
An Impact Evaluation of the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative

Final Report for the AB 1111-Funded Programs

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About This Report:

This evaluation report is part of a series of deliverables produced by CSW and SPR for the California Workforce Development Board as part of the Evaluation of the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative.



The California Workforce Development Board submits this Final Report to the Legislature for the AB 1111-funded Breaking Barriers to Employment Program. In accordance with the Supplemental Report of the 2018-19 Budget Act, the report contains:

- The ability of the grantees to provide the services proposed in the grant to the number of individuals specified in the grant as evidenced by, among other things, whether the grantee completed the work proposed (Chapter II).
- The ability of individuals to successfully complete relevant programming funded under the grant as demonstrated by relevant measures directly related to the purpose of the program (Chapter II).
- The ability of individuals to transition into or be integrated into the broader workforce and education system as evidenced by enrollment in relevant programs (Chapter II).
- The ability of individuals to succeed in both the broader workforce and education system and labor market once they transition into the broader system (Chapter III).
- The number of individuals served under the initiative (Chapter II).
- The number of individuals served who qualified under each eligibility category, as specified in Section 14034 of the California Unemployment Insurance Code (Chapter II).

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CSW and SPR produced this report for the State Board as part of the Evaluation of the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative.

Abstract

In December 2019, the California Workforce Development Board (State Board) awarded 26 Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative grants (Cohort 1) to partnerships between community-based organizations (CBO) and local workforce development boards (LWDBs). These programs enrolled 2,757 participants between April 2020 and March 2022 and were designed to help people with barriers to employment learn the skills and gain the experience and support needed to find and retain employment. The State Board also commissioned CSW and SPR to evaluate how programs were implemented and the impact of Breaking Barriers on participants' employment and earnings using workforce system administrative data. The evaluation showed that CBO and LWDB partnerships operated these programs in ways that met program goals. These Cohort 1 programs: enrolled more participants than planned; served wide-ranging demographic subgroups and people with up to 20 barriers to employment; delivered wide-ranging employment and supportive services to participants; and co-enrolled considerable numbers of participants into other workforce system programs.

Using a difference-in-differences impact study design, the study team also estimated positive and statistically significant differences between the pre-post changes in employment and earnings observed between the program and comparison groups (examining changes in employment and earnings from the three quarters prior to enrollment up through the second and fourth quarters after exit). The study team also estimated similar, positive, but slightly smaller impacts for two subgroups, including participants who were not co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser services and who had more barriers than other participants, and for many demographic subgroups.

While this report also discussed several limitations to how these research findings can be interpreted, the research suggests that Breaking Barriers has sizeable, positive, and relatively enduring impacts (up through four quarters after exit) on employment and earnings. These findings are especially important given that the State Board, the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and Employment Development Department, as well as many other public agencies around the country continue to fund and operate programs that provide workforce system services to people with multiple barriers to employment.

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Executive Summary

In October 2017, the California Legislature approved Assembly Bill (AB) 1111, establishing the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative, which was subsequently funded by Senate Bill (SB) 856 to provide workforce system services to populations often underserved by traditional state and federal workforce system programs through collaborative partnerships between mission-driven community-based organizations (CBOs) and local workforce development boards (LWDBs). In December 2019, the California Workforce Development Board (State Board) then awarded nearly \$15 million in funding to 26 partnerships CBOs and LWDBs partnerships and to the California Workforce Association for technical assistance and to the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) and Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) for an evaluation. An earlier evaluation report from the CSW-SPR study team examined the implementation and early outcomes of this first Cohort (Cohort 1) of Breaking Barriers programs (Geckeler et al, 2022).¹ This report updates those earlier implementation findings and presents the findings from an impact analysis.

A. Program and Evaluation Overview

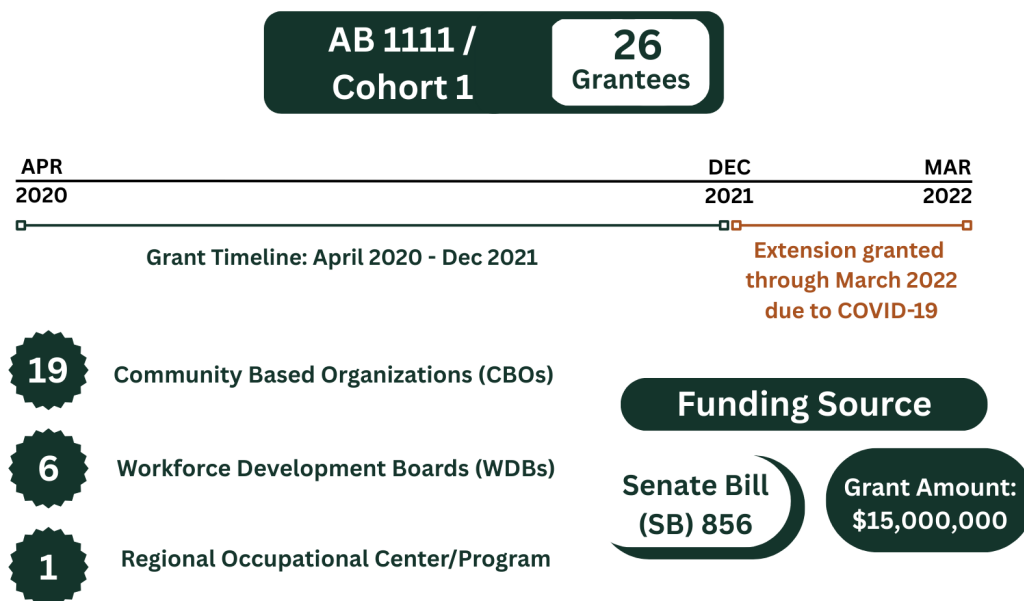
As shown in Exhibit ES-1, organizational structures and funding levels varied across Cohort 1 grantees. Most grantees (19) were CBOs and one was a regional occupational center, all of which had an LWDB partner. The other six grantees were LWDBs which had a CBO partner. In total, these 26 programs represented 16 of California's 45 LWDBs with grant awards ranging from \$168,075 to \$500,000. Programs operated over somewhat different lengths of time during the operational period from April 2020 to March 2022.

The analyses in this report were designed to answer four research questions: 1) how many participants enrolled in Cohort 1 and what was their demographic composition; 2) what services did Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants receive; 3) to what extent were Cohort 1 participants employed two and four quarters after program exit and what were their earnings; and 4) did Cohort 1 participants obtain employment and earnings at a higher rate than members of a comparison group of

¹ Future references to the evaluation's interim report refer to the study team's AB 1111 interim report ([Geckeler et al, 2022](#)) and not the State Board's own AB 1111 [interim report](#) or the study team's interim report for Cohort 2 (Folsom et al., 2025), unless otherwise noted.

Wagner-Peyser (WP) program participants? The study team answered these questions using administrative data on Cohort 1 (program group) and WP (comparison group) participants’ employment and earnings, both in the three quarters prior to enrollment and up to four quarters after being exited. These administrative data came from CalJOBS, the state’s system of record for most workforce programs, and outcomes data calculated in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reporting system (Participant Individual Record Layout, or PIRL).

Exhibit ES-1: Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 Grantee Overview



B. Outcomes Related to Program Implementation

Cohort 1 grantees generally achieved their Breaking Barriers program goals, including enrolling the numbers and types of individuals they aspired to, in their participants receiving workforce system services, and in co-enrolling participants into other workforce system programs.

- **The 26 Cohort 1 programs enrolled 2,757 participants, exceeding their overall enrollment goal of 2,301 participants.** Programs were able to increase the rate of enrollment relatively quickly and maintain it over the grant period, with 17 of the 26 programs exceeding their enrollment goals, six enrolling between 75 and 99 percent of their goals, and the remaining three enrolling between 49 and 74 percent of their goals. Despite this success in

enrolling participants, as noted in the evaluation's interim report, many Cohort 1 grantees experienced COVID-19-related startup issues, which may explain why some programs fell short of their goals.

- **Cohort 1 participants were demographically diverse.** Participants were relatively evenly dispersed across age categories from 18 to 44 then progressively declined in number after that. Cohort 1 participants were slightly more male (59 percent male) than female, with Latinx (43 percent) and Black/African American (27 percent) participants comprising the majority of participants. About 73 percent had obtained a high school diploma or equivalent.
- **Cohort 1 participants faced wide-ranging and extensive barriers to employment.** Cohort 1 programs served individuals across the 20 priority population categories that the program tracked with most participants (2,068) being identified as belonging to more than one priority population and most grantees serving three priority populations, on average. The largest share of participants (84 percent) were identified as being economically disadvantaged while the smallest group of individuals were identified as TANF/CalWORKs exhaustees (0.5 percent) with anywhere from one to all 26 programs having participants belonging to a particular priority population.
- **Participants received a wide range of service types, focusing especially on basic and individualized career services.** Most Cohort 1 participants received some form of basic career services (82 percent) such as assessments, self-guided job searches, or orientations, or individualized career services (69 percent), such as individual plan development and counseling. Fewer participants received training services (42 percent) and supportive services (35 percent). The percentages of Cohort 1 participants receiving each of these different types of services shifted only slightly from what was observed in the interim report.
- **About 62 percent of Cohort 1 participants were co-enrolled in one or more workforce system programs.** More specifically: 41 percent of Cohort 1 participants enrolled in WP programs (alone or in some combination with other programs) and 35 percent were co-enrolled in one or more of the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth programs (alone or in combination with some other programs). In addition to these two (sets of)

programs, participants were, to a lesser degree, co-enrolled into Title II Adult Education, National Farmworkers Job Programs, Veterans Programs, Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, and a few other programs. These rates of co-enrollment, which reflect the state's final reporting based on federal reporting practices, are notably larger than the 13 percent co-enrolled in WIOA Title I programs and the two percent co-enrolled in WP, as reported in the evaluation's interim report, which were based on more preliminary data. Overall, this relatively high rate of co-enrollment means that a considerable number of Cohort 1 participants were getting integrated into the larger workforce services system, thus potentially increasing their access to workforce system services in the future.

C. Program Impacts on Employment and Earnings

Using a difference-in-differences (DiD), quasi-experimental impact study design, which compares the average pre-post change in outcomes for the program group with the average pre-post change in outcomes for the comparison group, the study team compared changes in employment and earnings between program participants (the program group) with those of individuals participating in WP services (the comparison group) who: had at least one barrier to employment; were from the same LWDBs; and participated in WP during the same period of time.

- **Breaking Barriers had sizeable, positive impacts on employment for Cohort 1 participants.** Program group members experienced a regression-adjusted 20.3 percentage point increase in employment in the second quarter after exit (from 46.5 to 66.8 percent) as compared to a 7.5 percentage point increase for the comparison group meaning that the program group's change in employment was 12.8 percentage points higher than would be expected if the program group members did not participate in the program. This impact estimate is statistically significant and suggests that services received by program group members were effective at helping them find employment. Furthermore, by the fourth quarter after exit, the impact of Breaking Barriers on employment remained positive and statistically significant at 10.2 percentage points, indicating that the program's impacts on employment persisted over at least four quarters after exit.

- **Breaking Barriers also had sizeable, positive impacts on participants' earnings.** Program group members gained \$2,697, on average, as compared to \$1,035, on average, for comparison group members, resulting in a positive impact of \$1,662 (or a 51 percent increase compared to what would be expected in the absence of participation) in the second quarter after exit. In the fourth quarter after exit, there was also a positive impact of \$1,628 (or a 49 percent increase), demonstrating sustained economic benefits from participating in the program.
- **Impacts were robust to sensitivity analyses.** The study team was not able to identify the co-enrolled Cohort 1 participants within WP. While the DiD design should mitigate this potentially confounding factor when comparing program and comparison groups, the study team explored the extent to which this potential overlap of study groups might affect the evaluation's findings by creating a subgroup of program participants (1,328 participants) who were not co-enrolled in WP. This treatment group was distinct from the Cohort 1 participants who were co-enrolled in WP in that there was a statistically significant difference in the average number of barriers noted for each group (3 barriers v. 2.6 on average). The impacts on employment and earnings for this subgroup of participants who were not co-enrolled in WP compared to those in the comparison group were similar to those in the primary analysis: impacts were in the same direction, if somewhat smaller in magnitude. Importantly, this subgroup had more barriers than other Cohort 1 participants, suggesting that the program had an impact on even highly barriered individuals who did not benefit from co-enrollment with WP.
- **Breaking Barriers also had an impact on employment and earnings across several demographic subgroups, mostly within the second quarter after exit.** These demographic subgroup analyses are of limited value in and of themselves as a result of the high rate of overlap between many subgroups, the identification of priority populations, and the inability to use priority populations as subgroups due to participants having multiple barriers. Nevertheless, they are suggestive of the robustness of the overall findings and may offer some areas of potential exploration in future evaluations.

D. Impact Study Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Despite the sizeable and significant gains observed in employment and earnings for Cohort 1 participants, there are some limitations to the research which are important to consider, and which have implications for future evaluations.

- **The findings from this research are not generalizable to subsequent Breaking Barriers cohorts.** The State Board has funded two additional cohorts that operate at a later point in time and in somewhat different ways, thus the impacts observed for Cohort 1 may not be relevant to these later cohorts. The study team is not conducting an impact analysis of these later cohorts but, if possible, will examine the pre-post trends for program participants to see if similar trends emerge.
- **The program and comparison groups in this analysis were dissimilar in many ways.** While the DiD design should help to mitigate this factor, additional research using a different design, such as a randomized control trial, would help to control for the effects of any differences across groups, both observed and unobserved.
- **The study cannot identify which aspects of the program may drive the estimated impacts.** These programs are complex and vary across grantees, serving different populations, having different governance models and with participants receiving different types of services. To the extent that the models could be narrowed in future analyses, it may help to better identify factors that most contribute to the program's success.
- **There are several opportunities for improving research through better access to data, especially around participant co-enrollment in other workforce system programs.** These include: obtaining more accurate rates of co-enrollment from preliminary data sources and not needing to wait for the generation of PIRL data, which often is only available well after service delivery ends; making it possible to identify program participants within other workforce system programs like WP, which is often used as a comparison group due to its widely available access to people seeking workforce system services; and obtaining additional information on co-enrollment practices to more effectively share these practices.

The findings from this impact study are notable due to their size and enduring nature. These findings are especially important given that the State Board, the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and Employment Development Department, as well as many other public agencies around the country continue to fund and operate programs that provide workforce system services to people with multiple barriers to employment. While additional research on Breaking Barriers and other similar programs is needed, this current research offers substantial motivation for supporting people who are often overlooked by traditional workforce system programs. This report marks the end of any planned research on Cohort 1, but the study team is releasing an interim evaluation report on the next two Breaking Barriers program cohorts alongside this one and will produce a final evaluation report on those two cohorts in early 2026.

