Work Investment Opportunity Act Evaluation Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) went into effect 7/1/2015 after being signed by President Obama. WIOA is the largest single source of federal funding to support workforce development (U. S. Dept. of Labor Employment and Training, 2016).

In Utah, WIOA is primarily administered through the Department of Workforce Services (DWS). With WIOA programs, the state of Utah aims to help Utahans attain economic self-sufficiency through increased access to quality employment, education, training, and support services. The state plans to utilize data, partnerships, and available resources to support those providing services to employers and jobseekers in need (Utah's DWS, 2017).

The state of Utah has been successful in their implementation of WIOA. While many WIOA outcomes reflect program success, DWS strives to further improve service delivery and program outcomes. To this end, Utah's WIOA program leaders contracted with the Social Research Institute (SRI), University of Utah to conduct a program evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation was to answer the following key research questions posed by DWS leadership:

> 1) What is the overall composition and experience of the WIOA customer base relative to demographics, education and work history, barriers to program participation, and satisfaction with DWS programs and staff?
> 2) How do the DWS WIOA front-line staff experience implementing the WIOA program? From their perspective, what program and policy components support and /or hinder success in program implementation? What changes and/or supports would help them be more effective in administering the WIOA program?
> 3) What can workers' notes and data entered in UWORKS reveal regarding the appropriate implementation of WIOA services?

To learn answers to these questions, three methods of data collection were employed: 1) in-person interviews with WIOA customers; 2) focus groups with WIOA front-line staff and 3) a review of case notes and other data in the online UWORKS system.

WIOA Customer Survey

DWS WIOA leadership was particularly interested in understanding the make-up of the WIOA customer population and customer experiences as program participants at four different points of program exit. These four groups included:

> Group 1: Customers who were determined eligible for one or more funding stream(s) but never enrolled in the funding stream.
> Group 2: Customers determined eligible and enrolled in one or more funding stream(s) but never had a training service on their plan.
> Group 3: Customers deemed eligible and enrolled in a funding stream, had a training service on the plan but either did not start or complete the program.
> Group 4: Customers determined eligible and enrolled in a funding stream, had a training service on the plan and completed the program.

As shown in Table A, 335 individuals, were interviewed in person (response rate = 47.9%) for the WIOA survey. While the groups generally were similar in size, Group 3 was split between adults and youth. Because WIOA Youth contains unique elements that could get lost in the evaluation process it was determined that Youth typically would be viewed as its own group. In addition, within group comparisons between graduates (88) and non-graduates (247) were made with various factors significantly predicting graduation (see Appendix 4).

Table A: WIOA Study Sample

WIOA Adults n = 271				WIOA Youth n = 64				Total N = 335
Grp 1 n = 81	Grp 2 n = 65	Grp 3 n = 45	Grp 4 n = 80	Grp 1 n = 1	Grp 2 n = 6	Grp 3 n = 49	Grp 4 n = 8	

Demographics: The WIOA sample included in this survey is extremely diverse. The sample ranged from 17 – 71 and was nearly split between male and female. The ethnic population generally reflects the state as a whole. A little over one third (37.9%) of respondents were living in a two-parent relationship, a factor significantly correlated with graduation.

Background: The Youth Group was different in several important areas, many related to their personal background. Youth were most likely to: grow up in a single parent home, access public benefits and outside help from family during childhood, and experience homelessness as a child. Youth also had the highest ACE scores, as 62.5% reported 4+ ACES. Youth were less likely to experience physical health problems but more likely to have mental health issues. As nearly one fifth of the youth (18.8%) entered WIOA through a DCFS worker, it is possible that youth were more frequently diagnosed with a mental illness because of increased access to mental health services.

Employment: WIOA adults generally had extensive employment histories, particularly the adults. While 72.5% of the sample had earned income in the past month, Group 4 was significantly higher (87.5%); this group also was more likely to have higher wages, more hours per week, fewer temporary jobs, and report satisfaction with their current job.

Barriers to Employment: Participants were asked to describe their experience with 17 possible employment barriers. As reported in Appendix 5 – Table 33, just over a quarter (26.0%) of respondents indicated they had "no barrier" in the past year. Nearly half the respondents (48.1%) indicated "wages too low" as the greatest barrier. There were regional differences, with those from the Western and Eastern regions being more likely to report a "lack of good jobs available." Group 1 tended to report the most barriers and Group 4 the least. When naming the greatest barrier, or the barrier with the most impact, "mental health," "physical health" and "needs of a dependent child" were most frequent.

Experiences with DWS – General: A majority of respondents (81.4%) reported having a "good" to "excellent" relationship with the DWS employee with whom they worked most. As shown in Appendix 5 – Table 36, respondents generally were positive in rating all aspects of their working relationship with WIOA staff. Scores were lowest when asking about assistance with employment and community resources. Group 1 respondents were the least positive, while Group 4 respondents provided the highest ratings for almost all questions. Collaboration in creating plans has been an important focus for DWS and 76.0% of all

respondents with a plan reported that it had been created collaboratively. Notably, the perceived collaboration increased the longer a participant was in the program. When asked how workers could improve their customer service skills, 26.3% said, "It was all good, no changes needed." Of those who did have input, suggestions fell into three categories: improving the worker/customer relationship (25.4%), addressing DWS internal operations (23.3%), and increasing frequency/flexibility of communication (21.8%).

Respondents were asked to identify the very best part of working with DWS. Only a few respondents (38 [11%]) were unable to identify a positive experience working with DWS. Of those who did identify a "best part of DWS," three main themes arose: relationship with DWS WIOA staff (147), help with resources (111), and communication (16).

Training Program Experiences: During the interview, each WIOA respondent provided details regarding their specific case. These recorded narrations told the story of their experience and are rich in content and insights. Respondents who entered the program with a clear goal, and one that DWS could support, were more likely to graduate. Most initially came to DWS for financial support. However, many also came for help with jobs and skill-building programs. Employment was the long-term goal for most everyone.

The most appreciated DWS worker skills included active listening and support, knowledge of the training programs and DWS requirements, staying connected and communicating, assistance with goal setting, and providing the resources needed for success. Areas for improvement included knowledge on resources and navigating DWS programs, more flexibility, help with goal setting, and better communication.

Each group spoke to specific issues that lead to program exit, whether that exit came early in the WIOA experience or following graduation. There clearly were personal situations that arose for participants that led to unavoidable program exit prior to completion. However, the overall interaction between the worker and the customer played a significant role in both the experience and the outcome for the customer.

WIOA Staff Focus Group

In Spring 2019, six focus groups (6 – 12 WIOA staff each) were held across Utah. These discussions revealed DWS workers' perceptions of customers related to the funding steam through which a customer is supported. Comments from workers reflected attitudes that were likely to either support, or in some cases undermine, quality customer service.

Focus group conversations revealed struggles between adherence to WIOA program requirements and meeting the individual needs of a customer. Workers expressed a broad range of solutions to the conflicts that arise between customer interests and program options. However, it is not always easy or possible to find a uniform and viable solution, especially given the diverse experiences and needs of customers seeking WIOA services.

Another expressed challenge involves WIOA worker job performance metrics and the realities of serving WIOA customers. As with other programs, the tension between doing what is in the best interest of the customer and what will best produce a "positive outcome" is intense. While workers are directed to engage in "career counseling," there is a perception that none of this work counts towards a positive case closure. There are no midway markers

to give credit for partial successes. Some workers acknowledged that, in order to improve performance measures, their actions during a case are influenced by pre-judgement of a customer's likely training outcome. Others adamantly feel that doing what is best for the customer is the only ethical path – no matter how it affects personal performance measures.

UWORKS Data Review

An evaluation instrument (Appendix 7) was used to review data dentified by WIOA leaders as core elements of the case record. This included seeking evidence of barrier identification, customer contacts, case narratives, closure processes, and relationship building.

A total of 91 cases from across the state and all DWS offices were reviewed. This included 69 adult and 22 youth cases. Youth were most likely to have barriers identified and addressed, as well as have their plan adjusted in response. The level of customer contact was consistently higher than the expected once a quarter; most DWS workers (52.9%) contacted customers 1-2 times per month. When rating *quality* of the contacts, it was noted that Group 4 customers and Youth were most likely to have "good" or "excellent" contact quality.

Case narrative questions targeted the presence/completeness of assessments, evidence of career planning, frequency of progress notes, justification of actions/next steps, and clarity of narratives. Assessment notes varied widely with no significant trends, whereas notes regarding career planning and progress notes generally were sparse. Again, thorough notation was present more often in Group 4 and Youth cases. The overall tone of the notes generally was "neutral" or "somewhat supportive" (excluding Group 3), and at least half of the notes read at least somewhat "like a story" for understanding the case.

Service closure decisions generally were more straightforward and justified than case closures. Among the 23 Group 1 cases evaluated, over half provided evidence that a case closure could have been prevented, as most of those cases were auto-closed. The DWS worker typically made the decision for case closure, and only rarely was there evidence that the decision was collaborative. Case narration evidence of shared decision-making, building on customer success, and a helping relationship was present but not the norm.

Adding the customer perspective to the overall rating of the case gives balance to what is written in the notes. Customers often have a very different view of their case than what is reflected in the notes. If cases are transferred or reviewed, asking a customer for their perspective would provide a wider view of the current case.

Summary: Overall, the questions initially suggested by DWS leadership were well targeted to identify strengths and challenges of the WIOA program in Utah. The key findings suggest aspects that should be reinforced and expanded to continue supporting customer success. These findings also suggest areas where additional focus can potentially improve outcomes for both DWS workers and customers navigating the WIOA program pathways. These areas include: 1) addressing the diversity of the WIOA population, particularly the needs of those in WIOA Youth, 2) evaluating and addressing unnecessary challenges to navigating each stage of the WIOA process and 3) supporting motivational interviewing and trauma-informed approaches with customers to strengthen relationships and communication through quality contacts. In sharing the necessary tasks and goals of the WIOA program, more successful outcomes for both DWS staff and customers can be achieved.

KEY FINDINGS

1) WIOA Youth, in many ways other than age, are markedly different from WIOA adults. WIOA Youth are most likely to arrive with the greatest present and past challenges, including having the highest ACE scores (62.5% report 4+ ACEs), mental health issues, growing up in a single parent home that accessed public benefits, and experiencing homelessness as a child. Additionally, they are most likely either to not start or fail to complete a selected training program. This was particularly true when they did not have a program in mind when they entered the WIOA program.

2) Customers who graduated from their selected training program are significantly different from the non-graduate population in several important areas. Graduates are more likely to know what program they wanted and the institution they wished to attend; only 9 (10.2%) graduates did not know what they wanted upon beginning WIOA. Graduates also reported facing the fewest barriers while pursuing a training program.

3) Displacement from the workforce to pursue training, even for a short time, can have insurmountable consequences and implications for customers and their families, most notably loss of health insurance benefits and loss of wages to support basic needs. While customers may initially attempt to forgo current income in order to invest in training, the realities of needing to work oftentimes are prioritized over school/training.

4) There are rules and/or policies of the WIOA program, such as not being able go to school part-time or pursue training in certain fields, that result in highly-motivated customers deciding not to pursue training services. Respondents frequently gave feedback that additional program flexibility could support their efforts to engage in training, improve their skills and abilities, and meet their basic living needs.

5) Overall, there were several factors indicating different motivations behind worker and customer decision-making processes. DWS WIOA staff focus groups revealed workers are incentivized to make case decisions based on case closure performance metrics, such as placing customers in high-wage jobs and high demand career fields. Past experiences leading to negative outcomes also influence DWS worker decisions. Participant interviews suggest worker case decisions do not always align with the customer's career goals and motivations based on their inherent strengths and abilities.

6) There is an opportunity to increase success within the WIOA program by increasing customer ownership of the WIOA process. Customers are more likely to be successful if they drive the process and focus of their schooling, while having the support of a worker who helps fulfill logistical components necessary to meet program requirements or goals.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

WIOA History

The Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed by President Obama on July 22, 2014 and went in to effect July 1, 2015 (United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, 2016). WIOA saw bipartisan support, as it represented the most significant reform to our public workforce development system in 20 years (United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, 2016). While WIOA maintains the basic structure of the program it replaced, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), it reflects the changes necessary to keep up with the economy in the 21st century and the evolving needs of job seekers, workers, and employers across the nation (Bradley, 2015).

WIA was passed by Congress in 1998, replacing the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982, thus streamlining and enhancing the job training system (Bradley, 2013). The intent of the WIA was to create local, "one-stop" delivery systems of a number of employment services, job training, and education programs; it was designed to be completely accessible to job seekers and meet local demand throughout states across the nation (Bradley, 2013). While WIA worked well in some local areas, there was a downward trend in the number of job seekers being referred to training programs (Association for Career and Technical Education, n.d.). WIA became due for reauthorization in 2003, but Congress struggled for years with how to effectively utilize the existing "one-stop" model and overcome related partisan politics (Association for Career and Technical Education, n.d.). WIOA finally was passed, replacing WIA in 2014.

WIOA passed with an overwhelming bipartisan majority (Bradley, 2015). With WIOA, congress finally reached a deal that included components from previous attempts introduced by partners on both sides of the aisle (Association for Career and Technical Education, n.d). WIOA not only replaced the WIA of 1998, but it also amended the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998, the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Bradley, 2015). WIOA legislation included reforms that increased the job training system's capacity to provide support and services to job seekers looking to strengthen employment skills (Bradley, 2015). There also was a new focus on connecting employers with skilled workers needed to compete in the global economy. There were a number of key differences between WIA legislation and WIOA legislation (National Skills Coalition, 2014). These changes included:

- **Workforce Investment Boards (WIBS):** The number of required members has been reduced
- **State and local plans:** Each state must have a single, unified plan covering all programs under the bill and local plans must be aligned with the state plan
- **Performance metrics:** There now is a single set of common measures to be used across all core programs
- **One-stop Job Centers:** State boards are required to establish criteria for local boards to assess effectiveness and accessibility of job centers every 3 years
- **Sequence of services:** Policy guidance from the United States Department of

Labor eliminating "sequence of service" officially is codified. Individual are not required to receive career services prior to receiving training services

- **Funding levels:** Funding levels for each fiscal year are set & increase incrementally, so they eventually are on-par with funding levels established before the sequester
- **Data/performance systems:** All programs accountable for same core metrics

WIOA Nationwide

At the federal level, WIOA is funded under the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (National Association of Counties, 2019). The WIOA is the largest single source of federal funding for the workforce development system and is vital to the preparation of the skilled and educated workforce employers seek (United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, 2016). The federal government appropriates funds for WIOA core programs and partner programs, averaging about $10 billion per year in total funding (United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, 2016).

The six core programs WIOA requires states to coordinate include: The U.S. Department of Labor's Adult Services, Dislocated Workers, Youth Services, and Wagner-Peyser Programs as well as the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy and its rehabilitation services program (United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, 2019). State allotments for the six core programs are calculated based on a formula outlined in WIOA and closely correlate with the size of the state's population and the number of people within the state's civilian labor force (Bradley, 2015). All six programs have a unique formula that considers the number of people within the specific population the program aims to serve (Bradley, 2015). Programs funded by WIOA have served millions of people since its inception, with data showing 64% of WIOA participants gaining employment in 2016 (National Association of Counties, 2019).

WIOA programs aim to increase skill attainment among participants, thus improving the quality of the U.S. workforce, reducing dependency on public benefit programs, and positively affecting the productivity and competitiveness as a nation (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2017). WIOA has provided funding necessary to produce a demand-driven workforce development system designed to overcome the challenges faced by employers and jobseekers in our modern world (Bradley, 2015).

WIOA in Utah

In Utah, WIOA is administered through the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), the State Office of Rehabilitation, and Adult Education (Utah Department of Workforce Services, n.d.). Utah's DWS mission states, "We strengthen Utah's communities by supporting the economic stability and quality of our workforce" (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2019). In implementing WIOA, the state of Utah envisions increased access and opportunity for quality employment, education, training and support services necessary for Utahans to attain economic self-sufficiency (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2017). To achieve this goal, the state plans to utilize data, its partnerships, and available resources to support those providing services to employers and jobseekers in need (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2017).

Utah's economy has recovered quite successfully after the Great Recession. The state's labor market has not only recovered, it has grown (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2017). Utah has experienced employment growth since 2012, helping re-employ many who lost jobs during the Great Recession, as well as employ migrants who have recently arrived (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2017). Utah also boasts great confidence in withstanding the mass retirement of the baby boom generation. Unlike the nation's labor force, which is comprised of majority 45-to-60- year-olds, Utah's labor force is majority 25-to-40-year-olds (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2017). Not only will Utah be able to replace every retiree from the baby boomer generation, it is projected that every baby boomer will be replaced by two young workers upon retirement (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2017).

The state of Utah has seen great success in their implementation of WIOA. Within the adult and dislocated worker programs there has been an increase in awareness of these programs, which has increased program participation (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2019). Utah has succeeded in meeting and exceeding three of the WIOA required outcome measures for adults and dislocated workers, including: employment in the second quarter after exit, employment in the fourth quarter after exit, and credential attainment. The only one not met is credential attainment for youth (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2019).

The state has also provided two training modules to better help staff prepare jobseekers for the workforce (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2019). The youth program has exceeded two WIOA required outcome measures, employment in the second quarter after exit and employment in the fourth quarter after exit (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2019). There has been a push to focus specifically on at-risk, out-of-school youth. By reaching this population, the Workforce Development Division has increased opportunities for these youth to improve their ability to engage in the workforce (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2019).

Although Utah has experienced many successes with WIOA implementation, there remain challenges ahead. There is a need for continued education about available services for at-risk adults and at-risk youth (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2019). With a connection to the services available, these disadvantaged populations have a better opportunity to overcome barriers to employment, such as access to education and training needed for more sustainable employment.

WIOA Evaluation

While many WIOA outcomes reflect program success, DWS wants to continue to improve both service delivery and program outcomes. To accomplish this goal, Utah's WIOA program leaders contracted with the Social Research Institute (SRI) at the University of Utah to conduct an evaluation of the program. The purpose of the evaluation was to answer several key research questions posed by DWS leadership. The questions include:

 1) What is the overall composition and experience of the WIOA customer base relative to demographics, education and work history, barriers to program participation, and satisfaction with DWS programs and staff?
2) How do the DWS WIOA front-line staff experience implementing the WIOA program? From their perspective, what program and policy components support and

/or hinder success in program implementation? What changes and/or supports would help them be more effective in administering the WIOA program?
3) What can workers' notes and data entered in UWORKS reveal regarding the appropriate implementation of WIOA services?

Analysis of the findings from this broad evaluation of WIOA program components will focus on providing DWS with information needed to take next steps in enhancing worker and customer experiences and improving outcomes for the WIOA program overall.

WIOA CUSTOMER SURVEY

METHODS

The study method for this WIOA survey replicated protocols used in past DWS studies conducted by SRI. These methods have proven to be effective in producing strong response rates among similar populations. Following previous protocols allows for comparisons between DWS samples over time.

Respondents

Determining the process for identifying study participants who could best answer the DWS research questions was not simple. This process required several months of meetings and discussions between program specialists, DWS data support personnel, and the evaluation team. In the end, it was determined that all customers who were found eligible for one or more of four WIOA programs/funding streams, and whose eligibility or training service had ended in the previous month, would be eligible for the study. The programs include WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth and TANF Non-FEP (See Appendix 1 for program overview). Exclusion criteria included 1) customers with very limited English skills and 2) customers co-enrolled in the Family Employment Program.

Once identified as qualified for the study, customers were labeled based upon program exit at one of four trackable stages (See Appendix 2 for program participation flow chart). These four groups included:

Group 1: Customers who were determined eligible for one or more funding stream(s) but never enrolled in the funding stream.

Group 2: Customer determined eligible and enrolled in one or more funding stream(s) but never had a training service on their plan.

Group 3: Customers determined eligible and enrolled in a funding stream, had a training service on the plan but either never started or completed the program.

Group 4: Customers determined eligible and enrolled in a funding stream, had a training service on the plan and completed the program.

The goal was to interview approximately 300 WIOA participants from across the state. To achieve this sample, participant selection occurred monthly between January and May 2019. Both concurrent and staggered enrollment in multiple programs made it necessary to screen the entire sample monthly to eliminate duplication.

Data Collection

In order to gain consent for data sharing, DWS added a statement of consent to the WIOA program agreement and thus could provide SRI with basic information needed to reach out to potential study participants. All potential participants were sent a letter informing them of the study and inviting them to schedule an appointment. The letter also explained the purpose of the study, the potential benefits, and compensation provided in appreciation for their time. Additional contact protocols included phone calls, home visits, and verifying contact information. If at any time a potential participant declined participation, their name was removed from the list. Participation was voluntary and all names of potential and actual respondents were kept confidential.

For those expressing interest in completing the study, the interview date, time, and location were arranged. Interviews generally were conducted in-person, and, in the majority of cases, were completed in the respondent's current residence. Six interviews were conducted by phone as the participant had moved out of Utah. Interviews were conducted by 13 interviewers between January and July 2019 and averaged 70 minutes (range 40 – 140). All interviewers had social work experience and received extensive initial and ongoing training throughout the data collection process.

Once the informed consent document was reviewed and signed, respondents simply answered questions and the interviewer recorded the information. In this study, two sections were audio recorded to retain all details. Respondents were asked specifically to give permission for recording these portions of the interview. Interview questions covered a variety of areas, and respondents could refuse to answer any question at any time without penalty. While rural areas were visited less frequently, efforts were made to follow a consistent protocol statewide. All respondents received compensation for their time.

FINDINGS

Study Sample

Between January 2019 and May 2019, DWS staff identified customers whose eligibility or training service had ended in the previous month (December 2018 – April 2019). After applying the exclusion criteria, 700 WIOA participants were study eligible and invited to participate. Of this group, 335 WIOA participants were interviewed resulting in a 47.9% response rate.

As noted above, the study sample was comprised of WIOA participants meeting criteria for having exited the program at one of four stages in the process. A more detailed review of the data showed that participants in the WIOA Youth were significantly different in their exit patterns than those in WIOA Adult programs. As shown in Table 1, a total of 64 WIOA Youth participant in the study. Of that group 49 (76.5%) exited as part of Group 3.

