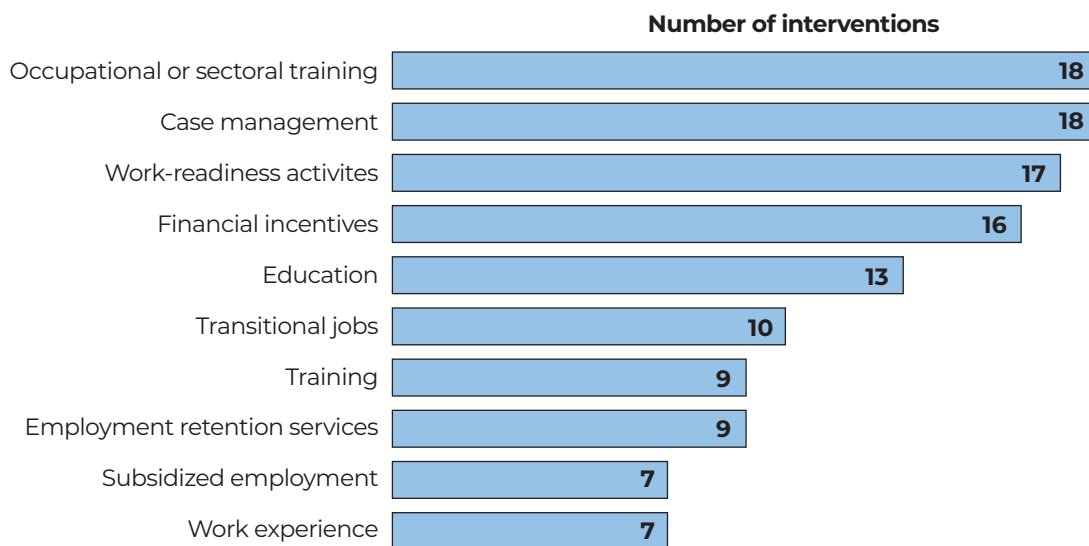
Note: The names of services are shown in a size proportionate to the number of interventions that include the service.

<sup>6</sup> See Table A.2 for definitions of these services.

All interventions included at least one service, and most included several. The average intervention in the Pathways Clearinghouse involved seven services, including a mix of services aimed at increasing participant skills, helping participants find or retain jobs, and assisting participants in overcoming or managing barriers to employment (Table A.1). Some services were common across interventions—for example, 69 percent of the interventions under study included work readiness activities, 61 percent included case management services, and 53 percent included some form of training.

In order to provide richer information about services and group together similar interventions, the Pathways Clearinghouse team also recorded information to determine the primary service that defined each intervention associated with any study providing high- or moderate-quality evidence. In Figure 5, we show the 10 most common primary service strategies used within these interventions. Occupational or sectoral training, case management, work-readiness activities, and financial incentives all featured prominently as the primary service for interventions. Additionally, many interventions focused on education, training, work experience, work-based learning (such as transitional jobs or subsidized employment), or employment retention services to help employed workers keep their jobs.

**Figure 5.** Most common primary services (primary services with five or more interventions)



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

### Key Pathways Clearinghouse term

An intervention's **primary service** is the principal service of the intervention. To identify primary services, two trained coders examined each intervention and identified the service that (1) a large proportion of intervention group members received and a large proportion of comparison group members did not and (2) was described by the study authors as most integral to the theory of change tested by the study. The two coders then compared their independent assessments and discussed the study until they achieved consensus.

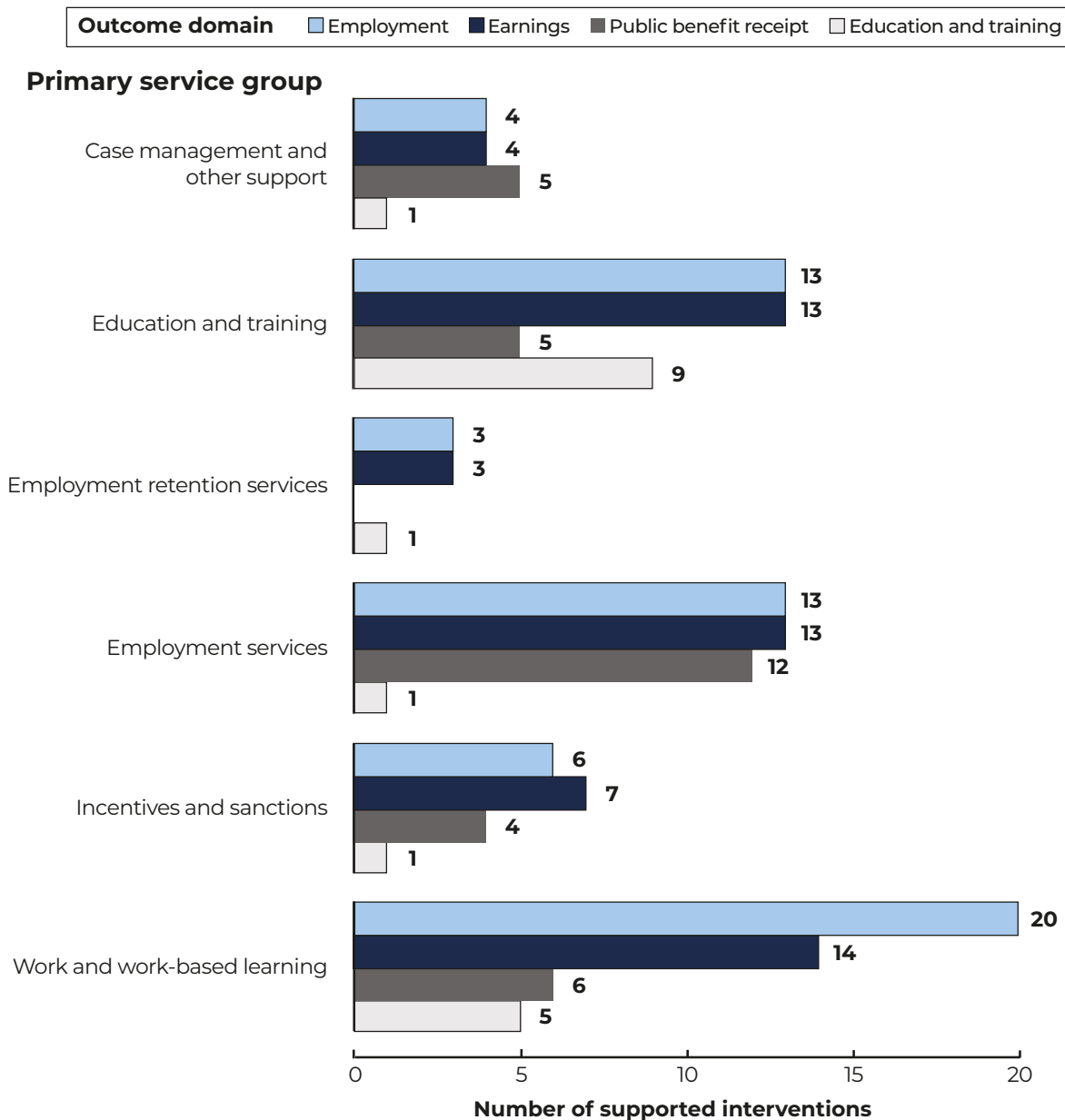
To help identify patterns, we grouped similar primary services together into several broad groups. Figure 6a shows the types of primary services most often associated with supported interventions by outcome type. Interventions that improve employment and earnings outcomes most commonly focused on work and work-based learning, followed by education or training and employment services. Interventions that reduced public benefit receipt most commonly focused on employment services, while education and training was the most common focus for interventions that improved education and training



outcomes. Categorizing interventions by primary service grouping and the timing of outcome measurement (that is, short-term, long-term, or very long-term) reveals similar patterns (Figure 6b). For short-term outcome domains, the most supported interventions had a primary service of work and work-based learning, followed by employment services and education or training. Interventions with supported ratings for long-term outcomes are somewhat more evenly distributed across primary service groups.