I. Introduction

In October 2017, the California Legislature approved Assembly Bill (AB) 1111, the Removing Barriers to Employment Act (Statutes 2017, Chapter 824), which established the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative (Breaking Barriers) to be

What is Breaking Barriers?

The Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative was designed to provide services to populations that are often underserved by traditional state and federal workforce system programs. Activities under this initiative included education and training, job placement, and supportive services delivered through a collaborative partnership between mission-driven community-based organizations and local workforce development boards.

The initiative has been implemented through two main pieces of legislation: Assembly Bill (AB) 1111, which supported 26 grantees (referred to as Cohort 1), and AB 628/Senate Bill (SB) 129, which funded 53 grantees (referred to as Cohorts 2a and 2b).

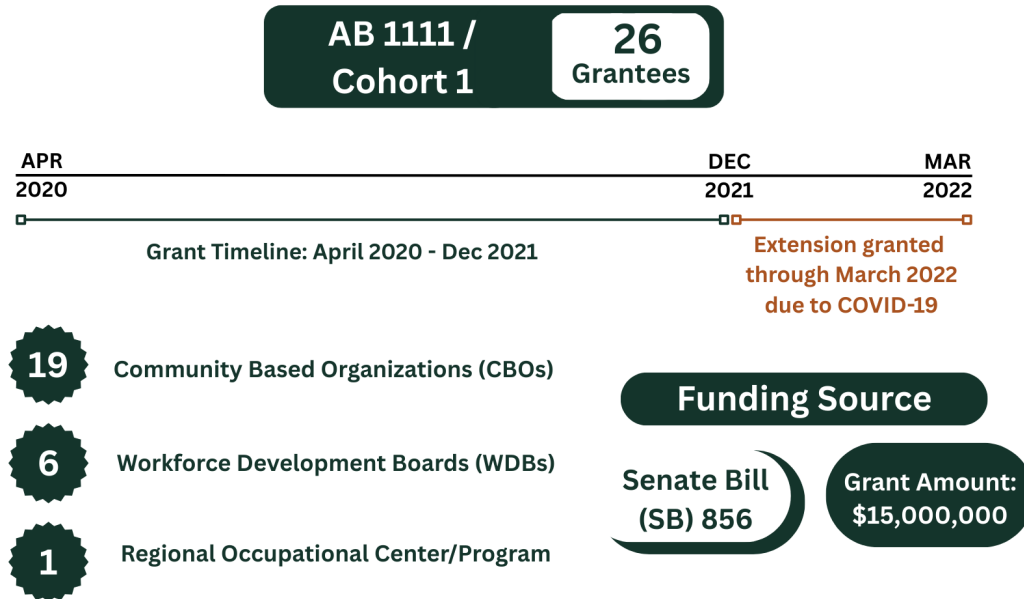
An earlier report examined the implementation and early outcomes of Cohort 1 (Geckeler et al., 2022). This report updates those earlier implementation findings and presents an impact analysis of the Cohort 1. A separate report presents interim findings from the implementation and outcomes studies of Cohorts 2a and 2b (Folsom et al., 2025).

administered by the California Workforce Development Board (State Board). In July 2018, Senate Bill (SB) 856 funded the initiative at \$15 million. After a series of statewide stakeholder engagement meetings to solicit feedback on its design, the State Board issued a request for applications for this first cohort of the initiative in 2019 (see the “What is Breaking Barriers” box for additional details on the overall initiative and information on other cohorts and evaluation reports). Then, in December 2019, the State Board awarded AB 1111 program grants to 26 partnerships between community-based organizations (CBOs) and local workforce development boards (LWDBs), a technical assistance (TA) grant to the California Workforce Association (CWA), and an evaluation grant to the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) and Social Policy Research Associates (SPR). Most Breaking Barriers contracts, including the evaluation contract, began in April 2020. Most of this first cohort (referred to hereafter as Cohort 1) of Breaking Barriers grantees were given some latitude in

terms of when they wanted to end their grants due both to initial funding delays and because grants began right at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. One Cohort

1 grantee ended its grant in October 2021, and two others ended their grants in December 2021. The other 23 ended their grants in March 2022. Exhibit I-1 provides an overview of the funding source, types of lead grantee organizations, and the project timeline for Cohort 1.

Exhibit I-1: Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 Grantee Overview



A. The Initiative and its Program Goals

According to AB 1111, funding for Cohort 1 of the Breaking Barriers program was designed to:

- Provide supplemental funding “aligned with the broader workforce and educational system in the State of California” that does not “duplicate or replicate existing programs” and that leads to “the success of individuals either preparing to enter or already enrolled in workforce and education programs.”
- “Provide individuals with barriers to employment the services they need to enter, participate in, and complete broader workforce preparation, training, and education programs aligned with regional labor market needs,” giving them “the skills and competencies necessary to successfully enter the labor market, retain employment, and earn wages that lead to self-sufficiency, and eventually, economic security.”

- Deliver services “principally through a collaborative partnership between mission-driven [CBOs]...and local [WDBs] to strengthen the America’s Job Center of California (AJCC) system.”

As such, each of the 26 Cohort 1 grantees established programs with the support of the state’s TA provider (CWA). These programs relied upon CBO-LWDB partnerships and prepared participants to work with other state systems and to find employment.

B. Program Grantee Overview

As shown in both Exhibit I-1 (above) and Appendix A, the 26 Cohort 1 Breaking Barriers grantees included a wide range of organization types operating in various locations throughout the state and relied upon various types of partnerships.

- Eleven of the 26 grants were \$500,000, while the remainder were between \$168,075 and \$500,000.
- Nineteen of these 26 grantees were CBOs, six were LWDBs, and one was a regional occupational center/program (ROCP) (like a CBO, this ROCP had a LWDB partner).
- Of California’s 45 LWDBs, just over one-third (16) were either grantees or the named LWDB partners of a Breaking Barriers grantee, and six of these LWDBs were affiliated with more than one grant.

C. Evaluation Approach and Research Questions

An evaluation of the Breaking Barriers initiative is critical to understanding its impact and effectiveness, as well as meeting the requirements outlined under AB 1111. CSW and SPR (the “study team”) previously evaluated the implementation and early outcomes of Cohort 1 and included those findings in an interim report (Geckeler et al., 2022)² that described how and to what extent Cohort 1 grantee organizations partnered with other organizations, including their CBO-LWDB partnerships, along with information on enrollment, the services delivered, and early outcomes observed, as programs sought to help individuals with significant employment barriers obtain education and training and find employment. That

² Future references to the evaluation’s interim report refer to the study team’s AB 1111 interim report ([Geckeler et al, 2022](#)) and not the State Board’s own AB 1111 [interim report](#) or the study team’s interim report for Cohort 2 (Folsom et al., 2025), unless otherwise noted.

interim report also described the progress grantees made in implementing their grants, offering context around the outcomes observed and helping to generate insights and lessons for expanding, sustaining, and scaling similar efforts in California and nationwide. However, due to evaluation funding being synchronous with the project timeline and lags in the availability of administrative data, that research was only able to examine outcomes for a small subset of participants.

This report summarizes the findings of new research into this same cohort of Breaking Barriers participants, using updated administrative data that includes information on all participants up to four quarters after they exited from the program. This report includes updated findings on enrollment, service receipt, and participant outcomes along with the results of a difference-in-difference impact study, comparing changes in program participants' rates of employment and earnings to those of a comparison group.

Insights from this research are intended to inform future program replication and help the State Board meet reporting obligations by documenting whether grantees reached individuals with multiple barriers (“priority populations”), met service goals, and achieved meaningful participant outcomes.

More specifically, this report answers the following research questions.

- How many participants enrolled in Cohort 1 of Breaking Barriers and what was their demographic composition?
- What services did Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants receive?
- To what extent were Cohort 1 participants employed two or four quarters after program exit and what were their earnings?
- How did Cohort 1 participants rates of employment and earnings compare to participants in other workforce system programs, where they might have otherwise received services if not for Breaking Barriers? ³

D. Data Sources

To answer the research questions listed above, the study team primarily analyzed administrative data on Cohort 1 participants, which it obtained from the State Board. These data come from two datasets generated from CalJOBS, the state's system of record for most workforce programs, and included updated information

³ See Chapter III and Appendix B for details on the comparison group and impact study design.

from what the study team obtained previously for its interim report (Geckeler et al., 2022). Both datasets include demographic data, but the first (hereafter "Detailed Services dataset") contains detailed data on the services participants received, while the second includes data on their outcomes calculated in accordance with WIOA following the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) (hereafter "PIRL dataset"). Both datasets include information on the 2,757 Cohort 1 Breaking Barriers participants.

While this new research primarily relies on the above-noted administrative data to answer its research questions, it does occasionally reference other, previously reported findings. As shared in the study team's AB 1111 interim report, these findings were developed from the analysis of the following data sources:

- Grantee documents, obtained from the State Board, including proposal narratives, work plans, contract updates, and quarterly narrative reports.
- A grantee survey, administered by the study team, of grantee coordinators from November 2021 to January 2022 with all 26 grantees responding.
- Grantee interviews, conducted by the study team, with directors and/or program coordinators conducted with half the grantees from December 2021 through February 2022.

Additional information on the data sources and methods used in this new research can be found in Appendix B.

E. Report Overview

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. Chapter II updates previously reported Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participant rates of enrollment service receipt, and rates of co-enrollment in other workforce system programs. Chapter III reports on the results of the evaluation's impact study, comparing the employment and earnings outcomes of Cohort 1 participants to people in the Wagner-Peyser program. Chapter IV provides a summary and some conclusions, synthesizing major insights and lessons learned to inform current and future implementation and evaluation efforts of Breaking Barriers and other similar programs.

II. Enrollment, Service Receipt, and Co-enrollment

This chapter provides information on: the 26 Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 grantees' levels and rates of enrollment; the demographic characteristics of these participants, including information on their barriers to employment; the services delivered to Cohort 1 participants; and the rates at which Cohort 1 participants were co-enrolled in other workforce system programs. The chapter also clarifies where these numbers represent notable updates to the information included in the evaluation's interim report (Geckeler et al., 2022).

Key Findings

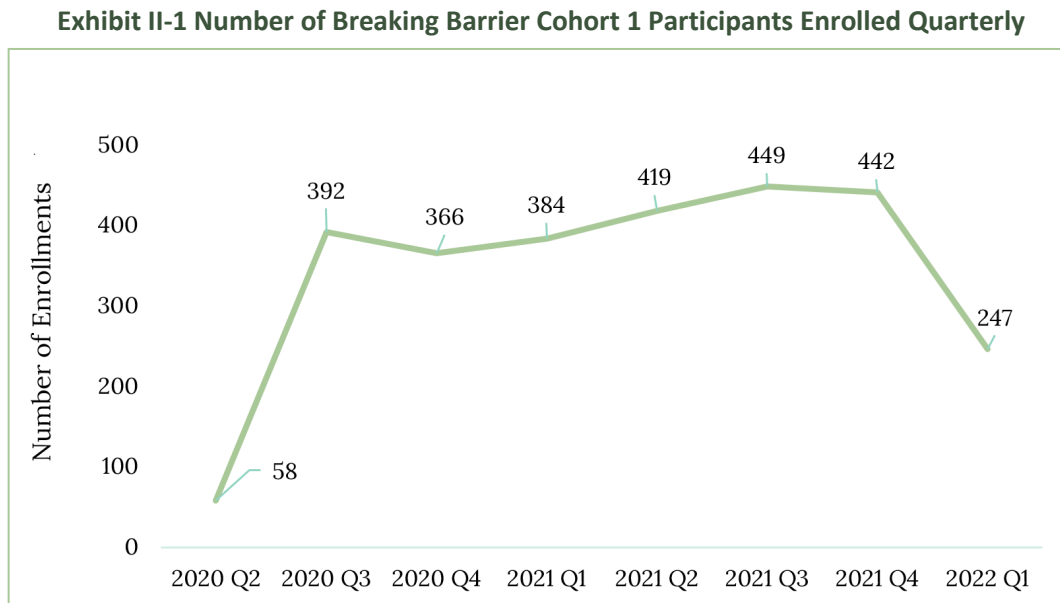
- **Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 grantees exceeded their enrollment goals.** Cohort 1 grantees enrolled 2,757 participants, which is 456 more than their collective goal of 2,301. This number reflects an increase of 247 participants more than were reported in the interim evaluation.
- **Grantees enrolled a diverse group of participants with wide-ranging barriers to employment.** Cohort 1 grantees served individuals across all 20 priority populations identified by the grant, with the largest share (84 percent) being economically disadvantaged individuals. Cohort 1 participants were also diverse in age, gender, and race/ethnicity, with Latinx (43 percent) and Black/African American (27 percent) individuals comprising the majority.
- **Cohort 1 participants received wide-ranging services.** Most Cohort 1 participants (82 percent) received some form of basic career services or individualized career services (69 percent), while 42 percent received training services and 35 percent received supportive services. This represented only a slight shift from what was reported in the interim report.
- **Sixty-two percent of Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants were co-enrolled in one or more workforce system programs,** an indicator of partnership strength between CBOs and local WDBs. More specifically, 41 percent of Cohort 1 participants were co-enrolled in WP and 35 percent were co-enrolled in one or more of the WIOA Title I programs (both either alone or with other programs).

A. Program Enrollment

The 26 Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 programs exceeded their collective enrollment goals and enrolled demographically diverse individuals as described below.

1. Enrollment

From April 2020 to March 2022, Cohort 1 grantees enrolled 2,757 participants. This number surpassed their collective enrollment goal of 2,301 participants and represents a small increase over the 2,510 participants reported in the interim report. As shown in Exhibit II-1, enrollment started modestly in mid-2020, jumped substantially in mid-2020, generally increased through 2021, and dropped off in early 2022 as the end of funding approached.

