

FY 2019



**PORTFOLIO OF
RESEARCH IN WELFARE
AND FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/>

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ACF promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals, and communities.

ACF programs aim to:

- Empower families and individuals to increase their economic independence and productivity;
- Encourage strong, healthy, supportive communities that have a positive impact on quality of life and the development of children;
- Create partnerships with front-line service providers, states, localities, and tribal communities to identify and implement solutions that transcend traditional program boundaries;
- Improve access to services through planning, reform, and integration; and
- Address the needs, strengths, and abilities of vulnerable populations including people with developmental disabilities, refugees, and migrants.



OFFICE OF PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre>


The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) studies ACF programs and the populations they serve through rigorous research and evaluation projects. These include evaluations of existing programs, evaluations of innovative approaches to helping low-income children and families, research syntheses, and descriptive and exploratory studies. OPRE also works to improve the analysis of data, coordinates performance management for ACF, and aims to build and disseminate knowledge about effective approaches to helping low-income children and families.


OPRE includes four divisions:

- The Division of Economic Independence focuses on welfare, employment, and family self-sufficiency.
- The Division of Child and Family Development focuses on child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, and child abuse and neglect.
- The Division of Family Strengthening focuses on teen pregnancy prevention, youth development, healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood, family violence, runaway and homeless youth, and home visiting.
- The Division of Data and Improvement focuses on improving the quality, usefulness, sharing, and analysis of data to improve ACF programs and program participants' outcomes.

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Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency Research

The Division of Economic Independence within OPRE has primary responsibility for welfare and family self-sufficiency research.

OPRE's research in the area of welfare and family self-sufficiency is designed to expand knowledge about effective programs to promote employment, self-sufficiency, and economic well-being among low-income families. Research focuses on five major areas:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Employment and the Labor Market
- Education and Training
- Behavioral Science
- Cross-Cutting and Other Safety Net Research

Within these areas, OPRE funds experimental impact evaluations, implementation evaluations, and descriptive research projects aimed at informing the design and implementation of programs.

OPRE also invests in activities to disseminate rigorous research on welfare and family self-sufficiency topics.

This *Portfolio of Research in Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency* describes major welfare and family self-sufficiency research projects sponsored by OPRE in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019.

ACF EVALUATION POLICY

ACF seeks to promote rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics in the conduct of evaluations. ACF's Evaluation Policy, which was published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2014, addresses these five key principles to govern ACF's planning, conduct, and use of evaluation. The [full evaluation policy](#) is available on the OPRE website.

- **Rigor:** ACF is committed to using rigorous methods to yield accurate and unbiased findings.
- **Relevance:** Our evaluations should address legislative requirements and congressional, federal, state, tribal, and local interests.
- **Transparency:** We will make information about planned and ongoing evaluations easily accessible. We will release results regardless of the findings. Reports will present comprehensive results, including favorable, unfavorable, and null findings.
- **Independence:** Evaluation should not be biased. To promote objectivity, we protect independence in the design, conduct, and analysis of evaluations.
- **Ethics:** ACF-sponsored evaluations will be conducted in an ethical manner and safeguard the dignity, rights, safety, and privacy of participants.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) RESEARCH

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides block grants to states to design and operate programs to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. OPRE's research examines the local implementation of TANF programs and policies; the intersection of TANF with other safety net programs; and other relevant issues related to TANF program operations, TANF recipients, and TANF-eligible families.

Recent past projects include: [a study of the intersection between TANF and Refugee Cash Assistance services](#); [an analysis of the coordination of TANF and Workforce Investment Act services](#); [a descriptive study of differences in TANF programs administered by counties versus states](#); and [an examination of situations in which TANF clients have zero reported hours of work participation](#).

Other past projects include: [a study of local implementation of TANF](#); [a descriptive study of Tribal TANF](#); [an examination of state and local efforts to divert TANF applicants from applying for cash assistance](#); [a study of what is known about the effects of time limit policies](#); [a series of research briefs synthesizing knowledge on important TANF topics](#); [an examination of the overlap between TANF and Supplemental Security Income programs and populations](#); and [a qualitative examination of the dynamics of disconnection from employment and TANF](#).

*In addition to the studies described in this section, OPRE conducts experimental research on welfare-to-work and innovative employment strategies; these efforts are described in the later sections on *Employment and the Labor Market* and on *Education and Training*.*

State TANF Policies Database

Under TANF, states have considerable authority to design the parameters of their programs and set their own rules. Since 1997, Urban Institute has maintained the State TANF Policies Database, also known as the Welfare Rules Database, in order to document state program rules. The database is meant to be a single location where information on TANF program rules can be researched across states and/or across years. ACF has funded updates to the database as well as publication of tables summarizing state TANF policies for each year since 1997. Annual publications are available on the [OPRE website](#).

Identifying Issues and Options to Understand TANF-Compatible Outcome Measures for Employment Services

OPRE launched Identifying Issues and Options to Understand TANF-Compatible Outcome Measures for Employment Services (OUTCOMES) in 2016. Conducted by Urban Institute, the project supported ACF in understanding how employment-related outcome measures could be meaningfully and practically implemented for TANF. The study explored: 1) the extent to which state TANF programs currently measure employment-related outcomes, and the practical lessons from those state experiences; 2) best practices in the development of performance measurement systems for employment-related outcomes, and the issues related to implementing such systems for TANF; and 3) ways to improve coordination across performance measurement systems for TANF, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training programs.

The project began with a review of all pertinent literature, reports, and data and held discussions with selected state TANF directors. The OUTCOMES team also consulted with experts on TANF and performance measurement. The project's final report, [Measuring Employment Outcomes in TANF](#), offers information and insights to help policymakers and stakeholders understand the challenges and opportunities for measuring employment outcomes in the TANF program. It also illustrates the difficulty of developing consistent national measures of employment outcomes in TANF that adhere to principles of good performance measurement.

Understanding Poverty: Childhood and Family Experiences and TANF Office Culture

The Administration for Children and Families is dedicated to promoting the economic and social well-being of families and children and thus has a particular interest in understanding the experiences of families within the systems designed to support them and move them out of poverty. While there are many facets to developing such an understanding, two crucial components are the operations of the programs themselves and the perspectives of families and children living in poverty. To that end, OPRE has undertaken the Understanding Poverty study, which launched in 2016 and is being conducted by MEF Associates in partnership with MDRC.

- **TANF Office Culture**

One component of this project explores how organizational culture, office design, and office procedures contribute to shaping clients' experiences with TANF, the services provided to them, and potentially their outcomes. The concept of organizational culture encompasses the organization's mission and vision in relation to its clients and the shared objectives guiding its work, as well as values, attitudes, expectations, assumptions, and norms. It also manifests in more concrete, everyday ways—such as physical location and office design, staff training, staffing decisions, employee decision-making and interactions with clients, and written procedures and materials. Fieldwork is focusing especially on exemplars of productive client-oriented office settings and organizational processes and culture as well as TANF offices that have made conscious attempts at organizational culture change.

- **Childhood and Family Experiences**

A second component of the project is examining the experiences and perspectives of children and families living in poverty, including the experiences of families who apply for and access TANF and other safety net

benefits. A large body of research spanning decades has reflected a range of psychological, educational, health, and other serious and sometimes long-term impacts associated with severe economic disadvantage in childhood. While there is a growing literature on the lived experiences of adults in conditions of severe deprivation, less work has looked at how low-income children of various ages experience, perceive, and view the day-to-day circumstances of living in poverty. Interviews with approximately 50 children and youths as well as their parents are intended to facilitate a deeper understanding of what children understand about their families' economic circumstances, how families talk about public assistance benefits, and other aspects of their life experiences.

In 2018, OPRE published a [review of the qualitative literature on the experiences of parents and children living in poverty](#) and a [review of literature describing the role that organizational culture plays in the delivery of TANF services](#). Fieldwork for both strands of this project are currently underway as of late 2019. Taken together, the outcomes of this inquiry can be expected to improve the field's understanding of the lives of children in poverty and their families while further building an understanding of how the TANF program and organizational culture affect individuals within this population.

Promoting and Supporting Innovation in TANF Data

Promoting and Supporting Innovation in TANF Data, also known as the TANF Data Innovation (TDI) project, supports innovation and efficiency within the TANF program through enhanced use of data from TANF and related human services programs. The OPRE Division of Data and Improvement oversees this project with support from the Division of Economic Independence. Launched in 2017, TDI is led by MDRC in partnership with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, the Center for Urban Science and Progress at New York University, and Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy at the University of Pennsylvania. The project's aim is to provide timely, actionable, and relevant technical assistance to federal, state, and local TANF agencies on a variety of issues related to TANF data. Topics will include integrated data systems, data sharing, promoting proper payments and program integrity, expanding analytic capacity, and overall increased use of TANF and related human services data for program improvement. TDI builds on the work of the earlier [Family Self-Sufficiency Data Center](#), which OPRE awarded to the University of Chicago in 2013 as a cooperative agreement for the development, implementation, and operations of a data center to support family

self-sufficiency research and activities. The Data Center was one of the three components of OPRE's [Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Consortium](#).

The TDI project includes the following key tasks:

- Assessment of the needs of all 50 states regarding collecting, sharing, and using TANF data;
- Support to states and localities through the TANF Data Collaborative (www.tanfdata.org), including wide-ranging training and technical assistance for states and localities on a variety of topics related to TANF data use and creation and evaluation of up to eight TDI pilot sites;
- Assessment of existing state approaches to ensuring program integrity and proper payments in TANF; and
- Support to ACF's Office of Family Assistance on data-related tasks.

Across these activities, the project will support the use of data for understanding the impact that TANF has on families broadly, and how the federal government and state partners can use data to better serve families.

State TANF Case Studies

OPRE launched the State TANF Case Studies project in 2018. The purpose of the project, which is being conducted by Mathematica, is to identify and provide in-depth, systematic case studies of promising and innovative employment and training programs for TANF recipients and other low-income individuals. There will be a particular focus on programs that have strong linkages with wraparound support services, with special emphasis on child care assistance. The project aims to increase ACF's knowledge about strategies that TANF and workforce development agencies are implementing

HUMAN SERVICES RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

The Human Services Research Partnerships (HSRP) support collaboration among researchers, human services programs, and policymakers in U.S. territories. Projects focus on topics related to the Head Start and TANF programs, such as self-sufficiency and stability among low-income families and the healthy development and school-readiness of children. Through the partnerships, ACF seeks to build the capacity for human services research while improving understanding of the human services systems in the region. Projects may examine the unique circumstances and challenges posed by economic, geographic, and developmental factors; the particular strengths, assets, and cultural norms of each region that impact human services; and opportunities for ACF to use human services to enhance the quality of life for residents in the U.S. territories.

Human Services Research Partnership: Virgin Islands (HSRPVI)

HSRP cooperative agreement was awarded in 2014 to the University of the Virgin Islands' School of Nursing. Goals specific to HSRPVI include establishing a research infrastructure to support the provision of quality human services for Head Start and TANF clients; developing a secure data collection system; providing training to support the development of research capacity; and implementing two human services research studies on questions of interest to Head Start and TANF programs locally.

The project has completed environmental scans of Head Start and TANF services available on the islands and continues to involve regular meetings with U.S. Virgin Islands human services government leadership and working subgroups examining data and research needs. These meetings have included workshops on participatory and rapid-cycle research and collaboration with other grant-funded initiatives on the islands, such as the ACF Office of Child Care's

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five. The university team partners with TANF and Head Start research experts, as well as experts in community-based research, to refine their approach and address priority questions for the local social services community.

Due to the hurricane season of 2017, the program partners working with the grantee experienced setbacks since the grantee facilities at the university were destroyed, and electricity and communication services were very limited for many months. Since the program partners reopened, the team continues to pursue community-focused research, including: 1) assessing availability of health and mental health referrals for Head Start and TANF families and clients; 2) examining local Head Start methods and procedures to maintain a waiting list; and 3) launching new implementation studies of TANF and Head Start in the wake of the hurricanes.

to help TANF recipients and other low-income individuals become economically self-sufficient. This descriptive study will identify innovative programs through a scan of the field and engagement with stakeholders, include interviews with program staff and participants, and conduct structured case reviews. Data collection began in October 2019.