Table 1: Adult and Youth Count by Group – N = 335

Sample divided by:	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4		All Youth
Four Groups	82 (24.5%)		71 (21.2%)		94 (28.1%)		88 (26.3%)		
Four Groups and Adults and Youth	Adults 81	Youth 1	Adults 65	Youth 6	Adults 45	Youth 49	Adults 80	Youth 8	
Four groups-Adults All Youth Separate	81 (24.2%)		65 (19.4%)		45 (13.4%)		80 (23.9%)		64 (19.1%)_

Because Group 3 WIOA Youth participants would disproportionately influence Group 3 outcomes, it was decided that this group would generally be separated out in the presentation of data findings as to not mix customer experiences between the WIOA Youth and WIOA Adult programs. [1]

Another important way to view the distribution of the study sample was by Region[2].

Figure 1 shows that the distribution of participants in Central, Mountainland, and Western Regions are similar to that found in past FEP studies. However, the portion of participants from North region is smaller and Eastern Region is larger than typical in previous FEP studies.

Figure 1: WIOA Region Distribution

- 52% Central
- 15% North
- 13% Mountainland
- 14% Eastern
- 6% Western
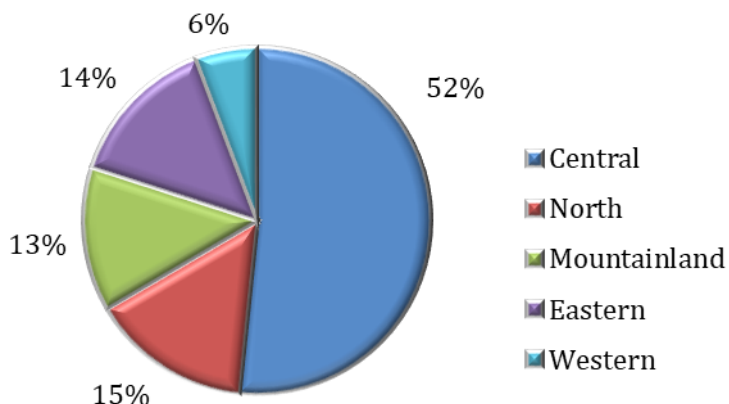
Again, as the WIOA sample is divided into four groups, it is important to explore how the groups were divided across regions. Table 2 shows that survey participants were more likely to exit the program at different stages depending on where they lived. For example, respondents in Central region are significantly more likely than expected to exit in Group 1 and less likely to have a youth exit in Group 3 (p = .001). Respondents from the Northern Region were less likely to exit in Group 1 and more likely to exit in Group 3.

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[1] The term "WIOA Adults" includes all participants in: WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, and TANF Non-FEP.

[2] It is recognized that DWS no longer uses the regional structure to define geographic areas. Regions are referenced here only for purposes of comparison with previous studies. While not exact, the approximate relationship between the regional and service area structure is as follows: Central Region = Wasatch Front South; North Region = Wasatch Front North and Bear River; Mountainland Region = Mountainland; Eastern Region = Uintah Basin, Castle Country and Southeast; Western Region = Central Utah and South West.

Table 2: Adult and Youth Count by Region

	WIOA Adults N = 271				WIOA Youth N = 64			
	Grp 1 n = 81	Grp 2 n = 65	Grp 3 n = 45	Grp 4 n = 80	Grp 1 n = 1	Grp 2 n = 6	Grp 3 n = 49	Grp 4 n = 8
Central (52%)	55 (67.9%)	33 (50.8%)	26 (57.8%)	37 (46.3%)	- 0 -	1 (16.7%)	19 (38.8%)	2 (25.0%)
Northern (15%)	1 (1.2%)	6 (9.2%)	14 (31.1%)	12 (15.0%)	- 0 -	2 (33.3%)	11 (22.4%)	4 (50.0%)
Mntland (13%)	12 (14.8)	10 (15.4%)	- 0 -	13 (16.3%)	1 (100%)	1 (16.7%)	7 (15.6%)	1 (2.2%)
Eastern (14%)	10 (12.3%)	10 (15.4%)	3 (6.7%)	15 (18.8%)	- 0 -	1 (16.7%)	9 (18.4%)	- 0 -
Western (6%)	3 (3.7%)	6 (9.2%)	2 (4.4%)	3 (3.8%)	- 0 -	1 (16.7%)	3 (6.1%)	1 (12.5%)

Non-Respondents

A total of 700 individuals qualified for and remained eligible for the study. While 335 (47.9%) people participated in the study, 282 (40.9%) indicated they were not interested, 63 (9%) never responded, and 20 (2.9%) could not be located. Limited administrative data were available for exploring potential differences between respondents and non-respondents (See Appendix 3). The profile of non-respondents was very similar to that of respondents in regards to age. There were however, significant differences relative to sex.

In the respondent sample, 48.4% were male while 59.0% of the non-respondents were male (p = .022). The group reflecting the greatest difference was Group 1 at just 38.3% male. Another area of difference was in the distribution between regions. While Central, Mountainland and Western regions were all representative of the sample, the North region was under represented and Eastern was over represented in the respondent sample. Both these factors should be kept in mind when interpreting the data.

Within Group Comparisons: Program Completion

The primary goal of the WIOA program is for customers to complete/graduate from whatever program they are enrolled. Thus, learning about what factors are most predictive of program graduation[3] could be very useful to DWS. In order to observe trends related to this outcome, comparisons will be made throughout the analysis process and, where applicable, findings of significant differences will be presented. This comparison thus includes all survey participants, adult or youth considered graduates (n = 88) and non-graduates (n = 247). Differences in these areas will be noted throughout this report and significant findings listed in Appendix 4.

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[3] (All members of Group 4 were not necessarily graduates, some "completed" certificates, courses, etc. However for ease, in this report all WIOA completes – Group 4 – will be referred to as "graduates.")

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The data gathered in this study present a snapshot of WIOA participants who exited the program at one of four trackable points. This section presents a profile of the entire cohort including demographics, household composition, children and overall financial picture. A brief report on family background and personal history is also included to better understand the population in historical context. Unlike most of the remainder of the report, demographic information will be presented using the 4-group model. This is necessary as the nature of WIOA Youth would, by definition significantly affect group differences.

Respondent Profile

The demographic characteristics of study respondents (Appendix 5: Table 3 - Respondent Demographics) are generally consistent across all four groups when comparing age, sex, race/ethnicity and relationship status. However, marital status presents statistically significant differences. As shown in Table 3, the respondents in Group 4, WIOA graduates, were significantly more likely to be married than those who did not complete (p = .014). Differences between adults and youth in Group 3 are also important factors to review.

Household Composition

The size of the household (excluding respondent) in which the respondents lived varied from 0 to 11, and averaged 3 persons. There were 124 (37%) respondents living with their spouse/partner. In total, 163 (48.7%) respondents were living with their children in their home. Of these respondents, 83 (50.9%) were living with their spouse/partner AND their children. Another 64 (39.3%) were living with their children without a spouse/partner. There were 87 (25.9%) respondents living with one or more parent, and 31 (9.3%) were living with another relative other than a parent in the home. Of the 335 respondents, 50 (14.9%) were living alone. When comparing respondents who graduated with those who did not, living with *anyone* was a statistically significant factor predicting graduation (p = .033).

Children

WIOA participants are not required to have children to participate. A large portion of survey respondents (38.8%) did not have any children living with them. Table 4 presents data

Table 4: Child Bearing

	Group 1 n = 59	Group 2 n = 43	Group 3 n = 29	Group 4 n = 60	Youth n = 14	Total N = 205
Age first pregnant(F) /first father child (M)*	21.8 yrs (14 - 37)	23.5 yrs (16 - 54)	21.8 yrs (15 - 35)	23.7 yrs (16 - 39)	19.4 yrs (16 - 24)	22.6 yrs (14-54)
Respondent was a teen (< 20) when first child born	21 (35.6%)	18 (41.9%)	12 (41.4%)	15 (25%)	7 (50%)	73 (35.6%)
Resp.'s mother was a teen when first child born (p = .02)	**n = 80** 31 (38.8%)	**n = 62** 29 (46.8%)	**n = 43** 7 (16.3%)	**n = 77** 26 (33.8%)	**n = 59** 25 (42.4%)	**N = 321** 118 (36.8%)

*Male respondents with no current spouse or partner were excluded from this question

regarding child bearing. The average age of respondents when they had their first child is fairly consistent between groups with the Youth being younger due to the average age of respondents in the group. It is also of note that 13 (4.3%) respondents are currently pregnant with 4 of those pregnancies being "high risk".

As shown in Table 5, the 2019 WIOA survey included the experiences of 275 children. Just over 93% of these children were the biological children of the respondent. Of these children, 50 (18.2%) were reported to have physical, mental, learning, or behavioral limitations. Only 17 (6.2%) children did not have insurance, generally due to lack of affordable coverage.

Respondents were also asked if their mother was a teen when her first child was born. Of those who could answer this question (321), a total of 118 (36.8%) participants indicated their mother was a teen. A significantly smaller number of Group 3 participants 7 (16.3%) reported that their mother had been a teen when she had her first child compared to the other groups that ranged from 33.8%-46.8% of participants reporting the same (p = .02).

Table 5: Individual Children in Sample

	Group 1 n = 92	Group 2 n = 54	Group 3 n = 32	Group 4 n= 84	Youth n = 13	Total N = 275
Child has health, mental health, learning, beh. prob that limits activities	21 (22.8%)	10 (18.5%)	5 (15.6%)	12 (14.3%)	2 (15.4%)	50 (18.2%)
Child problems so severe it limits parent about to do work or school	5 (5.4%)	3 (2.7%)	1 (3.1%)	4 (4.8%)	---	12 (4.4%)
Primary form of health insurance for children						
Medicaid	55 (59.8%)	27 (50%)	10 (31.3%)	50 (59.5%)	8 (61.5%)	150 (54.5%)
CHIP	2 (2.2%)	1 (1.9%)	---	2 (2.4%)	---	5 (1.8%)
Private	32 (34.8%)	21 (38.9%)	15 (46.9%)	30 (35.7%)	5 (38.5%)	103 (37.5%)
None	3 (3.2%)	5 (9.2%)	7 (21.9%)	2 (2.4%)	---	17 (6.2%)

Even one child in the home with special needs can affect employment or participation in education or training. Only 134 (40%) of the WIOA respondents had a child under 18 living with them in their home. As Table 6 shows, there were few differences between groups in this area. It is notable that 41 (19.9%) respondents have at least on child with mental health, physical health, learning and/or behavioral issues so severe that it limits the child's regular activities. Furthermore, it is important to note that of those 41 respondents, 10 (24.4%) have children with limitations so severe that, in the past year, the respondent was not able to keep a job or attend education/training activities.

Table 6: Children by Family

	Group 1 n = 40	Group 2 n = 29	Group 3 n = 18	Group 4 n = 39	Youth n = 8	Total N = 134
Average # children total	2.7	2.4	2	2.6	1.7	2.5
Average # of children under age 18	2.3	1.9	1.8	2.2	1.6	2.1
Youngest child under 6 No child under 6 No child - in 3rd trimester	20 (50%) 20 (50%) ---	17 (58.6%) 12 (41.4%) ---	11 (61.1%) 7 (38.9%) ---	25 (64.1%) 14 (35.9%) 1 (2.6%)	8 (100%) --- ---	81(60.4%) 53 (39.6%) 1 (0.7%)
Respondent has issues that that limit their regular activities	15 (25%)	8 (18.6%)	5 (16.6%)	11 (17.7%)	2 (18.2%)	41 (19.9%)
Respondent's child's issue so severe they couldn't work / attend school	**n = 15** 5 (33.3%)	**n = 8** 1 (12.5%)	**n = 5** 1 (20%)	**n = 11** 3 (27.3%)	**n = 2** -0-	**N = 41** 10 (24.4%)

Financial Profile

A review of the study participants' financial situation in the past month was conducted using the 4-group division in order to view all graduates in one group. Table 7 reports the most common sources of regular monthly income for respondents across the groups. One area of significant difference between the four groups was the respondent's personal earned income (p = .006). Group 4 respondents, WIOA program graduates, earned an average monthly income of $2,259 as compared to an average of $1,678 for all other groups (non-graduates). As noted above, Group 4 participants were more likely to have a spouse or partner. Average income from a spouse or partner was also higher in Group 4.

Significant between group differences can also be seen in those receiving unemployment insurance benefits and those receiving SNAP benefits. Members of Group 1 were more likely to receive money from unemployment insurance and food stamps than respondents from other groups.

Of the 49 respondents who were receiving benefits from "other" sources, only 2 mentioned accessing cash assistance. The top 3 most likely sources of other support were: family and friends (17), community organizations (churches, non-profit organizations, etc.) (7), and personal investments (rental, properties, financial investments, oil royalties) (7).

Table 7: The Financial Picture: Income in the Past Month

	Group 1 n = 82	Group 2 n = 71	Group 3 n = 94	Group 4 n = 88	Total N = 335
Earned Income (p = .006)	51 (66.2%) avg: $1,666 range: $50 - $10,000	54 (76.1%) avg: $1,870 range: $60 - $8,000	61 (64.9%) avg: $1,518 range: $30 - $7,000	77 (87.5%) avg: $2,259 range: $53 - $8,000	243 (72.5%) avg: $1,862 range: $30 – $10,000
Spouse/ partner Income	19 (23.2%) avg: $2,149 range: $100 – $10,000	16 (22.5%) avg: $1,700 range: $100 - $3,800	15 (16%) avg: $2,212 range: $300 - $8,166	27 (30.7%) avg: $3,442 range: $300 - $ 35,000	77 (23%) avg: $2,522 range: $100 - $35,000
Child support	12 (14.6%) avg: $488 range: $120 -$1,072	11 (11.5%) avg: $343 range: $30 - $1,000	1 (1.1%) avg: $640 range: $640 - $640	8 (9.1%) avg: $376 range: $150 - $600	32 (9.6%) avg: $415 range: $30 - $1,072
Housing Assistance	5 (6.1%) avg: $680 range: $298 - $1,200	5 (7%) avg: $659 range: $350 - $864	4 (4.3%) avg: $593 range: $500 - $700	3 (3.4%) avg: $817 range: $650 - $900	17 (5.1%) avg: $678 range: $298 - $1,200
Unemployment. Insurance ($p \le$ .000)	18 (22%) avg: $379 range: $69 - $640	2 (2.8%) avg: $270 range: $256 - $284	- 0 -	2 (2.3%) avg: $176 range: $153 - $198	22 (6.6%) avg: $351 range: $69 - $640
SSI/SSDI	6 (7.3%) avg: $1,123 range: $680 - $2,240	11 (15.5%) avg: $998 range: $571- $1,850	6 (6.4%) avg: $995 range: $700 - $1,500	8 (9.1%) avg: $1,241 range: $100 - $3,650	31 (9.3%) avg: $1,085 range: $100 - $3,650
Self Child Spouse	4 (57.1%) 2 (28.6%) 1 (14.3%)	6 (50%) 4 (33.3%) 2 (16.7%)	6 (100%) - 0 - - 0 -	4 (50%) 2 (25%) 2 (25%)	20 (6%) 8 (24.2%) 5 (15.2%)
Food stamps (p = .005)	28 (34.1%) avg: $305 range: $51-$800	12 (16.9%) avg: $301 range: $8 - $762	14 (14.9%) avg: $216 range: $100 -$450	21 (23.9%) avg: $380 range: $90 -$1,014	75 (22.4%) avg:$309 range: $ 8- $1,014
Child care assistance	1 (1.2%) avg: $455 range: $455 -$455	4 (5.6%) avg: $1,001 range: $524 - $1,400	1 (1.1%) avg: $458 range: $458 - $458	1 (1.1%) avg: $150 range: $150 - $150	7 (2.1%) avg: $724 range: $150 - $ 1,400
Other	17 (20.7%) avg: $852 range: $50 -$5,000	7 (9.9%) avg: $463 range: $25 - $1,500	13 (13.8%) avg: $419 range: $10 -$1,000	12 (13.6%) avg: $1,054 range: $380 - $3,000	49 (14.6 %) avg: $731 range: $10 - $5,000

Personal History - Family Background

Learning more about a respondent's personal history helps put the present scenario in context and sets the foundation upon which future efforts build. As seen in Figure 2, a majority of respondents (65.4%) grew up in a two-parent household and nearly one quarter (24.5%) grew up in a single parent home. While WIOA participants from Groups 1 -4 were very similar, the Youth Group was significantly different in all living situation categories (p = .002). While the majority of respondents in Groups 1-4 reported living in a "Two Parent Household", only 42% of Youth respondents reported this as their living situation during childhood. Youth responses were grouped more in the areas of "Single Parent", "Foster Care", and "Other." "Other" living situations typically included being raised by family members, often grandparents. These results are consistent with the situations reported by participants in the WIOA Youth program during the interview process.

Figure 2: Living Situation Growing Up
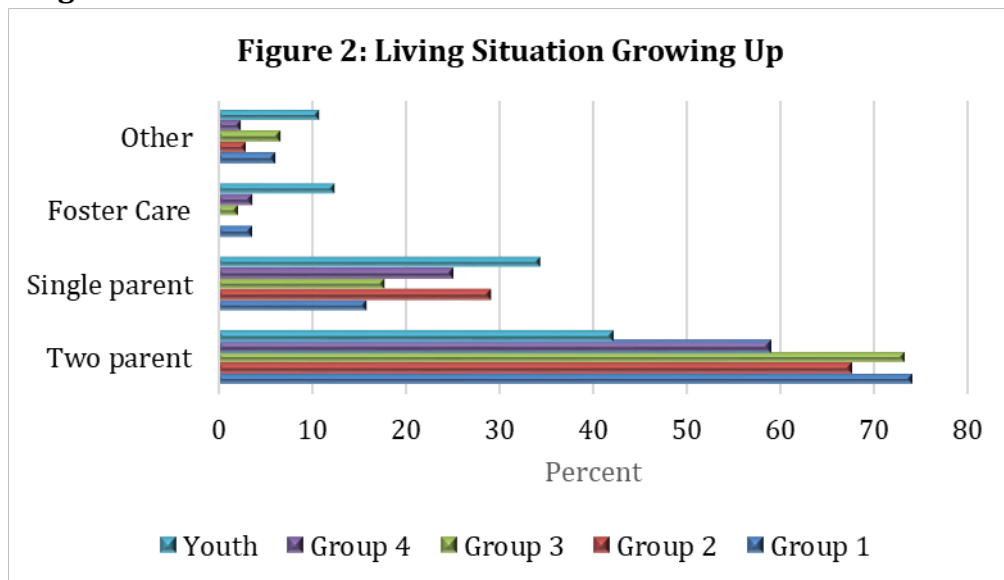
Figure 3: Father's Education Level
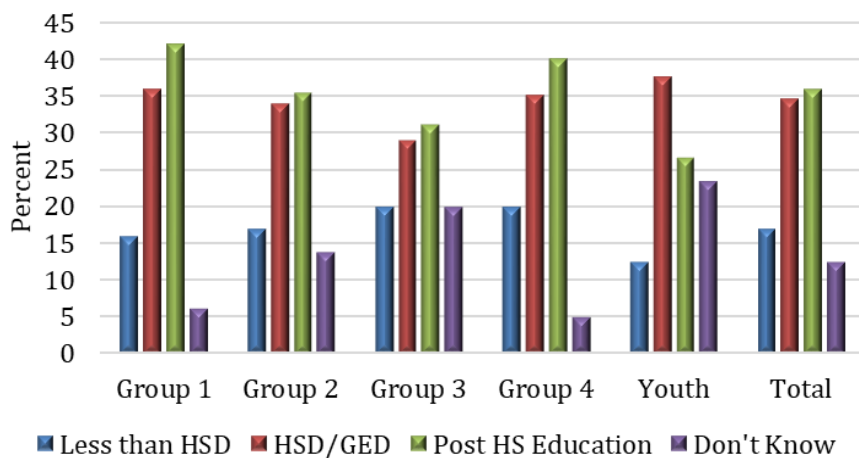
Figures 3 and 4 present parental levels of education. Levels of education among respondent's fathers and mothers were generally similar across all 4 levels of educational attainment. Youth were more likely than others to respond "don't know" when asked about both of their parent's education levels. This is to be anticipated as Youth were less likely to have grown up with one or both parents.

Figure 4: Mother's Education Level

-12-
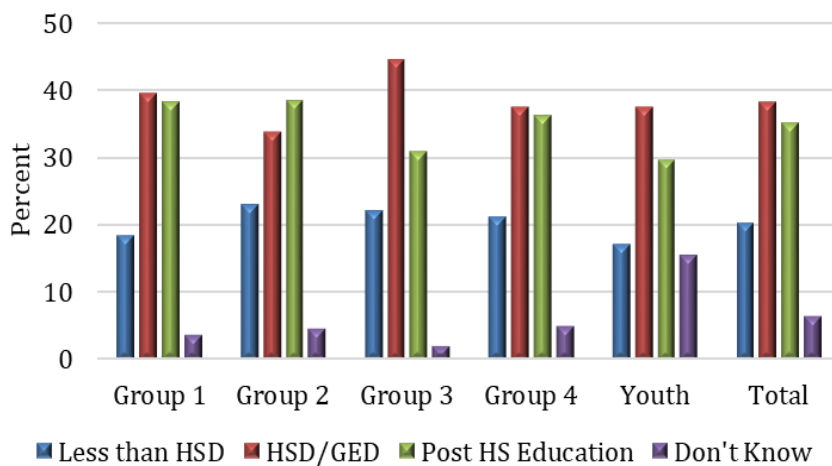
Respondents were also asked to recall experiences they had during childhood (Table 8). Of those interviewed, over one third (36.5%) remembered their family using some type of public benefits such as food stamps, Medicaid, or cash assistance. In addition, 125 (37.3%) remembered receiving some form of help from family, friends or the community. The portion of respondents recalling receiving public and private support from others in childhood was significantly higher in the Youth Group. In both cases, they reported receiving support at levels higher than 60%. While homelessness rates during childhood were relatively low, more than a quarter (28.6%) of Youth experienced childhood homelessness. In addition, more than half of respondents (52.4%) reported seeing someone else abused as a child.