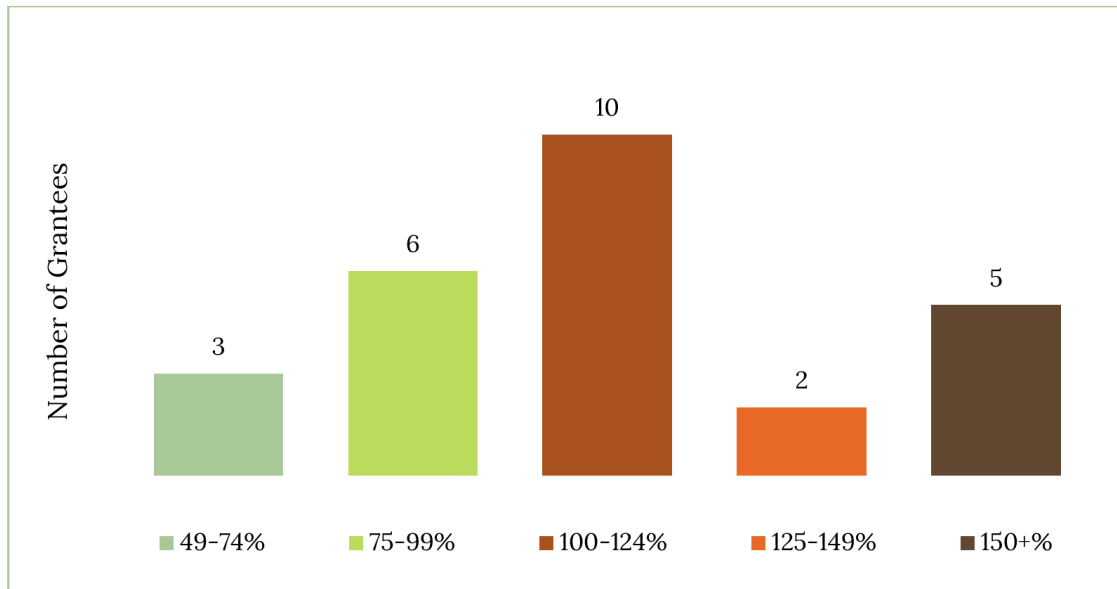


Source: Detailed Services dataset

Note: The dataset includes 2,757 participants.

While Cohort 1 grantees collectively exceeded their enrollment goal, the extent to which individual grantees met their enrollment goals varied. As shown in Exhibit II-2, 17 Cohort 1 grantees exceeded their individual enrollment goals, with five of these exceeding their goals by 150 percent or more, while only nine Cohort 1 grantees (fewer than previously reported in the interim report) were still unable to achieve their enrollment goals. These results are quite different from what was reported in the interim report at which point only 12 grantees had met or exceeded their enrollment goals. That report, based on grantee survey and interview data analysis, suggested that enrollment challenges may have stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted staffing and limited in-person engagement for these community-based programs.

Exhibit II-2: Number of Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 Grantees in Groups Defined by the Percentage of Actual to Planned Enrollment



Source: Detailed Services dataset

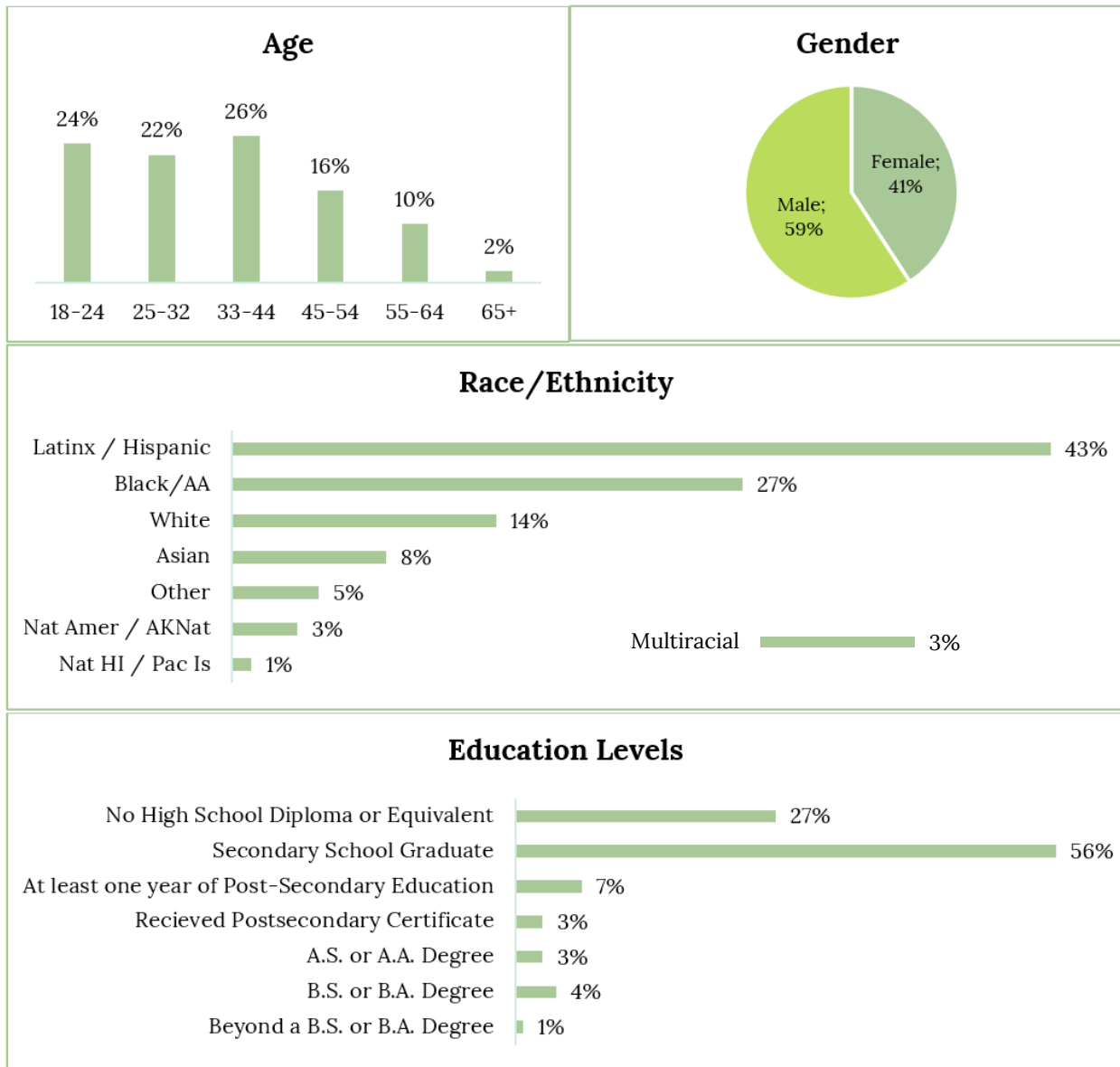
Note: The dataset includes 2,757 participants. The exhibit shows the number of grantees falling into different bands representing the percentage of each grantee’s enrollment goal.

2. Participant Demographics

Cohort 1 grantees enrolled a diverse group of individuals into their programs, many of whom faced significant barriers to employment, consistent with the initiative’s focus and with what was presented in the interim report (see Exhibit II-3).

- Age Distribution:** Cohort 1 participants ranged widely in age and were evenly distributed across all ages served. While the largest share (26 percent) were ages 33 to 44, 24 percent were ages 18 to 24 and 22 percent were ages 25 to 32. Older participants were less represented, with just 10 percent ages 55 to 64 and only 2 percent ages 65 and older. This decline in participants in the older age ranges makes sense given the program’s focus on employment.
- Gender Representation:** The majority of Cohort 1 participants identified as male (59 percent) while 41 percent identified as female.

Exhibit II-3: Cohort 1 Participant Demographics



Source: Detailed Services dataset

Note: Age: N=2,755; two individuals were under 18 and were excluded from the exhibit. Gender: N=2,757. Race: N=2,522; the multiracial category is tabulated independent of the other race/ethnicity categories. Education: N=2,752. Any values less than 2,757 indicate no response within the dataset for that number of participants for that demographic category.

- Race/Ethnicity:** Latinx/Hispanic individuals comprised the largest racial or ethnic group (43 percent), followed by Black/African American participants (27 percent). Smaller proportions included White (14 percent), Asian (8 percent), and other racial/ethnic groups. Native American/Alaska Native and

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander individuals made up 3 percent and 1 percent of Cohort 1 participants, respectively.

- **Education:** Most Cohort 1 participants were at least high school graduates or the equivalent (56 percent) while slightly over a quarter (27 percent) had not completed high school, and small portion had more than a high school education.

As shown in Exhibit II-4, and similar to the findings shared in the evaluation's interim report, the initiative successfully enrolled participants in all 20 priority population groups identified by the grant, demonstrating effective outreach and enrollment strategies.⁴ Most Cohort 1 grantees served multiple priority populations, with grantees serving about three of these populations on average and up to approximately seven. Furthermore, most (2,068) participants were identified as belonging to more than one priority population. However, most participants were members of just a few priority groups (most notable economically disadvantaged individuals) and that most Cohort 1 grantees also served those same populations.

⁴ The initiative initially included one additional priority population referred to as "any other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment." However, while one grantee planned to serve this group, this population was not further defined or tracked by the initiative.

Exhibit II-4: Number and Percentage of Participants Enrolled by Priority Population

Priority Populations	Number of Grantees Serving	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Economically disadvantaged individuals	26	2,316	84%
Displaced workers/long-term unemployed	25	1,106	40%
Ex-offenders	21	965	35%
Homeless individuals	24	715	26%
English language learners [†]	N/A	654	24%
Individuals over 50 years of age	23	508	18%
Disconnected youth ^{**}	N/A	427	16%
Individuals with disabilities	26	311	11%
Under skilled, low-wage workers ^{***}	N/A	266	10%
Immigrants	10	226	8%
Single parents (include single, pregnant women)	19	223	8%
CalWORKs participants [†]	N/A	106	4%
Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians	23	112	4%
Transgender and gender nonconforming individuals	6	62	2%
Migrants or seasonal workers	1	56	2%
Foster youth	8	58	2%
Women seeking nontraditional training/employment	8	45	2%
Returning veterans	13	28	1%
Displaced homemakers	10	18	1%
Individuals exhausted eligibility Part A, Title IV of Social Security Act (TANF)	5	14	.5%

Source: Grantee background documents, Detailed Services dataset and the PIRL dataset

Note: The numbers and percentages are based on 2,757 participants. Percentages in the exhibit total to more than 100 percent since participants could belong to more than one priority population.

[†] The detailed services dataset did not include the information needed to identify participants of this priority population. The study team therefore drew this information from the PIRL dataset for participants present in the detailed service dataset. But it was not possible to identify the number of grantees serving these populations in the PIRL dataset. For additional information on data sources and this process, see Appendix B.

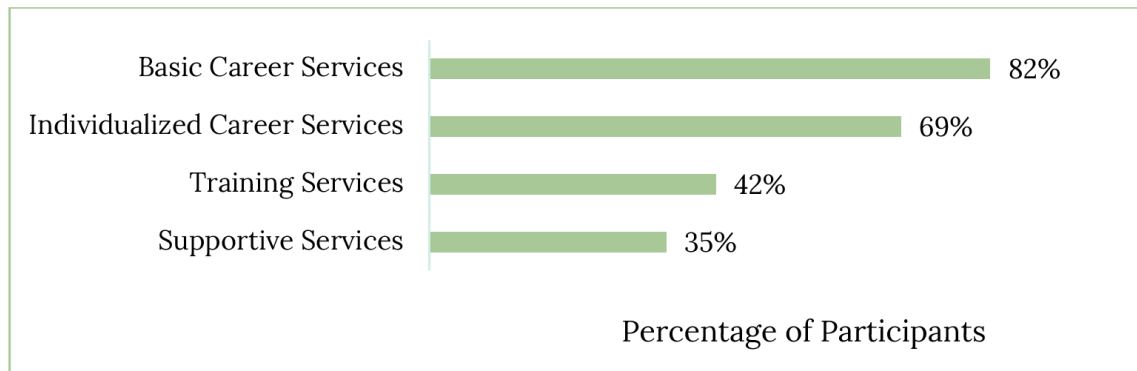
* “Disconnected youth” is not a category in the PIRL dataset. To identify these individuals, the study team, based on guidance from the State Board, identified participants who were ages 16 to 24, unemployed, and out of school at program entry.

** “Under skilled, low-wage workers” is not a category in the PIRL dataset. To identify these individuals, the study team, based on guidance from the State Board, identified participants who were shown in the data to be both employed and low-income at program entry.

B. Program Services

Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 grantees delivered multiple types of services to participants. As shown in Exhibit II-5, basic career services (82 percent of participants) and individualized career services (69 percent) were the most common services, followed by training services (42 percent) and supportive services (35 percent). These percentages are only slightly different from those in the interim report.

Exhibit II-5: Percentage of Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 Participants Receiving Different Types of Services



Source: Detailed Services dataset

Note: The dataset includes 2,757 participants. Percentages in the exhibit total to more than 100 percent since participants could receive more than one type of service. Not shown are 6 percent of participants who received youth services.

1. Basic and Individualized Career Services

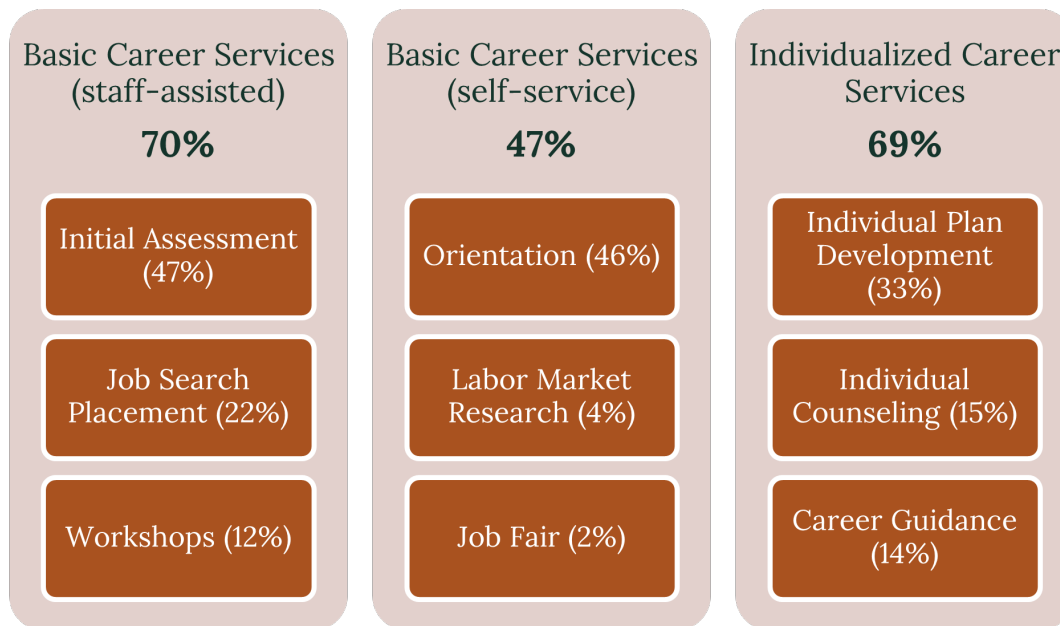
Cohort 1 participants received three types of basic and individualized career services. As shown in Exhibit II-6, more than two-thirds of participants received basic career services with assistance from staff members (70 percent), nearly half received self-service (self-guided) basic career services (47 percent),⁵ and about 69 percent of participants received an individualized career service that involved more intensive assistance from a staff member (see Exhibit II-6).