NEW

Building Evaluation Capacity in TANF: Implementing, Replicating, and Scaling Up Evidence-Informed Interventions to Promote Employment and Self-Sufficiency

A growing number of TANF and workforce development agencies are interested in becoming better users and producers of high-quality research in order to improve programs for low-income families; however, many of these agencies currently lack the expertise and capacity to integrate data and evidence into their program practices. ACF has responded to this need through investments to strengthen the evaluation capacity of human services agencies through the provision of evaluation technical assistance (TA). In 2012, ACF launched the [Advancing Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency Research Project](#) to support state and local human services agencies with research and evaluation activities, and subsequently awarded a [follow-on contract](#) to continue this work. Under these contracts, the project developed the “Learn, Innovate, Improve” (LI²) framework, which is a research-based approach to program improvement that embeds analytic methods in the process of designing, implementing, and iteratively testing program changes.

Building on this work, the ACF Office of Family Assistance awarded the Rapid Cycle Evaluation and Training Technical Assistance (RCE TTA) contract, an ongoing project that provides TA to state and local TANF agencies. RCE TTA has focused on the first two phases of LI², “Learn” and “Innovate,” which are centered around assisting agencies with identifying, designing, and implementing program changes.

To complement these efforts, in 2019 OPRE launched the Building Evaluation Capacity in TANF project, which aims to provide research and evaluation TA to state, tribal, and local TANF programs currently or formerly engaged under RCE TTA. Led by Mathematica, this project will support those agencies in advancing their existing initiatives into the “Improve” phase of the process, which focuses on evaluating program changes or innovations using pilot tests or other approaches. This

project will also enable programs to share their innovations, findings, and useful resources with the other sites involved in the project.

Further, in recognizing that LI² is just one method for providing evaluation TA, the project aims to document existing evaluation TA approaches and examine whether certain approaches are more promising than others at building evaluation capacity within agencies. This new work will assess the landscape of current or previous evaluation TA activities in human services program contexts, ask what can be learned from other fields that have examined this question, and document lessons to inform future federal evaluation capacity-building efforts.

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON POVERTY NATIONAL POVERTY CENTER FELLOWS

The National Poverty Center Fellows Program was established in 2013 in order to build the capacity of emerging researchers to conduct high-quality, policy-relevant research on poverty and inequality in the United States. The program is administered by the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a grant from OPRE and the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation that supports post-doctoral fellows in residence at OPRE. The fellows conduct poverty-related research and analysis, contribute to planning and consulting on OPRE research and evaluation studies, and work on their own ACF-related research projects.

Two fellows are currently in residence in the Division of Economic Independence and the Division of Data and Improvement at OPRE, where they are working on a variety of projects related to employment and training, disparities in human services, services for refugees, innovative research methods and measurement questions, and other poverty and safety net studies.

EMPLOYMENT AND THE LABOR MARKET

A major focus of OPRE's welfare and family self-sufficiency research is increasing knowledge about strategies for helping TANF recipients and other low-income individuals find jobs, maintain employment, and advance in the labor market. Major past projects include: the [Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration and Evaluation](#), which tested several strategies for helping hard-to-employ parents find and sustain employment; the [Employment Retention and Advancement Project](#), which tested strategies for helping employed individuals keep their jobs and advance in the workforce; and the [National Evaluation of Welfare to Work Strategies](#), which evaluated the effectiveness of mandatory welfare-to-work programs during the welfare reform era of the 1990s.

OPRE is currently conducting random assignment experiments of employment strategies, including [subsidized and transitional employment models](#), [job search assistance](#), [coaching practices aimed at job entry and retention](#), and approaches targeting hard-to-employ populations including [low-income individuals with behavioral health issues such as opioid dependency, substance abuse, and/or mental health challenges](#). OPRE seeks to increase the number of evidence-supported interventions for low-income populations seeking employment and economic stability. In addition, OPRE's congressionally mandated [Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse: The What Works Clearinghouse of Proven and Promising Projects to Move Welfare Recipients into Work](#) is building on the existing [Employment Strategies Evidence Review](#). In early 2019, OPRE also convened a roundtable of subject matter experts to identify gaps in knowledge of employment and training approaches for low-income populations and recipients of social safety net benefits.

[Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration](#)

OPRE launched the Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (STED) in 2010 with the goal of demonstrating and evaluating the next generation of subsidized employment models for critical low-income populations. The project, led by MDRC, examines strategies for providing counter-cyclical employment and for successfully transitioning individuals from short-term, subsidized employment to unsubsidized employment in the regular labor market. These strategies build upon approaches that have demonstrated effectiveness in previous studies and also test new and innovative interventions. The evaluation includes a random assignment impact evaluation in eight sites, an implementation evaluation at each project site, and a cost-benefit analysis. An in-program survey measured potential non-economic benefits of subsidized employment, such as emotional and social well-being.

The STED project is being conducted in close coordination with the Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration (ETJD). A project of the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) at the Department of Labor (DOL), ETJD funded seven grantees to provide temporary, paid work experiences to noncustodial parents and ex-offenders to improve their employability, earnings, and opportunities for advancement. Given the complementary nature of these efforts, OPRE and ETA entered into a memorandum of agreement to coordinate the STED and ETJD studies, including shared data collection instruments, shared evaluation sites, and coordinated reporting efforts.

STED began with an analysis of what was known about existing or previous approaches to subsidized employment, especially within the context of current TANF policies and requirements, as well as efforts under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In 2011, OPRE released [Subsidizing Employment Opportunities for Low-Income Families: A Review of State Employment Programs Created Through the TANF Emergency Fund](#).

Following this initial scan, the project team recruited eight sites to participate in the evaluation:

SITE	DESCRIPTION
<p>Good Transitions <i>Goodwill of North Georgia</i></p>	<p>This DOL-funded program provided transitional jobs in Goodwill locations to low-income, noncustodial parents referred to the program by the child support agency.</p>
<p>TransitionsSF <i>Goodwill and the San Francisco Department of Child Support Services</i></p>	<p>This DOL-funded program provided transitional jobs to low-income, noncustodial parents using a tiered approach that placed participants into one of three tiers – traditional transitional job, public sector position, or subsidized private sector placement – based on employability characteristics.</p>
<p>Transitional Subsidized Employment <i>Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services</i></p>	<p>Los Angeles County is testing two different program models for low-income individuals: 1) paid work experience in non-profit or public sector placements; and 2) “hybrid” on-the-job training in for-profit, private sector placements.</p>
<p>Jobs Now STEP Forward <i>San Francisco City and County Agency for Human Services</i></p>	<p>San Francisco is testing private sector (both non-profit and for-profit) subsidized employment placements for low-income individuals who have timed out of TANF or have exhausted Unemployment Insurance benefits.</p>
<p>Young Adult Internship Program <i>New York City Center for Economic Opportunity</i></p>	<p>The Young Adult Internship Program targets disconnected youth – neither in school nor working for at least three months – ages 16 to 24 and provides initial training followed by a private sector (for- or non-profit) internship for up to 12 weeks.</p>
<p>Bridges to Pathways <i>Chicago Department of Family and Support Services</i></p>	<p>Developed in partnership with the Chicago Crime Lab and University of Chicago, the Department of Family and Support Services is operating a pilot of the Bridges to Pathways Initiative, which targets 16- to 24-year-olds leaving incarceration and includes three components: 1) a transitional job; 2) an online high school program; and 3) a cognitive behavioral therapy-like program.</p>
<p>MSTED <i>Minnesota Department of Human Services</i></p>	<p>This program targets clients of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (the state’s TANF program) who are not working and who have been in the program for at least six months. The program features two tiers: 1) an eight-week structured work experience in non-profit or public agencies designed to build participants’ soft skills and work experience; and 2) a 16-week subsidized job in the private sector. Participants can start in either tier depending on their work-readiness.</p>
<p>Atlanta Paycheck Plus <i>United Way of Greater Atlanta</i></p>	<p>This program offers an enhanced Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income individuals without dependent children. As with the other STED programs, this site provides work-based income support, although in regular, not transitional, jobs. This approach has similar goals as the other STED programs – to increase the employability and income of low-income individuals – and it targets many of the same groups (young adults, former prisoners, and noncustodial parents).</p>

A [summary report](#) describing both the eight STED programs and the five additional ETJD programs was released in 2015. Implementation and 12-month findings from [the two joint STED/ETJD sites](#) (Atlanta and

San Francisco) and the [Young Adult Internship Program](#) in New York City were released in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Five reports were released in FY 2018: 1) [The Effects of Subsidized and Transitional Employment](#)

[Programs on Noneconomic Well-Being](#); 2) [Testing Rapid Connections to Subsidized Private Sector Jobs for Low-Income Individuals in San Francisco Implementation and Early Impacts of the STEP Forward Program](#); 3) [Forging a Path: Impacts and Costs of New York City's Young Adult Internship Program](#); 4) [Tribal Solutions: Subsidized Employment Programs Serving American Indians and Alaska Natives](#); and 5) [The Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration: New Perspectives on Creating Jobs – Final Impacts of the Next Generation of Subsidized Employment Programs](#).

Three reports have been released in 2019: 1) [Findings from In-Depth Interviews with Participants in Subsidized Employment Programs](#); 2) [The Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration: Implementation and Early Impacts of the Minnesota Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration](#); and 3) [Testing Two Subsidized Employment Models for TANF Recipients: Final Impacts and Costs of the Los Angeles County Transitional Subsidized Employment Program](#). Additional implementation and impact results from the other STED sites will be available in late 2019 and beyond.

Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation

In 2013, OPRE launched the Job Search Assistance (JSA) Strategies Evaluation. Led by Abt Associates and its partner Mathematica, JSA is a multi-site, random assignment evaluation of the relative impact of different TANF job search approaches on short-term labor market outcomes such as earnings and time to employment. JSA builds on OPRE's [Design Options of the Search for Employment](#) project, which included a literature review and recommendations for an overall approach to and design of a job search strategies evaluation. JSA draws from this work to conduct the first rigorous test of job search services for TANF recipients.

The JSA evaluation aims to achieve two goals. First, JSA will provide information about the relative impacts of various job search assistance services and the manner in which agencies provide them. Second, JSA is intended to provide actionable and policy-relevant feedback to the TANF field, including federal TANF policymakers, state and local TANF administrators, and frontline caseworkers.

The JSA evaluation uses a random assignment experimental design and includes an impact and implementation evaluation carried out across the selected sites. In addition to administrative data, the study will also include a survey of participants, administered approximately six months after random assignment, to capture information

on intensity and duration of JSA services, how participants found their current job, attitudes and motivations around the job search, and barriers to employment.

The job search assistance approaches tested in JSA are relatively short-term in nature. Impact and implementation studies are being conducted in three sites and implementation-only studies are being conducted in two additional sites.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE STRATEGIES EVALUATION

The Standard and Fast Track Job Clubs in Sacramento County, California

- The evaluation tested the impacts of the Standard Job Club, a three-week job search assistance class with an emphasis on workplace behavior skills followed by supervised job search and daily one-on-one meetings with staff, compared to the Fast Track Job Club, a three-and-a-half day class followed by primarily self-directed job search and weekly meetings with staff. Both programs operated as designed during the study period. The Standard Job Club provided a greater level of assistance with workplace behaviors and soft skills compared to the Fast Track Job Club, but both programs emphasized providing assistance with job search skills.
- Recipients in each type of Job Club participated in job search activities at relatively high rates. However, those in the Standard Job Club received assistance more frequently, in both group and one-on-one settings.
- There was no detectable impact on employment in the second quarter after random assignment (the study's confirmatory outcome) for the Standard Job Club compared to the Fast Track Job Club. In addition, there was no detectable difference in earnings or receipt of CalWORKs cash assistance and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.
- Recipients assigned to the Standard Job Club reported more favorable job characteristics such as paid time off for sick leave and holidays in their current or most recent job compared to those assigned to the Fast Track Job Club.