Table 8: Resource and Abuse History

Positive responses to:	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N = 335
Remembers family using public benefits when growing up (p = .003)	22 (28.9%)	18 (30%)	10 (23.3 %)	21 (28.4%)	40 (63.5%)	111 (35.1%)
Remembers family receiving help from others when growing up (p = .006)	24 (29.6%)	20 (30.8%)	12 (26.7%)	26 (32.5%)	40 (62.5%)	122 (36.4%)
Experienced homelessness as a child (p = .031)	8 (9.9%)	9 (14.1%)	8 (17.8%)	10 (12.7%)	18 (28.6%)	53 (16.0%)
Saw the abuse of someone else as a child	39 (48.1%)	35 (54.7%)	28 (63.6%)	37 (46.8%)	34 (54.8%)	173 (52.4%)

Adverse Childhood Experiences - ACES

The final component of personal background expands on the respondents' experiences of adversity in childhood. Starting in 2010, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) included ACE questions in the Utah Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS); a survey examining risk factors for negative health outcomes conducted with a random sample of adults in Utah's general population (Utah Department of Health, 2011). While not included every year, in 2018 the UDOH again included ACEs questions. In 2018, the ACE questions were also asked of a sample of Utah's Family Employment Program (FEP) participants.

Figure 5: ACEs Comparisons
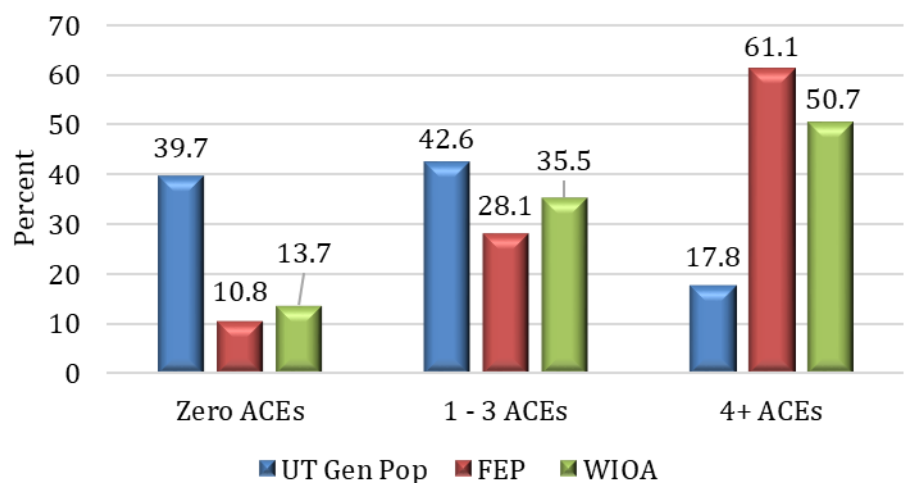
Comparisons between the three populations (Figure 5) revealed differences in ACE prevalence, specifically between Utah's general population and both the WIOA and FEP samples.

ACES data across groups is presented in Table 9. While the results are not statistically significant, it is clear Youth do report the highest number of ACEs. This might be expected as many Youth are participating in the WIOA program through connections with DCFS.

Table 9: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

ACEs	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N = 335
Zero ACEs	13 (16.0%)	9 (13.8%)	4 (8.9%)	15 (18.8%)	5 (5.8%)	46 (13.7%)
1 – 3 ACEs	22 (27.2%)	24 (36.9%)	21 (46.7%)	33 (41.3%)	19 (29.7%)	119 (35.5%)
4+ ACEs	46 (56.8%)	32 (49.2%)	20 (44.4%)	32 (40.0%)	40 (62.5%)	170 (50.7%)

When reviewing ACE data between graduates and non-graduates (Figure 6), statistical differences were found ($p = .05$). Appendix 4 presents data regarding the many areas in which graduates and non-graduates differ. A review of these factors reflects many of the areas already known to be highly correlated with childhood adversity reflected in the ACE study.

Figure 6: ACES Grad - Non-Grad Comparisons
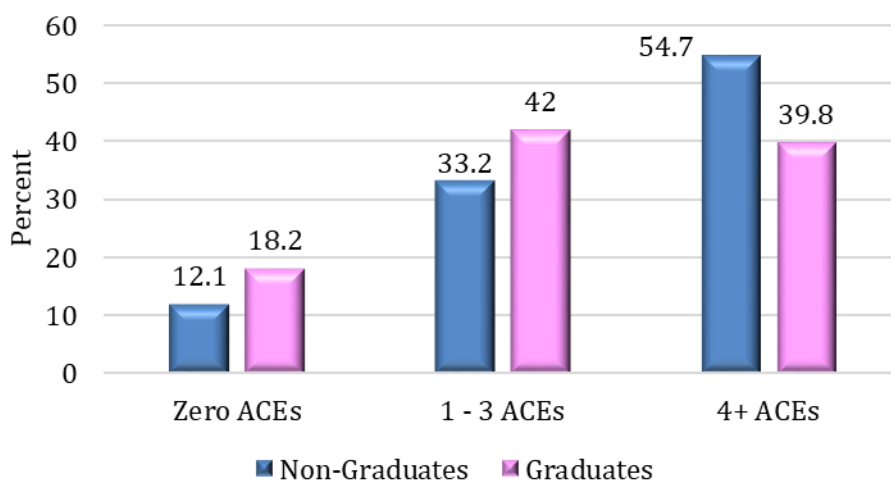
RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

There are many factors known to potentially affect a person's ability to participate in education and training activities and eventually seek, obtain, and maintain employment. The respondent characteristics presented here reflect years of research that suggests these factors are often significantly associated with program outcomes. Most factors would typically be evaluated in an assessment of the individual when preparing to engage in work activities. Characteristics evaluated here include: education, physical health, mental health, abuse experiences, and a criminal record.

Education – Overall

Among the entire WIOA population, 70.4% completed up through the 12th grade in the traditional timeframe. However, just half (50%) of the Youth Group had accomplished this. The average age of the Youth Group is about half the average age of the rest of the four groups, which could account, at least in part, for the lower level of educational attainment. Overall, 81.9% of the WIOA population had a high school diploma, followed by 45% who had a vocational, technical, or trade certificate with most having some type of medical training (42) or CDL licensing (30). Of the 14 who had education higher than a 4-year degree, 12 had Master's degrees, 1 had a Doctorate, and 1 had a graduate degree from outside the U. S.

Table 10: Education

Education	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N= 335
Highest grade passed K - 12:						
Eighth grade or less	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.5%)	3 (6.7%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.6%)	9 (2.7%)
9th - 11th grade completed	20 (24.7%)	9 (13.8%)	12 (26.7%)	18 (22.5%)	31 (48.4%)	90 (26.9%)
12th grade	59 (72.8%)	55 (84.6%)	30 (66.7%)	60 (75%)	32 (50%)	236 (70.4%)
Educational breakdown by activities completed:						
No diploma/certificates	5 (6.2%)	2 (3.1%)	3 (6.7%)	-0-	15 (23.4%)	25 (7.5%)
High School Diploma	66 (86.8%)	56 (88.9%)	34 (81%)	63 (78.8%)	35 (71.4%)	254 (81.9%)
GED-or high school equivalent	9 (11.8%)	5 (7.9%)	7 (16.7%)	11 (13.8%)	9 (18.4 %)	41 (13.2 %)
Voc./tech./trade Certif.	25 (32.9%)	24 (38.1%)	14 (33.3%)	60 (75%)	19 (38.8%)	142 (45.8%)
Some college	24 (31.6%)	23 (36.5%)	20 (47.6%)	12 (15%)	13 (26.5%)	92 (29.7%)
Associates Degree	8 (10.5%)	7 (11.1%)	7 (16.7%)	13 (16.3%)	-0-	35 (11.3%)
Four year college degree	17 (22.4%)	14 (22.2%)	3 (7.1%)	20 (25%)	-0-	54 (17.4%)
Other	5 (6.6%)	2 (3.2%)	-0-	7 (8.8%)	-0-	14 (4.5%)
Average age of completion of high school diploma/GED	18.8	18.1	19.6	19.2	18.1	18.8
Currently in school	**n = 11**	**n = 8**	**n = 12**	**n = 7**	**n = 14**	**N = 52**
Part time	(54.5%)	2 (25%)	7 (58.3%)	4 (57.1%)	5 (35.7%)	24 (46.2%)
Full time	5 (45.5%)	6 (75%)	5 (41.7%)	3 (42.9%)	9 (64.3%)	28 (53.8%)
Of this, percent studying:						
HS/GED	1 (9.1%)	-0-	3 (25%)	-0-	6 (42.9%)	10 (19.2%)
Certificate	2 (18.2%)	2 (25%)	5 (41.7%)	4 (57.1%)	4 (28.6%)	17 (32.7%)
Associate Degree	2 (18.2%)	2 (25%)	2 (16.7%)	-0-	1 (7.1%)	7 (13.5%)
Bachelor Degree	3 (27.3%)	2 (25%)	1 (8.3%)	2 (21.4%)	3 (21.4%)	11 (21.2%)
Other	3 (27.3%)	2 (25%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (14.3%)	-0-	7 (13.5%)

When looking at college level education across groups as shown in Table 10, Youth were unique in that 26.5% had some college level coursework, but none had completed an associate or bachelor degree. Of the 52 individuals currently attending school, 24 (46.2%) were attending part-time, while 28 (53.8%) were full-time.

Group 3 and Youth were more likely to be in school and receiving DWS financial support to do so. Youth were also most likely to be working towards their HSD/GED or a certification.

Study participants who had received financial support from DWS (14) were asked what DWS helped with, and a majority received help with tuition and fees (7) or supplies and books (6).Those who had not received any financial support from DWS (20) were asked why DWS said they could not help. The reasons most frequently given were that they did not meet requirements (9) , while others had received financial aid from a non-DWS entity instead (8). The participants who had not asked DWS for help with schooling or training (18) were asked why they did not. There were 4 participants who didn't know help was available. Of the 14 who knew they could ask for help but chose not to, 4 respondents said that someone else was paying for it and 4 noted they were still in free public high school.

Table 11: Not in School But Interested

	Group 1 n= 70	Group 2 n = 57	Group 3 n = 33	Group 4 n = 73	Youth n = 50	Total N= 283
Average age last time in school	28.3	29.5	32.7	36.2	18.5	29.3
Not currently in school but want to attend	63 (90%)	43 (75.4%)	28 (84.8%)	57 (78%)	40 (80%)	231 (81.6%)
Main reasons why unable to go to school now:						
No need/enough education	1 (1.6%)	1 (2.3%)	---	2 (3.5%)	---	4 (1.7%)
Need to work/ no time	17 (27%)	14 (32.6%)	15 (53.6%)	28 (49.1%)	12 (30%)	86 (37.2%)
Need/want to be w/ kids	3 (4.8%)	3 (7%)	1 (3.6%)	5 (8.7%)	---	12 (5.2%)
Learning problems	3 (4.8%)	1 (2.3%)	---	1 (1.7%)	---	5 (2.2%)
Physical health problems	4 (6.3%)	1 (2.3%)	3 (10.7%)	3 (5.3%)	2 (5%)	16 (6.9%)
Mental health problems	4 (6.3%)	3 (7%)	2 (7.1%)	3 (5.3%)	5 (12.5%)	18 (7.8%)
Domestic violence	---	---	---	1 (1.7%)	---	1 (0.4%)
Drug abuse / alcohol abuse	---	1 (2.3%)	---	---	---	1 (0.4%)
Not motivated	5 (7.9%)	4 (9.3%)	2 (7.1%)	9 (15.8%)	10 (25%)	30 (12.9%)
Child care problems	2 (3.2%)	---	---	2 (3.5%)	---	4 (1.7%)
Transportation problems	1 (1.6%)	1 (2.3%)	---	2 (3.5%)	4 (10%)	9 (3.9%)
Family demands	3 (4.8%)	4 (9.3%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (1.7%)	2 (5%)	12 (5.2%)
Lack of DWS support	9 (14.3%)	---	3 (10.7%)	---	2 (5%)	14 (6%)
English language barrier	---	1 (2.3%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (1.7%)	---	3 (1.3 %)
Worried about success	---	3 (7%)	1 (3.6%)	3 (5.3%)	3 (7.5%)	10 (4.3%)
No money / can't afford it	45 (71.4%)	22 (51.2%)	12 (42.9%)	23 (40.5%)	15 (37.5%)	117 (50.6%)
Other	7 (11.1%)	8 (18.6%)	9 (32.1%)	5 (8.7%)	11 (27.5%)	40 (17.3%)

Of those not currently attending school, 81.9% showed interest in pursuing some kind of education or training in the future. Of those interested in going back to school, more than a third (35%) wanted to pursue some type of certificate or licensure. There were another 27% interested in obtaining a bachelor's degree and 23% seeking an even higher degree.

As Table 11 shows, just over half of the respondents indicated that "lack of money to afford it" was the main barrier preventing them from attending school or training at this time. Those in Groups 1, 2, and Youth listed lack of money as their biggest barrier, while Groups 3 and 4 listed needing to work or not having time to attend school as the main barrier.

In addition to the issues listed, 40 (17.3%) noted "other" issues that were getting in the way of pursuing education/training. One of the most common was related to enrollment issues, for example, outstanding debt to local schools and application requirements (16).

Interestingly, when asked about the impact of not having education or training on their ability to work, 22.1% of respondents answered that lack of education indeed had gotten in the way of employment in the past year (see Table 12). Group 1 members were nearly twice as likely to identify this as an employment barrier.

Respondents discussed issues that can make educational achievement more challenging, including reading or writing problems and learning disabilities. When asked about difficulty with reading or writing, 40 (12.0%) respondents indicated they currently have problems with either reading, writing or both. Further, 71 (21.2%) participants had been diagnosed with a learning disability, while another 36 (13.7%) have not been diagnosed but believed they have such an issue. Those who believed they had a learning disability, but had not been diagnosed, were asked what specific learning problems they have experienced. Of those 36 participants, most had difficulty concentrating or focusing (16), while others switched numbers or letters when writing (10). Of those with a reading or writing problem or a learning disability, only 30 (25.9%) note these as barriers to employment in the past year.

Table 12: Education Challenges

Reading (R) Writing (W) Learning Disability (LD)	**Group 1** **n = 81**	**Group 2** **n = 65**	**Group 3** **n = 45**	**Group 4** **n = 80**	**Youth** **n = 64**	**Total** **N = 335**
In past year lack of education has been problem in getting job	28 (34.6%)	15 (23.1%)	9 (20%)	16 (20%)	6 (9.4%)	74 (22.1%)
Current problem: Reading Writing Both reading and writing	6 (7.4%) 1 (1.2%) 2 (2.5%)	4 (6.7%) 1 (1.5%) 3 (4.6%)	-0- 1 (2.2%) 2 (4.4%)	2 (2.5%) 2 (2.5%) 2 (2.5%)	5 (7.8%) 2 (3.1%) 7 (10.9%)	17 (5.1%) 7 (2.1%) 16 (4.8%)
Has been diagnosed with a LD	14 (17.3%)	15 (23.1%)	8 (17.8%)	14 (17.5%)	20 (31.3%)	71 (21.2%)
R/W problems and LD combined: Has problem R, W and LD Has either R, W problem or LD Neither R/W problem nor LD	4 (4.9%) 19 (23.4%) 62 (76.6%)	4 (6.1%) 19 (29.2%) 46 (70.8%)	2 (4.4%) 9 (20%) 36 (80%)	5 (6.3%) 15 (18.8%) 65 (81.2%)	7 (10.9%) 27 (42.2%) 37 (57.8%)	22 (6.6%) 89 (26. 3%) 246 (73.7%)
No diagnosed LD but think have LD	11 (164%)	10 (20.4%)	4 (10.8%)	6 (9.1%)	5 (11.4%)	36 (13.7%)
In past year, R or W or LD such an issue you couldn't get a job, lost job or couldn't go to school	**n = 27** 6 (22.2%)	**n = 27** 7 (25.9%)	**n = 15** 6 (40%)	**n = 20** 3 (15%)	**n = 27** 9 (29.6%)	**N = 116** 30 (25.9%)

Education Values- Past, Present, and Future Impacts

Understanding a person's historical values and attitudes towards education can provide context for that person's attitudes toward educational goals, as well as the values that are then passed down to the person's children. Participants in the WIOA Study were asked several open-ended questions about their views on education. These responses were audio recorded and later transcribed. The sample size associated with different questions will be explicitly stated, as there is slight variation from the total WIOA survey sample. Certain questions were not addressed with some participants either due to non-applicability and/or the participant not mentioning the topic during the audio recording.

First, participants were asked to describe the messages they received (or did not receive) about education during childhood. As will be discussed, respondents often elaborated on both the messages received (or not) and how well they listened to those messages. Next, respondents were asked to explore what barriers and supports impacted their pursuit of educational goals. Finally, participants with children were asked to describe how they view and prepare for their children's educational futures.

Childhood Education Messaging

As shown in Table 13, 216 (67.3%) respondents reported hearing positive messages about education when they were growing up. This messaging was strongest for Youth ($p \leq .001$). One training program graduate described the positive messages they received:

- *"Education is the key. Like that was totally what my parents talked about. My father regretted that he had not finished college. Education opens all the doors, because if you've got education, you can for yourself determine your future. If you don't have education people can only go on relationships to judge how effective you are. So the thing that my father and mother really pushed was getting an education will allow you to do things with people or for organizations where they don't know you. (Grp 4)"*

Table 13: Childhood Messages Heard about Education

	Group 1 n = 79	Group 2 n = 63	Group 3 n = 43	Group 4 n = 77	Youth n = 59	Total N= 319
Positive	50 (64.1%)	48 (76.2%)	27 (64.3%)	43 (55.8%)	48 (81.4%)	216 (67.7%)
Neutral	9 (11.5%)	9 (14.3%)	2 (4.8%)	7 (9.1%)	7 (11.9%)	34 (10.7%)
Negative	5 (6.4%)	1 (1.6%)	1 (2.4%)	--0--	--0--	7 (2.2%)
None	4 (5.1%)	3 (4.8%)	7 (16.7%)	16 (20.8%)	1 (1.7%)	31 (9.7%)
Mixed	10 (12.8%)	2 (3.2%)	5 (11.9%)	11 (14.3%)	3 (5.1%)	31 (9.7%)

Figure 7 shows the distribution of educational messages by graduate groups. Just 7 respondents remembered hearing only negative messaging about education during childhood. Interestingly, all of these respondents were non-graduates of their training program. One non-graduate described the messaging, "*When I was growing up you didn't… women didn't. You stayed home and had kids like our moms did.*" (Grp 2)

Statistical significance is seen in messaging between both the primary groupings and graduate vs. non-graduate groupings. It is interesting to note that positive messaging was not correlated to graduation, and in fact, Group 4 participants were the *least* likely to hear positive messaging about education in childhood. Group 4 also reported the highest incidences of no messaging (20.8%) and mixed messaging (14.3%) about education. These findings create questions surrounding the impacts that childhood messaging have on future educational success, as positive messaging was not correlated with training program completion. Participant input suggested that *receptivity* to the messages received could in fact be the greater predictor of future educational successes.

Figure 7: Childhood Education Messaging

There were 117 (37%) respondents who spoke to whether or not they listened to the educational messages, both positive and negative, they received in childhood (Figure 8). Among all groups, less than half of respondents who addressed receptivity (43.6%) listened to the educational messages they received during childhood. Of the respondents who did listen to messages, most were absorbing positive messaging (87%). Of 36 (30.8%) respondents who reported *not* listening to educational messaging, all but 4 ignored positive messages.

It is interesting to note that of those who mentioned receptivity to messages, non-graduates (33.3%) were less likely than graduates (22.2%) to absorb childhood messages. Although this finding is not statistically significant, one wonders if receptivity to childhood messaging might influence likelihood of successfully completing education programs. One non-graduate stated:

Figure 8: Attitude Toward Educational Advice
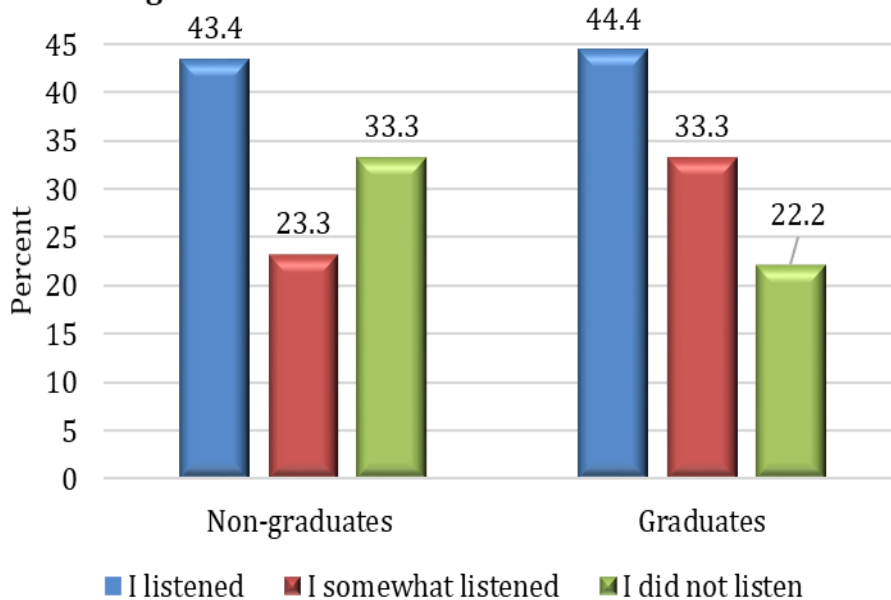
- *"My mom always pushed me to go get my degree or go to college right out of high school. And I was too good… and I was making $9.50 an hour. 'Mom, I don't need it, to go to school - $300 a week and I'm set.' But I should've listened. I should've took that advice. It would've put me on a different path." (Grp 3)*

A graduate described their experience of listening to negative educational messaging:
- *"Doctors always told me don't get it [education], and my parents agree with them. And so it frustrates me, because now I have like a McDonald's type of mentality, as far as finances go. And they've, they just go on with their life like nothing's wrong and it's really stunted where I'm at." (Grp 4)*

Education Supports and Barriers

Respondents were asked to describe what factors have supported and/or gotten in the way of their pursuit of educational goals. This information was gathered to potentially assist workers in tailoring resources offered to WIOA participants, as well as understanding customer strengths to build on in order to improve service outcomes.