⁵ These two groups are overlapping, and together 84 percent of Cohort 1 participants received some form of basic career services, as indicated in Exhibit II-5.

In terms of the specific services Cohort 1 participants received in each of these categories, the three most common staff-assisted basic *career services* included:⁶

- an *initial assessment* whereby staff assessed a participant's skill level, aptitude, interests, and needs (47 percent);
- *job search and placement assistance* in which staff provided participants with help searching for employment, including providing information on in-demand careers (22 percent); and
- *workshops* where staff provided group instruction on skills related to finding and keeping employment, such as interviewing skills (12 percent).

Exhibit II-6: The Most Common Types of Career Services Received by Cohort 1 Participants



Source: Detailed services dataset

Note: The dataset includes 2,757 participants. Percentages in the exhibit are derived from the total population. For example, 48 percent (1,335) of the 2,757 participants in the dataset received an initial assessment.

As for self-service basic *career services*, the most common services consisted of:⁷

⁶ Additional staff-assisted basic career services received included: resume prep, job referral services, proficiency testing, referrals, job search workshops, job development services, placement in training services, resume writing, and 11 other services where 10 or fewer people (effectively zero percent) received them.

⁷ Additional self-service basic career services that fewer than one percent of participants received included: access to a resource room, information on training providers, weblinks to job referrals and unemployment compensation information.

- attending a group *orientation* during which a participant learned about available services (46 percent);
- sharing of *labor market information* (4 percent); and
- providing information about an approaching *job fair* (2 percent).

The three most common *individualized career services* were:⁸

- the *development of an individual employment plan or individual service strategy* whereby a staff member and a participant jointly identified and created a strategy for achieving the participant's educational and employment-related goals, including appropriate services;
- *individual counseling* in which staff provided one-on-one counseling related to finding and maintaining employment to a participant; and
- *career guidance* where staff provided advice to a participant to assist them in making occupational or career decisions.

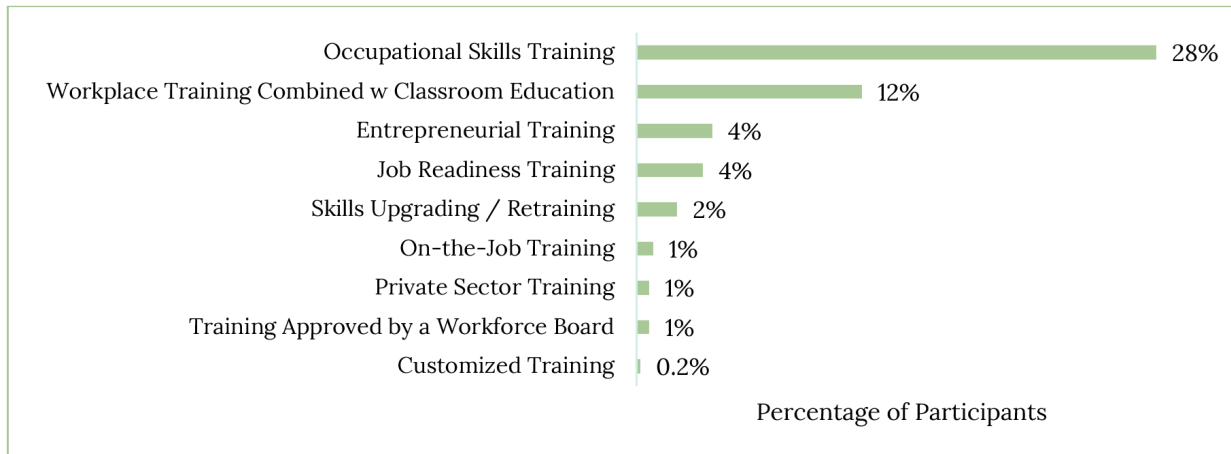
Within each of these categories, it is notable that one service was much more commonly received than all of the others (by one-third to one-half of participants). These results were very similar to what was described in the interim report.

2. Training Services

As noted above, 42 percent of Cohort 1 participants received at least one type of training service. As shown in Exhibit II-7, occupational skills training was the most commonly received type of training (28 percent) followed by workplace training combined with classroom education (12 percent). Only a small percentage of participants received other types of training services. As with other services data, these results are very similar to what was presented in the interim report.

⁸ Additional individualized career services that 12 percent or fewer participants received included short-term prevocational services, mentoring, assessments, work experience, English language learner services, transitional employment, financial literacy, GED prep, pre-apprenticeship training, and others.

Exhibit II-7: The Percentage of Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 Participants Receiving Different Types of Training Services



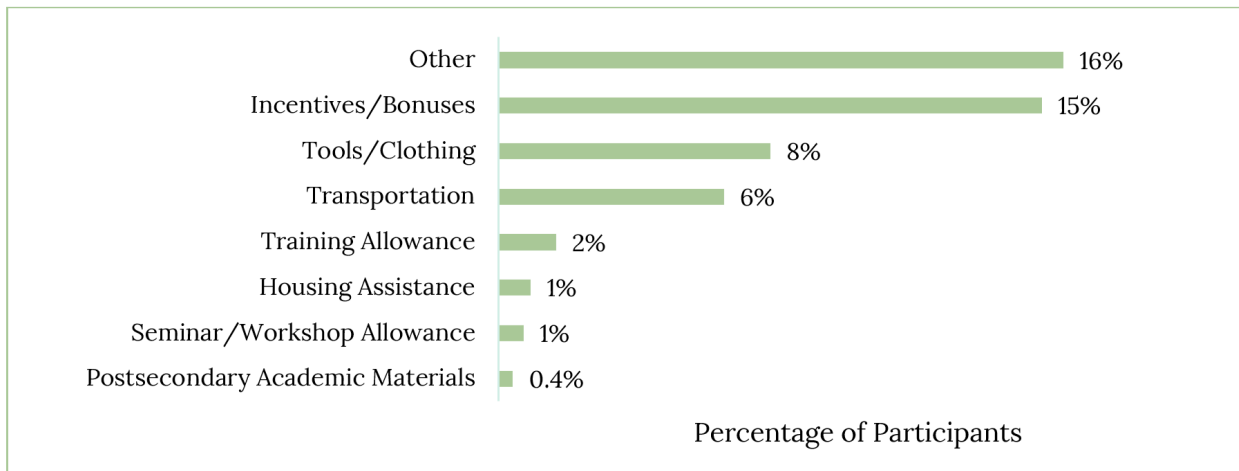
Source: Detailed Services dataset

Note: This dataset includes 2,757 participants. Percentages in the exhibit total to more than 42 percent since participants could receive more than one type of training service.

3. Supportive Services

Overall, 35 percent of Cohort 1 participants also received some type of supportive service. As shown in Exhibit II-8, the most commonly received supportive services were categorized as “other” (16 percent) and “incentives/bonuses” (15 percent), suggesting that many programs opted for flexible or motivational supports tailored to participants’ individual needs. Tools/clothing (8 percent) and transportation (6 percent) were also among the more frequently provided supportive services, which indicates a focus on helping participants overcome logistical barriers to participation. Other services were provided much less frequently. The percentage of participants receiving these supportive services was the same or higher than indicated in the interim report.

Exhibit II-8: Percentages of Cohort 1 Participants Receiving Different Types of Supportive Services



Source: Detailed Services dataset

Note: This dataset includes 2,757 participants. Percentages in the exhibit total to more than 35 percent since participants could receive more than one type of training service. Breaking Barriers programs provided other supportive services (not shown) to fewer than 1 percent of participants.

C. Co-enrollment of Cohort 1 in Other Workforce Programs

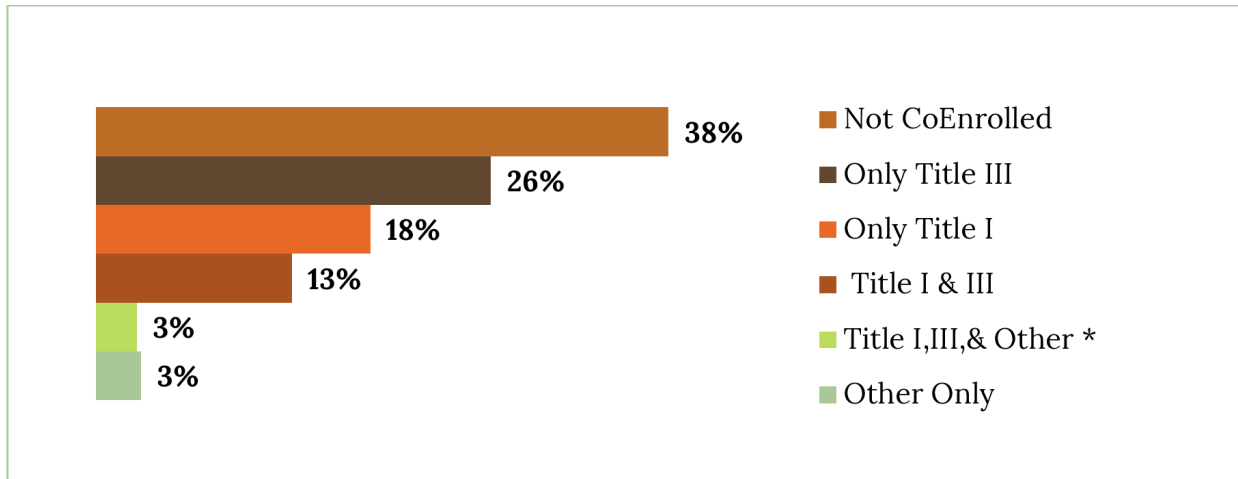
Co-enrollment of Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants in workforce system programs, while not required by the initiative, was encouraged and viewed as a possible measurement of the strength of the partnerships that existed between CBOs and LWDB partners. Furthermore, at the state level, co-enrollment approaches are highly encouraged by the California Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan (2024) because they can widen participants’ access to services. There can also be other organizational benefits to co-enrollment, such as helping service provider agencies maximize their resources, enabling greater efficiencies in service delivery, and encouraging more intentional coordination of services (California Workforce Development Board, 2024).

According to the PIRL dataset, sixty-two percent of Cohort 1 participants were co-enrolled in one or more workforce system programs. As shown in Exhibit II-9: about one quarter were enrolled in the WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Services program alone; nearly one-fifth were co-enrolled in one or more of the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth programs alone; and 13 percent were co-enrolled in both Title I and III programs. A small portion were also co-enrolled in “other” programs, including: Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs; the National Farmworkers Job Program; Veterans programs;

Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation; Vocational Education programs; YouthBuild; and the National Dislocated Worker Grants. A small portion were also co-enrolled in some combination of Title I and these “other” programs, Title III and other programs, or all three sets of programs. Not shown in the exhibit is that, collectively, 41 percent of Cohort 1 participants were co-enrolled in WP programs (either alone or in some combination with Title I and other programs) and 35 percent were co-enrolled in one or more of the WIOA Title I programs (either alone or in some combination with WP or other programs).⁹ Overall, these patterns of co-enrollment show a strong connection between Breaking Barriers and other workforce system programs that provided Cohort 1 participants with access to services to which they might not have otherwise had access.

⁹ These rates of co-enrollment are notably different than what was in the interim report (Geckeler et al., 2022). That report listed the interim co-enrollment rates in Title I programs as 13 percent and with the Title III WP program as 2 percent. The PIRL file used in this report represents California’s final measurement of co-enrollment for Breaking Barriers participants.

Exhibit II-9: Percentages of Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 Participants Co-Enrolled in WIOA Title I, Title III, and Other Workforce System Programs



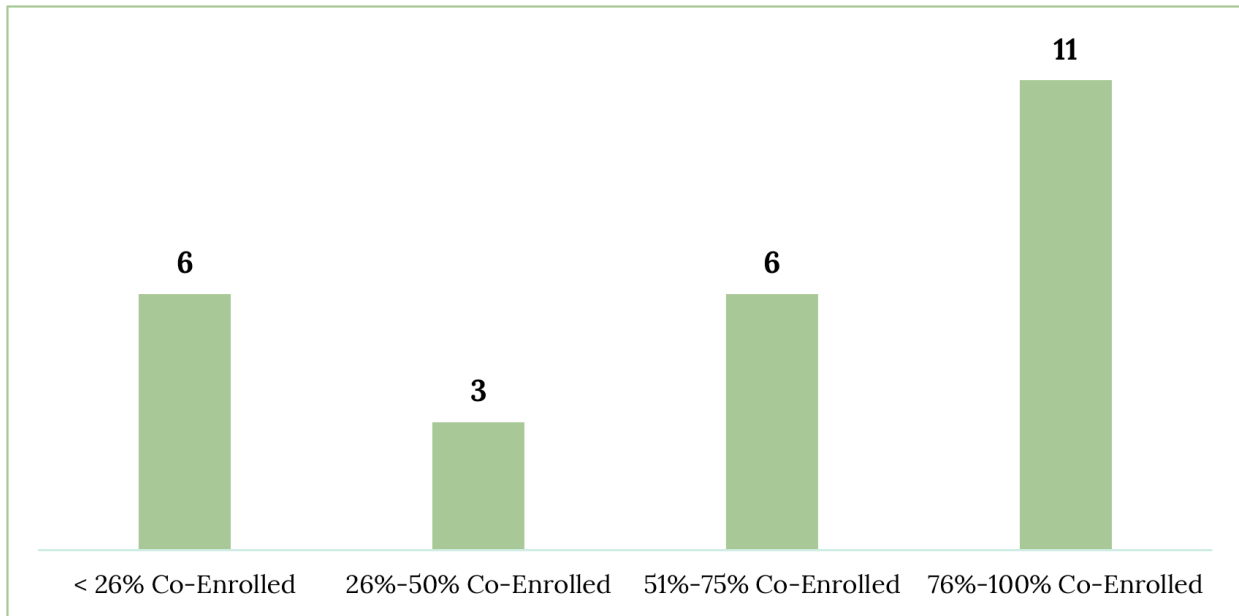
Source: PIRL dataset

Note: Data include 2,721 Cohort 1 participants, and counts are mutually exclusive. “Other” co-enrollment programs include: Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs, the National Farmworkers Job Program, Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation programs, Vocational Education, YouthBuild, and National Dislocated Worker Grants.

*This category shows the percentage of Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants co-enrolled in some combination of Title I, Title III, and other programs, Title III and other programs, or all three sets of programs.

These rates of co-enrollment among Cohort 1 participants varied by grantee. As shown in Exhibit II-10, a majority of Cohort 1 grantees (17 out of 26) co-enrolled over 50 percent of their Breaking Barriers participants in other workforce system programs, with 11 grantees co-enrolling more than 75 percent of their participants in these programs. However, nine grantees co-enrolled fewer than half of their participants, with six of these co-enrolling fewer than 25 percent. This information is important because if policymakers and practitioners want to encourage co-enrollment for programs like Breaking Barriers, it may be important to identify grantees with lower rates of co-enrollment and to focus support on them.