In both cases, the concentration of supported interventions in certain categories follows partly from the total number of interventions in each category overall. Although there is variation in the share of supported interventions across primary service categories, additional analyses are necessary to determine whether certain primary services are more likely to earn supported ratings. The results of these analyses will be described in future Pathways Clearinghouse synthesis reports.

**Figure 6a.** Number of supported interventions by primary service group and outcome type



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

**Figure 6b.** Number of supported interventions by primary service strategy and follow-up time period

Primary service category	Follow-up time horizon		
	Short-term	Long-term	Very Long-term
Case management and other support	4	9	0
Education and training	12	11	2
Employment retention services	4	2	0
Employment services	15	14	0
Incentives and sanctions	7	8	2
Work and work-based learning	19	10	2

Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

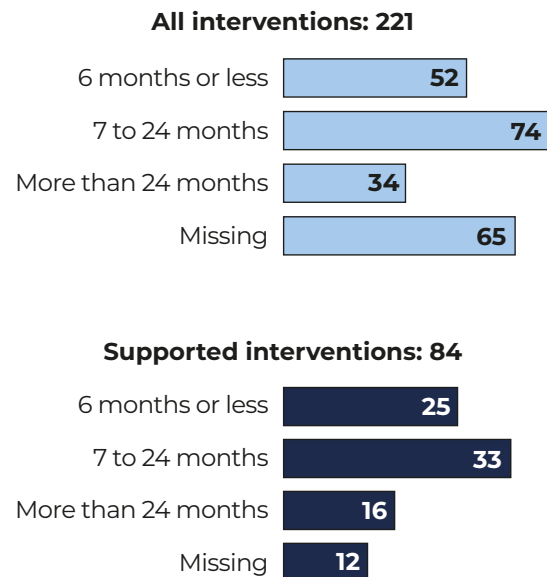
### How were interventions delivered?

For each intervention examined, the Pathways Clearinghouse team tracked information on the organization delivering the intervention, the duration of the intervention, and whether participation in the intervention was mandatory for any study members.

**Duration.** Depending on the services provided, interventions could last for as short as a few hours or as long as a few years. Some lasted indefinitely. Almost a third of all interventions, and fourteen percent of supported interventions, were missing information about their duration (Figure 7). In both groups, among those interventions for which duration information was available, about one third lasted 6 months or less and almost half lasted between 7 and 24 months, with the remainder lasting more than 24 months.

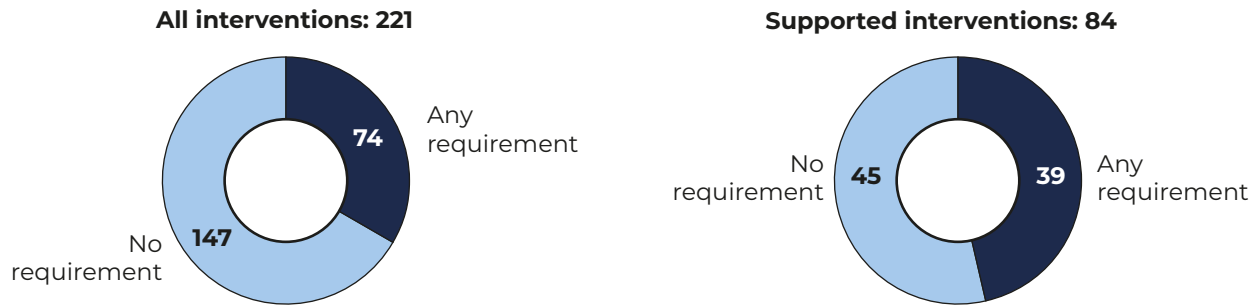
**Requirement to participate.** Participation in the majority of interventions was voluntary. However, a third of all interventions (74 out of 221), and just under half (39 out of 84) of supported interventions, included some mandatory component—such as a requirement to participate in services as a condition of benefit receipt—for at least some participants (Figure 8). This includes most interventions implemented exclusively by public agencies (not shown).

**Figure 7.** Number of interventions by service duration



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database  
Note: Some interventions were implemented for different durations in separate studies and may appear in more than one category. Interventions with missing duration include those for which duration was not specified and those provided indefinitely.

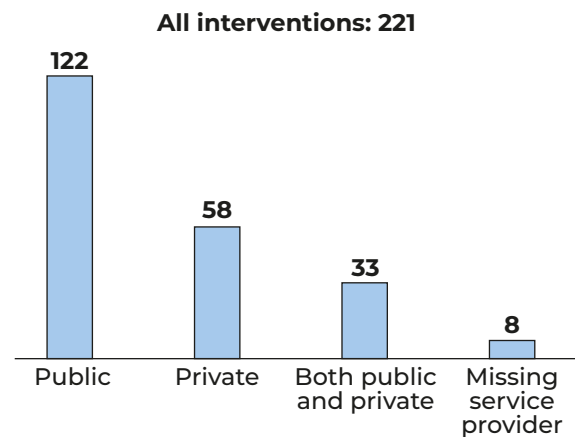
**Figure 8.** Number of interventions with a mandatory participation requirement



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

**Service provider.** Public entities—such as state TANF agencies, community colleges, or workforce agencies—delivered most interventions in the Pathways Clearinghouse (Figure 9). Overall, public providers delivered 55 percent of all interventions, private providers delivered 26 percent of interventions, and public and private providers jointly delivered 15 percent of interventions. (Examples of private providers included community organizations and non-profits, or agencies operating under contract for public entities.) The distribution was similar for the set of supported interventions (not shown).

**Figure 9.** Number of interventions by service provider type



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

### What groups did interventions serve?

To help Pathways Clearinghouse users identify studies focused on specific populations, reviewers recorded information on study participants’ characteristics. The characteristics included the setting where participants lived and worked, demographic traits such as race and gender, population descriptors such as single parenthood, and employment barriers such as disability status.