Supports: Of 312 respondents questioned, only 120 (38.5%) were able to identify anything that had supported moving forward with education. Interestingly, non-graduates (40.3%) were able to identify supports at a greater frequency than graduates (33.3%). The general low reporting of education supports suggests that identification of personal, social, and environmental strengths, as well as building upon existing support, is an area of need for many customers. Interestingly, many of the supportive factors named by some participants were identified as barriers by others. Personal motivation (69) was the most commonly identified support among respondents. Rather than solely relying on outside supports, many respondents had an intrinsic desire for education. Some respondents described the impact of their personal motivation:
- *"For myself too, I have to encourage myself to get school. Because when I'm like if I don't do this, maybe I'm going to be homeless… or if I don't do this, I'm not going to get anything. Then I stop thinking all those negative things that aren't gonna give me the energy to push forward to get whatever I have today." (Grp 4)*
- *"Well, I didn't have any supports from anybody until I became an adult and I decided myself, I want to go to school. Because I always had that dream. And I said, no, I want to have something. I want to do something because when I die, it's the only thing that I'm going to take with me." (Grp 3)*

For some, family and children (63) were reported to be education supports. Several themes recognized in family support included wanting to provide for family, having support of family members, and wanting to set a positive example. In the words of customers:
- *"My family, my dad always supported me in my studies. Because that would provide a better job. They always supported me, my dad and my family". (Grp 4)*
- *"I'm going to school to be a good role model for my kids. I mean that's basically the main reason why I'm doing this." (Grp 3)*

Only 10 respondents identified financial resources as a support to pursuing education and training activities. Financial supports generally included DWS assistance, scholarships, and financial help from family. One program graduate noted, *"The scholarship that I got, that*

helped. They asked me to write an essay about what my goals were, and I think I got about $700 or $800 out of it, that helped. Not getting into any more debt." (Grp 4).

Finally, some respondents identified DWS support (6) and supportive teachers (4) as additional supports to their educational goals.

Barriers: In general, participants were more likely to identify barriers to education than supports. Of 312 respondents questioned, 263 (84.3%) identified training and educational barriers they had faced. There are no significant differences between graduates and non-graduates regarding 1) likelihood of identifying barriers and 2) categories of barriers identified. Of those who identified barriers, many spoke to self-created barriers resulting from personal choices or attitudes that limited their educational goals (102). Personal choices and attitudes commonly included not prioritizing education, having a fear of failure, or lack of motivation. Some examples of personal attitudes and choices that created educational barriers include:

- *"I was tired of school. I didn't really have any passion. Nothing stood out to me. I think I'm an individual who's not really that strong, goal driven type of person. I would say it's just a lack of finding a value within myself of going through and changing that."* (Grp 3)
- *"Partying too much. Not really growing up yet and not taking life seriously. Just not being responsible. Putting other things before responsibility. So, slacking."* (Grp 4)
- *"For me, the biggest barrier is probably my own confidence in myself that I can probably get through it and finish it."* (Grp 4)

Another large group of respondents (94) identified finances as the main external barrier to education. Respondents spoke to their financial barriers to education:

- *"Money. Money's the biggest deal. I mean, no money, no education. Plus people looking at your credit now to get into school. If you don't have good credit, they won't let you in."* (Grp 1)
- *"It's been financial mostly that I haven't done it. That's part of the reason I had to drop out, because I couldn't afford to go to school and not have a job. A part-time job wouldn't have done it."* (Grp 2)
- *"The biggest thing is just money. Like, if money wasn't an issue it would eliminate everything else."* (Grp 3)

Children and families (87) were another common barrier to pursuing educational goals. Rather than childcare issues, respondents most commonly talked about focusing on parenting and working to support their children. This being said, it leads to the question of whether or not increased childcare and/or parenting support could produce more successful training outcomes. Some customers described family barriers:

- *"Probably just being a single parent. So working was always more of a priority. And my son has always been way more priority than myself. Always. He's… I've always put him first. So that just how I naturally am."* (Grp 1)
- *"My family life has gotten in the way. I have a special needs son. I tried to study for the board, but just having him and not having resources for him was too much. There is not enough to focus. I am an A student, so I should be able to do this, but all this gets in the way."* (Grp 4)

Mental health issues, substance use, and learning disabilities were barriers for 43 respondents. Some specific barriers were described by customers:

- *"I was into sports and all that stuff... going to school and everything. And then I got injured and kind of lost it. And got into drugs after that. So I kind of just... that and my dad basically not being there. Kind of got me into a depression, got me into a downward spiral and kind of took off from there." (Grp 4)*
- *"My learning disability I guess frustrates me and scares me." (Grp 2)*
- *"I have symptoms of ADHD where it was very difficult for me to learn. I shut down at an early age, because teachers didn't understand what I was going through. My education lacks severely based off of, they didn't understand me, they yelled, so I pushed back or I shut down". (Grp 1)*

A final large group of respondents (82) identified general personal circumstances that created barriers to education goals. Some common personal circumstances include work schedule, frequent moving, transportation issues, housing issues, and issues with educational institutions/social service agencies. Some customers described these circumstantial barriers:

- *"Last year, there was a lot with court and stuff. I was still part of foster care. So, I was in foster care for almost three full years, and that was a struggle with school as well because you have court dates and you have the court meetings with case workers and foster care and all of those things." (Grp 3)*
- *"Transportation. Get there and it would have to be for me if I was to do the bus, which is a confusing system for me... but I would have to take me and my kids on the bus or whatever transportation and drop them off and whatever childcare I find. Then getting from there to a job or school. It would take like three hours." (Grp 2)*

Some other barriers include negative messaging (8), physical health (7), not understanding application processes or requirements (5), and language barriers (4).

Parental Attitudes about Education

Parental Values: With the hopes of better understanding intergenerational messaging about education, all WIOA Study participants with children were asked to describe the educational values they want to pass on to their children. There were 154 (46.0%) respondents who have at least one child and were asked, "What ideas do you want your children to have about the value of education as they grow up?"

Nearly all respondents (94.8%), including every graduate interviewed, mentioned wanting their children to view education as important. Education was described as important for personal growth, stability, skill-development, purpose, and pursuit of passion. Some respondents described this value:

- *"I want them to think that it's very important. That you need to go to school. I feel like just even learning something is very good for you. Feeding your brain with knowledge is very important. I'm always going to teach them that education is the way to go." (Grp 3)*
- *"I want them to love school and actually want to do it and have goals and have support. Definitely have support." (Grp 3)*

Another set of respondents (17), representing every group, spoke of wanting their children to view education as a "means to an end." For these customers, education leads to positive

outcomes such as financial stability, job security, and independence. As two people noted:

- *"To educate yourself in the area that you want to live your life. Like, don't go to school without a goal, because I think it's a waste of money. But if you know what you want to do… if you want to be a doctor, then go to school and be a doctor. If you don't know, then wait until you know." (Grp 1)*
- *"Just saying education… it's there to get out of poverty and whatever you have in your brain is yours. No one can ever take that away from you." (Grp 4)*

Some respondents spoke directly to the relationship between their childhood messaging and what they want to pass along to their children. Several respondents (17) want their children to have better ideas than they did, while 5 respondents want their children to have the same ideas. Some customers stated:

- *"To look at me and see how bad I'm struggling right now for not having an education". (Grp 3)*
- *"I want them to be happy, but I also want them to be educated more than I was and have better opportunities as a result." (Grp 1)*

A small group of respondents (5) want their children to understand that education is not the only path to success. One parent explained this attitude:

- *"I want them to know that if they don't get a college degree, then that doesn't make them a failure… that they can achieve life in other ways, and there's trades and there's definitely other types of paths that they can go. So I don't ever want them to feel like they have to, like if they don't want to… if schools not for them, then that's okay and they can find another path for them and make them successful." (Grp 4)*

Education Conversations: Parents described the conversations they have with their children about education. These conversations often mirrored many of the themes in the previous question about educational values they hope to instill in their children. While gaining understanding of values is important, it is also important to consider the explicit messages that parents pass along to their children. WIOA parents overwhelmingly have positive and supportive conversations with their children about education. Only 1 parent reported not having any conversations with their child about education goals.

The largest group of respondents (67) reported talking with their children about the benefits of education. In the words of some customers:

- *"To start early, you know? There's so many grants and things available to kids that work hard. There's so many things to where it would make it a lot less stressful as they got older." (Grp 4)*
- *"I think I conveyed to them how important education is and to me it was never always about going to school or going to college, because it's not for everybody. But the idea of wanting to learn and improve and figuring out what you want to do and then figuring out the route to get there. That to me is the most important thing that I conveyed to my kids." (Grp 2)*

Another group (65) focus conversations on encouraging their children to stay in school. Some respondents referenced these conversations:

- *"Oh, I've already told them that they're going. They got the GI bill and they are going to school. No questions. They are going to college." (Grp 1)*

- *"I talk to them all the time about college and being good in high school. College is not an option. It's important. And that they can live here rent free and tuition free as long as they are staying in school." (Grp 1)*

Some parents talked about their child's educational future in relation to their experience. Some encouraged their kids to follow their example (17), while others encouraging their child to approach education differently (18). Some parents discussed this attitude:

- *"That it's important and just because I didn't do something, doesn't mean that she can't. She can, just like my parents only went to 3rd grade and I graduated. So she can even do more than whatever I do." (Grp 3)*
- *"That it's fun! And that it's necessary to be able to have that secure future in life and just make it easy. You want to be able to have that savings account and be able to just, not have to rely on Medicaid or workforce or any of those programs. Because my mom did and as you see I am too. I'm trying to get out of it and show them that with the education, you can have it all. You can do whatever you want. Whatever your heart desires." (Grp 2)*

Other conversation elements that were mentioned include goal setting (6) and offering their support (3).

Hopes and Fears for Children: Parents with at least one child over 10 years old (59) were asked about their hopes and fears surrounding their children pursuing education or training after high school. Only one parent was unable to identify any reason *NOT* to be hopeful for their child's educational future after high school. Almost all parents (54) indicated they are hopeful their children will be successful in higher education. Themes surrounding success included gaining independence, opportunity, and direction. One customer noted, *"Just to have them succeed and see them all graduate is like the best blessing in the world." (Grp 1)*

Another group of parents (12) hope that their children have a positive experience in higher education. One parent described the hope that her children *"would find happiness through that." (Grp 1)*

When asked about fears surrounding children pursuing higher education, 19 respondents expressed fear that their child might not be successful or have a negative experience. Lack of success was defined academically and socially. One customer expressed this concern:

- *"For my son, I know his learning disabilities, so again he doesn't fit in that box. So just making sure that he doesn't give up on himself and finding some way to work through, with his strengths and identify something that really fits him, instead of him trying to do what his friends are doing." (Grp 2)*

Financial concerns was another fear several parents (15) expressed concerning their child pursuing higher education. One respondent said, *"Just financial stress if they need too many student loans. So hopefully he gets a scholarship like his older brother did." (Grp 2)*

Some other concerns include negative influences (3), safety (3), and a child moving far from home (3). There were also several parents (20) who reported to have no fears about their children pursuing education after high school, and rather were focused only on the benefits of higher education.

Preparatory Steps: Parents with older children (59) were asked a final question about preparations they had made for their children to possibly go to college one day. Only 7 parents (12.1%) could not identify any plans that they had made for their children.

Well over half of parents (36) had made financial preparations for their children's educational future. This is interesting, as financial concerns were such a prevalent fear for parents. Some respondents described the financial preparations they had made:
- *"I myself have been putting the extra hour in the army, so that I can… one of my silent bonuses is the education bonus for them. So I put in the extra four more years in my contract, so they can have school money." (Grp 4)*
- *"I'm trying to save money for them in the bank. And I'm trying to make different sources of income. I'm planning to use resources at my job, so that way in the future when they need money for college, they can use that money for it. And I'm very strict… whenever they have cash, they need to save some of it. So I opened a bank account for each of them and whenever they get allowance or money from family, they need to put some percentage in their saving account for school." (Grp 3)*

Almost half of parents (26) referenced the general support that they provide to their children being a preparatory action that they take in their educational futures. Most general support mirrored the conversations about the importance of school, rather than making tangible preparations. Some customers described these preparatory actions:
- *"I would say most definitely encouraging him and you know, like explaining more what college is and how important it is." (Grp 1)*
- *"Anything he needs. I mean if it's emotional support, physical support, whatever support he needs. I'm there for him no matter what; so even if he's making the wrong choices, I'm still there. I made a lot of wrong choices myself, so who am I to say." (Grp 3)*

Other preparations that parents have made include: social (3), emotional (5), and academic (7). Overall, the themes observed in these responses include supporting children in these areas, in order to increase their preparedness for the independence of college.

Physical Health

Utah's Department of Health produces an annual report on the overall health status of Utahns. The general health question is based on the General Health index used both nationally and by the State of Utah to evaluate overall health. Similar to the Utah Department of Health report, participants were asked to rate their overall health from excellent to

Figure 9: General Physical Health

Legend: Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, Group 4, Youth, Total
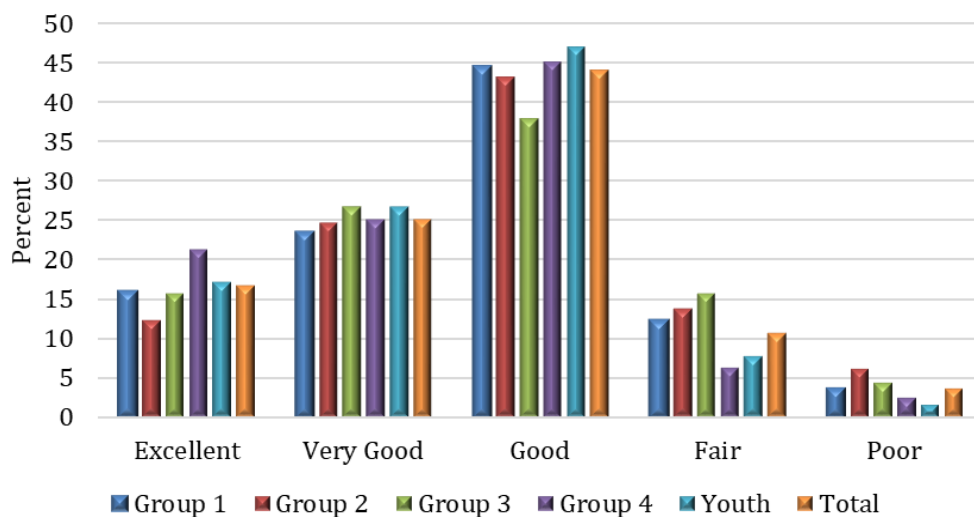
poor. Figure 9 shows that a majority of participants reported their overall physical health as being "good." In fact, a majority of respondents reported their health to be "good", "very good", or "excellent". However, 48 (14.3%) participants reported their health to be "fair" or "poor", which is nearly identical the 14.9% of the entire state of Utah reporting the same concern for their health (Utah Dept. Of Health, 2019). There was a significant difference related to graduation, as non-graduates were significantly more likely to report "fair" or "poor" physical health (p = .047).

Chronic health conditions were present in 143(42.7%) respondents, with no significant difference between groups. The most common chronic condition reported was back, joint, or chronic pain (61) followed by those with high blood pressure (19) and neurological disorders (19). As seen in Table 14, when asked out their physical health, 60 (17.9%) respondents reported that, within the last year, health problems had been such a problem that they could not take a job, had to stop working, or could not attend education or training. Of those reporting this issue, 25 (41.7%) indicated it had also been true in the last month.

Table 14: Physical Health Problems

	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N = 335
Has chronic health condition	37 (45.7%)	33 (50.8%)	18 (40%)	36 (45%)	19 (29.7%)	143 (42.7%)
Physical health issue prohibited work/school: In past year	13 (16%)	17 (26.2%)	6 (13.3%)	13 (16.3%)	11 (17.2%)	60 (17.9%)
If these, in past month	8 (61.5%)	6 (35.3%)	4 (66.7%)	5 (38.5%)	2 (18.2%)	25 (41.7%)

Mental Health

Mental health is a broad topic and can include a variety of factors. Here, overall mental health, specific diagnoses, self-esteem, and alcohol and other drug issues will be addressed.

Figure 10: Overall Mental Health
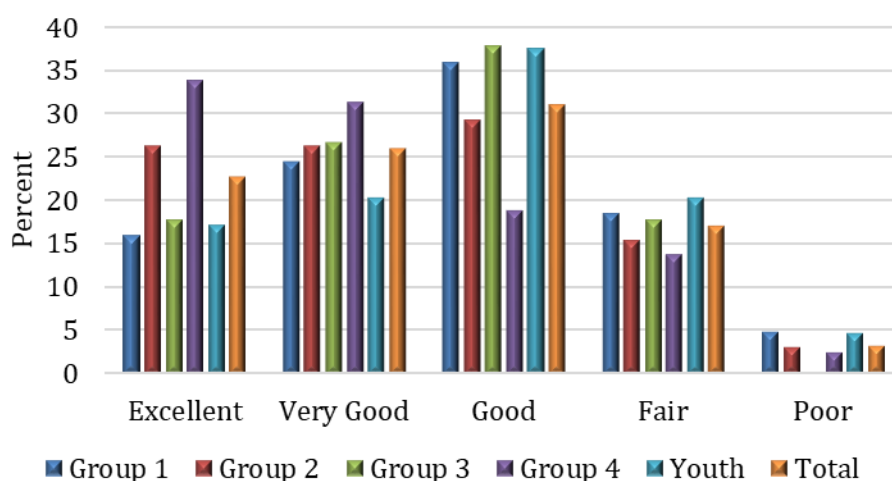
Overall Mental Health: Similar to physical health, mental health was measured using the General Health Index question in the context of mental health. Respondents were asked to rate their overall mental health using the same "excellent to poor" scale (See Figure 10). When comparing respondent ratings of overall mental health across the groups, there was not a significant

difference in mental health status. As seen in Table 15, Youth were more likely to be *currently* receiving mental health treatment (38.1%), followed closely by 37.5% of Group 1 respondents. Further, 17.0% of those not currently receiving mental health treatment felt that they could use such help at present. Youth were also the most likely to report that in the last 12 months, their mental health was such a problem that they could not work or attend school.

Table 15: Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment

	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N = 335
Has been diagnosed with mental health issue ($p \leq .001$)	43 (53.1%)	26 (40%)	19 (42.2%)	23 (28.7%)	39 (60.9%)	150 (44.8%)
Currently receive mental health treatment: ($p = .042$) Of those in trtmnt: Counseling Medication	30 (37.5%) 19 (63.3%) 24 (80%)	16 (24.6%) 11 (68.8%) 13 (81.3%)	13 (28.9%) 9 (69.2%) 8 (61.5%)	15 (18.8%) 6 (40%) 15 (100%)	24 (38.1%) 14 (58.3%) 22 (91.7%)	98 (29.4%) 59 (60.2%) 82 (83.7%)
Not currently receiving, but believes needs treatment	**n = 50** 11 (22.0%)	**n = 49** 8 (16.3%)	**n = 32** 6 (18.8%)	**n = 65** 10 (15.4%)	**n = 39** 5 (12.8%)	**N = 235** 40 (17.0%)
Mental health such a problem couldn't work or go to school ($p = .015$) In past year In past month	21 (25.9%) 7 (33.3%)	14 (21.5%) 5 (35.7%)	11 (24.4%) 4 (36.4%)	7 (8.8%) 1 (14.3%)	21 (32.8%) 9 (42.9%)	73 (21.8%) 26 (35.6%)

Mental Health Diagnosis*:* Respondents who had been diagnosed with a mental health issue were asked to identify the specific diagnoses and Table 16 shows those most commonly reported. To evaluate for the current presence of the more prevalent mental health issues, respondents completed assessment screens for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), clinical depression and generalized anxiety disorder. These screens are produced by the World Health Organization and have been used in multiple studies of this population and found to be valid and reliable (World Health Organization, CIDI-12 month SF, 1998). These results present a range of the potential prevalence of each of the mental health issues.

While the diagnosis and screening data vary widely, the prevalence of PTSD among WIOA participants is higher than found in the general population. Findings from the 2003 U.S. National Co-morbidity Survey indicate that in the general population PTSD occurred at a rate of 3.5% (Kessler, et al., 2005). The prevalence of PTSD among WIOA participants was higher than the national average, with 34 (10.2%) having received a PTSD diagnosis and 47 (14.0%) screening positive for the disorder. When viewing the prevalence of PTSD relative to graduation, non-graduates were significantly more likely to have either screened positive *or* been previously diagnosed ($p = .048$). There was also a significant difference in the prevalence of depression when comparing across groups ($p = .02$). Table 16 shows that Group 4 participants were less likely to have been previously diagnosed, to screen positive, or to be diagnosed *and* screen positive for depression. When looking at the prevalence of anxiety, Youth were almost twice as likely to have been previously diagnosed with the disorder ($p = .02$) and again non-graduates significantly more likely to have either been

diagnosed or screened positive for depression (p = .003). Of the participants who provided "other" diagnoses (41), the most frequently listed diagnoses included Autism Spectrum Disorder (9) andor Substance Use Disorder (6).