SITE	TYPE OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
New York City Human Resources Administration	Impact and Implementation	New York City is testing its current approach, which requires 35 hours of participation per week including group job search classes, compared to supervised job search in which clients have one-on-one, weekly meetings with a staff person to assist them with their job search, but otherwise conduct a self-directed search. The study operates at two vendors (America Works and Goodwill) in Brooklyn and Queens.
Sacramento County (CA) Department of Human Assistance	Impact and Implementation	Sacramento is testing: 1) three weeks of group job search and workplace behavior skills instruction followed by one-on-one job search assistance and daily meetings with staff compared to 2) three-and-a-half days of group job search instruction followed by independent job search and weekly meetings with staff.
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (Genesee and Wayne Counties)	Impact and Implementation	Genesee County (which includes Flint) and Wayne County (excluding the Detroit area) are testing enhancements to their current 21-day Applicant Eligibility Period (AEP) and the PATH (Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope.) program. The enhancement includes a service delivery framework that uses a tool called the "Bridge of Strength," a revised orientation, revised accountability measures in lieu of the work participation rate, and training for treatment group case managers on how to coach clients and use a number of goal achievement tools.
Westchester County (NY) Department of Social Services	Implementation only	JSA is conducting implementation studies of Westchester's supervised, one-on-one job search compared to the full-time, classroom-based STRIVE program. STRIVE is an eight-week program that includes four weeks of training on behavioral change and job readiness skills followed by four weeks of some form of supervised job search.
Ramsey County (MN)	Implementation only	JSA conducted an implementation study of Ramsey County's Lifelong Learning Initiative (LLI). LLI includes enhanced approaches to assessments, orientations, counseling, and staff assistance (with a focus on goal setting and coaching).

Three site reports have been released to date:

- [Implementation of a Goal-Oriented Approach to Providing Employment Services to Cash Assistance Recipients: The Lifelong Learning Initiative in Ramsey County, Minnesota](#)
- [Implementation and Relative Impacts of Two Job Search Assistance Programs in New York City](#)
- [Implementation and Relative Impacts of Two Job Search Assistance Programs in Sacramento County, California](#)

Other site reports will be available on a rolling basis in 2019 and 2020. The project will also publish two additional products: 1) a cross-site brief that will describe the approaches used by the three impact study sites, synthesize key impact findings, and provide summary conclusions and 2) a brief documenting the methodology for the monthly text surveys that helped maintain contact with study participants and collect interim job search outcomes data and how those text surveys correlated with response rates on the six-month follow-up survey.

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES FOR LOW-INCOME ADULTS EVIDENCE REVIEW

Employment Strategies for Low-Income Adults Evidence Review (ESER) is a systematic review of the evaluation research on employment and training programs for low-income adults. The review's findings are shared via a searchable, public website: employmentstrategies.acf.hhs.gov. In addition to creating the website, ESER also produced a number of briefs synthesizing the review's results and highlighting strategies that produced promising outcomes.

ESER was designed to provide practitioners, policy-makers, researchers, and the general public with a transparent and comprehensive assessment of the research evidence on interventions aimed at improving the employment-related outcomes of low-income adults. A core component of ESER, as with other federal evidence reviews, involved analyzing the quality of the research evidence on different interventions. To conduct the review, the project team engaged in a systematic and broad literature search for relevant studies; screened studies to determine whether they met the criteria for being reviewed; and assessed the rigor of each study's methods. This approach followed pre-specified [standards and methods](#). Until ESER, no other such comprehensive review on this topic had been undertaken.

The [website](#) provides key information about studies considered most reliable. Users can search for results by program studied, by favorable impacts found, by target population, and in other ways.

The ESER research briefs summarize the results of the review and examine review topics in greater depth.

These briefs:

- [Qualitatively summarize the evidence base on employment strategies for low-income adults](#);
- Describe the evidence on both [financial incentives and sanctions](#) and [work-readiness interventions](#) as strategies for improving employment outcomes;
- [Recommend best practices for study authors on how to describe impact evaluations of employment programs and strategies](#);
- [Identify gaps in the research base on employment strategies for low-income adults](#); and
- [Review all of the studies in the ESER database to conduct a meta-analysis of which employment strategies appear to be most effective](#).

ESER became the foundation for a new database mandated by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-31). This law directs HHS to create a database of projects that have used a proven or promising approach to move welfare recipients into work, based on independent, rigorous evaluations of the projects, and to showcase the content of that database via a public website. That project, the [Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse: The What Works Clearinghouse of Proven and Promising Approaches to Move Welfare Recipients to Work](#), is described later in this section.

ESER ran from 2013 to 2019 and was conducted by Mathematica.

Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations

In 2016, OPRE launched the Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations. Conducted by Mathematica, with partners Abt Associates and MDRC, the evaluation is using an experimental design to examine the effectiveness of coaching interventions that focus on both job entry and retention and that target TANF populations and other low-income individuals. The evaluation is also examining the effect of coaching on self-regulation skills, and the role of these skills in generating any impacts on employment outcomes.

The project developed a conceptual framework for measuring self-regulation skills in the context of evaluations of employment programs. The paper, [Measuring Self-Regulation Skills in Evaluations of Employment Programs for Low-Income Populations: Challenges and Recommendations](#), was published in 2018. To build on this framework, the project will conduct empirical analyses of the validity of measures of self-regulation skills and share findings in a special topics paper. Additionally, in 2019, the project released a brief, [Employment Coaching: Working with Low-Income Populations to Use Self-Regulation Skills to Achieve Employment Goals](#), which discusses the definition of and theory behind coaching and examines how coaching interventions might affect self-regulation skills. The project also published the [Evaluation of](#)

[Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations: Evaluation Design Report](#), which details the design of the evaluation and includes the survey and interview tools used in the data collection.

Included below is a list of the coaching models participating in the evaluation.

EMPLOYMENT COACHING MODELS	LOCATION(S)
Family Development and Self-Sufficiency	Iowa Department of Human Rights
Goal4 It!™	Jefferson County Department of Human Services (CO)
LIFT	New York, NY Chicago, IL Los Angeles, CA
MyGoals for Employment Success	Baltimore, MD Houston, TX

Next Steps for Employment and Training Research: Roundtable and White Papers

The purpose of this project, which launched in 2017, is to identify gaps in knowledge of employment and training approaches for low-income populations and recipients of social safety net benefits, in order to inform potential future directions for research and evaluation. This aim will be accomplished by convening a roundtable of subject matter experts to discuss the gaps in research and by producing a series of complementary white papers.

The Next Steps for Employment and Training Research Roundtable was held on January 15-16, 2019 in Washington, DC. The U.S. Department of Labor’s Chief Evaluation Office served as a key partner to OPRE in organizing the convening. Invitees included a mix of researchers, employers, practitioners, and federal staff. The Roundtable consisted of presentations on and group discussions of specific topics within the area of employment and training including strengthening sectoral strategies in serving disadvantaged populations, assessing and improving implementation of program models, and implications of the changing nature of work for job skills and work quality and stability. The project is currently synthesizing themes from the Roundtable and developing plans for drafting complementary white papers.

The project is being conducted by MEF Associates in partnership with MDRC.

In 2019, the project published [Employment Coaching Program Snapshots](#) that share key characteristics of each of these models. The project anticipates releasing descriptive findings from the evaluation in 2020 and impact findings beginning in 2021.

Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families

For more than two decades, researchers have studied the effectiveness of programs, policies, and practices in TANF-supported employment and training services. Given the changes in the characteristics of caseload populations, labor demands, and the skills needed to advance in the workforce, TANF agencies have innovated over time, resulting in interventions appropriate for new research and evaluation.

In 2017, OPRE launched Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families (BEES). The project aims to build on and complement current state and federal efforts, efficiently move selected interventions or program models to the next level of evidence, and ultimately, increase the number of evidence-supported interventions for low-income populations seeking employment and economic stability. Led by MDRC in partnership with Abt Associates and MEF Associates, BEES will assist ACF in building evidence for innovative interventions aimed at supporting low-income individuals and families seeking employment, advances in the labor market, and economic security. In addition, ACF aims to support states in moving toward rigorous evaluations of state-initiated interventions. The project has a particular interest in 1) innovative approaches to addressing barriers to employment and 2) interventions designed to improve employment outcomes for individuals with behavioral health challenges that create barriers to employment, including substance use disorder, opioid dependency, and/or mental health issues.

Further, in 2019, BEES partnered with the Social Security Administration to support evaluation of early employment interventions for those with current or foreseeable disabilities who may be at risk of applying for Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Income.

Since the project's inception, BEES has consulted with more than a dozen federal agencies to identify emerging priorities for evidence building and conducted a broad field scan to learn about innovative programs. Through this field scan, BEES has identified seven initial sites for evaluation:

SITE	TYPE OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
Breaking Barriers San Diego (California)	Long-Term Data Analysis	A program designed to increase employment among TANF recipients and other low-income individuals with disabilities, including substance use disorder and mental health issues
Central City Concern (Oregon)	Impact and Implementation	A program based in Portland, Oregon, that provides treatment for substance use disorder, healthcare, housing, and comprehensive employment services
Two-Generation Residential Mobility Demonstration (Chicago-Cook County, IL)	Impact and Implementation	A demonstration program that is part of the Creating Moves to Opportunity initiative and is designed to help families living in concentrated poverty make sustained moves to better neighborhoods while helping the parents and young adults in those families improve their success in the labor market
Pathways to Prosperity and Well-Being (Dakota and Olmstead Counties, Minnesota)	Implementation Only	A new initiative using human-centered design to offer a more coordinated and customized response to the needs and capacities of families involved with the counties' human services systems
Addiction Recovery Care (Kentucky)	Impact and Implementation	A mature, innovative program that combines treatment and recovery services with workforce development for individuals struggling with substance use disorder
Gen+ Initiative (Mississippi)	Implementation Only	An initiative in which individuals applying for assistance and other services at county offices are assessed and, based on their and their family's needs, are referred to "whole family" services that encompass education, literacy, parenting, youth, and job readiness
WorkAdvance (multiple states)	Long-Term Data Analysis	An innovative employment approach designed to help low-income disadvantaged workers prepare for and enter quality jobs with opportunities for advancement

The project will continue to work with states to identify interventions that are focused on improving employment, training, and economic security for low-income families. After interventions are identified, ACF and its contractors will determine the most rigorous evaluation approach feasible, focusing on random assignment designs where possible.

This multi-pronged research effort will produce individual reports for each intervention evaluated in addition to developing special topics papers.

Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse: The What Works Clearinghouse of Proven and Promising Approaches to Move Welfare Recipients to Work

The Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse is a new, congressionally mandated evidence review. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-31) directed HHS to create a clearinghouse of projects that have been subject to independent, rigorous evaluation to help us better understand what approaches are effective in moving welfare recipients into work. To create this clearinghouse, OPRE is conducting a systematic review of the evidence to identify projects that aim to improve employment outcomes, reduce employment challenges, and support self-sufficiency for low-income populations.

In establishing this new clearinghouse, OPRE has several goals:

- Conduct a transparent, comprehensive search to identify studies on employment and training interventions designed to improve self-sufficiency outcomes for low-income individuals;
- Rate the quality of those studies to assess the strength of the evidence they provide on the different interventions;
- Determine the evidence of effectiveness for those interventions;
- Create a user-friendly website to be launched in 2020 that will share the results and provide web-based tools to help state and local TANF administrators and policymakers, researchers, and the general public better understand how this evidence might apply to questions and contexts that matter to them; and
- Summarize the overall state of evidence in the field by creating and disseminating new reports that synthesize findings from the review and gaps in existing evidence.

The new clearinghouse aligns with and builds on the work OPRE had already been conducting for the Employment Strategies for Low-Income Adults Evidence Review (ESER), described earlier in this section. ESER is a systematic review of the evaluation research published between 1990 and 2014 on employment and training programs for low-income adults. It culminated in a searchable, public website (employmentstrategies.acf.hhs.gov/). A key difference between ESER and the new clearinghouse, however, is that while ESER analyzed the quality of the research evidence on the interventions reviewed, it did not assess the effectiveness of those interventions.

To effectively build on this existing work in line with the requirements of the new legislation, OPRE undertook a series of consultations with other federal staff and key experts in federal evidence reviews from the Departments of Labor, Justice, and Education, as well as other agencies within HHS. These consultations, which took place between late 2017 and early 2018, produced a series of recommendations for establishing the clearinghouse, which were shared for public comment through a [Federal Register Notice](#) published on June 6, 2018.

This project, which began in 2018, is led by Mathematica with assistance from MEF Associates and Hager Sharp.