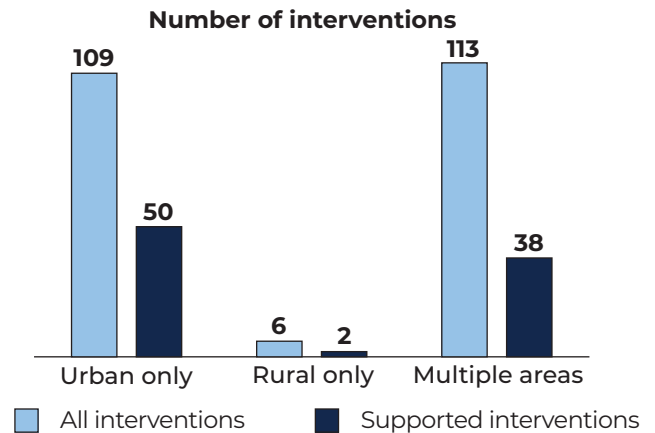
Examining these characteristics provides useful information on the groups for which evidence is available and the groups for which it is lacking. For example, the number of interventions tested with a group of people with a given characteristic tells us the extent to which the group has been the focus of research. The number of supported interventions tested within a specific group further tells us the extent to which researchers have found interventions that might help improve outcomes among individuals in that group.

**Setting.** Most interventions were tested in urban settings (Figure 10). In total, 109 interventions were tested with a fully urban population versus 6 interventions tested with a fully rural population. An additional 113 interventions were examined with populations that were neither exclusively urban nor exclusively rural (plus one tested only in suburban areas).

**Gender.** Most interventions were tested within predominantly female populations.<sup>7</sup> Although data on gender were not available for every intervention, the typical intervention sample was 68 percent female (Figure 11). Individuals receiving TANF, a key population of interest for the Pathways Clearinghouse, overwhelmingly identify as women. The large share of female TANF recipients likely played a role in the gender composition of the research examined by the Pathways Clearinghouse team.

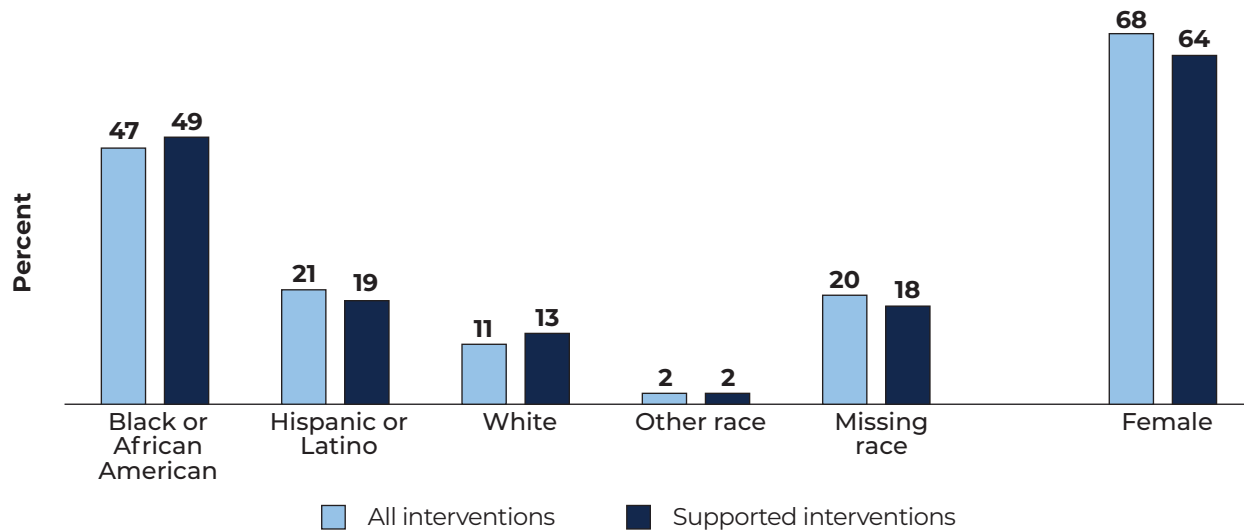
**Race and ethnicity.** Most interventions were tested within majority-minority populations.<sup>8</sup> In only 2 intervention study samples did more than two thirds of sample members identify as White and not Hispanic or Latino (not shown). Not all studies provided data on participant race, and even in studies that did provide this information, race was unavailable for about 20 percent of participants on average. However, for the average intervention, 47 percent of the study population identified as Black, 21 percent as Hispanic or Latino, and 2 percent as some other racial or ethnic minority (Figure 11). The predominance of majority-minority samples likely reflects both the characteristics of people with low incomes and the predominance of urban settings for testing interventions (Figure 10).

**Figure 10.** Number of interventions tested within groups defined by setting



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.  
Note: Interventions appear in more than one category if tested within more than one population in separate studies, and in the multiple areas category for interventions tested in multiple populations within a single study.

**Figure 11.** Racial, ethnic, and gender makeup of intervention participant groups



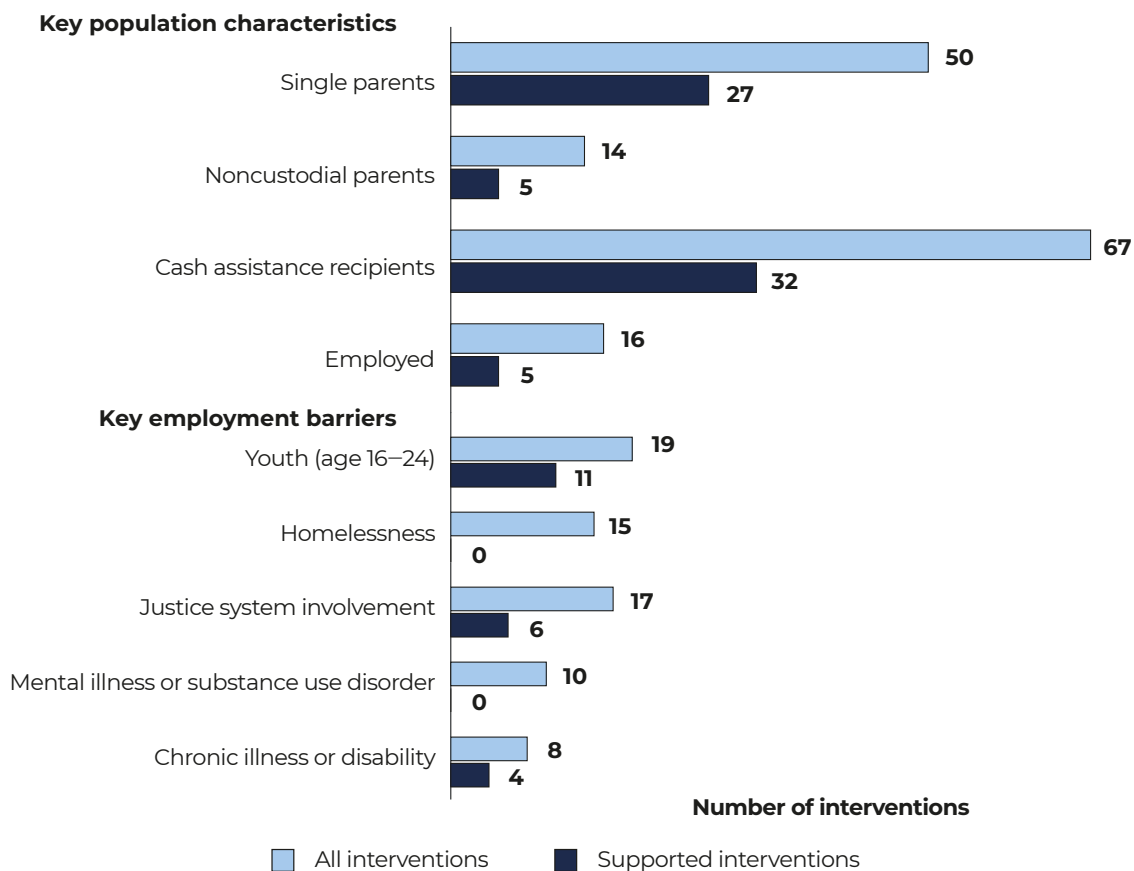
Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.  
Note: Information examined only for interventions with any study receiving a high or moderate quality rating only. Information on race and ethnicity was available for 139 of 147 interventions with one or more high- or moderate-quality studies and 78 of 84 supported interventions. Information on gender was available for 130 of 147 interventions and 73 of 84 supported interventions. "Other race" includes individuals identified as Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and multiracial.