Table 16: Mental Health Diagnosis

	Previously diagnosed	Positive screen	Diagnosed and screened positive	Not diagnosed and screened negative
PTSD				
Group 1	7 (8.8%)	10 (12.3%)	3 (3.7%)	64 (79.0%)
Group 2	7 (10.8%)	9 (13.8%)	3 (4.6%)	49 (75.4%)
Group 3	5 (11.1%)	7 (15.6%)	2 (4.4%)	34 (75.6%)
Group 4	3 (3.8%)	9 (11.3%)	2 (2.5%)	68 (85.0%)
Youth	12 (18.8%)	12 (18.8%)	8 (12.5%)	41 (64.1%)
Total (N = 335)	**34 (10.2%)**	**47 (14.0%)**	**18 (5.4%)**	**256 (76.4%)**
Depression				
Group 1	32 (40.0%)	33 (40.7%)	22 (27.2%)	38 (46.9%)
Group 2	19 (29.2%)	20 (30.8%)	9 (13.8%)	35 (53.8%)
Group 3	17 (37.8%)	21 (46.7%)	13 (28.9%)	20 (44.4%)
Group 4	17 (21.3%)	19 (23.8%)	9 (11.3%)	27 (66.3%)
Youth	30 (46.9%)	26 (40.6%)	18 (28.1%)	26 (40.6%)
Total (N = 335)	**115 (34.4%)**	**119 (35.5%)**	**71 (21.2%)**	**172 (51.3%)**
Anxiety				
Group 1	21 (26.3%)	16 (19.8%)	7 (8.6%)	51 (63.0%)
Group 2	13 (20.0%)	17 (26.2%)	7 (10.8%)	42 (64.6%)
Group 3	10 (22.2%)	4 (8.9%)	1 (2.2%)	32 (71.1%)
Group 4	15 (18.8%)	12 (15.0%)	7 (8.8%)	60 (75.0%)
Youth	27 (42.2%)	9 (14.1%)	7 (10.9%)	35 (54.7%)
Total (N = 335)	**86 (25.7%)**	**58 (17.3%)**	**29 (8.7%)**	**220 (65.7%)**
Bipolar				
Group 1	4 (5.0%)			
Group 2	4 (6.2%)			
Group 3	3 (6.7%)			
Group 4	5 (6.3%)			
Youth	8 (12.5%)			
Total (N = 335)	**24 (7.2%)**			

Alcohol and Other Drug Dependency: Measurement of alcohol or other drug dependency was completed in two ways and reported in Table 17. Respondents were able to self-report if alcohol or other drug use had been a barrier to employment or schooling in the past year. Also, all respondents were screened with validated tools to evaluate alcohol and other drug dependency (World Health Organization, CIDI-12 month SF, 1998). In some cases, the proportion of those who screen positive for both alcohol and other drug dependence is higher than the rate of those reporting alcohol or other drug use as an employment barrier, because there are those who are able to retain a level of functionality even while living with alcohol or other drug dependency.

Table 17: Alcohol and Other Drug Dependency

	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N= 335
Alcohol dependence indicated positive by screen	5 (6.2%)	2 (3.1%)	1 (2.2%)	-0-	2 (3.1%)	10 (3.0%)
Use of alcohol self-reported as barrier in past year	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (2.2%	-0-	-0-	3 (0.9%)
Drug dependence indicated positive by screen	3 (3.7%)	4 (6.2%)	2 (4.4%)	1 (1.3%)	7 (10.9%)	17 (5.1%)
Use of drugs self-reported as barrier in past year	1 (1.2%)	5 (7.7%)	2 (4.5%)	1 (1.3%)	5 (7.8%)	14 (4.2%)

Adult Abuse Experiences*:* Given the prevalence of severe PTSD in the sample, it is not surprising that rates of abuse in several areas were also higher than in the general population. While experiences of abuse surfaced in many areas of the interviews, these results are from specific questions regarding issues of domestic violence and other experiences of violence as an adult. For the protection of respondents, domestic violence questions were never asked when a spouse or partner was present, either in the room or nearby.

The commonly cited Conflict Tactic Scale was used to measure domestic violence (Strauss, 1979). Five questions from the physical assault and sexual coercion sub-scales were used to measure severe domestic violence. While 42.4% of the study population reported they had experienced domestic violence at some point in their life, Table 18 shows that Group 1 was most likely to have experienced domestic violence (p = .018). Furthermore, non-graduates were significantly more likely to have experienced severe domestic violence at some time in the past (p = .037).

Table 18: Domestic Violence (DV)

	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N= 335
Severe DV – ever (p = .018)	45 (55.6%)	30 (46.2%)	20 (44.4%)	27 (33.8%)	20 (31.3%)	142 (42.4%)
Severe DV - in past year	6 (7.4%)	5 (7.7%)	4 (8.9%)	1 (1.3%)	8 (12.5%)	24 (7.2%)
Severe DV - current issue	1 (1.2%)	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (0.3%)
In past year, current or past romantic partner such a problem couldn't do work or school, etc.	**n = 75** 4 (5.3%)	**n = 60** 2 (3.3%)	**n = 42** 4 (9.5%)	**n =70** 1 (1.4%)	**n =61** 4 (6.6%)	**N = 308** 15 (4.9%)

When exploring severe domestic violence in the past year, there was not a significant difference between the five groups. However, 9.3% of non-graduates reported to have experienced severe domestic violence compared to 1% of program graduates (p= .011).

Similarly, when respondents were asked if a relationship with a current or past romantic partner was such a barrier that they could not take a job, job search, or go to school in the past year, there was not a significant difference in responses across the groups. While the greatest challenges were in Group 3, the differences were not statistically significant.

Data from questions regarding both witnessing and experiencing various forms of violence in other relationships can be seen in Table 19. Participants were asked about experiences of physical abuse as an adult. Experiencing abuse as an adult was significantly correlated with non-graduation. Non-graduates were also significantly more likely to have been physically abused ($p \leq .001$) and sexually abused ($p = .017$) than program graduates. Emotional abuse was much more prevalent in Group 1 respondents, with 65.4% reporting emotional abuse after turning 18, but this was not statistically significant.

Table 19: Other Abuse/Violence History

Positive responses to:	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 61	Total N = 332
Did you ever see the abuse of someone else as an adult?	46 (56.8%)	37 (56.9%)	23 (51.1%)	34 (42.5%)	19 (31.1%)	159 (47.9%)
Were you ever physically abused after you were 18?	33 (40.7%)	24 (36.9%)	13 (28.9%)	12 (15%)	10 (16.4%)	92 (27.7%)
Were you ever sexually abused after you were 18?	14 (17.3%)	12 (18.5%)	6 (13.3%)	4 (5%)	3 (4.9%)	39 (11.7%)
Were you ever emotionally abused after you were 18?	53 (65.4%)	31 (47.7%)	25 (55.6%)	35 (43.8%)	20 (32.8%)	164 (49.4%)

Criminal Record

The presence of a criminal record can have a significant impact on employability. Respondents were simply asked if a criminal record had affected their ability to obtain or retain employment or go to school in the past year, and if so, had this happened in the past month. There were 60 (17.9%) respondents who reported that a criminal record had interfered with employment or schooling in the past year. Further, a criminal record had been a problem for 23 (38.3%) of these respondents in the past month. Group 1 participants were significantly more likely to have been affected be a criminal record ($p = .02$) as 23 (28.4%) reported a criminal record had been a barrier to work or school.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

WIOA, while specifically an education and training program, is ultimately focused on helping individuals obtain employment. At times, supports beyond a degree or credential are necessary to support employment efforts. Resources generally come from a variety of sources including family, friends, religious organizations, and other local agencies. In this section, data will be presented regarding the primary resources which contribute to gaining and maintaining employment. These resources include: childcare, housing, telephone access, transportation, health care, community resources, computer access and social supports.

Childcare

In Utah, a child under the age of 13 is not to be left alone in the home. While many families allow self-care at younger ages, for this review, only WIOA participants with a child under 13 will be included. Childcare was not an issue for the 201 households with no children and the 13 households with no child 12 or younger.

Of the remaining 121 households with at least one child 12 or younger, Table 20 shows that 34 (28.1%) had at least one child currently cared for by someone other than a parent on a *regular* basis. The term "regular" was focused on childcare used when the parent was working, in school or training, job searching, etc. (not simply running errands). Of 34 families with a child in regular care, only 7 (20.6%) were receiving state assistance. When asked to give the primary reason they were not receiving state assistance, 15 (55.6%) respondents said there was no need for financial help. Of the 7 (25.9%) respondents who applied for child care but were told they were not eligible, most reported they were denied because they made too much money.

Table 20: Current and Recent Child Care

	Group 1 n = 37	Group 2 n = 25	Group 3 n = 16	Group 4 n = 35	Youth n = 8	Total N = 121
Has child(ren) cared for by someone else on a regular basis	8 (21.6%)	6 (24%)	6 (37.5%)	13 (37.1%)	1 (12.5%)	34 (28.1%)
Families currently receiving state child care assistance	2 (25%)	4 (66.7%)	-0-	1 (7.7%)	-0-	7 (20.6%)
Primary reason not receiving state assistance:						
No Need	5 (83.3%)	1 (50%)	4 (66.7%)	4 (33.3%)	1 (100%)	15 (55.6%)
Didn't know help was available	1 (16.7%)	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (3.7%)
Was told I was not eligible	-0-	1 (50%)	-0-	6 (50%)	-0-	7 (25.9%)
Person I want is not eligible	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (8.3%)	-0-	1 (3.7%)
Other	-0-	-0-	2 (33.3%)	8 (8.3%)	-0-	10 (11.1%)
No current child care but has used in past year						
	n = 29	n = 19	n = 10	n = 22	n = 7	N = 87
Had child(ren) cared for by someone else in past year	6 (20.7%)	4 (21.1%)	5 (50%)	6 (27.3%)	3 (42.9%)	24 (27.6%)
Received state cc assistance	1 (16.7%)	2 (50%)	1 (20%)	-0-	1 (33.3%)	5 (20.8%)
Why no child care assistance:						
No Need	2 (40%)	1 (50%)	3 (75%)	5 (83.3%)	1 (50%)	12 (63.2%)
Did not know help was available	-0-	1 (50%)	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (5.3%)
Was told I was not eligible	2 (40%)	-0-	1 (25%)	1 (16.7%)	-0-	4 (21.1%)
Person I want is not eligible	1 (20%)	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (5.3%)
Other	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (50%)	1 (5.3%)

The 87 respondents who did not currently have a child in regular care were asked if their children had been in childcare during the past year. As shown in the bottom half of Table 20, 24 individuals indicated regular use of childcare in the past year, but only 5 (20.8%) of them had received state child care assistance. When asked to give the primary reason they had not received state assistance, 12 (63.2%) respondents said there was no need for financial help. Of the 4 (21.1%) respondents who applied for child care in the past 12 months but were not eligible, most were denied due to being over income. Lastly, when asked about childcare issues as an employment barrier, 29 (24%) of the 121 with a child under 13 in their home indicated that childcare issues had, in the past year, prohibited employment or education.

Those who stated childcare was a barrier to employment or education activities were asked what kinds of problems they faced. Of those reporting this barrier, 16 (55.2%) participants said that it cost too much and 6 (34.5%) said they could not find care for the times needed. The "other" answers participants provided included: the DWS assistance application taking too long, parents not wanting children to be cared for by anyone other than family, the family making too much money when both parents worked, and the child's disability requiring specialized care.

Housing

As seen in Figure 11, the types of housing varied across groups ($p = .000$). Significantly more youth were living with family (either paying rent or rent-free) compared to the other groups. While a majority of all study participants, except Youth, rented their home, Group 2 was significantly more likely to rent their residence.

Figure 11: Housing
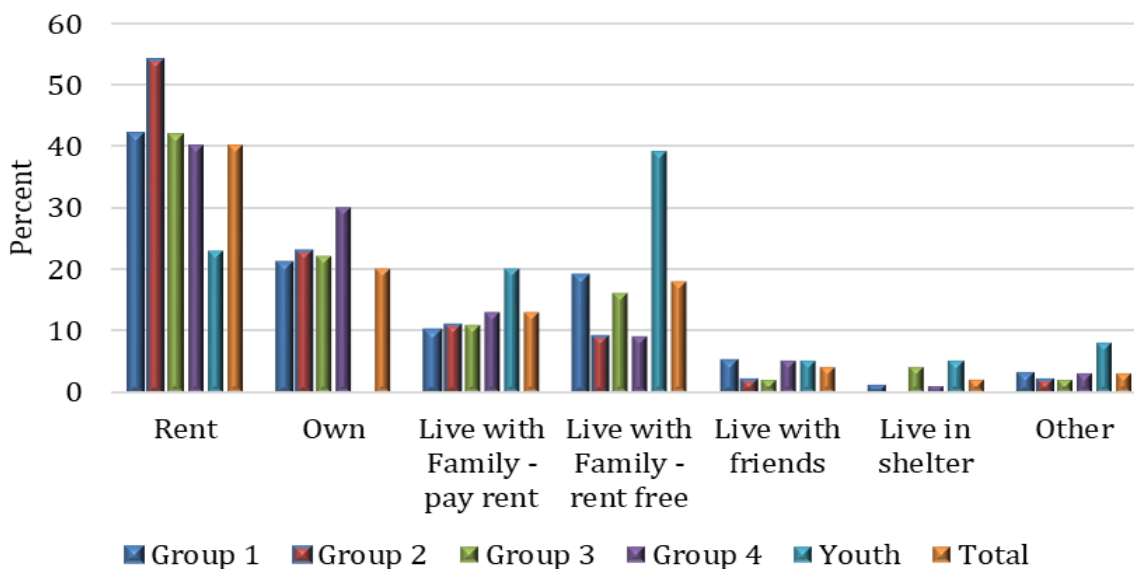
Only 35 (10.4%) participants reported that housing had been such a problem in the past year that they could not take a job or go to school, with no significant difference across groups. Of the 35 respondents with housing problems, the majority expressed that *housing instability* was the main contributing factor in this difficulty (21). Not having a permanent address for job applications or a place to get ready for work all created feelings of instability. Other respondents stated that frequent disruptions at the place they were living made it difficult to focus on work and school (9).

However, Table 21 shows that Group 2 participants were significantly more likely to report that they had been homeless as an adult (p = .015). Further, significantly more non-graduates reported experiencing homelessness as an adult (p = .010) than graduates.

Table 21: Housing

Living Situation	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N = 335
Housing such a problem in past year could not work or attend school	11 (13.6%)	3 (4.6%)	7 (15.6%)	6 (7.5%)	8 (12.5%)	35 (10.4%)
- Average time current residence (months) - Median time current residence (months)	38.5 12	48 18	34.3 18	46.7 24	35 5.6	41.1 13
Have been homeless as an adult (p = .003)	27 (33.3%)	29 (44.6%)	17 (37.8%)	15 (18.8%)	12 (19.7%)	100 (30.1%)

Health Care Coverage

Health care coverage is an important employment support for everyone, but it is especially important for those with significant physical and mental health problems. As seen in Table 22, 173 (51.6%) respondents reported a period in the last year when they were not covered by health insurance. Participants were also asked if within the last year they needed medical care but did not receive care because they could not afford it. Youth participants were significantly less likely to have needed, but not received, medical care due to cost (p = .002). While not statistically significant, Youth were among the least likely to rate their overall health as fair to poor and less likely to report having any chronic health conditions.

When asked what, at present time, is their primary form of health insurance, Table 22 shows that overall, there was an even split between the use of Medicaid (38.2%) and Private insurance (38.8%). However, Group 1 and Youth participants were more likely to be accessing Medicaid (p = .028). Further, with 17 (37.8%) participants reporting no coverage, Group 3 had a significantly higher percentage of those without health insurance at the time (p = .028). The 77 (23.0%) respondents who did not have health care coverage at the time were asked what the main reasons were for lack of coverage. The high cost of coverage was the barrier most commonly cited (32). The second most frequent response was not qualifying for coverage (27).

Participants were also asked if their healthcare coverage was meeting their health care needs. Of the 257 (76.7%) participants covered by health insurance at the time, 225 (87.5%) felt that their health needs were met. The 32 (12.5%) that felt their needs were not being met were asked what needs they felt were not covered. The most common responses were dental care (11) and specialist care (10). The 257 (76.7%) participants who had health care coverage were also asked if they had any difficulty accessing health care for which they are covered. The most common problems cited were confusion about their coverage (6), care being too expensive (5), and difficulty finding an in-network provider (5).

Table 22: Health Care Coverage

	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N = 335
Anytime in past year - no health insurance	46 (56.8%)	34 (52.3%)	24 (53.3%)	44 (55.0%)	25 (39.1%)	173 (51.6%)
Past year needed medical care but couldn't afford it (p = .002)	39 (48.1%)	31 (47.7%)	15 (33.3%)	27 (33.8%)	12 (18.8%)	124 (37.0%)
Currently applying for SSI/SSDI benefits:						
No	74 (91.4%)	63 (96.9%)	39 (86.7%)	77 (96.3%)	55 (85.9%)	308 (91.9%)
Yes	4 (1.2%)	1 (1.5%)	4(8.9%)	1 (1.3%)	6 (9.4%)	16 (4.8%)
Already receiving	3 (3.7%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (4.4%)	2 (2.5%)	3 (4.7%)	11 (3.3%)
Primary form of health insurance right now:						
(p = .028) Medicaid	40 (49.4%)	16 (24.6%)	13 (28.9%)	31 (38.8%)	28 (43.8%)	128 (38.2%)
Private	25 (30.9%)	32 (49.2%)	15 (33.3%)	34 (42.5%)	24 (37.5%)	130 (38.8%)
None	16 (19.8%)	17 (26.2%)	17 (37.8%)	15 (18.8%)	12 (18.8%)	77 (23.0%)
Coverage meets health care needs	**n = 65** 51 (78.5%)	**n = 48** 44 (91.7%)	**n = 28** 24 (85.7%)	**n = 64** 55 (85.9%)	**n = 52** 49 (94.2%)	**N = 257** 225 (87.5%)
Had difficulty in accessing health care	4 (6.2%)	5 (10.4%)	2 (7.1%)	5 (7.7%)	-0-	16 (6.2%)

Telephone

Telephone access is an important resource in gaining employment. On the whole, 320 (95.5%) of the study participants had regular access to a telephone to make and receive calls. As seen in Table 23, Group 2 respondents were significantly more likely to have a phone, with 65 (100%) respondents reporting regular access (p = .015). Group 3 was significantly less likely to have regular access to a telephone to make or receive calls, with 3 (6.7%) reporting little to no access, compared to the other groups with just 1 person reporting little or no access (p = .015). Personal cell phones were the most common primary phone, with 319 (96.4%) participants using their own cell phone to make and receive calls. The four participants who had little or no access reported using email (2) or in person contacts (2) as their main source of communication.

Lastly, participants were asked if access to a telephone was ever such a problem that they could not take a job or could not attend education activities. Within the entire WIOA study population, only 20 (6.0%) participants reported that access to a telephone had been a barrier in the last year, with 10 (50.0%) reporting this had been barrier in the last month.

Table 23: Telephone Access

	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N = 335
Access to a telephone for making and receiving calls:						
Yes, regular access	76 (93.8%)	65 (100%)	40 (88.9%)	78 (97.5%)	61 (95.3%)	320 (95.5%)
Some limited access	5 (6.2%)	-0-	2 (4.4%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (3.1%)	11 (3.3%)
No very little or no access	-0-	-0-	3 (6.7%)	-0-	1 (1.6%)	4 (1.2%)
Primary phone						
Own home phone	1 (1.2%)	-0-	1 (2.4%)	-0-	2 (3.2%)	4 (1.2%)
Own cell phone	79 (97.5%)	65 (100%)	39 (92.9%)	79 (98.8%)	57 (90.5%)	319 (96.4%)
Family member's phone	1 (1.2%)	-0-	1 (2.4%)	1 (1.3%)	2 (3.2%)	5 (1.5%)
Friend or neighbor's phone	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (1.6%)	1 (0.3%)
Other	-0-	-0-	1 (2.4%)	-0-	1 (1.6%)	2 (0.6%)
Access to telephone such a problem couldn't work:						
In past year	5 (6.2%)	5 (7.7%)	1 (2.2%)	3 (3.8%)	6 (9.4%)	20 (6.0%)
Of those, in past month	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (100.0%)	1 (33.3%)	5 (83.3%)	10 (50.0%)

Transportation

Regular transportation is also a significant work support, especially in areas where public transportation is not readily available or where childcare is a significant distance from one's home. As seen in Table 24, 275 (82.1%) respondents currently have a valid driver's license. However, only 29 (45.3%) Youth participants had a valid driver's license, which is significantly lower than the other groups ($p \leq .001$). Table 24 also shows that only 34 (53.1%) Youth had regular use of a car ($p \leq .001$). While most participants reported their main source of transportation as being their own car, Figure 12 shows that less than half the Youth had similar access and were dependent on other sources of transportation ($p \leq .001$).

Table 24: Transportation

	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N = 335
Has current driver's license ($p \leq .001$)	73 (90.1%)	60 (92.3%)	37 (82.2%)	76 (95%)	29 (45.3%)	275 (82.1%)
Has regular use of a car ($p \leq .001$)	71 (87.7%)	62 (95.4%)	35 (77.8%)	70 (87.5%)	34 (53.1%)	272 (81.2%)

Table 24 (Con't)	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N = 335
Condition of current vehicle	n = 71	n = 62	n = 35	n = 70	n =34	N = 272
Excellent	26 (36.6%)	21 (33.9%)	12 (34.3%)	24 (34.3%)	10 (29.4%)	93 (34.2%)
Good	40 (42.3%)	29 (46.9%)	17 (48.6%)	33 (47.1%)	14 (41.2%)	123 (45.2%)
Fair	13 (18.3%)	10 (16.1%)	4 (11.4%)	10 (14.3%)	7 (20.6%)	44 (16.2%)
Poor	2 (2.8%)	2 (3.2%)	2 (5.7%)	3 (4.3%)	3 (8.8%)	12 (4.4%)
Public Transport in Area						
Yes	60 (74.2%)	50 (76.9%)	38 (84.4%)	62 (77.5%)	48 (75%)	258 (77%)
No	20 (24.7%)	15 (23.1%)	7 (15.6%)	18 (22.5%)	16 (25%)	76 (22.7%)
Don't Know	1 (1.1%)	---	---	---	---	1 (0.3%)
Those who use public transport where available (p = .006)	n = 60 19 (31.1%)	n = 50 17 (34%)	n = 38 10 (26.3%)	n = 62 15 (24.2%)	n = 48 27 (56.3%)	N = 258 88 (34%)
Transport a problem can't work or attend school:						
In past year	12 (14.8%)	10 (15.4%)	9 (20%)	17 (21.3%)	19 (29.7%)	67 (20%)
In the last month	8 (66.7%)	2 (20%)	3 (33.3%)	6 (35.3%)	5 (26.3%)	24 (35.8%)

While 258 (77%) WIOA study participants lived near public transportation, only 88 (34%) of them actually use it. However, when comparing across groups, 27 (56.3%) Youth reported using public transit, which is significantly more than the other groups ($p \le .001$). Lastly, participants were asked if within the past year transportation was ever such an issue that they could not take a job or could not attend education activities. Across all respondents, 67 (20%) reported transportation to be a barrier in the past year. Of those, 24 (35.8%) reported it as a barrier in the last month.