EMPLOYMENT AND HEALTH LITERATURE REVIEW

An abundance of evidence suggests that working is connected to health and well-being. Although research consistently finds a link between being employed and good health and well-being and, conversely, between being unemployed and poorer health and well-being, the nature of these links is complex, and ascertaining the directionality of the relationship is methodologically challenging. While there are a number of ways in which employment promotes good health and well-being, the nature of the work and working conditions matter: not all jobs, nor all working conditions, promote good health.

Although an extensive body of research explores the relationship between employment and health, much less of it has focused on this relationship in the context of low-wage employment. To get a better understanding of the relationship between employment and health, especially for the populations that ACF serves, OPRE conducted a literature review to capture what existing research can tell us about the key pathways by which employment status is linked to health, the characteristics of jobs and working conditions that most likely affect health, and the factors that make it challenging to know definitively how employment and health are related.

Mathematica was the contractor for this work. The [literature review](#) was published in March 2019.

Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies

Many people have trouble fulfilling their goal of economic independence because they face complex challenges to finding and keeping a job. Moreover, decades of research on programs for people with complex barriers to employment show mixed results.

In 2018, OPRE contracted with Mathematica to conduct the Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies (NextGen) project to build on lessons learned and gaps in knowledge revealed by previous and current studies. NextGen will identify and test approximately nine innovative, promising employment interventions designed to improve employment and economic outcomes for low-income people with complex challenges to employment including physical and mental health conditions, substance misuse, a criminal history, or limited work skills and experience. The project is working closely with the Social Security Administration to incorporate a focus on employment-related early interventions for individuals with current or foreseeable disabilities who have limited work history and are at risk of applying for Supplemental Security Income.

The project will consider a wide range of employment strategies for evaluation. Strategies may include work opportunities, treatments for health conditions, personal and workplace supports, and opportunities to build hard and soft skills. In response to the growing recognition of the importance of employer engagement in job training and workforce integration programs, NextGen has a special focus on market-oriented or employer-driven programs, including social enterprises—organizations that hire workers who face complex challenges to produce goods or services for commercial sale.

Each evaluation of a promising intervention will use a randomized controlled trial to determine the intervention's impacts on participants' employment, earnings, and other outcomes. The study team will also conduct cost studies and descriptive studies of each intervention. Additionally, the team may conduct case studies of the role of employers in other promising strategies.

In its first year, the study team conducted extensive outreach to a range of stakeholders for input on promising interventions to consider for evaluation. The team is currently engaged in site identification and assessment activities. The project began working with its first site in 2018: the Utah Department of Workforce Services' Work Success program, which provides TANF recipients and other low-income clients statewide with coaching, employment and life skills training, and peer support to help them find and keep a job.

Lessons learned from the NextGen project will be shared with a broad range of stakeholders such as policymakers, practitioners, program developers, and researchers across the welfare, workforce, disability, education, and justice communities. The study team anticipates that findings from the descriptive and cost studies, and early findings on the effectiveness of the interventions, will be available beginning in 2022.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

OPRE has a strong history of sponsoring rigorous research on the effectiveness of education and training strategies for improving employment and earnings for TANF recipients and other low-income individuals. Currently, OPRE is a national leader in the rigorous evaluation of post-secondary career pathways programs. Career pathways programs connect education, training, and related supports in a pathway that leads to employment in a specific sector or occupation or to further training. The approach is gaining attention as a promising strategy to improve post-secondary education and training outcomes for low-income and low-skilled adults.

Although there is some research evidence on selected components of career pathways programs, to date there has been no rigorous research on the overall effectiveness of this approach. Beginning in 2007, with the launch of the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education project and continuing with the evaluations of the Health Profession Opportunity Grants program, ACF has developed a robust portfolio of research on the career pathways approach.

CAREER PATHWAYS

The career pathways framework has attracted increasing attention as a promising approach to post-secondary education and training for low-income and low-skilled adults. Its central feature is instruction that is organized as a series of manageable and well-articulated steps accompanied by strong supports and connections to employment. The steps provide opportunities for pre-college-level students to access college-level training and for better-skilled students to move to successively higher levels of credential-bearing training and employment. Each step incorporates customized curricula and instruction, academic and non-academic supports, and employment experiences and opportunities.

To engage, retain, and facilitate learning among low-skilled adults, the career pathways framework includes four categories of service strategies: (1) assessments of skills and needs; (2) promising and innovative approaches to basic skills instruction and occupational training; (3) academic and non-academic supports; and (4) approaches for connecting students with career-track employment opportunities. Within each of these categories, there are a variety of promising strategies. Though many programs include all of these strategies, the extent to which and ways they do so vary.

For more information visit www.career-pathways.org.

Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education

In 2007, OPRE initiated the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) study, a multi-site, random assignment evaluation of promising strategies for increasing employment and self-sufficiency among low-income families. The project aimed to study interventions with the potential to have substantial effects on earnings and income rather than just modest effects, prioritize strategies focused on skills development, and concentrate on a relatively wide population of

low-income parents. Based on stakeholder input, PACE came to focus on post-secondary career pathways as the main intervention framework to study.

The PACE team, led by Abt Associates, conducted implementation and impact evaluations of nine career pathways programs around the country. Each of the programs was profiled in a separate publication, available at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/pathways-for-advancing-careers-and-education.

The PACE partners included:

CAREER PATHWAY PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
Des Moines Area Community College, Workforce Training Academy Connect*	Students in the Workforce Training Academy (WTA) Connect program received contextualized basic skills instruction, instruction in employment and life skills, and vocational training through a short-term certificate course. Each short-term certificate offered in WTA Connect ladder into one or more specific certificate, degree, or diploma programs.
I-BEST Programs in Washington State	The Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program operates in all 34 of Washington’s community colleges to provide basic skills or English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and training in a range of credit-based occupational training programs, along with counseling and other supports. The PACE project is evaluating I-BEST model programs at the Bellingham Technical, Everett Community, and Whatcom Community Colleges.
Instituto del Progreso Latino, Carreras en Salud	Instituto del Progreso Latino is a large non-profit education and employment organization in Chicago dedicated to serving the city’s growing Latino population. Launched in 2005, Carreras en Salud (Careers in Health) is a career pathways program in nursing occupations for low-skilled and limited-English-proficient Latino/as that leads participants from a certified nursing assistant certification to pre-licensed practitioner nurse and ultimately to registered nurse.
Madison College, Patient Care Pathway Program*	The Patient Care Pathway Program provided short-term, condensed training that allowed lower-skilled students to take courses for college credit and prepared them for healthcare degree and diploma programs. Students were placed into one of two available academies depending on individual skill level.
Pima Community College, Pathways to Healthcare**	The Pathways to Healthcare program offered training to students in 16 health-care professions based on personal preference and test scores. Professions ranged from home health aides to medical billers/coders to EMT-paramedics. The length of training could be as short as the five-week nursing assistant training or up to two or three years for the associate degree programs.
San Diego Workforce Partnership, Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry**	The Bridge to Employment program enabled eligible adults to develop the skills and knowledge needed for emerging career opportunities in healthcare by providing extensive case management and support services.

CAREER PATHWAY PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
<u>Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement</u>	Serving four large counties in southern Texas, the non-profit Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA) aims to help students achieve an associate degree and gain occupational training in allied health, manufacturing, technology, business, education, and other specialized trades. VIDA offers a bridge program, the College Prep Academy, to build basic educational and language skills in preparation for enrollment at a local community college.
<u>Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, Health Careers for All**</u>	Health Careers for All was designed to meet the region's expanding healthcare labor needs while simultaneously addressing the training, employment, and advancement needs of its low-income residents by preparing them for jobs such as nursing assistant, medical office assistant, and phlebotomist.
<u>Year Up</u>	Year Up offers young adults skills training, experience, and support to empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education. The intensive, one-year program operates in eight cities nationally, and provides high school graduates and GED recipients between the ages of 18 and 24 with a combination of hands-on skill development and corporate internship opportunities.

* This partner is no longer operating the program as evaluated under PACE.

‡ This partner was supported by a Health Profession Opportunity Grant (2010-2015).

In 2015, the project released its [evaluation design report](#) and [impact analysis plan](#). The study released implementation and early impact reports in 2017 and 2018 for each of the nine demonstrations. In 2019, the study released a series of briefs summarizing key findings from the implementation and early impact reports for each program. OPRE is supporting intermediate and long-term follow up studies of the programs in PACE through the Career Pathways Outcomes Studies, discussed later in this section.

The study conducted in-depth interviews with a small number of participants across all nine programs. The project released four briefs based on interviews with PACE treatment group members that were focused on: participants' [motivations for enrolling](#) in PACE programs, the [challenges they faced](#) in participating in the programs, the [programmatic and other supports](#) they received while participating, and [students' progress on their career pathway](#). An additional brief focuses on [control group members' experiences](#).

The study also released a [brief](#) on findings from a quantitative analysis of participants in the control group, which highlights the risk factors disadvantaged students face in college success, and a [report](#) that shares the experiences of and lessons learned from Year Up's efforts to scale up their program.

In its final year, PACE released a [report](#) that shares cross-program implementation and impact findings, as well as a [brief](#) wherein staff from eight of the nine programs in PACE reflect on their experience participating in a rigorous evaluation.

The PACE study concluded at the end of 2018. Data collected for PACE is available for [secondary analysis](#) through the Inter-university Consortium on Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research.

[Evaluation Portfolio for the Health Profession Opportunity Grants Program](#)

The Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Program provides education and training to TANF recipients and other low-income individuals for occupations in the healthcare field that pay well and are expected either to experience labor shortages or to be in high demand. The HPOG Program is administered by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) within ACF.

The HPOG Program uses the career pathways framework of postsecondary occupational training and education to address the challenge of preparing nontraditional student populations for gainful employment while

considering their various assets and challenges related to education and work. HPOG grantee programs are expected to target skills and competencies demanded by the healthcare industry; support career pathways; result in an employer- or industry-recognized certificate or degree; combine supportive services with education and training services to help participants overcome barriers to employment; and provide services at times and locations that are easily accessible to targeted populations.

In 2010, OFA awarded the first round of HPOG grants to 32 organizations located across 23 states to carry out five-year programs (referred to as HPOG 1.0). In 2015, OFA awarded a second round of HPOG grants to 32 organizations located across 21 states for a new five-year period (referred to as HPOG 2.0). [OFA's website](#) provides additional information about the HPOG Program.

HPOG was authorized as a demonstration program with a mandated federal evaluation. OPRE developed a multi-pronged evaluation strategy to assess the success of the HPOG Program. The evaluation strategy aims to provide information on program implementation, systems change, outcomes, and impacts. OPRE's evaluation portfolio for HPOG includes a number of components.

Evaluations of HPOG 1.0:

The evaluations of HPOG 1.0 have largely concluded, with the exception of follow-up studies to assess the intermediate and long-term impacts of HPOG 1.0 (see the Career Pathways Outcomes Studies description, which appears later in this section). Below is a list and brief descriptions of the most recently concluded HPOG 1.0 evaluations, both of which were conducted by Abt Associates and Urban Institute; additional information is available on [OPRE's website](#).

- **HPOG National Implementation Evaluation (NIE)** included an in-depth examination of the HPOG grantee programs' design and implementation, a systems analysis of networks created by HPOG programs, and a quantitative descriptive analysis of HPOG program outputs and outcomes.
- **The HPOG Impact Study** used an experimental design to examine the effect of HPOG on participants' educational and economic outcomes at about 15 months after random assignment. The study also aimed to identify which components of HPOG programs (e.g., types of support services, program structure, and training areas) contribute to participant success. Some grantees implemented a multi-arm experimental design to test the effectiveness of three program enhancements: facilitated peer support groups, emergency assistance, and non-cash incentives. As noted

above, OPRE is also supporting longer-term follow-up of participants in the HPOG Impact Study. The Career Pathways Intermediate Outcomes Study is examining impacts on participants' educational and economic outcomes three years after random assignment, and the Career Pathways Long-Term Outcomes Study is doing so six years after random assignment. More information about both of these studies is provided later in this section.