<sup>7</sup> Information on sample gender composition was examined only for studies rated high or moderate.  
<sup>8</sup> Information on sample racial and ethnic composition was examined only for studies rated high or moderate.

**Key groups of people with low incomes.** Many interventions focused on serving individuals with specific employment barriers, needs, or characteristics. In Figure 12, we provide a snapshot of the research base for several key populations served. The populations included groups defined by a characteristic, such as receipt of cash assistance benefits, single parenthood, noncustodial parenthood, or employment status at program entry. The populations also included groups defined by specific employment challenges, such as being young or experiencing homelessness, involvement with the justice system, a mental illness or substance use disorder, or a chronic illness or disability. The top bar of Figure 12 shows the number of interventions for which all sample members shared the selected characteristic. The bottom bar shows the number of those interventions supported by the research.<sup>9</sup>

Cash assistance recipients were the most common population examined, with 67 interventions having one or more studies focused on these individuals; 32 of those interventions received a supported rating (Figure 12). This abundance of evidence is not surprising, since the Pathways Clearinghouse included only studies focused on people with low incomes, and reviewers considered cash assistance receipt a signal of low-income status. Similarly, the Pathways Clearinghouse team found a substantial body of evidence on single parents (mostly single-parent cash assistance recipients). The team noted 50 such interventions, 27 of which received a supported rating. In addition, the Pathways Clearinghouse included several studies focused on noncustodial parents, who were typically identified based on their children’s receipt of public benefits. For this population, we found 14 interventions, of which 5 interventions provided evidence indicating their services help noncustodial parents succeed in the labor market.

**Figure 12.** Number of interventions tested within key groups of people with low incomes



Source: Pathways Clearinghouse database.

Note: Interventions appear in more than one category if tested in more than one population, or in populations possessing multiple characteristics.

<sup>9</sup> For a study to be included in the mental illness or substance use category, the full study sample had to be classified as having either a mental illness or a substance use disorder. That is, if fifty percent of a study's sample had a mental illness and fifty percent had a substance use disorder, the study would not fall under the mental illness or substance use disorder category, because if the two fifty percent groups overlapped then the entire sample would not be made up of people with a mental illness or substance use disorder. Likewise, for a study to be included in the chronic illness or disability category, the full study sample had to be classified as having either a chronic illness or a disability.

Even though the Pathways Clearinghouse focused on employment and training interventions for individuals with low incomes, 16 interventions studied individuals who were employed at the time of enrollment. Of these interventions, 5 were supported in at least one domain.

The evidence included in the Pathways Clearinghouse was somewhat less robust for some populations identified by specific employment barriers, such as experiencing homelessness or justice system involvement. Few of the studies included in the Pathways Clearinghouse focused exclusively on these populations, and even fewer interventions demonstrated evidence of effectiveness for helping these individuals succeed in the labor market (see box).

### **Reasons there might be little evidence on how to help specific populations succeed in the labor market**

Interventions can fail to receive a supported or well-supported rating for two key reasons: (1) the studies examining the intervention did not receive a high or moderate study quality rating, or (2) the studies with high or moderate quality ratings did not provide consistent evidence that the intervention improved outcomes. For many of the interventions focused on the populations highlighted in Figure 12, a lack of high and moderate quality studies drove the lack of supported interventions. For example, although 10 interventions provided evidence on individuals with mental illnesses or substance use disorders who also had low incomes, only 4 of these interventions had been evaluated in studies with high or moderate quality ratings, and none of those provided consistent evidence that the intervention improved the outcomes examined by the Pathways Clearinghouse team. Similarly, none of the studies identified by the Pathways Clearinghouse team on 15 interventions focused on people experiencing homelessness had a high or moderate quality rating. Cases like these indicated gaps in the evidence, where further high quality research is needed to improve our understanding of the effectiveness of interventions for these populations.