Exhibit II-10: Co-Enrollment Levels Among Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 Grantees



Source: PIRL dataset

Note: Data includes 2,721 Cohort 1 participants. Co-enrollment includes enrollment in both Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 and some combination of Title I, Title III, and “other” workforce programs, including Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs, the National Farmworkers Job Program, Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation programs, Vocational Education, YouthBuild, and National Dislocated Worker Grants.

III. Participant Outcomes and Program Impacts

This chapter describes the outcomes of Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants and the estimated impact the program had on their employment and earnings. The chapter first describes the study team's approach for using a difference-in-difference, quasi-experimental design to assess impact. It then describes the results of that analysis. Finally, it presents the results of subgroup analyses designed to test the sensitivity of the main findings and to explore impacts across different demographic groups. Further information on the data and methodology not covered in the chapter are found in Appendix B.

Key Findings

- **Breaking Barriers had sizeable, positive impacts on employment for Cohort 1 participants.** The study estimated that Breaking Barriers had a 12.8 percentage point impact on employment for Cohort 1 participants in the second quarter after exit when comparing their pre-post differences to those of a comparison group of Wagner-Peyser (WP) program participants. These positive impacts on employment also persisted into the fourth quarter after exit with a 10.2 percentage point difference.
- **Breaking Barriers also had sizeable, positive impacts on participants' earnings.** Cohort 1 participants earned \$1,662, on average, more than what would have been expected in the absence of the program in the second quarter after exit (51 percent increase) and \$1,628 (49 percent increase) in the fourth quarter after exit, demonstrating sustained economic benefits from program participation.
- **Impacts were observed across various subgroups.** Breaking Barriers had positive impacts on employment and earnings in the second and fourth quarters after exit for Cohort 1 participants who were not co-enrolled in WP. This finding suggests that Breaking Barriers was successful in serving individuals with barriers to employment since this subgroup had more barriers on average (3 barriers) than participants who were co-enrolled in WP (2.6 barriers). The study team also estimated impacts on employment and earnings across several demographic subgroups mostly within the second quarter after exit.

A. Impact Study Groups and Analytic Approach

To estimate the impact Breaking Barriers had on Cohort 1 participants' employment and earnings, the study team needed to identify a suitable group of individuals (i.e., a comparison group) for whom data were available and with whom outcomes of Cohort 1 participants (the program group) could be compared. The WIOA Title III

Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Services program—which provides job seekers with access to a variety of career services, including labor exchange services, job search assistance, information, and referrals to employment—appeared suitable in this regard. Because WP provides universal access to workforce system services to all job seekers, it is a widely available alternative that Breaking Barriers participants would have had access to if not for the Breaking Barriers program. Furthermore, data for WP is captured within the PIRL, as it is for Breaking Barriers, meaning that data on the same performance measures are available for both groups and those measures are calculated in the same way. For these reasons, the study team made the decision to select a comparison group for use in estimating program impacts from the WP program.

1. Selecting the Comparison Group

Within California, approximately 137,000 people are served by the WP program annually (U.S. Department of Labor, 2023). However, WP program participants are different from Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants in various ways. To develop a comparison group that was similar to Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants (i.e., the program group), the study team narrowed the pool of California WP participants in three ways.

First, the study team identified WP participants who enrolled during the same timeframe as Cohort 1 participants. Doing so helped to ensure that both program and comparison groups were facing similar labor market, policy changes, and historical events (i.e., COVID-19 was an event during this time frame) that could influence employment and earnings. The study team also used employment and earnings data from the three quarters prior to program participation for both groups of participants, which was essential to assessing program and comparison group trends before participation.

Second, the study team narrowed the comparison group by location, selecting WP participants from the same 16 local WDBs affiliated with the Cohort 1 grantees (see Appendix A for a list of grantees and their local WDBs). Restricting WP participants to these local WDBs increased the likelihood that program and comparison group members all faced similar local labor markets, economic conditions, employer networks, and seasonal employment patterns, and received services from the same administrative systems. Without geographic selection, observed differences in

employment or earnings outcomes could reflect stronger local economies or better-functioning labor markets rather than the effectiveness of program services.

Third, the study team restricted the WP comparison group to participants who had at least one barrier to employment.¹⁰ Doing so increased the demographic and circumstantial similarity between the program and comparison groups, contributing to the development of a more realistic counterfactual better mirroring what would have happened to Breaking Barriers participants with barriers if they had not participated in the Breaking Barriers program.

However, after taking these steps to define a comparison group among WP participants, the study team found that the program and comparison groups still differed significantly from one another in demographic characteristics and numbers and types of barriers to employment. For example, as shown in Exhibit III-1, program group members had more barriers, on average, than WP comparison group members (2.9 vs. 2.6). Although some barriers were more prevalent in the comparison group (e. g., disability, limited English, veteran status), the program group members were much more likely to be justice-involved (35 vs. 3.8 percent), to have experienced homelessness (25.9 vs. 18.5 percent), have low incomes (84 vs. 76.6 percent), and be unemployed long-term (40.1 vs. 20.2 percent).¹¹

¹⁰ For employment barriers at program entry, the study team used the standardized data elements from US DOL PIRL (ETA 9172). These include individuals with a disability, foster care youth status, veteran status, homeless participants, ex-offender status, low-income status at program entry, English Language Learner Status, Basic skills deficiency, cultural barriers, single parenthood, receiving Supplemental Security Income, long-term unemployed, and displaced homemakers.

¹¹ The study team decided not to use a higher number of barriers for selection because that would have further reduced the sample. For example, choosing two barriers as a threshold would have reduced the size of the comparison group by approximately 3,000 cases.

Exhibit III-1: Comparison of Demographic Characteristics and Barriers to Employment Between Program and Comparison Groups

	Program Group (N=2,757)	Comparison Group (N=5,170)	Difference
Demographic Characteristics			
Female (%)	40.5	45.3	-4.8 ***
Average age	36.6	45.6	-9.6 ***
Race/Ethnicity (%)			
Asian	7.8	7.7	0.1
Black/African American	26.5	12.1	14.4 ***
White	13.7	15.2	-1.5
Hispanic	42.5	61.1	-18.6 ***
Barriers to Employment (%)			
Individual with a disability	11.4	30.5	-19.1 ***
Veteran	0.9	14.3	-13.4 ***
Foster care youth	2.1	0.4	1.7
Homeless participant	25.9	18.5	7.4 ***
Ex-offender status	35	3.8	31.2 ***
Low-income status at entry	84	76.6	7.4 ***
English language learner	23.7	34.0	-10.3 ***
Basic skills deficient	39.4	35.4	4.0 ***
Cultural barriers	12.3	31.5	-19.2 ***
Single parent	8.1	8.7	-0.6
Supplemental Security Income	3.9	5.8	-1.9 ***
Long-term unemployed	40.1	20.2	19.9 ***
Displaced homemaker	0.7	0.5	0.2
Average Number of Barriers (+)	2.9	2.6	0.3 ***

Source: PIRL dataset, WP publicly available data.

Note: (+) The average number of barriers was calculated by adding one for each of the following barriers captured at program entry divided by the total: individual with a disability, foster care youth status, veteran status, homeless participant, ex-offender status, low income status at program entry, English Language Learner Status, Basic skills deficient, cultural barriers, single parenthood, receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI), long term unemployed, displaced homemaker.

*/**/** indicate the difference between the program and comparison groups is statistically significant at the .10/.05/.01 level.

2. Analytic Approach

The significant differences in demographic characteristics and barriers to employment between the program and comparison groups, as indicated in Exhibit

III-1, had important implications for the analytic approach used in the impact analysis. The study team originally planned to use traditional matching methods, such as propensity score matching or inverse probability weighting, to estimate the program's impact. However, these designs were not feasible due to the poor overlap between program and comparison groups.¹²

In response, the study team employed a difference-in-differences approach (DiD), which compares the average pre-post change in outcomes for the program group with the average pre-post change in outcomes for the comparison group, provided the two groups have parallel trends in the pre-participation period. In other words, this approach does not require the groups to be similar and leverages the longitudinal nature of the available data (for each participant, employment and earnings data are known for three quarters before participation and up to four quarters after exit) to estimate the impact (Card & Krueger, 1994). If participating in Breaking Barriers did not have an impact, then post-program outcomes in both groups should diverge from their baseline value by the same amount (even though the baseline values may be different). If, on the other hand, the program group gains more compared to its pre-intervention trend than the comparison group does, it provides evidence that the program had a positive impact.

Because some of the pre-participation trends in employment and earnings between program and comparison group members were not exactly parallel, our estimates took this into account by explicitly modeling the pre-participation trends (See Appendix B for the unadjusted pre-participation and post-program outcomes for the program and comparison groups). Therefore, our models measure the differences between post-exit outcomes and pre-participation trends, providing more valid estimates.

¹² The regression specification includes individual fixed effects (α_i) that control for all time-invariant characteristics of participants, whether observed or unobserved, by comparing each individual's outcomes to their own baseline performance over time. This fixed effects approach eliminates potential bias from stable participant characteristics such as education level, motivation, or other personal attributes, allowing the authors to isolate the causal effect of the Breaking Barriers program while accounting for all unchanging individual-level confounders.

B. Primary Impact Analysis

For the primary impact analysis, the study team selected employment in the second and fourth quarters after exit and wages in second and fourth quarters after exit¹³ since these outcomes represent important goals for both the WP and Breaking Barriers programs and are outcomes for which the study team had data.¹⁴ While the study team did consider including other outcomes used by WIOA to measure program performance such as credential attainment rates and measurable skill gains indicators (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022), the team decided not to include them because these measures are not calculated for the WP program since it does not directly fund education nor training activities. In addition, very few Breaking Barriers participants participated in education or training programs that could lead to what is counted as a credential by these WIOA measures because Breaking Barriers programs did not offer such programs (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2020, TEN 25-19).

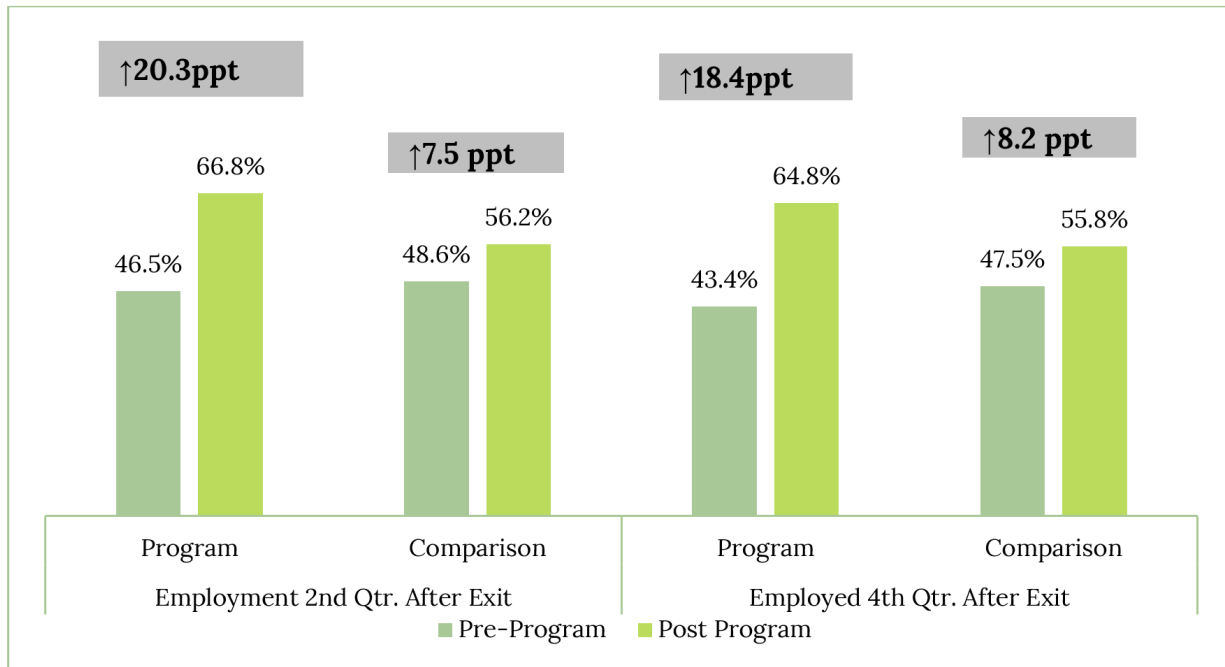
1. Impacts on Employment

Participation in Breaking Barriers resulted in greater increases in post-program employment (in both the second and fourth quarters after program exit) than were observed for the comparison group (see Exhibit III-2). Program group members experienced a regression-adjusted 20.3 percentage point increase in employment in the second quarter after exit (from 46.5 to 66.8 percent) as compared to a 7.5 percentage point increase for the comparison group. In other words, the program group's change in employment was nearly 13 percentage points higher than would have been expected if the program group members had not participated in the program. This statistically significant difference strongly suggests that the services provided by Breaking Barriers programs were effective at helping participants find employment. These positive impacts also persisted through the fourth quarter after exit, declining only slightly to 10.2 percentage points.

¹³ All participants of WIOA-funded programs, such as WP, without an active service for 90 days must be exited. This means participants are automatically transitioned out of the program after 90 days of no active participation. The same process for exit was also applied to Breaking Barriers participants.

¹⁴ Wage data need to be matched to program data and there can be up to two quarters lag in the availability of these data. Given that the Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 program ended in March 2022 and that the vast majority of participants (99 percent) exited by that time, nearly all Cohort 1 participants had wage data in their fourth quarters after program exit.

Exhibit III-2: Impact of Breaking Barriers on Employment for Program and Comparison Group Members in the second and fourth Quarters After Program Exit



		Pre-Program Participation	Post-Program Participation	Diff.	Impact (DiD)	p-value
Employment Second Qtr. After Exit	Program	46.5%	66.8%	20.3%	12.8%	0.000***
	Comparison	48.6%	56.2%	7.5%		
Employment Fourth Qtr. After Exit	Program	43.4%	64.8%	18.4%	10.2%	0.007**
	Comparison	47.5%	55.8%	8.2%		

Source: PIRL dataset, WP publicly available data.

Note: Sample sizes are 2,757 for the program group and 5,170 for the comparison group.