Evaluations of HPOG 2.0:

- **[Evaluation and System Design for Career Pathways Programs: 2nd Generation of HPOG](#)**

The purpose of this project, led by Abt Associates in partnership with Urban Institute and AKA Enterprise Solutions, is to provide recommendations for the design of an evaluation to assess the implementation, outcomes, systems change, and impacts of the HPOG 2.0 programs. Additionally, this project built and provides ongoing maintenance and support for the HPOG Participant Accomplishment and Grant Evaluation System (PAGES), a web-based management information system, to track grantee progress for program management and to record grantee and participant data for use in the evaluation. Based on PAGES data, the project drafts annual reports that describe program offerings; participant characteristics; and participant outcomes in training enrollment, training completion, and employment. The [Year One Annual Report](#) was released in 2017, the [Year Two Annual Report](#) was released in 2018, and the [Year Three Annual Report](#) was released in June 2019. The project also produces special topics papers; three have been released to date:

- [Career Prospects for Certified Nursing Assistants: Insights for Training Programs and Policymakers from the HPOG Program](#)
 - [Targeting Higher Skills and Healthcare Jobs: How HPOG Grantees Set and Use Performance Goals](#)
 - [Which Program Characteristics are Linked to Program Impacts? Lessons from the HPOG 1.0 Evaluation](#)
- **National and Tribal Evaluation of the 2nd Generation of HPOG**
OPRE awarded a contract in 2015 to Abt Associates, in partnership with MEF Associates, Urban Institute, Insight Policy Research, and NORC at the University of Chicago, to undertake impact, outcome, and implementation studies of the second round of grants awarded under the HPOG program. Under this contract, OPRE is conducting evaluations of the 27

non-tribal HPOG 2.0 grantees (HPOG 2.0 National Evaluation) and the five Tribal HPOG 2.0 grantees (HPOG 2.0 Tribal Evaluation).

SUMMARY OF THIRD-YEAR HPOG 2.0 PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES FROM THE [HPOG 2.0 YEAR THREE ANNUAL REPORT](#)

- From its start through the end of Year 3, HPOG 2.0 grantee programs enrolled 23,215 participants. About 14,293 participants began healthcare training in the first three years of HPOG 2.0, and 88 percent of them had completed training or were still in progress by the end of Year 3. Two-thirds of participants who completed healthcare training went on to earn a professional license or certification and three-fifths started a job in healthcare or were promoted within an existing job in the field.
- About one-third of all participants engaged in standalone basic skills training (not combined with occupational training); of those, 92 percent had completed or were still engaged in that training at the end of Year 3. Of those who completed, 76 percent moved on to enroll in healthcare training.
- Under a set of overall career progress metrics that combine multiple ways individuals can make progress (including basic skills or prerequisites completion, healthcare training completion, and employment), 52 percent of HPOG participants showed overall career progress by the end of Year 3, and another 16 percent were engaged in activities toward career progress.
- Similar to results for earlier years, participants in HPOG 2.0 are mainly single, female, and have dependent children. At the time of enrollment, the most common benefit received was Medicaid (67 percent), followed by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (59 percent) and TANF (20 percent). More than one-third had some college education, already had a professional license or certification, or were in school at the time of enrollment in the program.
- HPOG 2.0 participants engage in a variety of activities and receive a variety of supportive services. For example, almost half engaged in skill-development activities and almost half received transportation assistance. HPOG 2.0 funded tuition in whole or in part for the majority of participants' healthcare trainings.

- **HPOG 2.0 National Evaluation:** The HPOG 2.0 National Evaluation includes a descriptive evaluation, impact evaluation, and cost-benefit study. Data sources for all three components of the National Evaluation include program data, administrative data from the National Directory of New Hires and National Student Clearinghouse, and participant follow-up surveys at approximately 15 and 36 months after random assignment.
 - The descriptive evaluation includes implementation, systems change, and outcomes studies and will help interpret findings from the impact study. The [descriptive evaluation design report](#) presents detailed information on the design of the implementation, systems change, and outcome studies. The project has also published a [research design plan](#) for conducting in-depth interviews with HPOG 2.0 participants.
 - The impact evaluation is rigorously assessing the impacts of HPOG programs administered by the non-tribal grantees. The 27 non-tribal grantees operate 38 HPOG programs across 17 states. For the impact evaluation, eligible participants are randomly assigned to either a treatment group that is allowed to receive HPOG services or a control group that does not have access to HPOG but is allowed to receive other services available in the community ("business as usual"). The [impact evaluation design plan](#) presents information on the design of the impact evaluation, key research questions, and the methods that will be used to estimate the impact of HPOG 2.0 programs. The impact evaluation's analysis plan, which will be published in late 2019 or early 2020, will provide additional information on how analyses to estimate the impact of HPOG will be conducted.
 - The evaluation also includes a cost-benefit analysis to assess the costs and benefits of a standard HPOG program. The [cost-benefit analysis design plan](#) includes information on how costs and benefits will be estimated and compared.
- **HPOG 2.0 Tribal Evaluation:** The five Tribal HPOG 2.0 grantees are participating in a comprehensive implementation and outcome study led by NORC at the University of Chicago. The HPOG 2.0 Tribal Evaluation is assessing the HPOG programs administered by the Tribal grantees using sound scientific methods and grounded in culturally appropriate approaches. The evaluation is guided

by the principles outlined in [A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities](#), developed by ACF's Child Welfare Research and Evaluation Tribal Workgroup. The Tribal Evaluation is using a mixed-methods approach and is collecting quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources. The research questions focus on the Tribal HPOG programs' structure, processes, and outcomes. The Tribal HPOG 2.0 [evaluation plan](#) and the Tribal HPOG [literature review](#) are available on the OPRE website. Also available on the OPRE website are two early project briefs:

- [An Introduction to the Tribal Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG\) 2.0 Program and Evaluation](#)
- [Principles to Guide Research with Tribal Communities: The Tribal HPOG 2.0 Evaluation in Action](#)

The first brief introduces the evaluation and describes how it is informed by the Tribal HPOG 1.0 evaluation. The second project brief explains how the principles outlined in the Roadmap and findings from the literature review guide the design and execution of the evaluation.

- **HPOG University Partnership 2.0 Research Grants (HPOG UP 2.0)** augment OPRE's multi-pronged evaluation strategy for HPOG by funding university research teams that conduct research and evaluation studies that focus on questions relevant to HPOG program goals and objectives and that benefit the broader employment and self-sufficiency research field. The teams partner with HPOG program grantees as an integral part of the research plan development and execution. A [brief](#) provides an overview of the HPOG University Partnership 2.0 Research Grants. The HPOG UP 2.0 grants were awarded in 2016 to the following universities:

ORGANIZATION RECEIVING AWARD	PROJECT TITLE	HPOG PROGRAM PARTNER
Northwestern University, Institute for Policy Research	The Northwestern University Two-Generation Study (NU2Gen) of Parent and Child Human Capital Advancement	Community Action Project of Tulsa County, Inc. (Tulsa, OK)
Brandeis University, Institute on Assets and Social Policy, Heller School for Social Policy and Management	Study of Career Advancement and Quality Jobs in Health Care	The WorkPlace (Bridgeport, CT)
Loyola University of Chicago, School of Social Work	Evaluation of Goal-Directed Psychological Capital and Employer Coaching in Health Profession Opportunity Development	Chicago State University (Chicago, IL)

Career Pathways Outcomes Studies

The [Career Pathways Intermediate Outcomes \(CPIO\) Study](#) and the [Career Pathways Long-Term Outcomes \(CPLO\) Study](#) are follow-up studies to assess the intermediate and long-term impacts, respectively, of career pathways program models. Specifically, CPIO and CPLO will look at educational progress, employment and earnings, and family well-being among participants in the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Impact Study and Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) study, both described earlier in this section. The CPIO and CPLO

studies complement and augment the HPOG Impact and PACE studies, which are examining short-term outcomes from 15 to 24 months after entry into the study.

CPIO, launched in 2014, will examine impacts at 36 months after random assignment, while CPLO, launched in 2016, will look at impacts approximately 72 months after random assignment. CPIO and CPLO will use follow-up surveys and administrative data on all participants to examine educational attainment, employment and earnings, and family well-being impacts. Both studies are led by Abt Associates.

Key evaluation questions that will be addressed in these studies include:

1. What are the intermediate and long-term effects of the HPOG and PACE programs on their populations of interest?
2. How do effects of career pathways programs vary over time, across outcomes or domains, by occupational sector, by program model, and by participant characteristics?
3. Do different PACE and HPOG models, strategies, or components (e.g., a particular curricular model, such as I-BEST, or particular recruitment strategies or support services) lead to different impacts for participants?
4. How can career pathways models be adjusted to promote intermediate and longer-term outcomes for participants?

In 2017, OPRE released the [analysis plan for the cost-benefit analyses](#) the CPIO team will conduct in up to six of the nine PACE programs. OPRE also released [analysis plans](#) for the PACE intermediate follow-up analyses in November 2018 and the HPOG intermediate [follow-up analyses](#) in January 2019. OPRE also released the [HPOG intermediate impacts report](#) in late 2019. Key findings from the report are highlighted in the text box on this page. Reports on intermediate impacts from PACE will be released in 2020. Reports on long-term outcomes and impacts from HPOG and PACE are expected beginning in late 2020.



Career Pathways Secondary Analysis Grants

In late 2019, OPRE will award four two-year grants to support secondary analysis of data collected for the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) study and the evaluations of the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Program. The purpose of the Career Pathways Secondary Data Analysis Grants is to stimulate and fund secondary analysis of data collected through the PACE, HPOG Impact Study, and HPOG NIE evaluations (each discussed earlier in this section) on questions relevant to career pathways programs' goals and objectives. The grants are an integral component of OPRE's multi-pronged career pathways portfolio.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE [HPOG IMPACT STUDY THREE-YEAR IMPACTS REPORT](#)

According to a follow-up survey initiated about three years after randomization and national administrative data available through the 13th follow-up quarter, relative to the control group:

- 13 percentage points more of the HPOG treatment group had completed training (one of the study's two confirmatory outcomes); and
- Quarterly earnings (the other confirmatory outcome) among the treatment group were no different in the 12th and 13th quarters after random assignment, with both groups earning approximately \$5,000 on average per quarter.

In addition to these two confirmatory outcomes, the three-year analysis also found that, relative to the control group:

- 1 percentage point more of the treatment group were employed;
- 12 percentage points more of the treatment group were employed in healthcare;
- 2 percentage points more of the treatment group were employed at a job offering health insurance;
- 7 percentage points more of the treatment group experienced career progress, a measure that combines educational progress with earnings growth;
- 3 percentage points fewer of the treatment group reported financial hardship, as indicated by generally not having enough money to make ends meet at the end of the month over the prior year; and
- 1 percent more of the treatment group self-assessed as "confident" in their career knowledge.

NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER ON HISPANIC CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Established in 2013, the [National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families](#) generates new research and translates research across three priority areas—poverty reduction and self-sufficiency, healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood, and early care and education—to build knowledge and inform ACF programs and policies in order to better serve Hispanic children and families. The Center has three primary goals: 1) advance a cutting-edge research agenda; 2) build research capacity; and 3) translate emerging research concerning low-income Hispanic children and families in the United States. In 2018, OPRE awarded a new cooperative agreement for the Center to Child Trends and NORC at the University of Chicago, in collaboration with university partners at the University of Maryland-College Park, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and New York University’s Institute for Human Development and Social Change. Over the past year, the Center released numerous [publications, data](#)

[tools, webinars, and trainings](#) examining various topics concerning low-income Hispanics in the United States. These include an [analysis](#) of the job characteristics of low-income Hispanic parents; an [examination](#) of state-level variation in Child Care and Development Fund policies and practices that may shape the use of child care subsidies among Hispanic families; a research [synthesis](#) focused on the early home environments of Latino children and their families; an [analysis](#) of fertility rates among women in the United States; an [analysis](#) of and a [webinar](#) about the use of non-parental care and the search for care among low-income Hispanic families; and a [fact sheet](#) about tailoring job training programs for Hispanics. In addition, the Center shared [recommendations](#) for building capacity in the field through a multi-pronged approach to supporting emerging scholars, including offering resources and opportunities to explore and strengthen skills such as [data visualization](#).

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

A growing body of research demonstrates that all humans have limited attention, imperfect self-control, and finite cognitive resources, and that public policies can be more effective when they acknowledge and account for these realities of human capacity and behavior. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that coping with the stress of poverty and economic insecurity can place a high demand on cognitive resources, making attention to the realities of human capacity and behavior particularly important when designing programs and policies for low-income populations. Insights from psychology, neuroscience, and other social and behavioral sciences can provide tools to help the design of programs reflect the reality of how people actually make decisions and behave. OPRE is building a portfolio of projects focused on learning and applying insights from social and behavioral sciences.