## **Looking forward: Increasing evidence on how to help people with low incomes**

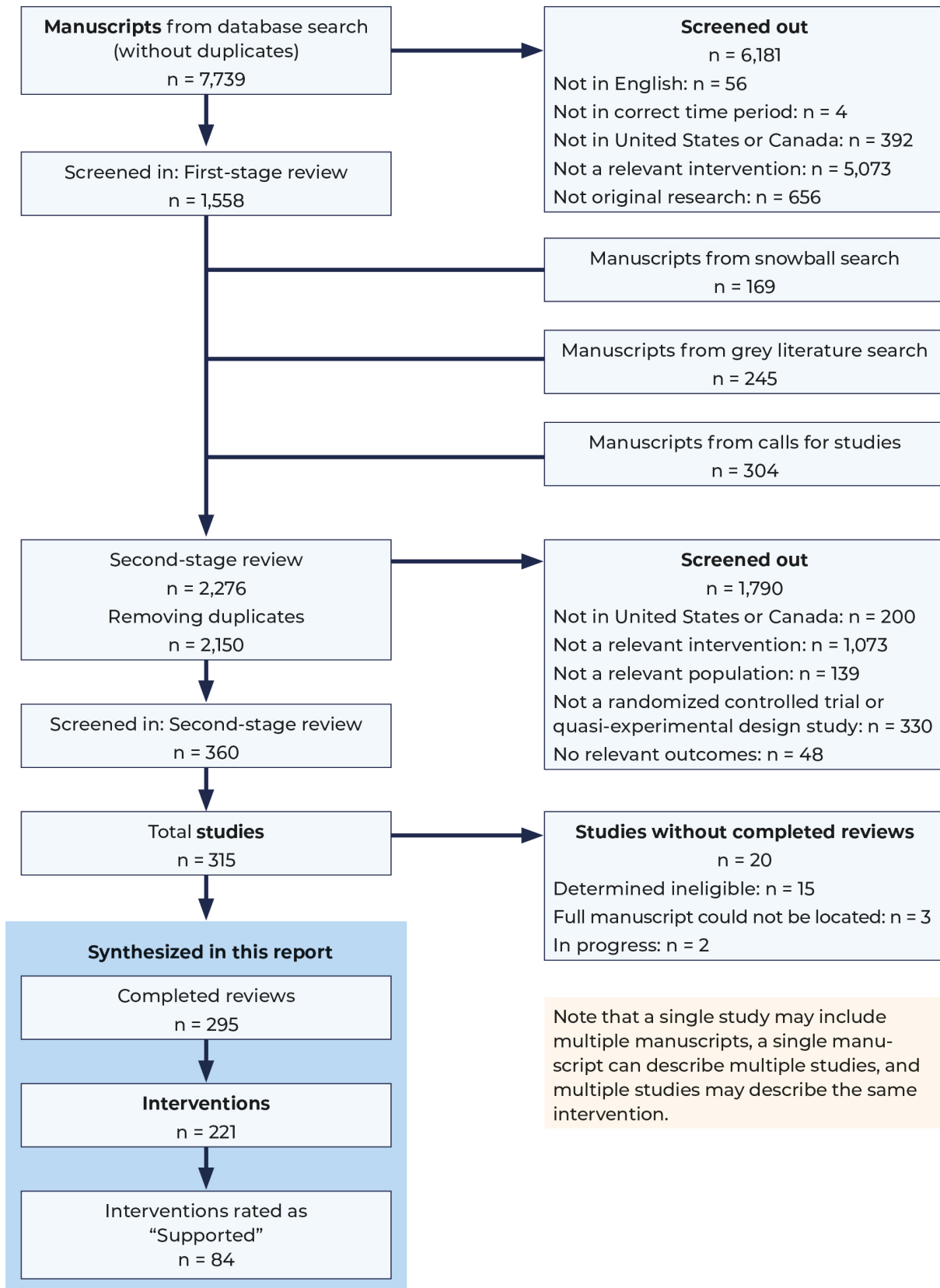
Through a comprehensive review of available research, the Pathways Clearinghouse team examined over 8,000 manuscripts and identified research on 221 interventions. The team classified 84 of the interventions as “supported” in at least one outcome domain, meaning that at least some evidence suggested that they improved earnings, employment, benefit receipt, or education.

However, no interventions received the Pathways Clearinghouse’s highest rating of well-supported in any outcome domain. For an intervention to earn this rating, two separate studies must demonstrate consistent evidence of favorable effects in the same domain. Additional research is needed to confirm the favorable findings for supported interventions and more robustly identify the interventions most likely to help individuals with low incomes succeed in the labor market and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Likewise, additional research could build our understanding of how to improve employment and earnings for certain specific populations of workers with low incomes. For example, few studies examine employment and training interventions targeting individuals experiencing homelessness or with both low income and a mental illness or substance use disorder, and none of those interventions reviewed so far by the Pathways Clearinghouse have earned a supported rating in the review. Very few studies focus specifically on rural labor markets, where workers may face substantial challenges related to transportation and limited job opportunities. The information collected and presented in the Pathways Clearinghouse can help researchers identify these knowledge gaps and direct future research.










## Appendix A: Additional tables and figures

**Figure A.1.** Process for conducting the Pathways Clearinghouse systematic review



**Table A.1.** Supported interventions catalogued by the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse, by primary service

The  symbol comes from the [Pathways Clearinghouse](#), and indicates that the intervention received an effectiveness rating of "Supported" for the listed domain.

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<b>Interventions focused on case management and other support</b>											
<a href="#">Broadened Horizons, Brighter Futures (BHBF)</a>	<b>Case management,</b> Apprenticeships, Employment coaching, Employment retention services, Financial education, Financial incentives, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities										
<a href="#">Enhanced Early Head Start</a>	<b>Case management,</b> Financial education, Health services, Physical health services, Substance use disorder treatment and mental health services										
<a href="#">Future Steps</a>	<b>Case management,</b> Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Supportive services, Work readiness activities										
<a href="#">Integrated Case Management</a>	<b>Case management,</b> Education, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Sanctions, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities										
<a href="#">Integrated Case Management (as compared with Traditional Case Management)</a>	<b>Case management</b>										



Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">Michigan Opportunity and Skills Training (MOST) Followed by Work First</a>	<b>Case management</b> , Education, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, On-the-job training, Sanctions, Supportive services, Training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities								↑		
<a href="#">Second Chance Act (SCA) Adult Demonstration</a>	<b>Case management</b> , Education, Health services, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Substance use disorder treatment and mental health services, Supportive services, Training, Work readiness activities					↑					
<a href="#">Teenage Parent Demonstration</a>	<b>Case management</b> , Education, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Sanctions, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Work readiness activities								↑		
<a href="#">Traditional Case Management</a>	<b>Case management</b> , Education, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Sanctions, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities							↑	↑		↑
<a href="#">YVLifeSet</a>	<b>Case management</b> , Soft skills training, Supportive services				↑						
<b>Interventions focused on education and training</b>											
<a href="#">Atlanta Human Capital Development (HCD) Program</a>	<b>Education</b> , Case management, Occupational or sectoral training, Sanctions, Supportive services, Training							↑	↑		↑

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported										
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training	
<a href="#">Bridges to Pathways (Bridges)</a>	<b>Education</b> , Case management, Health services, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑										
<a href="#">Grand Rapids Human Capital Development (HCD) Program</a>	<b>Education</b> , Occupational or sectoral training, Sanctions, Supportive services, Training	↑						↑	↑			↑
<a href="#">Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)</a>	<b>Occupational or sectoral training</b> , Education, Supportive services, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities											↑
<a href="#">Job Corps</a>	<b>Training</b> , Education, Health services, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Physical health services, Soft skills training, Substance use disorder treatment and mental health services, Supportive services, Work readiness activities		↑			↑		↑	↑			
<a href="#">Los Angeles Reconnections Career Academy (LARCA) Program</a>	<b>Education</b> , Case management, Financial education, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities	↑										↑

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) (as compared with MFIP Incentives Only)</a>	<b>Training</b> , Education, Sanctions, Supportive services, Work readiness activities	↑	↑			↑					
<a href="#">National Guard Youth Challenge</a>	<b>Education</b> , Case management, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Work readiness activities		↑			↑					↑
<a href="#">Oklahoma City's Education, Training, and Employment (ET&amp;E) Program</a>	<b>Education</b> , Case management, Job development/job placement, Occupational or sectoral training, On-the-job training, Sanctions, Soft skills training, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities				↑			↑	↑		
<a href="#">Parents' Fair Share (PFS)</a>	<b>Training</b> , Case management, Education, Occupational or sectoral training, On-the-job training, Supportive services, Work and work-based learning, Work experience				↑						
<a href="#">Partners for a Competitive Workforce: Advanced Manufacturing Partnership</a>	<b>Occupational or sectoral training</b> , Apprenticeships, Case management, Education, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities	↑			↑						