Figure 12: Transportation
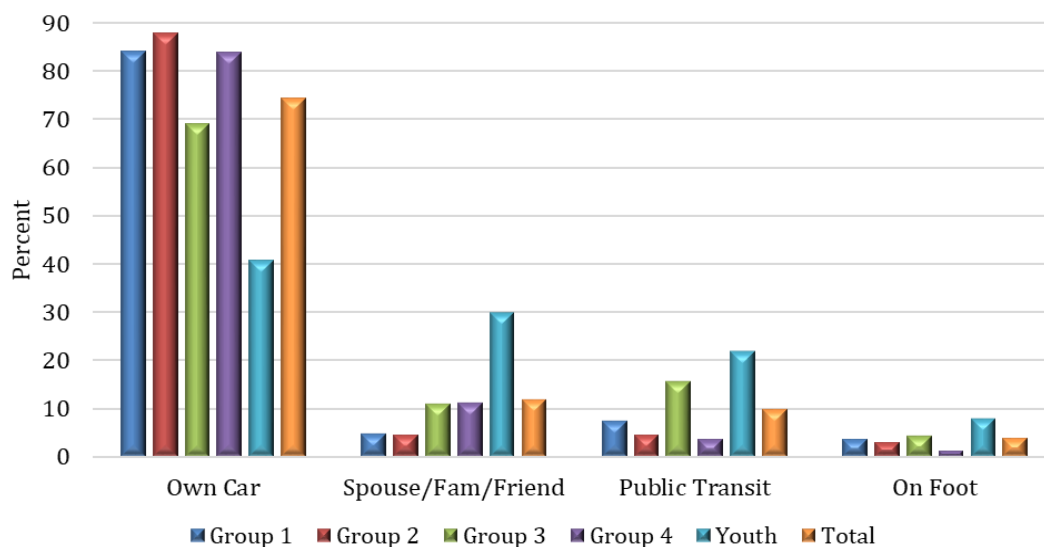
Community Resources

Community resources continue to fill significant gaps for those struggling to make ends meet. Respondents were asked to indicate if, *in the past six months*, they had used a variety of resources to supplement their other income sources. Table 25 displays the range of community services used by WIOA participants. Use of thrift stores was most common with 133 (39.7%) participants using this resource.

Use of the H.E.A.T. program or other utility assistance was significantly lower among Youth with only 1 (1.6%) participant reporting use of this resource (p = .047). This significant difference is expected, as the majority of Youth live with family and are not responsible for covering utilities. Vocational Rehabilitation was the most commonly used "other" resource not listed, with 9 (36%) total participants having accessed this resource.

Questions regarding services such as WIC and Free School Lunch were only asked of those respondents with children of appropriate age for these services. Among these participants, use of WIC was common with 64 (44.4%) respondents using this resource. When looking at use of free or reduced cost school lunch, Youth were significantly more likely to have children who used this resource with 7 (77.8%) respondents reporting such use (p = .030).

Table 25: Community Resources

	Group 1 **n = 81**	**Group 2** **n = 65**	**Group 3** **n = 45**	**Group 4** **n = 80**	**Youth** **n = 64**	**Total** **N = 335**
Food Bank or Food Pantry	20 (24.7%)	17 (26.2%)	8 (17.8%)	15 (18.8%)	8 (12.5%)	68 (20.3%)
Thrift Store	29 (35.8%)	29 (44.6%)	16 (35.6%)	34 (42.5%)	25 (39.1%)	133 (39.7%)
Homeless shelter or DV shelter	-0-	-0-	5 (11.1%)	1 (1.3%)	5 (7.8%)	11 (3.3%)
Help from Church or religious organization	21 (25.9%)	11 (16.9%)	8 (17.8%)	12 (15.0%)	8 (12.5%)	60 (17.9%)
Drug/alcohol treatment or 12 step group	10 (12.3%)	7 (10.8%)	4 (8.9%)	3 (3.8%)	4 (6.3%)	28 (8.4%)
Mental Health Services (for self,/spouse/child)	18 (22.2%)	11 (16.9%)	9 (20.0%)	8 (20.0%)	16 (25.4%)	62 (18.6%)
Help with credit counseling, budgets/financial advising	-0-	7 (10.8%)	5 (11.1%)	3 (3.8%)	6 (9.4%)	21 (6.3%)
H.E.A.T. program or other utility assistance	11 (13.6%)	12 (18.5%)	5 (11.1%)	10 (12.5%)	1 (1.6%)	39 (11.6%)
WIC	**n = 43** 6 (14.0%)	**n = 35** 7 (20.0%)	**n = 19** 8 (42.1%)	**n = 38** 17 (44.7%)	**n = 9** 1 (11.1%)	**N = 144** 64 (44.4%)
Free or reduced cost school meals	**n = 45** 9 (20.0%)	**n = 34** 14 (41.2%)	**n = 19** 5 (26.3%)	**n = 40** 12 (30.0%)	**n = 9** 7 (77.8%)	**N = 147** 47 (32.0%)
Other	3 (3.7%)	4 (6.2%)	2 (4.4%)	7 (8.8%)	9 (14.1%)	25 (7.5%)

Computer Literacy and Access

Computer literacy and access has become an essential tool for finding and securing employment. As seen in Table 26 (Appendix 5 – Table 26), 286 (85.4%) respondents had regular access to a computer; of those, 239 (83.6%) reported the computer was located in their home. Not only did a majority of participants report having regular access to a computer, but 278 (97.2%) also reported having regular internet access. The 57 (17.0%) participants that did not have regular internet access on a computer were asked if they had a phone or other device that provided them with regular internet access, and 54 (94.7%) of them reported that they did have another option for regular internet access.

In addition to questions regarding access, other questions ask about the individual's level of confidence and comfort in using the computer for a variety of tasks. Job searching and applying for jobs online was a task that 259 (77.3%) respondents felt "very" confident completing. However, respondents reported less confidence in using a computer to write a letter or a resume, with only 212 (63.3%) reporting feeling "very" confident.

Connecting to DWS Online: Many interactions that WIOA customers have with DWS, both initially and throughout training, occur online. My Case is the online platform through which customers access and provide information about their case. Additionally, customers usually submit their initial application for the WIOA program via the online portal.

Customers were asked how comfortable they felt using the computer to manage their DWS case. There were 10 respondents who had never accessed DWS online and could not answer these questions. Of the 325 respondents who had accessed DWS online, the distribution of website comfortability between groupings can be seen in Appendix 5 - Table 26. Most customers [251(77.2%)] felt "mostly" or "completely" comfortable managing their case online. Although group differences are not significant in this area, Youth customers were more likely to feel not at all comfortable managing their case online.

Separate from comfortability, respondents were asked whether or not they felt parts of the online system were difficult to use. There were 111 (33.9%) respondents who struggled with aspects of the online system. When asked to specifically describe what parts of the website were challenging for them, nearly half (50) identified that the website generally is not user friendly and/or is difficult to navigate. Some common issues with website navigation surrounded general layout, specific screens, and information provided on the site. Some customers described the website as being confusing, not intuitive, complicated, and time consuming. One customer stated, *"Navigation is cumbersome and not user friendly. Website takes a lot of steps to get where you need to go. Time consuming."* Another customer spoke directly to the WIOA-specific part of the website, stating, *"Training part of the website was too complicated. They could've had a simpler breakdown. Too many options. It made me anxious to look at."*

Another group (24) reported that finding information on the website is challenging. Commonly, customers described having to go through several screens and tabs to find the needed information. Many of these respondents described particular difficulty with finding the WIOA training application. One customer stated that the *"training app was buried under tabs. It was hard to find."* Another participant agreed, stating, *"The WIOA specific page is hidden and hard to find. It's not visible on their website."*

Other customers (20) mentioned personal information and the website itself being outdated. Issues with signing in (17) and uploading documents / completing forms (15) were frequently mentioned. Customers who access the website primarily from their mobile device (6) mentioned that it is not mobile friendly. Lastly, 8 respondents were unfamiliar with computers, which impacted their ability to use the website.

Social Supports

Having others around to provide support in difficult times is known to act as a protective factor in managing difficult life circumstances. The term "support" was defined broadly to include emotional support, help with daily activities, as well as possible financial support (Kalil, Born, Kunz, & Caudill, 2001). As seen in Table 27, 298 (86.3%) participants reported being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the support they receive from others. When comparing across groups, Group 4 participants were significantly more likely to report high levels of satisfaction than Group 1 (p = .008). When comparing program graduates to non-graduates, graduates were significantly more likely to be satisfied with their social support (p = .003).

Participants were also asked how often they experience receiving the social and emotional support they need. Overall, participants reported high levels of support as 222 (66.4%) reported "usually" or "always" getting the support they need. Interviewers then asked *who* the participant considers their closest support. Respondents reported parents, spouse/partner, friends, and other family members to be their "closest supports" between 34% - 39% of the time. When comparing across groups, Group 4 was significantly more likely to consider their spouse/partner as their closest support (p = .014). Parents were the closest support for 38 (59.4%) Youth, a significantly higher proportion compared to the other groups (p = .002). Lastly, Youth were significantly less likely to consider their children to be their closes support with just 1 (1.6%) Youth participant reporting this compared to other groups ranging from 13-23% of participants who report their children are their closest supports (p = .006). Of the "other" closest supports that participants reported (34), most found their faith based relationships (6) and therapeutic relationships (6) to be their closest support.

Involvement with a particular religious group was another area of support explored. The majority of respondents [129 (39.0%)] did not identify with any specific religion or religious institution. Of those who reported specific religious affiliation, the largest group [87 (26.3%)] self-identified as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. "Christian" was the second most commonly reported religious identity [34 (10.1%)]. Participants were also asked how many times they had attended a religious service in the past month and 108 (32.4%) had attended 1 or more while the majority (67.6%) had not attended any religious service. Lastly, when comparing program graduates to non-graduates, 175 (71.4%) non-graduates had not attended any religious services which was significantly higher than the 50 (56.8%) program graduates that also had not attended (p = .012).

Table 27: Social Supports

	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64	Total N = 335
Satisfaction level of support from others: (p = .008)						
Very satisfied	24 (29.6%)	23 (35.4%)	11 (24.4%)	39 (48.8%)	25 (39.1%)	122 (36.4%)
Satisfied	37 (45.7%)	34 (52.3%)	26 (57.8%)	36 (45.0%)	34 (53.1%)	167 (49.9%)
Dissatisfied	12 (14.8%)	5 (7.7%)	8 (17.8%)	4 (5.0%)	3 (4.7%)	32 (9.6%)
Very Dissatisfied	8 (9.9%)	3 (4.6%)	-0-	1 (1.3%)	2 (3.1%)	14 (4.2%)
How often gets social/emotional support:						
Always	22 (27.2%)	24 (36.9%)	11 (24.4%)	37 (46.8%)	24 (37.5%)	118 (35.3%)
Usually	24 (29.6%)	20 (30.8%)	15 (33.3%)	22 (27.8%)	23 (35.9%)	104 (31.1%)
Sometimes	19 (23.5%)	13 (20.0%)	11 (24.4%)	12 (15.2%)	12 (18.8%)	67 (20.1%)
Rarely	10 (12.3%)	6 (9.2%)	7 (15.6%)	7 (8.9%)	5 (7.8%)	35 (10.5%)
Never	6 (7.4%)	2 (3.1%)	1 (2.2%)	1 (1.3%)	-0-	10 (3.0%)
Closest personal supports come from:						
Spouse/partner	26 (32.1%)	26 (40.0%)	15 (33.3%)	42 (52.5%)	17 (26.6%)	126 (37.6%)
Parents	27 (33.3%)	21 (32.3%)	12 (26.7%)	30 (37.5%)	38 (59.4%)	128 (38.2%)
Children	14 (17.3%)	15 (23.1%)	10 (22.2%)	11 (13.8%)	1 (1.6%)	51 (15.2%)
Other family	31 (38.3%)	16 (24.6%)	16 (35.6%)	28 (35.0%)	26 (40.6%)	117 (34.9%)
Friends	33 (40.7%)	16 (24.6%)	18 (40.0%)	29 (36.3%)	24 (37.5%)	120 (35.8%)
Others	5 (6.2%)	6 (9.2%)	7 (15.6%)	6 (7.5%)	10 (15.6%)	34 (10.1%)
Don't have any supports	4 (4.9%)	2 (3.1%)	-0-	-0-	1 (1.6%)	7 (2.1%)
Religious Identity:						
Protestant	4 (5.1%)	3 (4.7%)	2 (4.4%)	9 (11.3%)	2 (3.2%)	20 (6.0%)
Catholic	6 (7.6%)	6 (9.4%)	11 (24.4%)	4 (5.0%)	5 (7.9%)	32 (9.7%)
LDS	19 (24.1%)	17 (26.6%)	11 (24.4%)	24 (30.0%)	16 (25.4%)	87 (26.3%)
Muslim	1 (1.3%)	1 (1.6%)	-0-	-0-	1 (1.6%)	3 (0.9%)
None	33 (41.8%)	28 (43.8%)	13 (28.9%)	27 (33.8%)	28 (44.4%)	129 (39.0%)
Other	16 (20.3%)	9 (14.1%)	8 (17.8%)	16 (20.0%)	11 (17.5%)	60 (18.1%)
Attend ANY religious services past month:						
Never	55 (68.8%)	44 (67.7%)	33 (73.3%)	45 (56.3%)	48 (76.2%)	225 (67.6%)
1 - 3 times	14 (17.5%)	7 (10.8%)	6 (13.3%)	14 (17.5%)	12 (19.0%)	53 (15.9%)
4 times	9 (11.3%)	12 (18.5%)	4 (8.9%)	16 (20.0%)	3 (4.8%)	44 (13.2%)
More than 4	2 (2.5%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (4.4%)	5 (6.3%)	-0-	11 (3.3%)

EMPLOYMENT

Employment History

Nearly all respondents (99.1%) reported having been employed at some point in their life. Figure 13 shows that a majority of respondents in all five groups (63.6%) reported that they have been employed "most of the time" since turning 16.

While the question reflected relative portions of time of employment, it is understandable that the Youth Group would likely not have had as extensive a work history as many of them spent a portion of their years in high school.

Employment history is a factor often associated with future employment potential. In Figure 14, employment history was collapsed into a two-response variable. Across Groups 1-4, the majority of respondents reported that they had been employed at least ¾ of the time since age 16. The Youth Group was significantly different ($p \leq$ .001) with the distribution of respondents almost being equal between the two groups.

Figure 13: Employment History
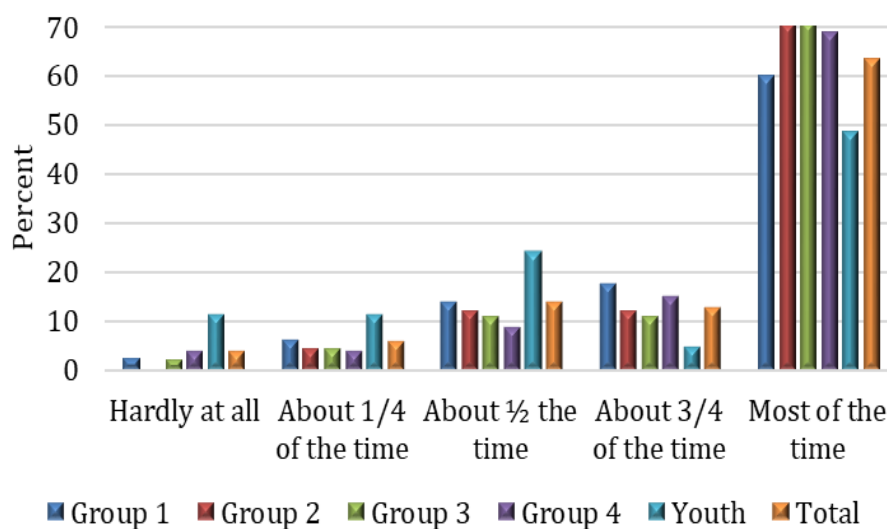
Figure 14: Employment History - Bivariate
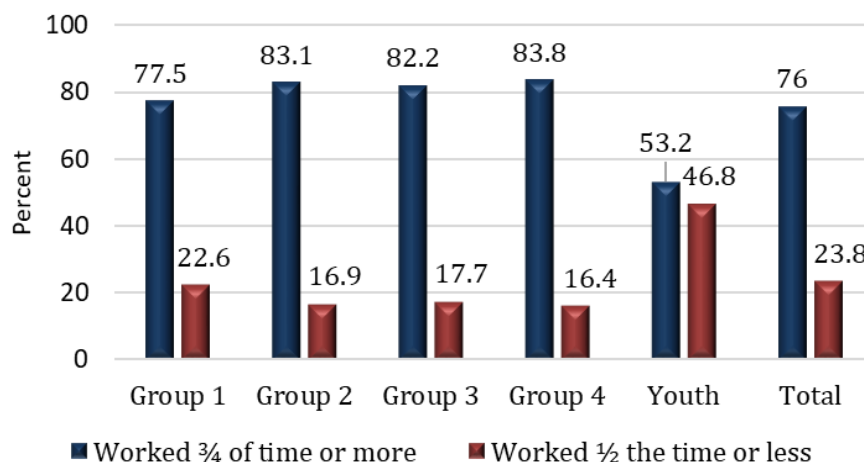
Employment Status

At the time of the interview, 221 (66%) respondents were employed while 114 were unemployed. Among the unemployed, 3 individuals (1 from Group 1 and 2 from Youth) had never been employed. This section of the report explores employment related information for respondents according to their current employment status.

Currently Employed

In Table 28 (Appendix 5 – Table 28) the basic employment information of "currently employed" respondents across all groups is compared. There were a range of responses between groups regarding average number of weekly hours worked with Group 1 and Group

4 being significantly different (p=.010). However, the mean number of months at the current job was just 3 months, thus many participants' employment situation was relatively new.

There were also significant differences in wages, as Groups 1 and 4 were significantly higher than the Youth (p= .003). Graduates also had significantly higher hourly wages at $19.48/hour than non-graduates at just $16.52/hour ($p$ = .027). There were also differences in the main sources of transportation. The Youth Group was less likely to use their own car and much more likely than the other groups to rely on family and friends for transportation.

Although employed, respondents were asked if they had been looking for work in the past month. In the final section of Table 28, significant group differences can be seen among those who had not been looking for employment in the past month (p = .044). Respondents from Group 1 were most likely to be currently looking for employment, and Youth were least likely to being searching for jobs. In fact, 100% of Youth indicated they were "satisfied with" their current job.

Employment Soft-Skills

Employment skills are not limited to work history and education background, but include "soft-skills" such as being on time, coming to work every day and taking direction from a supervisor. Those who were currently employed were asked about these skills. Results displayed in Table 29 indicate that being "late to work by more than 5 minutes" was the most challenging soft-skill overall. This was an issue for 47 (21.6%) respondents with no differences between groups. The Youth Group was significantly more likely than the other groups to experience difficulty understanding and following directions with 8 (22.2%) respondents reporting difficulty in the previous month with this soft-skill (p = .015). Finally, when comparing graduates and non-graduates, graduates were significantly less likely to have experienced difficulty understanding or following directions at a job (p = .015).

Table 29: Employment Soft-Skills

Currently Employed Only In the past month....	Group 1 n = 42	Group 2 n = 47	Group 3 n = 32	Group 4 n = 64	Youth n = 36	Total N= 221
- Been late to work by more than 5 minutes	10 (24.4%)	9 (19.1%)	7 (22.6%)	12 (19%)	9 (25%)	47 (21.6%)
- Lost temper for example with rude customers	1 (2.4%)	4 (8.5%)	1 (3.2%)	1 (1.6%)	3 (8.3%)	10 (4.6%)
- Had problems getting along with coworkers/supervisor	5 (12.2%)	4 (8.5%)	3 (9.7%)	3 (4.8%)	2 (5.6%)	17 (7.8%)
- Missed work and did not call in to let them know	3 (7.3%)	1 (2.1%)	1 (3.2%)	---	1 (2.8%)	6 (2.8%)
- Had trouble understanding, following directions for job	6 (14.6%)	4 (8.5%)	1 (3.2%)	2 (3.2%)	8 (22.2%)	21 (9.6%)
- Had personal issues that regularly interrupted work	5 (12.2%)	3 (6.4%)	5 (16.1%)	3 (4.8%)	3 (4.8%)	20 (9.2%)

Experience of Unemployment

As noted above, 3 respondents had never been employed while 111 had some work history, but were not currently employed. Unemployed respondents were asked to speak about their most recent job. Data similar to that found for those currently employed is presented in Appendix 5 – Table 30.

Among unemployed respondents, Groups 1 and 4 had worked at their most recent job longer than others ($p \leq .001$). Youth had experienced significantly lower wages than those in other groups and were more likely to have worked in temporary jobs ($p = .041$). This was also reflected in Youth having less access to benefits, including health insurance.

Those who were unemployed were also asked *why* they left their most recent job. While there were often several contributing factors, respondents were asked to decide what they considered to be the main reason (Table 31). Respondents gave a wide variety of reasons for leaving their most recent job; however, the most frequently reported answer was that they were "Laid Off" (20). The second most common reason for leaving was getting fired (18).

When asked *why* an individual was fired, reasons such as misunderstandings with their employers (7), criminal/legal issues (3), and personal/family problems (3) were most often cited. The respondent's own mental and physical health was also cited as a common reason for leaving the job and was also a contributing factor to being let go.