In 2010, OPRE launched the [Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency \(BIAS\) project](#), the first major opportunity to apply behavioral science insights to programs serving low-income and vulnerable families in the United States. In 2015, OPRE launched [BIAS Capstone](#) and [BIAS Next Generation](#) to synthesize, disseminate, and build on BIAS's applied behavioral science work. Most recently, OPRE created the [Behavioral Interventions Scholars Grants](#) to support dissertation research that will add to the growing body of knowledge on effective behavioral interventions for ACF programs and populations.

Additionally, OPRE's [Goal-Oriented Adult Learning in Self-Sufficiency](#) project is exploring how psychological processes associated with goal-oriented skills (such as goal-setting, self-regulation, planning, and problem-solving) can usefully be incorporated into programs aimed at improving job entry, retention, and advancement. OPRE's [Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations](#),

featured in the section on Employment and the Labor Market, also draws on behavioral insights.

Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency Next Generation

Many human services programs are designed such that individuals must make active decisions and undertake a series of steps in order to benefit from them—from choosing which programs to apply for, to completing forms, attending meetings, showing proof of eligibility, and arranging travel and child care. Program designers often implicitly assume that individuals will carefully consider options and make decisions that maximize their well-being. Over the past several decades, however, innovative research in the area of behavioral economics has shown that human decision-making is often imperfect and imprecise. People – clients and program administrators alike – procrastinate, get overwhelmed by choices, and miss important details. As a result, both programs and participants may not always achieve the goals they set for themselves.

Insights from behavioral economics, which combines findings from psychology and economics, suggest that a deeper understanding of decision-making and behavior could improve human services program design and outcomes. Principles from behavioral economics can both shed light on decision-making and offer new tools to improve outcomes for program participants. Small changes in the environment can facilitate desired behaviors; planning and commitment devices can be used to improve follow-through; and default rules can produce positive outcomes even for people who fail to act.

OPRE's [Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency \(BIAS\) project](#) was the first major opportunity to apply a behavioral economics lens to programs that serve low-income and vulnerable families in the United States. The project demonstrated that applying behavioral insights to challenges facing human services programs can improve program operations and outcomes. While

the effects of interventions tested in BIAS were typically modest, they were consistently achieved and meaningful due to their scalability and low-cost. In 2015, OPRE launched the BIAS Next Generation (BIAS NG) project to build on the successes of BIAS and continue exploring the application of behavioral science to the programs and target populations of ACF. This next-generation project, led by MDRC in collaboration with Larry Katz of Harvard University, Marianne Bertrand of the University of Chicago, Judd Kessler of the University of Pennsylvania, MEF Associates, Child Trends, and Public Strategies, is building on the activities and lessons of BIAS while also going beyond the work of BIAS in several ways including:

- Working with additional ACF programs, specifically TANF, child welfare, and Head Start programs;
- Testing additional types of interventions, including [going beyond “nudges”](#) and considering changes to program structures and choice architectures; and
- Collecting additional information about the interventions, including conducting implementation research to better understand how and why the interventions do or do not work.

For each program area, the BIAS NG team consulted with stakeholders about the major challenges facing these programs. Based on these consultations, BIAS NG is designing interventions that aim to increase TANF recipient engagement in welfare-to-work programs. For child welfare, BIAS NG is focusing on goals including improving foster family recruitment and retention and engaging families in services that lead to accomplishment of their permanency plans. In 2017, BIAS NG completed recruitment of an initial set of TANF and child welfare program

sites to participate in the project. These include Los Angeles County, California; Monroe County, New York; Allegheny County, Pennsylvania; and Washington State. In 2018, the project launched behavioral interventions designed to address the identified challenges in several of these sites. In 2019, the team completed consultations in order to select a set of challenges to focus on within Head Start and began recruitment of program sites.

To share lessons from the initial stage of the project, BIAS NG has published two Behavioral Buzz newsletters on the [challenge of going beyond “nudges” in the child welfare system](#) and [broadly applicable insights from work with TANF providers](#).

Behavioral Interventions Scholars Grants

The Behavioral Interventions Scholars (BIS) grant program was launched in 2017 to support dissertation research by advanced graduate students who are applying a behavioral science lens to specific research questions relevant to social services programs and policies and other issues facing low-income and vulnerable families in the United States. In line with OPRE’s Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency portfolio of projects, these grants are intended to facilitate the completion of high-quality research projects that will add to the growing body of knowledge on effective behavioral interventions for ACF programs and populations. BIS also aims to build capacity in the research field to use behavioral science approaches in this area and to foster mentoring relationships between high-quality doctoral students and faculty members.

The current BIS grant recipients and their projects are:

GRADUATE STUDENT	PROJECT TITLE	UNIVERSITY	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/ FACULTY MENTOR
Westin Merrick	Using Behavioral and Design Science to Reduce Administrative Burdens: Evidence from Minneapolis Public Housing	University of Minnesota	Dr. Jodi Sandfort
Emily Hanno	A Novel Approach to Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators and Caregivers	Harvard University	Dr. Stephanie Jones
Anne Byrne	The Processes of Supportive Relationships as a Resilience Factor: Towards a Culturally Responsive Construct	Cornell University	Dr. David Just
William Delgado	The MPACT Initiative: Using Behavioral Tools to Improve Children’s Early Math Skills	University of Chicago	Dr. Ariel Kalil

Goal-Oriented Adult Learning in Self-Sufficiency

ACF launched the Goal-Oriented Adult Learning in Self-Sufficiency (GOALS) project in 2014 to investigate the extent to which psychology-informed frameworks can be incorporated into programs aimed at improving job entry, retention, and advancement.

The project, conducted by Mathematica, reflected the confluence of several lines of research suggesting that adults who engaged in goal-directed activities were more likely to be productive and successful both in the workplace and at home. Emerging research by psychologists and neuroscientists also suggests that self-regulation skills such as executive functioning, metacognition, motivation, and other cognitive and emotional skills are critical for goal achievement. In addition, research suggests that exposure to poverty, chronic stress, lack of in-demand skills, and parenting responsibilities may challenge an individual's ability to operationalize self-regulation skills that support goal-directed behaviors and

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE [GOALS SUMMARY REPORT](#)

- Programs seeking to help low-income adults achieve economic self-sufficiency may be able to integrate a set of lessons from psychology, neuroscience, and behavioral science into their interventions.
- Research suggests the existence of potentially effective strategies for strengthening self-regulation skills and goal achievement among low-income adults in employment programs. Yet, given that only a few programs for low-income adults have attempted to implement these types of strategies to improve participants' employment outcomes, there is still much to learn about which approaches could most effectively and efficiently be integrated into such programs and how best to do so.
- No employment programs explicitly addressing self-regulation and goal achievement have undergone rigorous testing. Measuring the outcomes and impacts on skills and behaviors of interventions targeting self-regulation and goal attainment can be challenging, but can provide critical information on whether an intervention is working as intended and why and who might be most likely to benefit from the intervention.

advance self-sufficiency. While there has been substantial research in the early childhood field on the impact of exposure to adverse experiences, there has been less work focused on psychological processes that could support adults and young adults in overcoming similar contextual challenges.

The GOALS project aimed to improve understanding of relevant self-regulation skills associated with goal-directed behaviors both by synthesizing existing research and by undertaking fieldwork to learn about adult workforce development programs that are currently integrating these frameworks. In 2017, GOALS released a [synthesis report](#). The report summarizes existing research about the underlying skills relevant for goal-directed behaviors and goal achievement in workforce programs and promising strategies and interventions for strengthening these skills. In 2017, the project produced a [conceptual framework](#) that describes the relationship between self-regulation skills, the goal achievement process, personal goal attainment, and employment and self-sufficiency outcomes. The conceptual framework describes approaches and strategies for strengthening goal-directed behaviors among low-income adults in workforce development programs.

The project has published the following briefs:

1. [New Perspectives on Practice: A Guide to Measuring Self-Regulation and Goal-Related Outcomes in Employment Programs](#) provides guidance on how employment and human services programs can measure self-regulation and goal achievement and describes considerations for selecting measures and deciding when and with whom they might be used.
2. [Using Psychology-Informed Strategies to Promote Self-Sufficiency: A Review of Innovative Programs](#) illustrates how some programs for low-income adults are attempting to strengthen participants' self-regulation skills or make it easier for them to use existing skills. The brief includes profiles of five programs, which are intended to help practitioners understand how research-informed practices are currently being implemented in a range of contexts and incorporated into existing interventions.
3. [Using The Science About Self-Regulation To Improve Economic Outcomes For TANF Families](#) articulates a vision for TANF programs that is informed by the science about self-regulation and goal achievement. It emphasizes three principles for helping TANF recipients use self-regulation strategies to improve economic outcomes for children and families: 1) reduce sources of stress; 2) strengthen core life skills (for example, planning, monitoring, and exercising self-control); and 3) support responsive relationships.

4. [Improving Employment Outcomes: Using Innovative Goal-Oriented Strategies in TANF Programs](#) describes the efforts of four TANF programs to implement three new interventions that are informed by evidence on self-regulation and designed to help participants reach their personal and job-related goals.
5. [Supporting Employees and Maximizing Profit: The Case for Workforce Development Focused on Self-Regulation](#) presents evidence for developing the self-regulation skills of low-wage workers in order to improve their outcomes and employers' profitability.

GOALS concluded in 2019 following publication of a summary report, which is described in the text box on the previous page.

CROSS-CUTTING AND OTHER SAFETY NET RESEARCH

In addition to research that falls clearly within the substantive areas of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Employment and the Labor Market, Education and Training, and Behavioral Science, OPRE's family self-sufficiency research portfolio includes several projects that span these issues in a cross-cutting way.

Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Scholars Network

The inaugural Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Scholars Network supported cooperative agreements with academic researchers to work independently and collectively on systematic, multi-disciplinary examinations of the current gaps in family self-sufficiency and stability research. The Scholars Network was one of the three components of OPRE's Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Consortium. The major areas of focus for the Scholars' collaborative work were 1) instability and public policy and 2) safety net access in the 21st century. Products developed by the Scholars Network, including short research videos and discussion guides, can be found at <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-focus-areas/family-support/additionaltopics/fssrc>.

The first Scholars Network closed its five-year cycle in 2018. At the end of FY 2019, OPRE released a [funding opportunity announcement](#) for a new Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Scholars Network and expects to make cooperative agreement awards early in FY 2020.

Advancing Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency Research Project

Launched in 2012 and led by Mathematica, this project provided timely and flexible research and evaluation technical assistance to ACF and ACF stakeholders. The project's work with TANF and human services agencies at the state and local level aimed to support these agencies in becoming better users and producers of high-quality research. The Advancing Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency Research Project was one of the three components of OPRE's Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Consortium.

As part of those efforts, the project developed the "Learn, Innovate, Improve" (LI²) framework for working with sites. LI² is a research-based approach to program improvement that embeds analytic methods in the process of designing, implementing, and iteratively testing program changes. In 2019, the project published the final two briefs in a series that provides practical guidance for implementing the approach. The briefs in this series are:

- [Learn, Innovate, Improve \(LI²\): Enhancing Programs and Improving Lives](#)
- [The Learn Phase: Creating Sustainable Change in Human Services](#)
- [The Innovate Phase: Co-creating Evidence-informed Solutions to Improve Human Services Programs](#)
- [Using a "Road Test" to Improve Human Services Programs](#)

The Building Evaluation Capacity in TANF project, described earlier in the report, builds on this work, which concluded in 2019.

[Assets for Independence Evaluation](#)

From 1998 until 2017, ACF operated the Assets for Independence (AFI) program, a demonstration program that supported an assets-based approach for increasing the economic self-sufficiency of individuals and families with low incomes through Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). In 2011, ACF launched the first-ever random assignment evaluation of the impact of participation in the AFI program. The AFI Evaluation built on the previous quasi-experimental evaluation of the AFI program, as well as other research on IDAs. Research suggests that IDAs help low-income families save; however, rigorous, experimental research is limited, and the majority of research has not focused on AFI-funded IDAs. Although the AFI program was last funded in FY 2016, questions remain about the impact of the AFI program on participant outcomes.