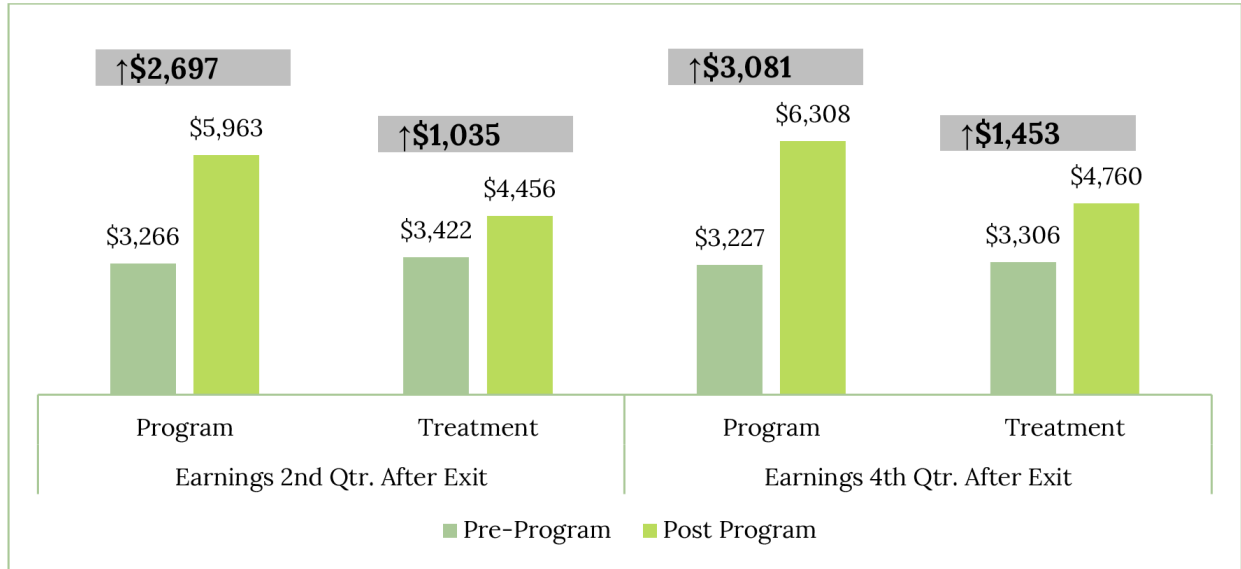
*/**/** indicates the difference between the program and comparison groups is statistically significant at the .10/.05/.01 level.

2. Impacts on Earnings

The estimated impacts of Breaking Barriers on participants’ earnings were also positive and statistically significant in both the second and fourth quarters after exit. As Exhibit III-3 shows, program group members gained \$2,697 in income, on average, during the second quarter after exit as compared to an increase of \$1,035, on average, for comparison group members, resulting in a positive impact of \$1,662 (or a 51 percent increase compared to what would be expected in the absence of

participation). As with employment, this impact persisted into the fourth quarter after exit, when Breaking Barriers participants also experienced a greater increase in earnings than comparison group members, a positive impact of \$1,628.

Exhibit III-3: Impact of Breaking Barriers on Earnings for Program and Comparison Group Members in the Second and Fourth Quarters After Program Exit



		Pre-Program Participation	Post-Program Participation	Diff.	Impact (DiD)	p-value
Earnings Second Qtr. After Exit	Program	\$3,266	\$5,963	\$2,697	\$1,662	0.000***
	Comparison	\$3,422	\$4,456	\$1,035		
Earnings Fourth Qtr. After Exit	Program	\$3,227	\$6,308	\$3,081	\$1,628	0.000***
	Comparison	\$3,306	\$4,760	\$1,453		

Source: PIRL dataset, ES publicly available data.

Note: Sample sizes are 2,757 for the program group and 5,170 for the comparison group.

*/**/** indicates the difference between the program and control groups is statistically significant at the .10/.05/.01 level.

C. Secondary Analyses

In addition to estimating the impacts of Breaking Barriers on all Cohort 1 program participants’ employment and earnings, the study team estimated the impacts of

Breaking Barriers on employment and earnings for both Cohort 1 participants who were not co-enrolled in WP, and for all demographic subgroups.

1. Impact Analysis for Program Group Members Not Co-Enrolled in WP

As discussed in Chapter II, many Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants were co-enrolled in other workforce system programs, including WP, as the program was aimed at increasing these individuals' connections to the larger workforce system. However, this co-enrollment, especially in WP, created a potential issue for the impact analysis. Due to the study team's inability to remove Cohort 1 participants who were co-enrolled in WP from the comparison group, some co-enrolled Breaking Barriers participants may have been compared to themselves.¹⁵ While the use of DiD for the impact analysis should have mitigated this potentially confounding factor, the study team wanted to conduct an additional analysis to explore the extent to which this issue might affect the evaluation's impact findings.

To begin this additional analysis, the study team first identified the 1,328 Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants who were not co-enrolled in WP (either in services or as reportable individuals) and removed them from the program group, thus creating a separate "treatment" group.¹⁶ As shown in Exhibit III-4, these two subgroups of Cohort 1 participants (those co-enrolled in WP and those not co-enrolled) were significantly different from each other. Cohort 1 participants who were not co-enrolled in WP had more barriers to employment (three barriers compared to 2.6 barriers), on average, than those who were co-enrolled, and the two groups were different across all demographic categories. This is interesting since it suggests that there may be mechanisms of selection or self-selection whereby participants with more barriers are less likely to be co-enrolled in WP.

¹⁵ The study team explored several approaches for removing Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 participants who were co-enrolled in WP from the comparison group with the Employment Development Department. Unfortunately, it was not possible to implement these approaches.

¹⁶ Cohort 1 participants who were reportable individuals (277) in WP (not counted earlier reported co-enrollment numbers/percentages) were nevertheless excluded from this new subgroup since they are individuals who had the intention to enroll, used self-services, or received information, and met the reporting criteria for WP. Thus, they were different than participants who did not have exposure to WP services during the grant period.

Exhibit III-4: Comparison of Demographic Characteristics and Barriers to Employment Between Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 Participants Who Co-Enrolled in WP and Those Who Did Not

	Cohort 1 Participants not Co-Enrolled in WP (N=1,328)	Cohort 1 Participants Co-Enrolled in WP (N=1,393)	Difference
Demographic Characteristics			
Female (%)	35.2	49.3	-14.1 ***
Average age	35.1	38.4	-3.3 ***
Race/Ethnicity (%)			
Asian	3.5	16.4	-13.0 ***
Black/African American	30.8	21.7	9.2 ***
White	17.9	12.5	5.5 ***
Hispanic	41.1	44.4	-3.3 ***
Barriers to Employment (%)			
Disability	17.7	5.7	12.0 ***
Veteran	1.0	0.9	0.1 ***
Foster	0.31	0.55	-0.2 ***
Homeless	26.0	26.6	-0.6 ***
Ex-Offender	45.9	21.6	24.4 ***
Low Income	89.3	78.8	10.5 ***
Limited English	21.1	28.0	-7.0 ***
Basic Skills Deficient	41.5	36.5	4.9 ***
Cultural Barriers	12.9	11.8	1.1
Single Parent	7.2	8.4	1.2
Supplemental Security Income	4.6	3.2	1.4 *
Long-term Unemployed	39.1	41.6	-2.5
Displaced Homemaker	.9	.5	.4
Average Number of Barriers (+)	3.0	2.6	-0.4 ***

Source: PIRL dataset and WP publicly available data.

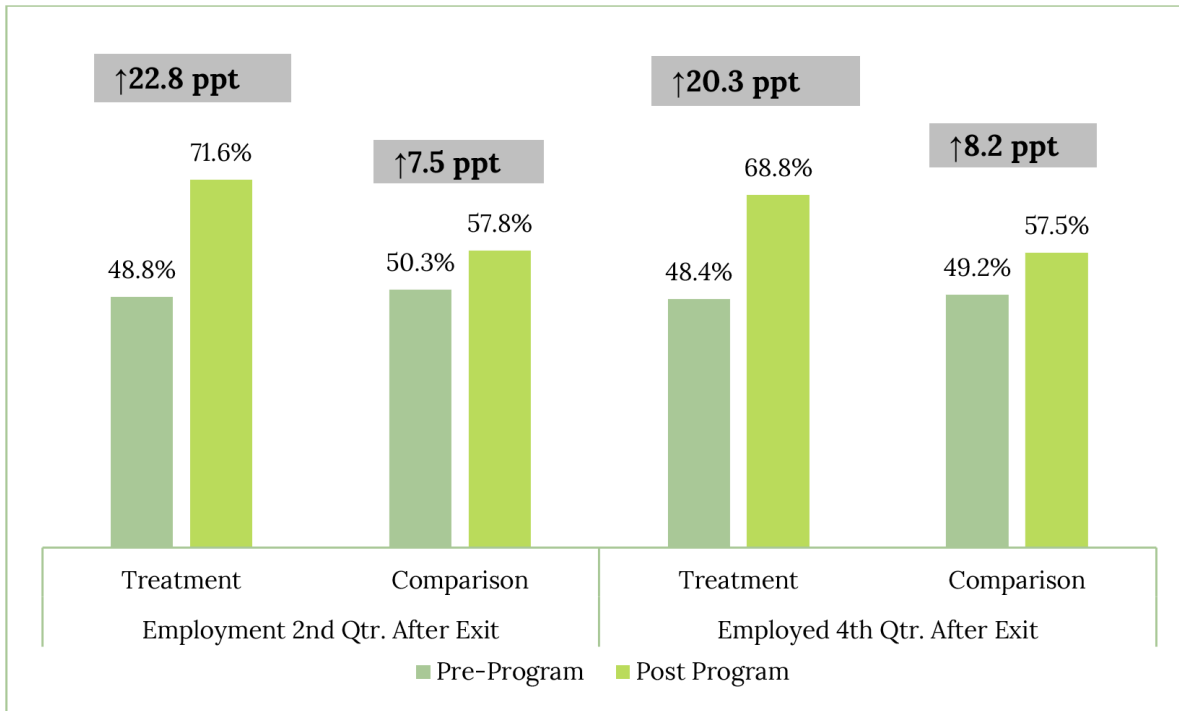
Note: (+) The average number of barriers was calculated by adding one for each of the following barriers captured at program entry: individual with a disability, veteran status, foster care youth status, homeless participant, ex-offender status, low income status at program entry, English language learner status, basic skills deficient, cultural barriers, single parenthood, receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI), long term unemployed, displaced homemaker.

*/**/** indicate the difference between the program and comparison groups is statistically significant at the .10/.05/.01 level.

The study team then estimated the impacts of Breaking Barriers on employment and earnings for this subgroup of Cohort 1 participants who were not co-enrolled

in WP (i.e., the treatment group) and found results similar to the primary analysis (i.e., all participants). Despite the fact that the treatment group was smaller than the overall program group and comprised of participants with more barriers to employment, the analysis still found statistically significant pre-post differences in employment and earnings in both the second and fourth quarters after exit that were larger in magnitude than those observed for the comparison group (see Exhibits III-5 and III-6). The results of this secondary analysis serve as additional evidence for the strength of the primary impact analysis that shows that the Breaking Barriers program was effective in assisting Cohort 1 participants—despite their barriers to employment—with obtaining post-program employment and gains in earnings.

Exhibit III-5: Impact of Breaking Barriers on Employment for Cohort 1 Participants Not Co-enrolled in WP and Comparison Group Members in the Second and Fourth Quarters After Program Exit



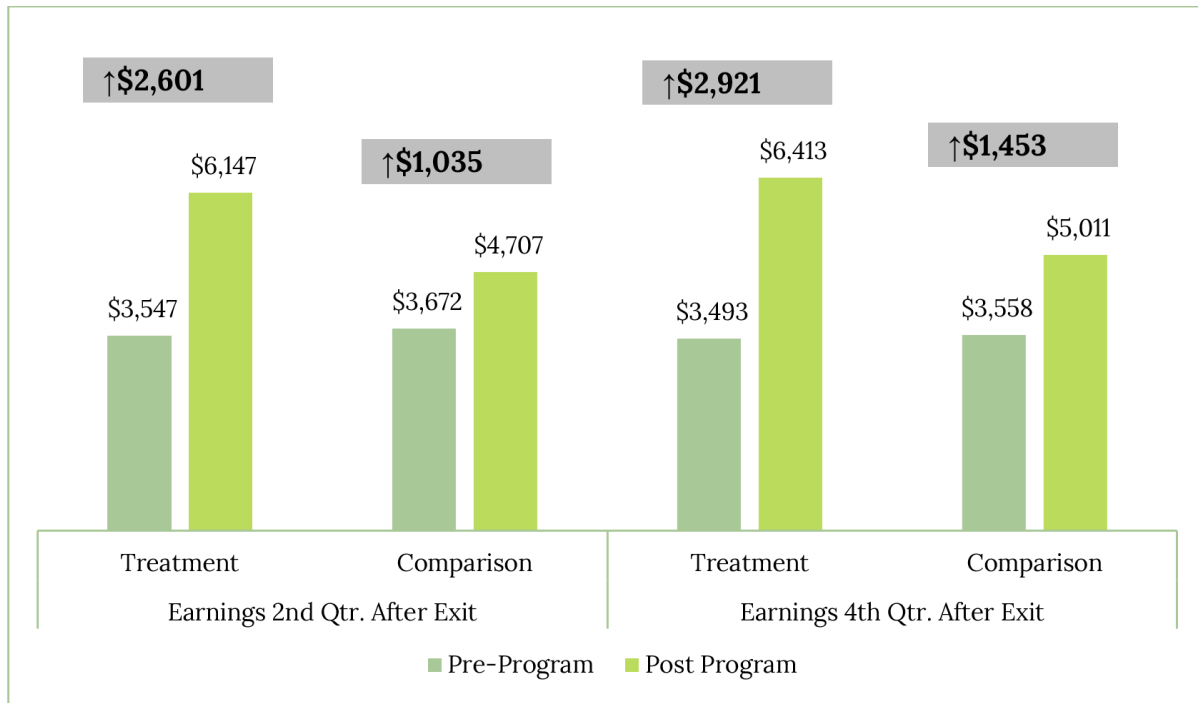
		Pre-Program Participation	Post-Program Participation	Diff.	Impact (DiD)	p-value
Employment Second Qtr. After Exit	Treatment	48.8%	71.6%	22.8%	15.3%	0.000***
	Comparison	50.3%	57.8%	7.5%		
Employment Fourth Qtr. After Exit	Treatment	48.4%	68.8%	20.3%	12.1%	0.026**
	Comparison	49.2%	57.5%	8.2%		

Source: PIRL dataset, WP publicly available data.

Note: Sample sizes are 1,328 for the treatment group and 5,170 for the comparison group.

*/**/** indicates the difference between the program and comparison groups is statistically significant at the .10/.05/.01 level.