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">Partners for a Competitive Workforce: Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati</a>	<b>Occupational or sectoral training</b> , Education, Financial education, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Training, Work readiness activities	↑			↑						
<a href="#">Per Scholas Sectoral Employment Program</a>	<b>Occupational or sectoral training</b> , Case management, Employment coaching, Employment retention services, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities					↑	↑				
<a href="#">Project Quality Employment Through Skills Training (QUEST)</a>	<b>Occupational or sectoral training</b> , Case management, Education, Health services, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Substance use disorder treatment and mental health services, Supportive services, Training, Work readiness activities	↑	↑			↑	↑				↑
<a href="#">Riverside Human Capital Development (HCD) Program</a>	<b>Education</b> , Case management, Sanctions, Supportive services		↑			↑			↑		↑

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">St. Nick's Alliance WorkAdvance Program</a>	<b>Occupational or sectoral training</b> , Case management, Employment retention coaching, Employment retention services, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Training, Work readiness activities	↑									
<a href="#">Towards Employment WorkAdvance Program</a>	<b>Occupational or sectoral training</b> , Case management, Employment retention coaching, Employment retention services, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Training, Work readiness activities										↑
<a href="#">Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP) Sectoral Employment Program</a>	<b>Occupational or sectoral training</b> , Case management, Education, Employment retention services, Job development/job placement, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Training, Work readiness activities					↑					
<a href="#">Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership Manufacturing Pathway</a>	<b>Occupational or sectoral training</b> , Apprenticeships, Education, Job search assistance, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑			↑						

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">YouthBuild</a>	<b>Training</b> , Case management, Education, Employment retention services, Financial incentives, Health services, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, On-the-job training, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities		↑			↑					↑
<b>Interventions focused on employment retention services</b>											
<a href="#">Chicago Retention and Advancement (ERA)</a>	<b>Employment retention services</b> , Case management, Education, Financial incentives, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Sanctions, Training, Work readiness activities	↑									
<a href="#">Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS) program</a>	<b>Employment retention services</b> , Case management, Financial education, Job search assistance, Supportive services, Work readiness activities		↑		↑	↑					
<a href="#">Texas Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA)</a>	<b>Employment retention services</b> , Case management, Financial incentives		↑		↑	↑					
<a href="#">Transition, Advancement, and Growth (TAAG) Program</a>	<b>Employment retention services</b> , Case management, Employment coaching, Financial education, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Work readiness activities				↑						

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported										
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training	
<a href="#">Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC)</a>	<b>Employment retention services</b> , Case management, Education, Occupational or sectoral training, On-the-job training, Supportive services, Training, Work and work-based learning											↑
<b>Interventions focused on incentives and sanctions</b>												
<a href="#">California Work Pays Demonstration Project (CWPPD)</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b>					↑				↑		
<a href="#">Connecticut's Jobs First Program</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b> , Education, Job search assistance, Sanctions, Soft skills training, Training, Work readiness activities	↑	↑		↑	↑						
<a href="#">Family Rewards</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b>				↑	↑				↑		
<a href="#">Family Rewards 2.0</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b> , Case management, Financial education, Supportive services					↑						
<a href="#">Family Transition Program</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b> , Case management, Education, Health services, Sanctions, Supportive services, Training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience	↑	↑			↑		↑	↑			
<a href="#">Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Incentives Only</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b> , Supportive services	↑	↑									

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">New Hope</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b> , Case management, Employment retention services, Health services, Individual Placement and Support, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Subsidized employment, Substance use disorder treatment and mental health services, Supportive services, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities	↑	↑		↑						
<a href="#">The Self-Sufficiency Project (SSP)</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b>	↑	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		
<a href="#">Virginia Independence Program (VIP)</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b> , Sanctions	↑									
<a href="#">Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP) Incentives Only</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b> , Case management, Health services, Supportive services, Work readiness activities									↑	
<a href="#">Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) with Incentive Payments</a>	<b>Financial incentives</b> , Case management, Education, Employment retention services, Occupational or sectoral training, On-the-job training, Supportive services, Training, Work and work-based learning										↑



Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported										
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training	
<b>Interventions focused on employment services</b>												
<a href="#">Atlanta Labor Force Attachment (LFA)</a>	<b>Work readiness activities,</b> Case management, Education, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Sanctions, Supportive services, Training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience	↑			↑				↑	↑		↑
<a href="#">Back to Work (B2W)</a>	<b>Job search assistance,</b> Case management, Job development/job placement, Soft skills training, Training, Work readiness activities							↑				
<a href="#">Building Nebraska Families (BNF)</a>	<b>Soft skills training,</b> Case management, Employment coaching, Financial education, Work readiness activities	↑										
<a href="#">Delaware's A Better Chance (ABC) Welfare Reform Program</a>	<b>Work readiness activities,</b> Education, Financial incentives, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Sanctions, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience	↑						↑	↑			
<a href="#">Florida's Project Independence</a>	<b>Work readiness activities,</b> Case management, Education, Sanctions, Supportive services, Training	↑										

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported										
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training	
<a href="#">Grand Rapids Labor Force Attachment (LFA) Program</a>	<b>Work readiness activities,</b> Education, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Sanctions, Supportive services, Training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience	↑			↑				↑	↑		
<a href="#">Grand Rapids Labor Force Attachment (LFA) Program (as compared with Grand Rapids Human Capital Development [HCD] Program)</a>	<b>Work readiness activities,</b> Job search assistance, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience								↑			
<a href="#">Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN)</a>	<b>Work readiness activities,</b> Case management, Education, Job development/job placement, Occupational or sectoral training, On-the-job training, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work experience	↑	↑		↑	↑			↑	↑		
<a href="#">Indiana Welfare Reform Initiative</a>	<b>Work readiness activities,</b> Financial incentives, Job search assistance, Sanctions, Supportive services	↑	↑		↑	↑			↑	↑		
<a href="#">Individualized Job Search Assistance (IJSA)</a>	<b>Job search assistance,</b> Case management, Work readiness activities	↑			↑				↑			

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">Jobs-First Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program</a>	<b>Work readiness activities,</b> Education, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work experience	↑	↑		↑	↑		↑	↑		
<a href="#">Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families</a>	<b>Work readiness activities,</b> Education, Financial incentives, Job development/job placement, Occupational or sectoral training, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Training					↑					
<a href="#">Los Angeles County Transitional Subsidized Employment Program: Paid Work Experience (PWE) (as compared with On-the-Job [OJT] Training)</a>	<b>Job search assistance,</b> Subsidized employment, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑			↑			↑	↑		
<a href="#">Portland Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program (JOBS)</a>	<b>Work readiness activities,</b> Case management, Education, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Sanctions, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work experience	↑	↑			↑		↑	↑		