Table 31: Reasons for Leaving Most Recent Job

	Group 1 n = 38	Group 2 n = 18	Group 3 n = 13	Group 4 n = 16	Youth n = 26	Total N= 111
MAIN reason left most recent job:						
Schedule/shift did not work out	1 (2.6%)	-0-	-0-	1 (6.3%)	1 (3.8%)	3 (2.7%)
Wanted to work more/less hours	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (3.8%)	1 (0.9%)
Did not like work/too stressful	2 (5.3%)	1 (5.6%)	1 (7.7%)	1 (6.3%)	1 (3.8%)	6 (5.4%)
Salary not good enough	1 (2.6%)	-0-	-0-	2 (12.5%)	1 (3.8%)	4 (3.6%)
Problems with co-workers	1 (2.6%)	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (0.9%)
Problems with boss	1 (2.6%)	1 (5.6%)	-0-	-0-	1 (3.8%)	3 (2.7%)
Maternity leave	-0-	-0-	1 (7.7%)	-0-	-0-	1 (0.9%)
Respondent's injured on the job	1 (2.6%)	-0-	-0-	1 (6.3%)	-0-	2 (1.9%)
Own health/mental problems	5 (13.2%)	3 (16.7%)	2 (15.7%)	1 (6.3%)	4 (15.4%)	15(13.5%)
Family member's health issue	1 (2.6%)	-0-	-0-	0	1 (3.8%)	2 (1.9%)
Family/ personal problems	-0-	1 (5.6%)	1 (7.7%)	1 (6.3%)	-0-	3 (2.7%)
Child care problems	-0-	2 (11.1%)	-0-	1 (6.3%)	-0-	3 (2.7%)
Transportation problem	1 (2.6%)	-0-	0	1 (6.3%)	2 (7.7%)	4 (3.6%)
Respondent moved	1(2.6%)	3 (16.7%)	1 (7.7%)	1 (6.3%)	3 (11.5%)	9 (8.1%)
Returned to school or training	1(2.6%)	-0-	-0-	1 (6.3%)	2 (7.7%)	4 (3.6%)
Did not need to work	1(2.6%)	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (0.9%)
Temp./short-term job ended	4 (10.5%)	-0-	1 (7.7%)	2 (12.5%)	3 (11.5%)	10 (9%)
Fired	10 (26.3%)	1 (5.6%)	2 (15.4%)	1 (6.3%)	4 (15.4%)	18 (16.2%)
Laid off	7 (18.4%)	6 (33.3%)	3 (23.1%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (7.7%)	20 (18%)
Other (specify)	1 (2.6%)	1 (5.6%)	1 (7.7%)	-0-	-0-	3 (2.7%)

Finally, the unemployed were asked what was *currently* preventing employment (Table 32). Physical and mental health issues were problems for nearly a quarter (22.5%) of the unemployed. From there the range of issues was quite broad. Interestingly, a third of respondents who reported they were not currently working were actively looking for employment, and nearly half (7) of these individuals had stopped working their last job less than one month before their interview for this study. Respondents had an array of reasons as to why they weren't currently working. These included recently moving (7), facing or fearing discrimination (3), and trying to retain benefits that might be cut if working too much (3).

Table 32: Unemployed - Why not currently employed

	Group 1 n=38	Group 2 n=18	Group 3 n= 13	Group 4 n= 16	Youth n=26	Total N=111
MOST IMPORTANT reason for not currently working / never worked:						
Need more education	2 (5.3%)	---	1 (7.7%)	---	1 (3.8%)	4 (3.6%)
Need more work experience	---	---	---	1 (6.3%)	1 (3.8%)	2 (1.8%)
No jobs available	2 (5.3%)	1 (5.6%)	---	---	1 (3.8%)	4 (3.6%)
Criminal record	4 (10.5%)	---	1 (7.7%)	---	---	5 (4.5%)
Transportation problems	---	1 (5.6%)	---	2 (12.5%)	2 (7.7%)	5 (4.5%)
Paying for or finding child care	---	1 (5.6%)	---	1 (6.3%)	2 (7.7%)	4 (3.6%)
Prefer/need to be home with kids	1 (2.6%)	1 (5.6%)	---	---	---	2 (1.8%)
Pregnancy/Maternity leave	---	---	1 (7.7%)	---	---	1 (0.9%)
Own ill health; disability	5 (13.2%)	3 (16.7%)	2 (15.4%)	3 (18.8%)	1 (3.8%)	14 (12.6%)
Mental health issues	5 (13.2%)	1 (5.6%)	2 (15.4%)	---	3 (11.5%)	11 (9.9%)
Own drinking/ drug problems	---	---	---	---	---	---
Other family responsibilities	4 (10.5%)	1 (5.6%)	---	---	---	5 (4.5%)
In school or other training	3 (7.9%)	2 (11.1%)	---	1 (6.3%)	5 (19.2%)	11 (9.9%)
Wages too low	2 (5.3%)	---	1 (7.7%)	1 (6.3%)	---	4 (3.6%)
Jobs don't offer health benefits	---	---	---	---	---	---
In drug treatment	---	---	---	---	---	---
No need – others provide support	---	1 (5.6%)	---	1 (6.3%)	2 (7.7%)	4 (3.6%)
Just don't want to work right now	1 (2.6%)	---	---	---	1 (3.8%)	2 (1.8%)
Other (Specify):	9 (23.7%)	6 (33.3%)	5 (38.5%)	6 (37.5%)	7 (26.9%)	33 (29.7%)

Self - Reported Employment Barriers

Throughout the interview, respondents were asked about individual issues and the contribution each made to difficulties in securing or retaining employment or attending school/training. At the end, each person was asked to reflect on the *greatest* employment barriers of the past year. Appendix 5 – Table 33 displays three findings in this area. The first section displays how often each item was reported as a barrier (prevalence). The second section indicates how often the barrier was identified as the greatest barrier. The final section reflects the frequency that a barrier was identified as the *greatest* barrier (impact).

Overall, "wages too low" was the most commonly reported barrier (48.1%). The next most common was "lack of good jobs available" (34.9%). While there were no significant differences between groups, there were differences between regions. Respondents from the Eastern and Western regions were significantly more likely to report "lack of jobs" as an employment barrier. However, when comparing across groups for other barriers, there were significant differences.

Group 1 was significantly more likely to report lack of education or training ($p = .008$), a criminal record ($p = .020$), lack of job skills ($p = .002$), and too low of wages ($p = .004$) as barriers to employment in the last year. The barriers significant to Group 1 can all be connected (i.e. lack of education or training can result in a lack of jobs skills, which is connected to an individual being qualified for mostly only low wage jobs.)

Youth were significantly more likely to report mental health issues as being a barrier to employment compared to the other groups, which may be explained by the prevalence of Youth in foster care ($p = .015$). Lastly, Group 4 was more likely to report going to school as a barrier to employment within the last year ($p \leq .001$). Group 4 participants completed the WIOA program, meaning they went through job training or education, so it is easily understood why going to school would be a significant barrier for this group.

Nearly one-fifth (19.7%) of the respondents identified an "other" employment barrier. The "other" barriers listed include lack of funding for education or training (11), discrimination (10), lack of motivation (8), legal barriers (6), balancing work and school (6), lack of connections (5), lack of experience or licensing, and relationship or domestic violence issues (4). It should also be noted that over one-quarter (26.0%) reported having "No significant barriers" in the past year. Unsurprisingly, Group 4 most often reported this outcome while Group 1 was the least likely to report "no barriers."

After all barriers were noted, respondents were asked to indicate, from their perspective, the *greatest* employment barrier in the past year (frequency). This information was used to determine the *impact* of the different barriers. To determine the impact of each barrier, the number of times a barrier was identified as the greatest barrier was divided into the number of times the barrier was listed. The resulting figure provided a sense of the impact that barrier had.

Among all categories (excluding no barriers), the "other" barriers were most frequently the highest impact barrier (60.6%). Aside from the "other" barriers, mental health issues (45.2%), physical health issues (45.0%), and needs of a dependent child (41.7%) were high impact barriers.

There was a group of barriers, while not identified as frequently, that were more likely to be the *greatest* barrier when they were mentioned. These low frequency – high impact barriers included: drug or alcohol abuse, lack of childcare, needs of dependent child, physical health, and housing problems. When present, these issues were more often viewed as completely preventing work and are distinguished from barriers that clearly *impact* work, but can be managed so that they do not prevent work.

Attitudes toward Work and Family

Respondents were asked a series of questions reflecting attitudes towards job training assistance in general and the role of parents, typically single parents, both as financial providers and as caregivers for their children (See Appendix 5 - Table 34). Answers to these questions provide insight into respondents' views of what it means to receive training assistance, the value of work to children, and their own desired pathway.

Of those who have children (145), 83 (57.2%) reported that they would rather have a job outside the home than be a stay at home parent. When comparing across groups, Youth were significantly more likely to prefer working outside the home than their counterparts, while Group 3 was significantly less likely to want to work outside the home ($p = .021$). Further, 116 (80%) respondents with children agreed that their children would benefit from them being employed outside the home.

When asked about the possibility of balancing DWS activities and the needs of their families, Group 3 participants were significantly less likely to have been able to find this balance as many reported this felt impossible ($p = .046$). However, Group 4 participants were significantly more likely to have balanced DWS activities and family needs with ease ($p = .046$). Participants were also asked about their confidence in managing their own finances and resources. Group 1 respondents were significantly more confident in their abilities to manage their finances while Youth were significantly less confident ($p = .016$).

Respondents were also asked to evaluate their situation as either similar to or different from "most others receiving training assistance." A total of 133 (40.4%) respondents indicated they were "neutral" on whether or not their circumstances were different from others. A slightly smaller portion (37.74%) believed their situation *was* different from most others receiving WIOA assistance. An even smaller proportion (21.9%) believed their situation is similar to others receiving assistance.

Of those who agreed their circumstances were different from most others (124), about half (61) felt their situation was worse, 31(26%) felt they had a better situation, and 27 (23%) did not feel any better or worse, they just felt they were different. The majority of those who felt their situation was *worse* reported family responsibilities (19) and lack of support or resources (16) were to blame. Of those who felt they were in a better situation than others (31), a majority reported they had less external barriers and more support and resources (17). Lastly, of the respondents who simply felt they were different from others (27), most reported the uniqueness of each person's circumstances (12) led to them feeling this way.

EXPERIENCES WITH DWS

Up to now, the focus has been on learning about the overall profile of the WIOA population. The following sections focus on the experience of WIOA customers as they engage with DWS personnel and programs. This section includes data regarding interactions with DWS employees, experiences related to employment plans, overall experiences with DWS and customer service. The section ends with customers discussing what they perceive to be their greatest accomplishment to date and their plans for the future.

Interaction with DWS Employees

All participants in the WIOA study who met with a worker at DWS were asked to rate their relationship with the WIOA worker with whom they had the most contact. (There were two Group1 participants and one Youth participant who had no memory of ever having met with anyone from DWS.) For the majority of respondents in all groups, except those in Group 1, the worker most frequently rated was the training employment counselor. In Group 1, respondents equally identified their training eligibility worker and employment counselor as their primary contact. It should be noted that in conducting interviews customers were not always aware of the difference between these types of workers. In the case of many rural areas, one person typically filled both roles.

Relationship Dynamics: As seen in Table 35, the majority of WIOA respondents (61.2%) reported a "very good" or "excellent" relationship with their primary WIOA worker. As might be expected, Group 1 respondents were the only group that did not identify an "excellent" relationship at the highest frequency. This group of respondents was more likely to identify their relationship as "good" or "fair" (51.9%). The lower level of DWS staff interaction natural for Group 1 customers could certainly be a contributing factor. Youth ratings were unique in that they had the highest likelihood of rating their worker as "poor" (11.1%) and frequently gave their worker a "fair" rating (14.3%). Overall, WIOA customers' ratings of their experience with a DWS worker are very similar to what has been reported in the 2006 and 2012 FEP studies.

Table 35: Relationship with DWS Worker

	Group 1 n = 79	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 63	Total N = 332
Excellent	19 (24.1%)	27 (41.5%)	24 (53.3%)	40 (50%)	24 (38.1%)	134 (40.4%)
Very Good	16 (20.3%)	14 (21.5%)	9 (20%)	15 (18.8%)	15 (23.8%)	69 (20.8%)
Good	23 (29.1%)	16 (24.6%)	6 (13.3%)	14 (17.5%)	8 (12.7%)	67 (20.2%)
Fair	18 (22.8%)	6 (9.2%)	4 (8.9%)	6 (7.5%)	9 (14.3%)	43 (13%)
Poor	3 (3.8%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (4.4%)	5 (6.3%)	7 (11.1%)	19 (5.7%)

Beyond the overall relationship, respondents were asked to evaluate particular aspects of their relationship with the WIOA worker with whom they had most contact. Appendix 5 – Table 36 shows the distribution of positive, neutral, and negative evaluations of customer relationships with their workers. The "neutral" response can be somewhat difficult to interpret as it could indicate an "in the middle" feeling about the question or at times it was used when the customer did not feel they had encountered this relational dynamic with the worker. Responses clustered as "generally agree" or "generally disagree" more clearly reflect the respondents' view.

Overall, respondents were generally positive in rating all aspects of their working relationship with WIOA staff. Interestingly, scores were lowest when asking opinions about helping them move closer to employment and connecting them with community resources. In addition, Group 1 respondents were the least likely grouping to agree with positive statements about the relationship. Group 4 respondents provided the highest ratings for

almost all questions. Table 36 (Appendix 5) is highlighted red where scores were significantly lower and green where significantly higher.

Respondents were also asked how "*comfortable they feel*" discussing their current situation, and its effect on training, with their WIOA worker. As shown in Table 37, a majority (75.3%) felt "mostly" to "completely" comfortable having such conversations. However, there was quite a range in responses with only 44.3% of Group 1 expressing "complete" comfort, while 66.3% of Group 4 respondents felt the same.

Table 37: Comfortability Discussing Situation with DWS Worker

	Group 1 n = 79	**Group 2 n = 65**	**Group 3 n = 45**	**Group 4 n = 80**	**Youth n = 63**	**Total N= 332**
Completely	35 (44.3%)	40 (61.5%)	26 (57.8%)	53 (66.3%)	32 (50.8%)	186 (56%)
Mostly	19 (24.1%)	11 (16.9%)	8 (17.8%)	16 (20.0%)	10 (15.9%)	64 (19.3%)
Somewhat	16 (20.3%)	9 (13.8%)	10 (22.2%)	4 (5.0%)	16 (25.4%)	55 (16.6%)
Not at all	9 (11.4%)	5 (7.7%)	1 (2.2%)	7 (8.8%)	5 (7.9%)	27 (8.1%)

Customer Comfortability and Worker Effectiveness: Respondents who felt only "somewhat" or "not at all" comfortable were asked to describe what contributed to their level of discomfort. Most commonly, respondents felt there was a lack of communication or time to discuss their personal situation (30). Customers noted:
- *"I didn't have many opportunities to talk because they didn't get back to me." (Grp 3-Y)*
- *"Lack of follow up. I wish they called and texted me more. I don't have access to my email regularly. So it would've been helpful for them to contact me and see how they could help me." (Grp 1)*
- *"Her availability. I was unable to communicate with her for weeks. She was never around. I didn't get anywhere until I went down to DWS and sat in the lobby." (Group 1)*

Recognition of their own personal discomfort or anxiety sharing with anyone was also acknowledged (18). One customer described their personal discomfort, stating, *"I am kind of humiliated that I am going through the homelessness and lack of income." (Group 1)*

Another group felt the worker did not care or was not understanding or compassionate (15). One customer spoke to this feeling in stating, *"the lack of understanding that she had towards my situation made it difficult to talk with her." (Group 2)*

Others identified that the worker did not have the knowledge to help (11) or that their worker did not ask questions about their current situation (9). Respondents also identified lack of knowledge about the training program as an issue. Some customer comments include:
- *"I was lost and she couldn't get me the answers that I was looking for. And she couldn't even give me many options." (Group 2)*
- *"He didn't know much about the class, so he couldn't explain it to me." (Grp 3 – Youth)*
- *"All formal, procedure, checking box type vibes." (Group 3)*

- *"She never asked me. The conversation always lead to, 'This is what we can do, go figure it out.' She never asked me about my goals or what I wanted. We didn't have a relationship. It was mostly transactional." (Group 2)*

Because addressing training barriers are vital in creating positive customer outcomes, respondents were asked how *helpful* their WIOA worker was in assisting them in managing issues (barriers) affecting their ability to start or complete training. Table 38 shows that a majority (54.8%) felt their worker was "very helpful." Again, the variance was wide as 74.4% of Group 4 reported this level of assistance while only 36.7% of Group 1 respondents found the worker "very helpful." Group 1 respondents were also significantly more likely (24.1%) to indicate the worker was "not at all helpful" *(p ≤ .001).*

Table 38: Worker Helpfulness in Addressing Training Barriers

	Group 1 n = 79	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 78	Youth n = 63	Total N= 330
Very	29 (36.7%)	32 (42.9%)	26 (57.8%)	58 (74.4%)	36 (57.1%)	181 (54.8%)
Somewhat	20 (25.3%)	22 (33.8%)	12 (26.7%)	8 (10.3%)	15 (23.8%)	77 (23.3%)
Not very	11 (13.9%)	5 (7.7%)	5 (11.1%)	6 (7.7%)	6 (9.5%)	33 (10.0%)
Not at all	19 (24.1%)	6 (9.2%)	2 (4.4%)	6 (7.7%)	6 (9.5%)	39 (11.8%)

Contact Preferences: In order to evaluate consistency and effectiveness of communication between WIOA workers and customers, respondents were asked about their preferred contact method and whether or not the WIOA worker utilized that method. This question is increasingly important, as new forms of communication are becoming prioritized over others for certain populations (e.g. texting is increasingly preferred over phone calls for some Youth). There were no significant differences between grouping and preferred method of contact. Phone calls are the preferred contact method for over half (55.9%) of respondents. Another large group of respondents (36%) prefer email and 6.6% prefer text communication from their WIOA worker. Mail and other forms of contact, such as in person, were the preference of only 1.5% of customers.

Significant differences were seen between groupings and a worker's utilization of customer's preferred method of contact. Group 1 and Youth customers were least likely to be contacted by their worker via their preferred method, with 21.5% and 14.3% respectively stating that their worker *did not* do this (*p* = .049). With that said, most workers (85.2%) are contacting customers via their preferred method.

Employment Plan Experiences

Each WIOA participant is required to have a training employment plan, that is, a list of activities that the customer is required to complete in order to continue receiving training assistance. Respondents who never created a training employment plan (i.e. Group 1) and those in Group 2 who had no memory of creating such a plan were excluded from this question set. As shown in Figure 15, there were also 2 Group 3 participants and 1 person from Group 4 who had no memory of creating any type of plan or having a list of "things they had to do to stay in the program."

Figure 15: Customer Understanding of Plan Activities
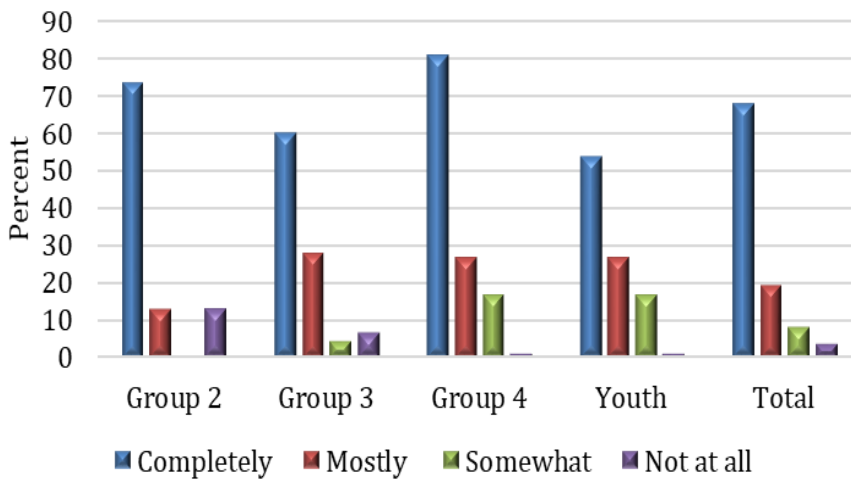
As Table 39 shows, the majority of respondents (88%) were able to identify the activities outlined on the plan. Only 11 respondents requested to have certain activities on their plan, but were told by their worker they could not. These individuals were asked to describe what services and/or training programs were denied and the reason for the denial. Denied activities fell into two main categories: customers either requested training programs that were not supported by DWS (5) or supportive services/ resources were denied (5).

The reasoning for denial was either due to DWS policy (7) or personal opinions of worker (5). One customer was told that he couldn't pursue *"diesel mechanisms training"* because *"they rushed me and didn't let me explore other programs I wanted." (Grp 3)* Another person stated that they *"wanted to get a certificate in something that would take less than a year to accomplish,"* but their worker said, *"certificates were not an option." (Grp 2)* Finally, another customer wanted help with "*dress for success and optometry,"* but the employment counselor *"didn't give me a direct answer about them. It felt like they were putting them off." (Grp 2)*

Over the years, it has become clear how important it is for customers to actively participate in creating the employment plan. Respondents were asked questions regarding who made their training employment plan and how much their views were considered in making the plan. Table 39 shows that most customers found the process of making the plan to be collaborative, with 155 (76.0%) respondents stating that the plan was jointly created with the DWS worker.

Interestingly, Group 3 customers indicated the lowest frequency of perceived collaboration. This is reflected in how much their views and concerns were considered in making the plan, which is displayed in Figure 16. Group 3 customers were least likely to report that their views were "completely" considered, which could be correlated with this group having less understanding of the plan

Figure 16: Customer's Views Considered in Making Plan

-50-
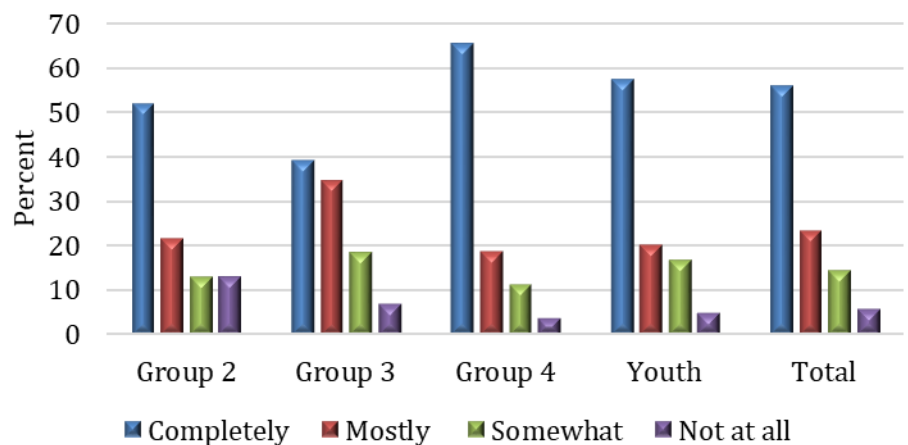
than some other groups. Group 4 customers were most likely to feel that their views were "completely" taken into consideration and reported the highest level of understanding of their plan activities.