Exhibit III-6: Impacts on Earnings for Cohort 1 Participants Not Co-enrolled in WP and Comparison Group Members in the Second and Fourth Quarters After Program Exit



		Pre-Program Participation	Post-Program Participation	Diff.	Impact (DiD)	p-value
Earnings Second Qtr. After Exit	Treatment	\$3,547	\$6,147	\$2,601	\$1,566	0.000***
	Comparison	\$3,672	\$4,707	\$1,035		
Earnings Fourth Qtr. After Exit	Treatment	\$3,493	\$6,413	\$2,921	\$1,467	0.001***
	Comparison	\$3,558	\$5,011	\$1,453		

Source: PIRL dataset, ES publicly available data.

Note: Sample sizes are 1,328 for the treatment group and 5,170 for the comparison group.

*/**/** indicates the difference between the program and control groups is statistically significant at the .10/.05/.01 level.

2. Impact Analysis for Demographic Subgroups

The study team also examined the impacts of the Breaking Barriers program on employment and earnings on several subgroups of Cohort 1 participants, disaggregated by gender, age, and race/ethnicity.¹⁷ The results of these

¹⁷ Note these are the same subgroups for which descriptive statistics are presented in Chapter II.

demographic subgroup analyses were similar to those for the overall impact analysis (detailed results for the demographic subgroup analyses are included in Appendix B). For example, regarding employment, there were statistically significant positive gains and impacts at the second quarter after exit for males, females, and most age groups. However, among program participants of different racial and ethnic groups, there were statistically significant gains and impacts only for Hispanic/Latino participants. By the fourth quarter after exit, only males, those aged 55 and older, and Hispanic/Latinos continued to experience statistically significant positive gains and impacts on employment.

In terms of earnings, most demographic subgroups experienced positive wage gains with statistically significant impacts in the second quarter after exit. Among racial/ethnic groups, only Hispanic/Latino participants exhibited statistically significant gains and impacts. By the fourth quarter after exit only males, those 45 to 55 and those 56 years old and older, and Hispanic/Latinos experienced sustained gains and statistically significant impacts on wages.

An important caveat to this analysis of demographic subgroups is that participant demographic characteristics and employment barriers in some cases appeared to be interconnected and overlapping, making it substantively challenging to cleanly parse out the independent effects of specific barriers on certain demographic groups. When barriers are not randomly distributed across demographic groups—such as justice involved status being more prevalent among African Americans in our sample—any observed differences in outcomes could reflect the compound effects of both the demographic characteristic and the associated barrier, making it impossible to determine whether outcomes are driven by race/ethnicity, criminal justice involvement, or their interaction. This issue is further complicated by the fact that individuals in our sample faced an average of three overlapping barriers, creating complex intersections where, for example, an individual in the treatment group experienced a web of interconnected disadvantages that cannot be neatly separated into discrete, measurable effects. These factors make it difficult to thoroughly explore groupings for which the program may have had stronger or weaker effects.

IV. Discussion and Conclusions

This report presents the findings from an evaluation of the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative, including how the 26 Cohort 1 grantees were overall quite effective in achieving the state's goal of helping individuals with barriers to employment find jobs and experience increased earnings after program participation. This closing chapter summarizes these findings and discusses some implications for future workforce system programs and subsequent research, as well as some limitations to these findings.

A. Summary of Findings

Cohort 1 grantees generally achieved their goals when it came to implementing their Breaking Barriers programs. The 26 Cohort 1 programs enrolled 2,757 participants, exceeding their overall enrollment goal of 2,301 participants. Participants across these grantees were demographically diverse and included individuals across the initiative's 20 priority populations, with most participants (2,068) belonging to more than one priority population and most grantees serving three priority populations, on average. Cohort 1 participants also received a wide range of services, with most (82 percent) having received some form of basic career services or individualized career services (69 percent), 42 percent having received training services, and 35 percent having received supportive services. Finally, About 62 percent of Cohort 1 participants were co-enrolled in one or more workforce system program, with 41 percent of Cohort 1 participants having co-enrolled in WP programs (alone or in some combination with other programs) and 35 percent having been co-enrolled in one or more of the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth programs (alone or in combination with some other programs). This means that a considerable number of Cohort 1 participants were getting integrated into the larger workforce services system, thus potentially increasing their access to workforce system services in the future.

Using a difference-in-differences quasi-experimental design, the study team compared Cohort 1 participants with WP participants who enrolled during the same period of time as Cohort 1 participants, in the same geographic areas as Cohort 1 participants, and who had at least one barrier to employment. The overall impacts were positive, substantial, and statistically significant. Cohort 1 participants experienced a 20.3 percentage point increase in employment in the second quarter

after program exit (from 46.5 percent to 66.8 percent), compared to only a 7.5 percentage point increase for the comparison group, resulting in a 12.8 percentage-point impact. By the fourth quarter after exit, the program maintained a meaningful and statistically significant 10.2 percentage point impact on employment. Earnings outcomes showed equally positive results. In the second quarter after exit, treatment group members gained \$1,662 in additional quarterly earnings (a 51 percent increase from baseline), while fourth quarter impacts remained strong at \$1,628 (a 49 percent increase from baseline), demonstrating that the program generated substantial economic benefits for participants.

Finally, the study team showed that these impacts were robust despite potential issues related to the possible inclusion of participants that could be present in both program and comparison groups by developing a subset of the program group of Cohort 1 participants who were not co-enrolled in WP. The impacts on employment and earnings for this subgroup of participants who were not co-enrolled in WP compared to those in the comparison group were similar to those in the primary analysis. Importantly, this subgroup had more barriers than other Cohort 1 participants, suggesting that the program had an impact on even highly barriered individuals who did not benefit from co-enrollment with WP.

B. Limitations of the Impact Findings

There are nevertheless three main limitations to the impact analysis findings that are important to consider. First, the positive impacts observed for Cohort 1 are not necessarily generalizable to grantees in the other two Breaking Barriers cohorts (Cohorts 2a and 2b), some of which are still operating and all of which are being separately evaluated by the study team. This stems from several factors, including: Cohorts 2a and 2b programs differing in meaningful ways (e.g., grant sizes, locations, priority populations, service delivery approaches, etc.) from those of Cohort 1; Cohort 1 beginning at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which represents a very different operational environment with unknown implications; and cohorts 2a and 2b using different data collection and measurement systems than were used for Cohort 1, which limit the full comparability of these different cohorts around things like services received by participants and the priority populations served. While the study team plans to examine the outcomes of these subsequent cohorts, an impact analysis is not possible due to the use of different

data systems and any comparisons of pre-post changes across cohorts may be limited in what information they can yield due to these programmatic differences.

A second potential limitation to this research is that program and comparison group members differed from one another in important ways. For impact analyses, it is ideal if the comparison group is very similar to, or identical to, the program group across many different observable (and unobservable) characteristics. In this case, the program group had significantly more barriers than the comparison group and was different as measured across multiple demographic characteristics. While the DiD design should mitigate this concern as does the study team's additional analysis to remove any overlap of participants between program and comparison groups, this lack of similarity between the comparison and treatment groups is a potential weakness. Future evaluations of individuals with multiple barriers to employment might better control for this by considering other designs, like randomized control trial designs or by considering ways to find more comparable comparison group populations.

Third, it is difficult to establish which Breaking Barriers program components are most associated with changes in participant outcomes or program impacts because of the extreme heterogeneity in program development among grantees. For instance, it is difficult to say whether the positive impacts estimated in this evaluation are due to program providers' existing relationships and levels of trust with the communities they serve, that they work with certain populations vs others, or some particular combination of services that they deliver. To determine these things, the study would have needed to compare one program model to another. However, beyond providing workforce system services to individuals with multiple barriers to employment through a partnership between CBOs and local WDBs, there was not a lot of similarity in the programs operated by Cohort 1 grantees. Instead, Cohort 1 programs could serve from one to 20 different priority populations in any combination, have lead grantees that were LWDBs or CBOs, and offer a wide variety of services. While this lack of uniformity in grantee service delivery models has clearly not limited the overall effectiveness of Cohort 1 programs, it does limit the ability of the study team to understand which service delivery elements drove that effectiveness. To counter this third limitation, as suggested in the Cohort 1 evaluation's interim report, the state may want to consider requiring more uniform program models for future grant programs

(Geckeler et al., 2022). As an alternative approach, the state could ensure that any research conducted on future discretionary grant programs that allow for wide variation in service delivery include is funded at a level that makes possible in-depth qualitative research to try and pinpoint possible associations between program elements and the observed positive outcomes.

C. Implications and Closing Thoughts

The first Cohort of Breaking Barriers grants, which operated from April 2020 to March 2022, presented two substantial new opportunities for California's workforce development system. First, these grants provided an opportunity for LWDBs and workforce development-focused CBOs to better coordinate their services, drawing on each type of organizations' relative strengths, either in managing funding and providing workforce system services or in identifying, enrolling, and supporting individuals with specific and significant barriers to employment. Second, these grants allowed the state's workforce development system to expand its services aimed specifically at helping people with multiple barriers to employment overcome those barriers and find work, improve their earnings, and advance economically. The research presented in this report provides compelling evidence that the Breaking Barriers program has been able to meet its goals and produce real change for people with barriers to employment, thus realizing both of these new opportunities.

Furthermore, while the positive and sizeable impacts estimated in this evaluation of Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 programs are not generalizable to other similar programs, they do suggest the merit in conducting additional research to see if these similar programs, or replicated versions of this program, can provides similar benefits to their participants. This research also suggests that other types of research that further explore different program models and which may incorporate other research designs better able to produce stronger similarities in comparison groups could be valuable for learning more about the merits of this research. This news is highly relevant since the State Board, the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA), and Employment Development Department (EDD), as well as many other public agencies around the country, continue to fund and operate programs that provide workforce system services to people with multiple barriers to employment. Some of these programs include the State Board's two other cohorts of Breaking Barriers grantees, its Prison to Employment program, its

Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment programs, and EDD's Emergency Medical Services Corps training programs.

While this report marks the end of any planned research on Cohort 1, the study team also recently completed an interim evaluation report on the second (Cohort 2a) and third (Cohort 2b Breaking Barriers program cohorts (Folsom et al., 2025) and plans to produce a final evaluation report on these two cohorts in early 2026.

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Appendix A: Additional Information on Cohort 1 Grantees

The following exhibit provides basic information about each of the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative Cohort 1 grantees, including the full name of the grantee, a short name used throughout this report, its location, grant size, organization type, and the primary local Workforce Development Board (WDB) or Community-Based Organization (CBO) partner, as required by the grant.

Exhibit A-1. Breaking Barriers Cohort 1 Grantee Location, Grant Size, Organization Type, and Primary CBO or WDB Partner

Grantee	Location	Grant Size	Organization Type	Primary Partner
Center for Employment Opportunities, Inc. Riverside (CEO Riverside)	Riverside	\$200,000	CBO	Riverside County Economic Development Agency/WDB
Center for Employment Opportunities, Inc. Solano (CEO Solano)	Solano County	\$168,075	CBO	Solano County WDB
Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD)	Los Angeles	\$500,000	CBO	Los Angeles City WDB
County of Orange Community Investment Division (Orange County)	Orange County	\$500,000	County Office/WDB	Goodwill of Orange County
Foothill House of Hospitality (Foothill)	Grass Valley	\$366,550	CBO	The Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC)
Goodwill of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin (Goodwill SF)	San Francisco	\$253,864	CBO	North Valley Job Training Consortium (NoVa)
Goodwill Southern California (Goodwill SC)	Los Angeles County	\$250,000	CBO	Los Angeles County WDB
Hospitality Industry Training and Education Fund dba Hospitality Training Academy (HITEF)	Los Angeles	\$500,000	CBO	City of Los Angeles WDB

Grantee	Location	Grant Size	Organization Type	Primary Partner
Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program (IVROP)	El Centro	\$500,000	Regional Occupational Center Program (ROCP) (Effectively the CBO partner)	Imperial County WDB
Jewish Vocational Services San Francisco Bay Area (JVS SF)	(Operating in) Contra Costa County	\$365,468	CBO	Contra Costa WDB
Los Angeles Brotherhood Crusade, Black United Fund, Inc. (LA Brotherhood)	Los Angeles	\$500,000	CBO	Los Angeles City WDB
Martha's Village and Kitchen, Inc. (Martha's Village)	Coachella Valley	\$498,859	CBO	Riverside County WDB
Merced County Workforce Development Board (Merced WDB)	Merced	\$500,000	WDB	Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC)
Mission Hiring Hall (Mission Hiring SF)	San Francisco	\$350,000	CBO	Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)
Nile Sisters Development Initiative (NSDI)	San Diego	\$275,174	CBO	San Diego Workforce Partnership
North Central Counties Consortium (NCCC)	Yuba City	\$500,000	WDB	Hands of Hope
Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE)	Los Angeles	\$500,000	CBO	Los Angeles County WDB
Rubicon Programs (Rubicon)	Contra Costa County	\$500,000	CBO	Contra Costa County WDB
Safe Place for Youth (Safe Place)	Venice	\$248,573	CBO	Los Angeles City WDB
San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development (SFOEWD)	San Francisco	\$500,000	Economic Development Agency/WDB	Jewish Vocational Services

Grantee	Location	Grant Size	Organization Type	Primary Partner
Southeast Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board (SELACO)	Los Angeles	\$386,000	WDB	Field of Dreams/Youth Build
The TransLatin@ Coalition (TransLatin@)	Los Angeles	\$249,746	CBO	Los Angeles City WDB
Transitions-Mental Health Association (THMA)	San Luis Obispo	\$468,616	CBO	Santa Barbara County WDB & San Luis Obispo County WDB
Vision y Compromiso (VyC)	Santa Barbara	\$353,676	CBO	Santa Barbara County WDB
Whole Systems Learning (Whole Systems)	Downey	\$500,000	CBO	Los Angeles City WDB
Workforce Development Board of Solano County (Solano WDB)	Fairfield	\$319,250	WDB	Caminar

Source: Grantee Background Documents

Appendix B: Technical Appendix

This technical appendix provides additional details on the design, data collection, and analyses conducted for the Evaluation of the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative for Cohort 1.

A. Data Sources

Chapter I describes the data sources used to answer the evaluation’s research questions. The State Board, in coordination with the California Employment Development Department (EDD), supplied the study team with two datasets on Breaking Barriers participants. Both datasets were derived from CalJOBS, the state’s system of record for most workforce programs, but include slightly different information and cover slightly different time periods.

The first dataset offers key information about the services in which participants engaged. For this reason, the study team refers to it as the “detailed services dataset” throughout the report. This dataset contains detailed data on the services participants received—also known as activity codes (Employment Development Department – State of California WSD 19-06; Employment Development Department – State of California 2019). The data included in this dataset were derived from the activity codes entered by grantee staff on the different types of services they provided to participants including “Basic Career Services,” “Individualized Career Services,” Training Services,” and “Supportive Services.” Activity codes have a direct relationship to the dataset created for federal reporting purposes using the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL). To understand in more detail how activity codes are related to the PIRL, EDD provides a *CalJOBS Activity Codes Detailed Listing* which includes information about each activity, the reporting category it is associated with, and what PIRL data element(s) are associated with it.