The study, led by Urban Institute and its partners MEF Associates and RTI International, began with an extensive field assessment to identify potential evaluation sites. The evaluation includes two AFI grantees: Prosperity Works in New Mexico and RISE Financial Pathways in Los Angeles, CA. Enrollment began in 2013 and ended in 2014. A [report](#) summarizing early impact and implementation findings was released in 2016.

In 2015, ACF provided support to Urban Institute and its partners to conduct intermediate follow-up data collection on participants in the initial study. This follow-on effort surveyed participants at 36 months after random assignment in order to provide important information on the intermediate impacts of AFI participation. This follow-up is critical for thoroughly evaluating AFI, as IDAs are designed to help people move up the asset and economic ladder over time. The 36-month follow-up survey was completed in 2017, and a [final report](#) summarizing impact findings was published in November 2019. The project will also produce a synthesis brief, expected in 2020, which will synthesize findings across the two AFI grantee sites in the evaluation and place the findings in the context of the AFI program and other asset-building programs.

[Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Human Services Analysis Execution](#)

This project builds on OPRE's [Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Human Services \(RED\)](#) project, which concluded in 2017. RED helped build a base of knowledge to inform ACF's identification and understanding of ethnic and racial differences across the service spectrum—more specifically, in access to and take-up of human services; nature and quality of services received; and outcomes of services. The goal was to examine how greater

insight into racial and ethnic disparities could be used to improve human services program delivery for ACF. To help achieve this goal, RED created a research plan to reliably identify racial and ethnic disparities across the service delivery system in a range of ACF programs and services. The plan outlines research questions and proposes approaches to addressing those questions, including recommended data sources, analytic strategies, and data collection activities.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Human Services Analysis Execution (RED-X), will implement RED's research plan in relation to TANF and to Child Care Development Fund-administered child care subsidies. Addressing the research questions and implementing the analyses and activities outlined in RED's plan will allow ACF to identify whether disparities exist in these programs, the magnitude of any disparities, and how these disparities may vary across the two programs. The goal of this new work is to improve ACF's human services program delivery by identifying opportunities to reduce any racial and ethnic disparities in access, treatment, or outcomes.

The project launched in 2018 and is conducted by Urban Institute and its partner NORC at the University of Chicago.

[Building Evaluative Capacity Through a Focus on Key Components of the Community Services Block Grant/Community Action Agency Model](#)

The mission of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is to provide assistance to states and local communities, working through a network of Community Action Agencies (CAA) and other neighborhood-based organizations, for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient. CSBG is administered by the Office of Community Services (OCS) at ACF. Beginning in FY 2012, OCS initiated efforts to increase performance and improve outcomes at all levels of the CSBG network. Specifically, OCS has worked to develop reporting systems that better integrate information from the local level on the people served, services provided, strategies used, and outcomes achieved.

Building on these efforts, this project hones in on the special challenges the CSBG network faces in assessing the outcomes of its community-level initiatives. Developing more robust tools to assess the impacts of initiatives that attempt to affect change at the community level is a long-standing challenge for the evaluation community, in

general, but it has a particular significance for members of the CSBG network for whom community-level change is a core aspect of their mission. To help CSBG-eligible entities tell an effective and accurate “causal story” about their community-level change work, this project is identifying promising practices to assessing effectiveness in relation to community-level change efforts. To identify these promising practices, the project:

- Consulted with experts;
- Conducted an internal analysis of data states report to the federal government as part of their required reporting about CSBG-funded activities; and
- Undertook a review of existing literature.

The result of this project will be a published summary of the literature review that explores lessons from both the literature on measuring community-level change and the literature on evaluating specific community-level initiatives. In summarizing these lessons, the literature review will look to how these might apply in the CSBG context. The literature review will also include an appendix of case studies highlighting the approaches taken to evaluating a set of well-known community-level change efforts.

Conducted by Urban Institute, the project launched in 2016 and will conclude in 2019.

OPRE METHODS INQUIRIES

The Methods Inquiries project helps ensure that OPRE-funded research uses the most scientifically advanced and appropriately applied methods possible. To accomplish this goal, OPRE regularly convenes meetings of scientists and research experts to advance its understanding of critical topics in social science research methodology. In addition to OPRE staff, these meetings include participants from a variety of contexts including academia, government, and the private sector. The meetings explore innovations in research design, analytic techniques, and measurement. Additionally, the Methods Inquiries project includes an ongoing seminar series; publications with further information on topics addressed in the meetings; and ad hoc responses to emerging methodological issues.

To date, OPRE has sponsored ten meetings on innovative methods. The most recent meeting, held in October 2019, was entitled “Methods for Promoting Open Science in Social Policy Research and Evaluation.” Prior meetings explored effect size; sub-group analysis; implementation science; innovative directions in estimating impact; methods for unpacking the “black box” of programs and policies; use of administrative data in social policy research; alternatives to randomized controlled trials; Bayesian methods; and rapid learning methods. These meetings are intended to help OPRE explore recent methodological advances, gaps in current knowledge and implementation, and opportunities to apply innovative methods to government-funded research and evaluation.

Following the 2018 meeting on rapid learning methods, OPRE released a brief summarizing key points raised during the event. The brief [Rapid Learning: Methods to Examine and Improve Social Programs](#) and an accompanying video provide an orientation to rapid learning methods, including definitions of key terms; questions to guide the design of an appropriate and adequate rapid learning approach; and steps that federal agencies can take to promote the effective use of rapid learning methods. A list of publications for further reading is forthcoming.

In addition, in 2019, OPRE published two briefs and one video related to the 2017 meeting on Bayesian methods. The first brief, [Bayesian Inference for Social Policy Research](#), provides an overview of the Bayesian perspective and highlights potential advantages of Bayesian inference over frequentist inference. The second brief, [Moving Beyond Statistical Significance: The BASIE \(BAYesian Interpretations of Estimates\) Framework for Interpreting Findings from Impact Evaluations](#), describes the potential misinterpretations that may result from using null hypothesis significance testing and proposes the BASIE Framework in response. The video [What Are Bayesian Methods? – OPRE in 60 Seconds](#) offers a primer for audiences less familiar with Bayesian inference and analysis.

Materials from all of OPRE’s past methods meetings, including agendas, presentations, and publications, are available at www.opremethodsmeeting.org.

Descriptive Study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program

Established by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in 1980, the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program serves refugees and other eligible youth within the United States who do not have a parent or relative available and committed to providing for their long-term care. The URM Program provides services within or parallel to the domestic child welfare system, including placements, independent living services, educational assistance, and other services to promote youth well-being through local URM provider agencies. While past research has examined programs and outcomes for youth aging out of domestic foster care, these studies have not focused specifically on the URM Program and its participants.

In 2017, OPRE launched the Descriptive Study of the URM Program with the goal of improving the field's understanding of the range of child welfare services and benefits provided through the URM Program and the

experiences of participants. Led by MEF Associates and its partner Child Trends, in coordination with ORR, the study includes analysis of URM Program administrative data, surveys of state administrators and URM service providers, and site visits to six URM service providers. During the site visits, the study team will interview program managers, staff, and community partners, and conduct focus groups with URM youth and foster parents.

In 2019, the study launched the surveys and began planning for the site visits. OPRE, ORR, and the project team worked together to select URM service providers for site visits across six different states, representing a diverse range of program ages, program sizes, geographic contexts, policy and program environments, and mixes of URM youth from around the world. Additionally, the study team began analyzing administrative data on URM youth's placements, services received, and well-being. Findings from these analyses will be available beginning in 2020.

BABY'S FIRST YEARS

Baby's First Years, launched in 2017, is a multi-site randomized controlled trial supported by a grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) within the National Institutes of Health, along with other public and private funders. This study seeks to fill important gaps in scientific knowledge about the role of economic resources in children's early development by evaluating whether unconditional cash payments have a causal effect on the cognitive, socio-emotional, and brain development of infants and toddlers in low-income U.S. families. Specifically, 1,000 mothers of infants with incomes below the federal poverty line from four diverse U.S. communities will receive monthly cash payments by debit card for the first 40 months of the child's life. Parents in the experimental group will receive \$333 per month (\$4,000 per year), whereas parents in the control group will receive a nominal monthly payment of \$20.

In order to understand the impacts of the added income on children's cognitive and behavioral development, an interdisciplinary study team will assess treatment/control group differences at age 3 (and, for a subset of measures, age 2) on measures of cognitive, language, memory, self-regulation, and socio-emotional development. Because brain circuitry may be

sensitive to the effects of early experience even before early behavioral differences can be detected, the study team will also assess treatment/control group differences in measures of brain activity. To understand how family economic behavior, parenting, and parent stress and well-being change in response to income enhancement, the study team will assess treatment/control differences in family expenditures, food insecurity, housing, and neighborhood quality; family routines and time use; parent stress, mental health, and cognition; parenting practices; and child care arrangements at child age 2 and, for a subset of these measures, child age 1.

In May 2019, OPRE contributed funds to the NICHD grant to enable a qualitative examination of how the cash income affects families' lives. Because the meaning mothers attach to the income is important to how they will use it and the impacts it will have on families, the study team will conduct four waves of qualitative interviews with a subset of mothers in two sites over the course of the study to ask about their views and experiences of the transfer. Together, these analyses will provide the first definitive understanding of the extent to which income plays a causal role in determining early child cognitive, socio-emotional, and brain development among low-income families.

[How TANF Agencies Support Families Experiencing Homelessness](#)

In 2013, ACF's Office of Family Assistance (OFA) released an Information Memorandum on the "[Use of TANF Funds to Serve Homeless Families and Families at Risk of Experiencing Homelessness](#)," which clarifies how TANF funds can be used to help address the housing and other needs of families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It encourages TANF agencies to consider using TANF funds to address housing needs; coordinate services for TANF-eligible homeless families; provide employment services to TANF-eligible homeless individuals; and serve as partners in statewide, regional, and local homeless efforts, such as Continuums of Care.

ACF is interested in learning about the extent to which states, counties, and local agencies are explicitly using TANF funds to serve families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and what they are specifically doing with TANF funds to support and serve these families. This project will include a scan of state policies (including an agency survey and document review), site visits, TANF agency and partner organization staff interviews, and focus groups with TANF adult recipients.

The project launched in 2017 and is being conducted by Abt Associates in partnership with MEF Associates. In 2019, a web survey was administered to 54 state and territory TANF administrators and 150 county and local-level administrators. Analysis and site visits will be conducted through 2019 and 2020.

[Human-Centered Design for Human Services](#)

In 2018, OPRE launched the Human-Centered Design for Human Services (HCD4HS) project, awarded to Child Trends, in partnership with MEF Associates and design firm Anthro-Tech, Inc. Human-centered design (HCD) is an approach that promotes the generation of innovative solutions to complex problems through new, creative ways of thinking about a problem and through intentional engagement with the beneficiaries of the solution. The purpose of this project is to gain a better understanding of what the process of HCD looks like in the context of human services; the requirements for implementation across a range of programs; and the measurable outcomes, evaluability, feasibility, and sustainability of HCD approaches. HCD will be explored across ACF programs at federal, state, and local levels.

Work under this project began in FY 2019 with an assessment of the current state of the field through expert and stakeholder consultation, a review of literature, and key informant interviews. These efforts aim to define core elements of the human-centered design process; identify programs that are currently implementing or recently implemented human-centered design in the context of human services; and describe the current state of the field. Building on what is learned from the field, HCD4HS will conduct an implementation and evaluation pilot study at up to three sites administering ACF programs. The pilot study will implement HCD and assess the implementation, feasibility, evaluability, and outcomes of interest to ACF programs.

NEW

[Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches](#)

This project builds on OPRE's [Integrated Approaches to Supporting Child Development and Improving Family Economic Security](#) project, which concluded in 2018. That project investigated the design and evaluability of integrated approaches to alleviating poverty that address the needs of both parents and children. A national scan found that most existing two-generation programs were in the early stages of development as pilots or as new programs that began only a few years prior and were not ready for evaluations of effectiveness. The scan also revealed that the majority of programs lacked the internal research capacity to conduct and manage research evaluations for themselves, and they rarely had partnerships with local evaluators to help them achieve this goal.