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">Riverside Labor Force Attachment (LFA)</a>	<b>Work readiness activities</b> , Case management, Education, Job development/job placement, Sanctions, Supportive services, Work and work-based learning, Work experience	↑	↑		↑	↑		↑	↑		
<a href="#">Structured Job Search Assistance (SJSA)</a>	<b>Job search assistance</b> , Case management, Work readiness activities				↑	↑					
<a href="#">Transition WORKS</a>	<b>Work readiness activities</b> , Apprenticeships, Case management, Employment coaching, Employment retention services, Financial education, Financial incentives, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work experience					↑					
<a href="#">Year Up</a>	<b>Job development/job placement</b> , Education, Financial education, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Sanctions, Soft skills training, Supportive services, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities	↑			↑	↑					

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<b>Interventions focused on work and work-based learning</b>											
<a href="#">Families Achieving Success Today (FAST)</a>	<b>Individual Placement and Support</b> , Case management, Employment retention services, Health services, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Physical health services, Sanctions, Substance use disorder treatment and mental health services, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑			↑						
<a href="#">Good Transitions</a>	<b>Subsidized employment</b> , Case management, Employment coaching, Job development/job placement, Occupational or sectoral training, Soft skills training, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑			↑			↑			
<a href="#">Los Angeles County Transitional Subsidized Employment Program: Paid Work Experience (PWE)</a>	<b>Subsidized employment</b> , Work readiness activities, Job search assistance, Work and work-based learning	↑			↑			↑			
<a href="#">Los Angeles County Transitional Subsidized Employment Program—On-the-Job Training</a>	<b>Subsidized employment</b> , On-the-job training, Training, Work and work-based learning	↑			↑						

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">Minnesota Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (MSTED)</a>	<b>Subsidized employment</b> , Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Training, Work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑									
<a href="#">Next STEP (Subsidized Transitional Employment Program)</a>	<b>Subsidized employment</b> , Case management, Employment retention services, Financial incentives, Health services, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Substance use disorder treatment and mental health services, Training, Transitional jobs, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑									↑
<a href="#">Parent Success Initiative (PSI)</a>	<b>Transitional jobs</b> , Case management, Education, Employment retention services, Financial education, Financial incentives, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Soft skills training, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑	↑		↑				↑		
<a href="#">Personal Roads to Individual Development and Employment (PRIDE)</a>	<b>Unpaid work experience</b> , Case management, Education, Employment retention services, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Sanctions, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities	↑	↑		↑			↑	↑		

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">Ready, Willing and Able Pathways2Work (Pathways)</a>	<b>Transitional jobs</b> , Case management, Financial education, Financial incentives, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Soft skills training, Subsidized employment, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑			↑						↑
<a href="#">RecycleForce</a>	<b>Transitional jobs</b> , Case management, Employment retention services, Job development/job placement, Occupational or sectoral training, Soft skills training, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑	↑		↑	↑					↑
<a href="#">STEP Forward</a>	<b>Subsidized employment</b> , Case management, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑			↑						
<a href="#">Supporting Families Through Work (SFTW)</a>	<b>Transitional jobs</b> , Case management, Employment coaching, Job development/job placement, Soft skills training, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑			↑						↑
<a href="#">The San Diego Saturation Work Initiative Model (SWIM)</a>	<b>Unpaid work experience</b> , Job search assistance, Sanctions, Work and work-based learning, Work experience, Work readiness activities	↑						↑			

Intervention	Services provided (primary service listed first)	Domains in which interventions are supported									
		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">Transitional Jobs Program at the Transitional Work Corporation (TWC)</a>	<b>Transitional jobs</b> , Case management, Education, Financial incentives, Job search assistance, Sanctions, Subsidized employment, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑	↑		↑						
<a href="#">Transitional Jobs Reentry Demonstration (TJRD)</a>	<b>Transitional jobs</b> , Case management, Employment retention services, Financial incentives, Job development/job placement, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities		↑								
<a href="#">TransitionsSF</a>	<b>Transitional jobs</b> , Case management, Employment retention services, Financial incentives, Health services, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Subsidized employment, Substance use disorder treatment and mental health services, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑	↑		↑						
<a href="#">Virginia Independence Program (VIP) with Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW)</a>	<b>Work experience</b> , Education, Financial incentives, Health services, Job search assistance, Occupational or sectoral training, Sanctions, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Training, Unpaid work experience, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑	↑								



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		Short-term employment	Long-term employment	Very long-term employment	Short-term earnings	Long-term earnings	Very long-term earnings	Short-term public benefit receipt	Long-term public benefit receipt	Very long-term public benefit receipt	Education and training
<a href="#">Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP)</a>	<b>Work experience</b> , Case management, Financial incentives, Health services, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Sanctions, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑	↑	↑		↑					
<a href="#">Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP) (as compared with WRP Incentives Only)</a>	<b>Work experience</b> , Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Subsidized employment, Training, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities		↑	↑		↑	↑	↑		↑	
<a href="#">Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP)</a>	<b>Work experience</b> , Case management, Employment retention services, Financial education, Job development/job placement, Job search assistance, Soft skills training, Subsidized employment, Supportive services, Work and work-based learning, Work readiness activities	↑	↑		↑						

Note: Supported interventions are those that received an effectiveness rating of supported or well-supported in any domain.

**Table A.2.** Services catalogue by the Pathways Clearinghouse team

Service	Definition
<b>Case management and other support</b>	
<b>Case management</b>	Meeting, typically one-on-one, with an employment specialist or counselor who helps assess needs and refers clients to other available services. Case management can take place before or during employment and could focus on employment or on mental health or substance abuse.
<b>Health services</b>	Services to support the mental or physical health of clients.
Substance use disorder treatment and mental health services	Services to treat clients for substance use disorder or mental health diagnoses.
Physical health services	Services to address clients' physical health concerns.
<b>Financial education</b>	Education that help individuals make informed decisions about their financial resources, such as providing information on budgeting or loans.
<b>Education and training</b>	
<b>Education</b>	Services to support educational attainment, such as GED support, adult basic education, or post-secondary education.
<b>Training</b>	Any type of training program.
Occupational or sectoral training	Training that is tied to a particular occupation, such as truck driving or welding.
<b>Employment retention services</b>	
<b>Employment retention services</b>	Supplementary services provided when a client already has a job. These could include ongoing case management to address barriers or to assess progress toward career goals.
<b>Incentives and sanctions</b>	
<b>Financial incentives</b>	Bonuses that clients receive for engaging in a specific activity or achieving a certain goal.
<b>Sanctions</b>	Reductions in payment for failing to comply with mandated services.
<b>Supportive services*</b>	Money or vouchers to fund child care, transportation (such as gas cards or bus passes), or other supports to help clients search for work or engage in a training program.