This detailed services dataset includes information on the 2,757 Breaking Barriers participants who enrolled from April 15, 2020, through March 31, 2022. In addition to participant-level activity codes, this dataset includes information on the priority populations each participant belonged to, including some populations created just for the grant and which are not available within CalJOBS for other programs. These priority populations include immigrants, transgender or gender nonconforming individuals, and women seeking nontraditional training/employment.

The second dataset includes data for Breaking Barriers participants that is formatted per the PIRL specifications (for delivery to the U.S. Department of Labor) and is thus referred to as the “PIRL dataset” throughout the report. This dataset includes four main types of data on Breaking Barriers participants. The first includes data on participant demographics, prior employment and education, public assistance received, and information about barriers at the time of program entry. The second type of data includes information about participant enrollment in WIOA core programs such as the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Title I) programs and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), as well as enrollment in non-core workforce programs such as JobCorps, YouthBuild, or the Indian and Native American Program (Employment and Training Administration, 2022). It also includes enrollment in other federal programs authorized outside of WIOA, such as the Trade Adjustment Assistance and the Senior Community Service Employment program (Employment and Training Administration, 2022). The third set of data included in the dataset is information on service receipt, organized into broad categories of services (without the level of detail included in the detailed services dataset). Importantly, the fourth type of data is information on outcomes such as employment, job retention, wages, and credential attainment, as well as the dates of attainment of such outcomes (Employment and Training Administration, most recent).

Importantly, both datasets include a proxy identification (ID) number that allowed the study team to compare and merge data across the two datasets and utilize aspects of both datasets to answer the evaluation’s research questions. Doing so was necessary to describe which grantees served (Chapter II) some of the selected populations not identified in the detailed services dataset. To do so, the study team used information present in the PIRL dataset to create binary variables (0,1) identifying participants as members of special populations. Once these binary variables were created in the PIRL dataset, the study team used these participants’ proxy IDs to locate observations and append the variables identifying participants belonging to those groups that were not included in the “detailed service dataset.”

B. Difference-in-Differences Methodology

The impact study employed a two-way fixed effects difference-in-differences model estimated using the following specification:

$$(1) Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1(\text{Treat}_i \times \text{Post}_t) + \beta_2(\text{Period}_t \times \text{Treat}_i) + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Y_{it} = Employment outcome for individual i in time period t

α_i = Individual fixed effects (captured by fe option)

Treat_i = Binary indicator for treatment group membership (Breaking Barriers participants not co-enrolled in WP)

Post_t = Binary indicator for post-program periods (quarters 2 or 4 after exit)

Period_t = Continuous time trend variable

γ_t = Time fixed effects

ε_{it} = Error term (with robust standard errors)

The coefficient β_1 captures the treatment effect—the difference in the change in outcomes between treatment and comparison groups from the pre-program period to the specified post-program quarter. The interaction term ($\text{Period}_t \times \text{Treat}_i$) allows for differential time trends between treatment and comparison groups, helping to account for the possibility that the groups might have different underlying trajectory patterns.

The model restricts the analysis to three pre-program quarters and the relevant post-program quarter (2 or 4), focusing on periods with the most reliable data while maintaining sufficient pre-program observations to establish baseline trends. Individual fixed effects control for all time-invariant characteristics that differ between participants. Models included robust standard errors to account for potential heteroskedasticity in the error terms.

C. Unadjusted Employment and Earnings Outcomes

While the results of the impact analysis presented in Chapter III show the employment and earnings for Cohort 1 program participants and the WP comparison group participants both prior to enrolling and in the second and fourth quarters after exit, these numbers are regression-adjusted. They do not represent the actual rates of enrollment or the actual earnings of either program or comparison group members. These unadjusted employment rates and quarterly earnings amounts are presented in the following four exhibits.

Exhibit B-1a: Unadjusted Employment Rates for Cohort 1 Participants in the Three Quarters Prior to Enrollment and in the Four Quarters After Program Exit

Employment	Mean	Min	Max
3 QTRs before program	35%	0	1
2 QTRs before program	34%	0	1
1 QTRs before program	35%	0	1
1 QTRs after exiting program	58%	0	1
2 QTRs after exiting program	55%	0	1
3 QTRs after exiting program	54%	0	1
4 QTRs after exiting program	53%	0	1

Source: PIRL dataset

Note: Employment rates before program were calculated from the earnings fields (PIRL 1700-1702); participants were employed when their earnings were greater than zero and were not missing.

Exhibit B-1b: Unadjusted Earnings Amounts for Cohort 1 Participants in the Three Quarters Prior to Enrollment and in the Four Quarters After Program Exit

Earnings	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
3 QTRs before program	\$ 1,842	\$ 4,191	0	\$ 66,593
2 QTRs before program	\$ 1,771	\$ 3,866	0	\$ 43,291
1 QTRs before program	\$ 1,684	\$ 3,675	0	\$ 39,364
1 QTRs after exiting program	\$ 3,997	\$ 5,480	0	\$ 59,385
2 QTRs after exiting program	\$ 4,146	\$ 5,722	0	\$ 54,773
3 QTRs after exiting program	\$ 4,241	\$ 5,952	0	\$ 56,844
4 QTRs after exiting program	\$ 4,372	\$ 6,134	0	\$ 57,511

Source: PIRL dataset

Note: Earnings history is collected from UI wage records for the period before individuals enter the program (PIRL 1700-1702). Participants were employed when their earnings were greater than zero and were not missing.

Exhibit B-2a: Unadjusted Employment Rates for Wagner-Peyser Comparison Group Members in the Three Quarters Prior to Enrollment and in the Four Quarters After Program Exit

Employment	Mean	Min	Max
3 QTRs before program	58%	0	1
2 QTRs before program	58%	0	1
1 QTRs before program	54%	0	1
1 QTRs after exiting program	52%	0	1
2 QTRs after exiting program	57%	0	1
3 QTRs after exiting program	56%	0	1
4 QTRs after exiting program	53%	0	1

Source: PIRL dataset

Note: Employment rates before program were calculated from the earnings fields (PIRL 1700-1702); participants were employed when their earnings were greater than zero and were not missing.

Exhibit B-2b: Unadjusted Earnings Amounts for Wagner-Peyser Comparison Group Members in the Three Quarters Prior to Enrollment and in the Four Quarters After Program Exit

Earnings	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
3 QTRs before program	\$ 4,496	\$ 6,561	0	\$ 136,349
2 QTRs before program	\$ 4,636	\$ 6,708	0	\$ 103,835
1 QTRs before program	\$ 4,106	\$ 6,719	0	\$ 134,698
1 QTRs after exiting program	\$ 3,847	\$ 5,746	0	\$ 53,029
2 QTRs after exiting program	\$ 4,639	\$ 6,440	0	\$ 61,536
3 QTRs after exiting program	\$ 4,720	\$ 6,584	0	\$ 75,733
4 QTRs after exiting program	\$ 4,602	\$ 6,731	0	\$ 105,648

Source: PIRL dataset

Note: Earnings history is collected from UI wage records for the period before individuals enter the program (PIRL 1700-1702). Participants were employed when their earnings were greater than zero and were not missing.

D. Results of the Impact Analysis on Demographic Subgroups

As described in Chapter III, the study team examined the impacts of Breaking Barriers on employment and earnings for the demographic subgroups first described in Chapter III. Exhibits B-3 and B-4 provide these results.

Exhibit B-3: Full Results for the Impact Analysis of Breaking Barriers on Employment for Program and Comparison Group Members, by Demographic Subgroups, in the Second and Fourth Quarters After Program Exit

			Second Quarter					Fourth Quarter				
			Pre	Post	Diff.	Impact	p-val.	Pre	Post	Diff.	Impact	p-val.
Overall		Program	46.5%	66.8%	20.3%	12.8%	0.000	46.4%	64.8%	18.4%	10.2%	0.007
		Comparison	48.6%	56.2%	7.5%			47.5%	55.8%	8.2%		
Gender	Male	Program	43.2%	65.9%	22.7%	15.1%	0.000	43.0%	63.1%	20.1%	13.0%	0.011
		Comparison	44.6%	52.3%	7.6%			43.8%	50.9%	7.1%		
	Female	Program	50.5%	67.6%	17.1%	9.3%	0.019	50.6%	67.0%	16.4%	6.2%	0.267
		Comparison	53.7%	61.5%	7.8%			52.3%	62.4%	10.1%		
Age	18-24	Program	46.7%	60.0%	13.2%	11.9%	0.183	47.0%	59.2%	12.3%	14.5%	0.265
		Comparison	47.1%	48.4%	1.4%			47.1%	44.9%	-2.2%		
	25-32	Program	47.9%	68.4%	20.5%	12.3%	0.056	47.8%	67.0%	19.3%	10.2%	0.265
		Comparison	49.8%	58.0%	8.2%			48.7%	57.8%	9.0%		
	33-44	Program	45.2%	67.1%	22.0%	12.0%	0.022	45.2%	61.7%	16.5%	5.6%	0.442
		Comparison	47.8%	57.8%	10.0%			46.6%	57.5%	10.9%		
	45-55	Program	44.4%	71.1%	26.8%	10.7%	0.053	44.0%	71.7%	27.7%	8.6%	0.277
		Comparison	46.6%	62.7%	16.1%			45.2%	64.2%	19.1%		
56+	Program	49.8%	70.9%	21.1%	22.5%	0.000	49.5%	69.6%	20.1%	21.8%	0.015	
	Comparison	51.3%	49.9%	-1.4%			50.3%	48.5%	-1.8%			
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian American	Program	49.5%	65.0%	15.5%	-3.0%	0.723	49.6%	62.2%	12.5%	-21.2%	0.081
		Comparison	57.5%	76.0%	18.6%			53.8%	87.5%	33.8%		
	Black/Afr. Am.	Program	38.9%	59.7%	20.8%	8.6%	0.191	38.5%	59.6%	21.1%	5.1%	0.58
		Comparison	40.4%	52.5%	12.2%			39.3%	55.2%	16.0%		
	White	Program	34.5%	58.5%	24.0%	9.4%	0.173	34.7%	55.9%	21.3%	1.9%	0.843
		Comparison	37.5%	52.2%	14.6%			36.3%	55.6%	19.3%		
Hispanic/Latino	Program	52.6%	73.5%	20.9%	16.9%	0.000	52.6%	70.5%	18.0%	16.1%	0.006	

Exhibit B-4: Full Results for the Impact Analysis of Breaking Barriers on Employment for Program and Comparison Group Members, by Demographic Subgroups, in the Second and Fourth Quarters After Program Exit

			Second Quarter					Fourth Quarter				
			Pre	Post	Diff.	Impact	p-val.	Pre	Post	Diff.	Impact	p-val.
Overall		Program	\$ 3,266	\$ 5,963	\$ 2,697	\$ 1,662	0.000	\$ 3,227	\$ 6,308	\$ 3,081	\$ 1,628	0.000
		Comparison	\$ 3,422	\$ 4,456	\$ 1,035			\$ 3,306	\$ 4,760	\$ 1,453		
Gender	Male	Program	\$ 3,358	\$ 6,105	\$ 2,748	\$ 1,828	0.000	\$ 3,329	\$ 6,368	\$ 3,039	\$ 2,065	0.000
		Comparison	\$ 3,463	\$ 4,383	\$ 919			\$ 3,383	\$ 4,357	\$ 974		
	Female	Program	\$ 3,102	\$ 5,744	\$ 2,642	\$ 1,356	0.001	\$ 3,045	\$ 6,212	\$ 3,166	\$ 987	0.087
		Comparison	\$ 3,330	\$ 4,616	\$ 1,286			\$ 3,163	\$ 5,342	\$ 2,179		
Age	18-24	Program	\$ 2,133	\$ 4,323	\$ 2,190	\$ 1,173	0.079	\$ 2,099	\$ 4,780	\$ 2,681	\$ 1,812	0.068
		Comparison	\$ 2,009	\$ 3,026	\$ 1,017			\$ 2,035	\$ 2,904	\$ 869		
	25-32	Program	\$ 2,903	\$ 5,591	\$ 2,688	\$ 1,370	0.018	\$ 2,880	\$ 5,725	\$ 2,845	\$ 655	0.41
		Comparison	\$ 3,062	\$ 4,380	\$ 1,318			\$ 2,962	\$ 5,152	\$ 2,190		
	33-44	Program	\$ 3,431	\$ 6,286	\$ 2,855	\$ 1,136	0.054	\$ 3,406	\$ 6,454	\$ 3,048	\$ 812	0.318
		Comparison	\$ 3,649	\$ 5,367	\$ 1,719			\$ 3,517	\$ 5,753	\$ 2,236		
	45-55	Program	\$ 3,477	\$ 6,641	\$ 3,164	\$ 1,459	0.012	\$ 3,389	\$ 7,474	\$ 4,085	\$ 1,790	0.033
		Comparison	\$ 3,594	\$ 5,299	\$ 1,705			\$ 3,449	\$ 5,743	\$ 2,295		
56+	Program	\$ 3,807	\$ 6,522	\$ 2,715	\$ 2,893	0.000	\$ 3,770	\$ 6,695	\$ 2,926	\$ 3,007	0.001	
	Comparison	\$ 3,960	\$ 3,782	\$ (178)			\$ 3,848	\$ 3,766	\$ (81)			
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian American	Program	\$ 4,460	\$ 7,654	\$ 3,194	\$ 1,415	0.305	\$ 4,313	\$ 8,638	\$ 4,325	\$ 713	0.711
		Comparison	\$ 4,914	\$ 6,693	\$ 1,779			\$ 4,548	\$ 8,159	\$ 3,611		
	Black/Afr. Am.	Program	\$ 2,113	\$ 4,693	\$ 2,580	\$ 464	0.535	\$ 2,063	\$ 4,959	\$ 2,896	\$ (213)	0.849
		Comparison	\$ 2,398	\$ 4,515	\$ 2,117			\$ 2,210	\$ 5,319	\$ 3,109		
	White	Program	\$ 2,429	\$ 4,969	\$ 2,541	\$ 520	0.542	\$ 2,440	\$ 5,196	\$ 2,756	\$ (778)	0.516
		Comparison	\$ 2,961	\$ 4,982	\$ 2,021			\$ 2,716	\$ 6,250	\$ 3,534		
Hispanic/Latino	Program	\$ 3,743	\$ 6,400	\$ 2,657	\$ 2,135	0.000	\$ 3,725	\$ 6,767	\$ 3,042	\$ 2,635	0.000	
	Comparison	\$ 3,819	\$ 4,341	\$ 521			\$ 3,763	\$ 4,171	\$ 408			