This new project, Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches, aims to build on the gaps in research and practice highlighted in the Integrated Approaches project. Specific objectives include:

1. Conducting formative research to better understand program implementation, strengthen promising programs, and prepare them for evaluations of effectiveness;
2. Building the capacity of programs and researchers to conduct rigorous and meaningful evaluations of integrated approaches to supporting child development and improving family economic security; and
3. Addressing measurement issues in order to promote learning across evaluations and a better understanding of relevant processes and outcomes of two-generation programs for low-income children and their parents.

The project launched in September 2019 and is led by Mathematica.



Understanding Financial Literacy Interventions in Employment-Related Contexts for Low-Income Individuals

Very little empirical or exploratory work currently exists on the nexus between financial literacy and employment and training programs designed for adults, as previous research has typically focused on other contexts and/or populations. This project seeks to fill that gap in the research and develop a better understanding of how financial capability interventions reach and affect low-income populations through employment and training programs.

In 2019, OPRE launched a descriptive study to explore financial capability interventions within employment-related contexts for low-income adults. The purposes of this project are to better understand the extent to which employment and training programs incorporate financial literacy training, how such training is incorporated, and options for future research and evaluation efforts in this area. This project will include:

- Expert consultations;
- A review of the existing literature on the effects of financial capability interventions on economic and employment outcomes among human services and employment program participants;
- A survey of employment and training programs; and
- Special topics briefs on various matters concerning financial capability interventions in employment-related contexts for low-income individuals, including the impacts of incremental versus one-time Earned Income Tax Credit payments on family economic stability.

The study is led by MEF Associates and its partner Urban Institute.



Human Services Programs in Rural Contexts

Though significant evaluative work has been carried out to improve our understanding of how human services programs meet their goals of improving family economic self-sufficiency, financial security, and overall well-being, there are gaps in knowledge of how programs can best serve rural communities. Rural contexts present unique opportunities and challenges for administering human services programs. Through the Human Services Programs in Rural Contexts project, ACF seeks to better understand these contexts for several programs: Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood; TANF; Health

Profession Opportunity Grants; and Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting.

The types of challenges human services programs experience in rural communities translate into a series of more specific challenges for leveraging the four ACF programs that are the focus of this study. While rural communities often have many assets, they can struggle with access to economic opportunity, transportation, broadband internet, and health services. Distance to services and negative cultural perceptions of public assistance also present barriers to accessing human services and other benefits for which families may be eligible. Disparities in populations' access to services and benefits can lead to people's basic needs going unmet. Given these key challenges, this study will focus on the following goals:

1. Provide a rich description of human services programs in rural contexts
2. Determine the unmet need for human services in rural communities
3. Identify opportunities for strengthening the capacity of human services programs to promote the economic and social well-being of individuals, families, and communities in rural contexts

This study will be conducted by 2M Research and its partner Urban Institute.

SPOTLIGHT ON DISSEMINATION

OPRE continually strives to produce high-quality, rigorous research, and ensure that it is accessible and relevant to those interested in deepening their understanding of this work. Whether communicating with researchers, practitioners, program providers, policymakers, or the public, OPRE understands that program and policy research does not exist in a vacuum and is part of a cycle of communication across multiple dissemination channels. OPRE has a robust dissemination function that includes the OPRE [website](#), an [e-newsletter](#), and social media presence on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). OPRE also hosts conferences to share research findings with researchers and with program administrators and policymakers at all levels.

[Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency](#)

Since 1998, OPRE has convened the Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (RECS) for researchers, state and local administrators, practitioners, and federal officials and policymakers to discuss cutting-edge research from evaluations of programs, policies, and services that support low-income and vulnerable families on the path to economic self-sufficiency. The biennial conference serves as an opportunity to present the latest findings from evaluations of human services programs and policies; discuss ways to incorporate findings into the design, implementation, and improvement of programs; and develop strategies for future evaluations. In addition, the conference provides an opportunity for emerging scholars who are early in their research careers to showcase their work. Conference topics include:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Programs, Policies, and Populations
- Employment and Mobility in the Labor Market
- Youth Well-Being and the Transition to Adulthood
- Strengthening Families, Fatherhood, Marriages, and Relationships
- Evaluating Social Programs, Building Evidence, and Using Data
- Approaches to Alleviate Poverty and Expand Opportunity

The 2018 conference had over 1,000 participants, included 41 plenary and breakout sessions, and featured the work of 30 emerging scholars. The 2020 RECS will be held May 27-29 at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC. For more information on past and future conferences, visit recsconference.net.

OPRE WELFARE AND FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PUBLICATIONS – FY 2019

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Research

State TANF Policies Database

- [*Welfare Rules Databook: State TANF Policies as of July 2017*](#)
- [*Welfare Rules Databook: State TANF Policies as of July 2018*](#)

Understanding Poverty: Childhood and Family Experiences and TANF Office Culture

- [*Organizational Culture in TANF Offices: A Review of the Literature*](#)

Employment and the Labor Market

Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration

- [*The Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration: New Perspectives on Creating Jobs – Final Impacts of the Next Generation of Subsidized Employment Programs*](#)
- [*Findings from In-Depth Interviews with Participants in Subsidized Employment Programs*](#)
- [*The Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration: Implementation and Early Impacts of the Minnesota Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration*](#)
- [*Testing Two Subsidized Employment Models for TANF Recipients: Final Impacts and Costs of the Los Angeles County Transitional Subsidized Employment Program*](#)

Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation

- [*Implementation of a Goal-Oriented Approach to Providing Employment Services to Cash Assistance Recipients: The Lifelong Learning Initiative in Ramsey County, Minnesota*](#)
- [*Implementation and Relative Impacts of Two Job Search Assistance Programs in New York City*](#)
- [*Implementation and Relative Impacts of Two Job Search Assistance Programs in Sacramento County, California*](#)

Employment Strategies for Low-Income Adults Evidence Review

- [*Employment and Health Among Low-Income Adults and their Children: A Review of the Literature*](#)

Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations

- [*Measuring Self-Regulation Skills in Evaluations of Employment Programs for Low-Income Populations: Challenges and Recommendations*](#)
- [*Employment Coaching Program Snapshots*](#)
- [*Employment Coaching: Working with Low-Income Populations to Use Self-Regulation Skills to Achieve Employment Goals*](#)
- [*Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations: Evaluation Design Report*](#)

Education and Training

Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education

- [*Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training \(I-BEST\) Program in Three Colleges: Implementation and Early Impact Report*](#)
- [*Madison Area Technical College Patient Care Pathway Program: Implementation and Early Impact Report*](#)
- [*Des Moines Area Community College Workforce Training Academy Connect Program: Implementation and Early Impact Report*](#)

OPRE WELFARE AND FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PUBLICATIONS – FY 2019 *(continued)*

- [Analysis Plan for the PACE Intermediate \(Three-Year\) Follow-Up Study](#)
- [“We Get a Chance to Show Impact”, Program Staff Reflect on Participating in a Rigorous, Multi-site Evaluation](#)
- [Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education \(PACE\) Cross-Program Implementation and Impact Study Findings](#)
- [Findings from Washington State’s Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training \(I-BEST\) Program Implementation and Early Impact Report](#)
- [Findings from the Year Up Implementation and Early Impact Report](#)
- [Findings from the Workforce Training Academy Connect Implementation and Early Impact Report](#)
- [Findings from the Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement Implementation and Early Impact Report](#)
- [Findings from the San Diego County Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry Program Implementation and Early Impact Report](#)
- [Findings from the Patient Care Pathway Program at Madison Area Technical College Implementation and Early Impact Report](#)
- [Findings from the Pathways to Healthcare Implementation and Early Impact Report](#)
- [Findings from the Instituto del Progreso Latino, Carreras en Salud Program Implementation and Early Impact Report](#)
- [Findings from the Health Careers for All Implementation and Early Impact Report](#)

Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Evaluation Portfolio

- [Des Moines Area Community College Workforce Training Academy Connect Program: Implementation and Early Impact Report](#)
- [Analysis Plan for the PACE Intermediate \(Three-Year\) Follow-Up Study](#)
- [Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG\) Impact Study’s Three-Year Follow-Up Analysis Plan](#)
- [Participant Perspectives on HPOG 2.0: Design Report for In-Depth Interviews with HPOG 2.0 Program Participants](#)
- [National Evaluation of the Second Generation of Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG 2.0\) Design Plan for Cost-Benefit Analysis](#)
- [National and Tribal Evaluation of the 2nd Generation of Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG 2.0\): Impact Evaluation Design Plan](#)
- [Targeting Higher Skills and Healthcare Jobs: How HPOG Grantees Set and Use Performance Goals](#)
- [Which Program Characteristics Are Linked to Program Impacts? Lessons from the HPOG 1.0 Evaluation](#)
- [Health Profession Opportunity Grants 2.0: Year Three Annual Report \(2017-2018\)](#)

Career Pathways Intermediate Outcomes Study

- [Analysis Plan for the PACE Intermediate \(Three-Year\) Follow-up Study](#)
- [Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG\) Impact Study’s Three-Year Follow-Up Analysis Plan](#)

Behavioral Science

Behavioral Interventions Scholars Grants

- [Behavioral Interventions Scholars Grants Summary Chart – FY18](#)
- [Behavioral Interventions Scholars: 2018 Grantee Project Abstract](#)

Goal-Oriented Adult Learning in Self-Sufficiency

- [Using the Science About Self-Regulation to Improve Economic Outcomes for TANF Families](#)
- [Supporting Employees and Maximizing Profit: The Case for Workforce Development Focused on Self-Regulation](#)

OPRE WELFARE AND FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PUBLICATIONS – FY 2019 *(continued)*

- [*Improving Employment Outcomes: Using Innovative Goal-Oriented Strategies in TANF Programs*](#)
- [*GOALS Summary Report*](#)

Cross-Cutting and Other Safety Net Research

Advancing Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency Research Project

- [*The Learn Phase: Creating Sustainable Change in Human Services Programs*](#)
- [*The Innovate Phase: Co-creating Evidence-informed Solutions to Improve Human Services Programs*](#)
- [*Mobile Coaching: Innovation and Small-scale Experimentation to Better Engage Program Participants in Rural Colorado*](#)

Assets for Independence Evaluation

- [*Matched Savings Program Strategies for Community Colleges*](#)

Homeless Families Research Briefs

- [*Behavioral Health Improvements Over Time Among Adults in Families Experiencing Homelessness*](#)
- [*Predicting Repeated and Persistent Family Homelessness: Do Families' Characteristics and Experiences Matter?*](#)

OPRE Methods Inquiries

- [*Causal Validity Considerations for Including High Quality Non-Experimental Evidence in Systematic Reviews*](#)
- [*What are Bayesian Methods? – OPRE in 60 Seconds*](#)
- [*Rapid Learning: Methods for Testing and Evaluating Change in Social Service Programs*](#)
- [*Moving Beyond Statistical Significance: The BASIE \(BAYesian Interpretation of Estimates\) Framework for Interpreting Findings from Impact Evaluations*](#)
- [*Bayesian Inference for Social Policy Research*](#)

National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families

- [*Webinar: Low-Income Hispanic Children's Early Home Environments*](#)
- [*Research Priority Areas for Understanding and Improving Access to Early Care and Education \(ECE\) for Children in Low-Income Hispanic Families*](#)
- [*Webinar: Early Care and Education Access and Use Among Low Income Hispanic Families*](#)
- [*Applying Child Development Research to Immigration Policy*](#)
- [*The Job Characteristics of Low-Income Hispanic Parents*](#)
- [*How State-Level Child Care Development Fund Policies May Shape Access and Utilization among Hispanic Families*](#)
- [*Hispanic Women are Helping Drive the Recent Decline in the U.S. Fertility Rate*](#)
- [*Recommendations for Supporting Emerging Scholars*](#)
- [*Tailoring Job Training Programs for Hispanics*](#)
- [*The Early Home Environment of Latino Children: A Research Synthesis*](#)
- [*Webinar: Data Visualization Training*](#)
- [*An Economic Portrait of Low-Income Hispanic Families: Key Findings from the First Five Years of Studies from the National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families*](#)
- [*How State Policies Might Affect Hispanic Families' Access to and Use of Child Care and Development Fund Subsidies*](#)

Portfolio of Research in Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency

FY 2019

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