Service	Definition
<b>Employment services</b>	
<b>Work readiness activities</b>	Services designed to help job seekers find a job that are not related to education or training. These can include initial assessments to identify employment barriers, formalized assessments to identify skills and interests, help designing a resume and cover letter, job search assistance, or help developing an individual employment plan.
Employment coaching	Intensive assistance with identifying barriers and goals and helping clients address them. Also known as life coaching.
Job development or job placement	Assistance getting placed in a job. Typically, a client visits a career center and meets with a counselor who works with employers to identify or create a specific opening for the client.
Job search assistance	Assistance identifying potential jobs and preparing resumes and cover letters.
<b>Soft skills training</b>	Training in so-called soft skills, such as punctuality, manners, professional dress, interactions with colleagues, or conflict management. Sometimes also called life skills training.
<b>Work and work-based learning</b>	
<b>Work and work-based learning</b>	Paid or unpaid (such as internships) work experience or training that occurs in a work setting.
Apprenticeships	An organized or structured form of learning on the job, typically in a skilled trade, but typically not subsidized.
Individual placement and support	The integrated provision of job placement services and supports such as mental health counseling.
On-the-job training	An agreement between the workforce system and an employer in which the workforce system pays all or part of the wages for a client working for an approved employer in an approved occupation for a specified period. At the end of that time, the employer can hire the worker but without the wage subsidy.
Subsidized employment	Employment that is partially or fully paid for by an external funder (not the employer).
Transitional jobs	Jobs that are meant to integrate those who have been out of the workforce (for example, former prisoners) into the community. They can be paid or unpaid.
Unpaid work experience	Work experience that is voluntary or unpaid, such as an unpaid internship.
Work experience	Work experience, including in paid and unpaid jobs.

\* At the time of publication, the Pathways Clearinghouse was in the process of adding additional services tags for interventions that provide more intensive services around housing, child care, legal assistance, and possibly other related domains. For this report, any interventions including these types of services are included in the “supportive services” classification.

## Appendix B: Details on the studies in the Pathways Clearinghouse

For each intervention in the Pathways Clearinghouse, trained reviewers assessed the causal evidence provided by all of the research studies we had identified for that intervention. In this appendix, we describe the technical characteristics of the studies.

All studies in the Pathways Clearinghouse compared outcomes observed among a group of individuals who received an offer of intervention services—the intervention group—and a group of individuals who did not—the comparison group. Reviewers categorized studies based on how study authors identified the two groups. In randomized controlled trials (RCT), individuals are randomly assigned to the intervention and comparison groups. In quasi-experimental design (QED) studies, individuals are not randomly assigned. Instead, researchers typically identify intervention group members who were receiving the intervention of interest and then construct a comparison group of individuals who did not receive the intervention.

The vast majority of the studies (79 percent) included in the Pathways Clearinghouse used an RCT design (Table B.1). In an RCT, random assignment ensures that no systematic differences exist between the study groups before the intervention. Therefore, RCTs produce the strongest possible evidence of effectiveness and are eligible to receive the highest Pathways Clearinghouse study quality rating. QED studies can still receive moderate study quality ratings but cannot receive high ratings.

Almost two-thirds of all studies—191 of 295—received a study quality rating of high, 4 received a rating of moderate, and the remaining 100 studies received a rating of low (Table B.1).

Studies in the Pathways Clearinghouse took place in a range of diverse time periods. Given that political and economic events strongly affect labor market outcomes, we classified each study with a high or moderate study quality rating based on the timing of participants' service receipt. The most recent studies—those for which individuals received services after the onset of the Great Recession (in 2008 or later)—accounted for 27 percent of all studies that received a high or moderate rating. Another 27 percent enrolled participants before the Great Recession but after TANF implementation (that is, 1997 to 2007). The remaining studies (45 percent of studies with a high or moderate rating) enrolled participants prior to TANF implementation (1996 or earlier).<sup>10</sup> Recessions occurred in each of these three time periods, with 20 percent of all studies rated high or moderate enrolling participants during a recessionary period, and 18 percent measuring outcomes during recessionary periods.

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<sup>10</sup> Studies were eligible for review by the Pathways Clearinghouse if they were published no earlier than 1990, although some studies refer to interventions initiated before that year.

**Figure B.1.** Characteristics of studies reviewed by the Pathways Clearinghouse

	Number of studies reviewed	Percent of reviewed studies	Number of studies receiving a high or moderate study quality rating	Percent of studies receiving a high or moderate study quality rating
<b>Study design</b>				
Randomized controlled trial	234	79%	191	98%
Quasi-experimental design	61	21%	4	2%
<b>Study rating</b>				
High	191	65%	191	98%
Moderate	4	1%	4	2%
Low	100	34%	0	0%
<b>Time period</b>				
Enrolled participants pre-welfare reform (1996 or earlier)	NA*	NA	88	45%
Enrolled participants post-welfare reform, pre-Great Recession (1997–2007)	NA	NA	53	27%
Enrolled participants during the Great Recession and later (2008 or later)	NA	NA	53	27%
Enrolled participants during a recession (any time period)	NA	NA	39	20%
Includes outcomes measured during a recession (any time period)	NA	NA	36	18%
<b>Sample size</b>				
Fewer than 750 people	NA	NA	50	26%
750–1,499 people	NA	NA	49	25%
1,500–2,999 people	NA	NA	43	22%
3,000 or more people	NA	NA	53	27%
<b>Data source for findings rated high or moderate</b>				
Administrative data	NA	NA	103	53%
Survey data	NA	NA	17	9%
Both	NA	NA	75	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>		<b>195</b>	

\*NA = Not available. This information is available only for studies receiving a high or moderate rating. Survey data are collected directly from study participants by researchers, while administrative data include governmental records such as benefit receipt or earnings reported to tax databases. Enrollment dates were missing for one high-rated study.

Although some studies were small, the majority were based on at least 1,000 individuals (Table B.1). We collected sample size information only for studies with high or moderate study quality ratings. The median sample size was around 1,500 (not shown). The smallest study examined only 28 individuals, while the largest included more than 66,000 participants (not shown). Overall, 26 percent of high- or moderate-rated studies included fewer than 750 participants, 25 percent included 750 to 1,499 participants, 22 percent included 1,500 to 2,999 participants, and 27 percent included 3,000 or more participants.

Study authors used a mix of administrative data—such as unemployment insurance, tax, or public benefits records—and surveys to measure outcomes. Slightly more than half of studies (53 percent) included findings with high or moderate quality ratings based exclusively on administrative data. Many studies (38 percent) used a combination of survey and administrative data. Only 9 percent of studies included findings with high or moderate quality ratings based exclusively on survey data.

## Goals of the Pathways Clearinghouse

The Pathways Clearinghouse systematically evaluates and summarizes the evidence on the effectiveness of interventions that aim to improve employment outcomes, reduce employment challenges, and support self-sufficiency for populations with low incomes. It has several goals:

- Conduct a transparent, comprehensive search to identify studies of employment and training interventions designed to improve employment, increase earnings, support self-sufficiency, or advance education and training for populations who are low income.
- Rate the quality of those studies to assess the strength of the evidence they provide on the different interventions.
- Determine the evidence of effectiveness for those interventions.
- Share the results, as well as other Clearinghouse products, on a user-friendly website to help state and local TANF administrators, policymakers, researchers and the general public make sense of the results and better understand how this evidence might apply to questions and contexts that matter to them.
- Synthesize the overall state of evidence in the field by creating and disseminating a variety of reports, briefs, and other products.

For more information, see <https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov>.

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