Table 39: Experience with Employment Plan

Questions	Group 2 n = 24	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 79	Youth n = 59	Total N = 208
Do you know what activities are/were on your employ. plan?					
Yes	20 (83.3%)	39 (86.7%)	74 (93.7%)	49 (83.1%)	183 (88%)
No	2 (8.3%)	5 (11.1%)	3 (3.8%)	5 (8.5%)	15 (7.2%)
Unsure	2 (8.3%)	1 (2.2%)	2 (2.5%)	5 (8.5%)	10 (4.8%)
Asked to have activity on the plan & DWS said no	3 (13%)	2 (4.5%)	4 (5.1%)	2 (3.4%)	11 (5.3%)
Who decided what to put on employment plan?					
Self	1 (4.5%)	5 (11.6%)	5 (6.3%)	3 (5.1%)	14 (16.9%)
Employment Counselor	4 (18.2%)	8 (18.6%)	12 (15.2%)	8 (13.6%)	32 (15.7%)
Both Together	16 (72.7%)	28 (65.1%)	62 (78.5%)	48 (81.4%)	155 (76%)
Other	1 (4.5%)	2 (4.7%)	---	---	3 (1.5%)
Did you think could complete activities?					
Yes	20 (87%)	36 (80%)	76 (95%)	47 (79.7%)	180 (86.5%)
No	3 (13%)	5 (11.1%)	2 (2.5%)	11 (18.6%)	21 (10.1%)
Don't know	0 (0%)	4 (8.9%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.7%)	7 (3.4%)
If no, why would you not be able to complete activities?					
Physical/Mental health issue	- 0 -	0	0	3 (17.6%)	3 (7.9%)
Transportation issue	0	0	0	2 (11.8%)	2 (5.3%)
Just don't want to do it	1 (25%)	0	1 (20%)	0	2 (5.3%)
Too much/overwhelming	0	3 (25%)	1 (20%)	5 (29.4%)	10 (26.3%)
Child care problems	0	1 (8.3%)	0	0	1 (2.6%)
Didn't believe it is right for me	2 (50%)	1 (8.3%)	2 (40%)	1 (5.9%)	5 (13.2%)
Other	1 (25%)	7 (58.3%)	1 (20%)	6 (35.3%)	15 (39.5%)
How much were children's needs taken into consideration when creating plan?	**n = 12**	**n = 17**	**n = 38**	**n = 11**	**N = 78**
Completely	5 (41.7%)	9 (52.9%)	23 (60.5%)	6 (54.5%)	43 (55.1%)
Mostly	2 (16.7%)	1 (5.9%)	7 (18.4%)	2 (18.2%)	12 (15.4%)
Somewhat	1 (8.3%)	5 (29.4%)	4 (10.5%)	2 (18.2%)	12 (15.4%)
Not at all	4 (33.3%)	2 (11.8%)	4 (10.5%)	1 (9.1%)	11 (14.1%)

Participants were asked whether or not they believed they could complete all of the training employment plan activities. Again, the majority of respondents (86.5%) felt confident that they could successfully complete the activities expected of them. Interestingly, Youth (20.3%) and Group 3 (20.0%) customers were the most likely to feel like they would not be able to or were unsure of their ability to follow through on activities. There were 7 (3.4%) customers who were not sure of their ability to do the assigned tasks.

This group was asked to describe the reason(s) they did not feel they could complete plan activities. Several respondents (12) believed the plan was too much, overwhelming, or confusing. Another group (5) thought it was just not the right plan for them. Some customers (4) were concerned that life conflicts would get in the way of completing activities, while others didn't know that activities were expected of them (5). One customer stated, "*I don't know what's on it. I don't remember her ever mentioning this or anything.*" Finally, respondents with children were asked how much they felt the needs of their children were taken into consideration in making the plan. As shown in Table 39, more than half of those with children (55.1%) indicated they felt their children's needs *were* taken into consideration in making the plan. Inclusion of children's need was again highest among Group 4 and lowest for Group 1.

EXPERIENCES WITH DWS OVERALL

While many questions had specific choices of answers, it was important to give study participants a chance to give more responses that are open-ended. Two questions were directed specifically at the customer's experience with DWS.

> 1)   DWS will be doing some training with staff to improve their customer service skills. In general, what do you feel DWS could do to improve the quality of the relationship or interactions between DWS workers and customers like yourself?
> 2)   When you think back to the people you have worked with and everything that you have done with DWS, what stands out to you as the very best or most important part of working with the agency?

To close the interview, two questions were asked focusing on the customer's view of themselves and their future:

> 1)   So far, in your life, what has been your greatest accomplishment?
> 2)   Thinking about the next year or two ahead, what goals do you have for yourself and your family?

Responses to these questions were analyzed to discover themes that might be helpful as DWS moves forward with program development and better serving WIOA customers.

DWS Customer Service

Respondents were asked for suggestions about ways DWS employees could improve customer service skills and relationships with customers. Just over a quarter of respondents (26.3%) had no suggestions for changes; generally indicating "it's all good!" Of those who did make suggestions, ideas fell into three categories: improving the worker/customer

relationship (25.4%), addressing DWS internal operations (23.3%), and increasing frequency/flexibility of communication (21.8%).

Respondents who suggested improving relationships expressed wanting a more empathetic, personalized relationship with their DWS worker. Over a quarter of these responses specifically reported feeling like "a number in the system" and felt that an individualized approach would increase customer satisfaction. Some respondents described this feedback:

- *"Just personalize the empathy. Knowing that someone is actually an advocate for you, instead of just pushing you through like paperwork." (Grp 4)*
- *"To improve they could be more personal. Treat each person as a person… or try to approach that particular person and find out what that person needs, as opposed to applying a blanket methodology of figuring out what everybody needs." (Grp 2)*
- *"I think if they had a little bit of psychology tips that could really help. If they understood, you know? I feel like a lot of people that come to DWS have mental health issues. I think if they just have a clearer understanding of it and ways to help them cope a little better. It might give them a better understanding of customers." (Grp 3 Youth)*

Suggested improvements to DWS operational systems included increasing worker knowledge of DWS resources (28), increasing support for DWS workers (18), and streamlining systems (14). Some respondents felt that DWS workers were not aware of the variety of resources available at DWS and noticed inconsistencies in workers' knowledge of programs (i.e. "not being on the same page"). Additionally, several respondents (18) suggested reducing worker caseloads or providing more support to DWS workers to help improve customer relationships. Some specific customer feedback in this area include:

- *"I think everyone needs to be on the same page. Like with all of the programs that they offer. It is extremely difficult and way frustrating when you have to repeat yourself frequently and paperwork goes missing, because all of these people who have to have the exact information do not have a central system." (Grp 2)*
- *"I think they need more staff, so maybe they aren't as busy. Maybe they have back to back phone calls with people, and they are just tired." (Grp 1)*
- *"Be more aware of the programs you can offer to people… be more knowledgeable." (Grp 2)*

About one quarter of respondents with feedback suggested that more frequent and flexible communication with customers would improve their experiences with DWS (73). Many respondents mentioned long wait times on phone calls, lack of timeliness in returning calls, and infrequent attempts to check in about progress. Some customers explained their suggestions surrounding communication:

- *"Once in a while call and say, "Hey, how are you doing?" And then talk about school and talk about life." (Group 3 Youth)*
- *"I think they could be a little more persistent with their phone calls and returning messages." (Group 1)*
- *"On the phone, I think they need to work on shorter wait times." (Group 4)*

Best Part of DWS Involvement

Respondents were asked to identify the very best or most important part of working with DWS. Only a few respondents (38 -11%) were unable to identify any positive experience of working with DWS. Of those who did identify a "best part of working with DWS," three main themes arose: relationship with DWS WIOA staff (147), help with resources (111), and communication (16).

Of those who described their relationship with their Employment Counselor or DWS staff as the best part of their DWS experience, 90 (61.2%) respondents spoke to the supporting and caring nature of the relationship and 57 (38.8%) respondents referenced the kind and friendly attitudes of the DWS workers. Some customers described the support they received from DWS workers:

- *"I really feel like they care about you and your future. They are willing to listen, and they honestly want to help you as best as they can." (Group 1)*
- *"That stood out to me in how my counselor who I worked with, he was very outgoing, very friendly, and he always said hello to me. When he saw my face, he knew my name. He made me feel very human, very welcome." (Group 4)*
- *"I think my previous worker reaching out and making sure that I wasn't giving up, because there was a period of time where I just didn't want to go to school anymore, I was going through a divorce, I had a baby, it was just a lot going on. And she made sure to keep tabs of me and be like, okay, like that's fine if you don't want to go to school this semester, like take a break, you need a break, but you are coming back and you are finishing your degree. And like having that push was really, really helpful." (Group 4)*

In regard to assistance with resources, respondents mentioned general resources (Medicaid, Cash Assistance, etc.), academic help, and/or employment assistance. As customers said:
- *"How my case worker let me know what resources were available. She let me know if there was funding available for transportation help. And that helped a lot." (Grp 4)*
- *"They have a lot of things… networking and finding work, resume writing… I went to a couple of different training seminars, and they've been really helpful as far as knowing what employers are looking for." (Grp 1)*
- *"That assistance for training and gaining an education in a field that will allow me to financially sustain my needs." (Grp 1)*

Finally, efficacy and/or frequency of communication were identified by a small portion of respondents as the best part of working with DWS. Respondents stated:
- *"I thought they were really good about staying on top of things and contacting me. If I ever called them, they'd call me right back. They were really responsive." (Grp 4)*
- *"Just good communication. Answering emails back or returning voicemails. And just being open to having sit down conversation if I'm unsure about something or I'm questioning something." (Grp 3)*
- *"I'd say just communication was great with my agent. Like I said for a period there…for about three weeks, and I didn't hear nothing, you know, so she'd just periodically give me a call and tell me, "Hey. We're still waiting on that to come in. We haven't forgot about you." So it was great. And just telling me, "I'm gonna send this over to your house." Or "I'll send this to your address and it should be there within, you know, a certain time." And everything she told me just happened the way she told me it would be." (Group 4)*

Greatest Personal Accomplishment

Responses to the question regarding the individual's greatest accomplishment were categorized into 3 main themes: employment/ education (151), family (141), and personal growth (75). Of respondents questioned, 7 were unable to identify any greatest accomplishment.

The largest group of respondents identified employment (50) and education (101) as their greatest accomplishments. Respondents expanded on reasoning for this, identifying independence, security, persistence, and mastery as reasons why they view vocational/ educational successes as their greatest achievement. Some responses included:

- *"I am the first person in my family to graduate high school and go to college." (Grp 3 Youth)*
- *"My career is my largest accomplishment. I started off on the phones, and I left the company when they closed in upper management. I'm proud of achieving something I didn't know I had within me." (Grp 2)*
- *"My high school diploma or this good job. Because the high school diploma took me a while to realize that I could get it. I did it when everybody was saying you're not going to get it and you're not going to do this. And then the job... people thought I couldn't get or keep a job, but I've been at this job for three months now." (Grp 3)*
- *"Earning my license. Because I know it's a job that can pay me well. It's a job that can move me forward." (Grp 4)*

Many identified building and connecting with family as their greatest accomplishments, with the overwhelming focus being upon children. Respondents expanded on the associated values, identifying love, connection, service, sacrifice, identity, and legacy as reasons why they view family as greatest accomplishments. In the words of the customers:

- *"I would say being a mom. Just knowing that I raised my kids right. Know that they know I'm there for them." (Grp 1)*
- *"Being a single parent. That's my biggest accomplishment. It's hard... it's tough. You just gotta do what you gotta do." (Grp 1)*
- *"My kids. Watching them celebrate things and stuff. Watching them do things I didn't do and wish I would've done." (Grp 4)*
- *"Having my kids. Once you have kids, your whole life changes. When you're a teenager, you just want to go do fun things. But when you have kids, you have to think about them and all that stuff that you think when you're a teenager goes away. They make you more responsible." (Grp 2)*

Within personal growth accomplishments, some respondents (31) identified mental health and sobriety as their greatest achievements. The ability to rebuild a healthy life and overcome barriers were common themes in this category. Specific personal growth accomplishments are described here:

- *"I struggled with drugs for a lot of years. And I finally kicked that to the side. I finally am realizing that I don't have to run back to that to try and make myself feel good. I just I don't have to numb anymore. Learning to work through that and just hold on." (Grp 1)*
- *"I'm just super proud of myself for, I don't know, being able to become sober and stay clean. And I'm also super proud of myself for being able to know how to make music and stuff. Because that's always been one of my favorite passions." (Group 3 – Youth)*

- *"Mentally, that's the number one thing. I have a very strong and positive mental health. That's probably my number one accomplishment, because without healthy me, without me living myself, then how can anybody appreciate me or me love anybody else?" (Grp 1)*

Other respondents (26) identified literal survival and avoiding trouble as their greatest accomplishment. Staying out of jail, staying alive, and escaping abusive environments were common themes observed in this category.

- *"Not getting into serious trouble. I don't have a criminal record. I made it to adulthood without getting arrested. That's my biggest accomplishment." (Grp 4)*
- *"Just being able to take one day at a time and survive how hard it is out in the world. I mean, I don't complain about it. I just deal with it. When life knocks me down, I just pick myself back up by my bootstraps and move on." (Group 1)*
- *"Just surviving. I had so much stress that I literally had all those strokes and I came out of it with no real visible signs… So I guess my greatest accomplishment is just still being alive. Still not giving up… even though I haven't had much help. I've had a lot of discouraging people in my life. I don't think a lot of people would survived it. I'm doing good." (Group 4)*

Finally, some respondents identified the broad category of independence as their greatest accomplishment. Independence primarily included financial and emotional freedom.

- *"I think becoming independent from… just going from being dependent to being independent and functional." (Grp 4)*
- *"That what I have, nobody gave me. I had to make it all on my own." (Group 2)*
- *"Having a roof over my head, being able to pay my bills, being able to live comfortably and have all of the animals I want." (Group 1)*

Looking Towards the Future – Next Steps

When asked to identify future goals, answers were categorized into 5 themes: employment/ education (291), stability (168), family (59), health (24), and joy/ connection (34).

Many participants reported having goals surrounding employment (156 -46.6%) and/or education (135 – 40.3%). Of those who had employment goals, many wanted to advance in their career (75), while others wanted to start a job (48). Some respondents (23) wanted to focus on maintaining their current employment. People also mentioned goals surrounding retirement (11). Participants spoke directly about their employment goals:

- *"There's a lot of opportunity in this job. I have to spend 6 months to a year in the position that I'm at, but then I can move to other departments, other branches, learn more things, get promotions." (Grp 2)*
- *"I just need to find a decent paying job so I can afford to continue living the lifestyle that I would like to." (Grp 1)*
- *"Keep my job, get my retirement going again, and get the house paid off so that we can retire at 62." (Grp 2)*

Of respondents who identified education goals, some (74) wanted to start or return to school, while others wanted to finish the program in which they were enroll at the time of the interview (61). Customers described their future ambitions surrounding education:

- *"Start college. Finally, just to start getting the education to start the career." (Grp 3)*
- *"Finish college. Finish my undergraduate and get that out of the way, so I can continue on to other things." (Grp 4 Youth)*
- *"For myself, I would say getting more training and going on to hopefully college and eventually going and getting... well, it'd probably be a lot longer, but going on to college and getting more training and certificates I need for the job I want." (Group 3 – Youth)*

About half of the participants identified general stability as a main goal (168). Participants mentioned stable housing as a goal (86). Others mentioned financial stability as a main goal (50), which included not living paycheck to paycheck or having the ability to save. Daily balance and routine was important to many people (18). Others mentioned a need for stable transportation (16). In the words of some customers:

- *"We're going to have a home that's not a hotel room, we're going to have jobs, and we're going to hopefully have a car. That's what we're working towards." (Grp 3)*
- *"Stability. Just creating stable relationships, healthy relationships, a healthy relationship with money, stable job, regular income. I want peace and security with everything." (Grp 4)*
- *"I want to not have to struggle. So I don't have to rely on the state to help me." (Group 1)*

Family support was a common theme, which included financially providing for immediate family (27), financially supporting extended family (12), helping kids with schooling (13), and starting a family (7). Specific family goals are seen below:

- *"Having a place for my kids. Hopefully by then, I can take full responsibility of my kids. It's a battle." (Grp 4)*
- *"Well, for my girls to start and to continue college. And for one, to finish high school." (Grp 1)*

Other respondents mentioned goals that would bring joy or human connection such as traveling, developing hobbies, spending time with loved ones, or simply doing something fun (34). Customers describe these goals below:

- *"I want to take them on a vacation. We have never been on one and I want to take them somewhere." (Grp 2)*
- *"Just doing... since I'm now financially stable... just doing more things with my son, like whether it's travelling, just doing more involved family things instead of just always things at home." (Group 4)*

Finally, some respondents mentioned health goals, including physical health (9), mental health (11), and sobriety (4).

- *"My mental health to get better. That's a big one." (Grp 3 Youth)*
- *"I want to be less depressed and not sit around feeling sorry for myself. Because you're less able to help other people if you cannot help yourself."(Group 2)*

WIOA STAFF FOCUS GROUPS

DWS education and training staff bring a unique perspective to the conversation about implementation of the WIOA program. To learn more about how these frontline staff view the strengths and challenges of the WIOA program, five focus groups were held in early Spring 2019. In each focus group, WIOA staff were asked to share thoughts and experiences relative to engagement with customers, strengths and challenges with WIOA processes, and the impact of WIOA policy on their own employment outcomes and job satisfaction. (See Appendix 6 for focus group questions.) The following report is a culmination of the findings from all focus groups.

METHODS

WIOA front line staff are scattered throughout the state. In larger offices, staff may only serve WIOA customers, whereas in more rural areas, this may only be one of many hats they wear. To capture these different perspectives, focus groups were held in each of the 5 regions. All WIOA front line staff, excluding supervisors, from the area were invited to gather in a specific DWS office (except in the Eastern region, where some joined the in-person conversation over the phone). Each focus group had between 6 – 12 participants and lasted approximately 90 minutes. With permission of the participants, each session was recorded and transcribed to assure accuracy in reporting the findings.

FINDINGS

The findings presented include the most common insights, suggestions and concerns raised across groups. It should be noted that pathways and policy implementation varied by area. Because the WIOA program is so small, findings will not be attributed to particular regions to ensure participant confidentiality.

These focus group outcomes will start with worker views of WIOA customers. Next, a review of four WIOA program components will be addressed: application, eligibility, assessment and placement, and retention. The findings will conclude with front-line staff reflections on the WIOA program's impact on their own employment. Italicized comments represent the specific comments made by individual staff during focus group sessions.

Perceptions of WIOA Customers

Throughout the state, DWS workers are tasked with implementing the WIOA program to those seeking education and training assistance. Workers along the Wasatch front typically only work with WIOA customers. With that said these workers, along with all workers in more rural areas, typically have past and/or present experience with a wide range of DWS customers. To better understand how DWS perceives the WIOA population, staff were asked to describe their view of a "typical" WIOA customer.

Some staff viewed WIOA customers as a particularly diverse group and found it difficult to identify "typical" characteristics, needs, etc. Others linked customer characteristics to the funding stream(s) for which the customer had been found eligible. For example:

- *""You have two types of WIOA- you've got the really, really good ones that come in that are excited about school, that know what they're doing. And then you've got the ones that are like their last step, you know, they just need help and say, 'I just want a job.' They think they're going to get money to go to school. So, you've got two kinds of customers. Dislocated workers tend to be the easiest. Because they're normally people who have been working, and they're of the professional work ethic, want to work, and know that they need some sort of education or training to get back to work. Usually we find the ones, at least in my experience, the ones that come in and are eligible because they're categorically eligible either for SNAP or they mark homeless on the application. I don't remember the last time I had somebody get through eligibility and enroll as WIOA adult. It's generally dislocated workers who enroll and do what they need to do.""*

This relationship between staff attitudes and capacity, and funding streams, was also clear in distinguishing particular characteristics of the WIOA Youth population. Some who work exclusively with WIOA Youth had specific insights about this group. As one worker noted:

- *"They don't know what they don't know. They don't know a lot. They don't know what questions to ask or where to go for anything. There's no support at home. A lot of times with the youth... children involved, because they have children themselves and they're young... that's another issue we see. Not issue, just a barrier. I also think that they think it's like a drive-up window. 'Come in... I want me a_____?' Like same day they can get their money. Like same day for anything they want. And I also feel a lot of customers we see have had family members go through what they've went through, so this experience might be different for them so they're like, 'Oh this happened with my sister or brother, why am I not getting the same services?' I just don't think they understand that."*

Other DWS staff who, currently or previously, worked with a variety of DWS customers and tended to view WIOA customers very different from others. One staff who has experience working with both FEP and WIOA customers said:

- *"I think, um, a lot of the customers that are on FEP, not that they have more barriers than WIOA, but they probably just have a harder time dealing with those barriers. Obviously they are FEP because they have financial need and a WIOA customer might have a part time job or might have other sources of income that can help them stay focused on the schooling... where a FEP customer has to focus on keeping their financial and they have all these other barriers as childcare, something. So I think a lot of that gets in the way of their, um, participation just with FEP. And then a lot of them do want, I have a lot of customers that when I first meet with them, they want to, um, get some sort of training. You know, that's like the one thing that they want. But when reality kind of hits, it's like, okay, I have to get all of these areas taken care of before I even think about actually getting in school. Their focus is just on survival."*

WIOA worker perceptions of those they service could potentially influence the level and content of customer service provided. Some workers spoke of specific attempts to welcome each customer as a new opportunity, while others expressed reluctance to "get burned again" and were more likely to rely on past experience to guide their actions with specific types of customers.

Application

The focus groups explored questions targeting the process of getting customers connected to WIOA. Several groups started with a discussion about how difficult it is to simply locate the WIOA application on the DWS website. It is not clearly identified, and customers must click several times to find the application. DWS staff find it difficult to explain to customers the step-by-step process of navigating the website to the application. To manage this, some workers send a link to the customer to simplify the process.

Once the customer is able to find the application, there is another challenge of creating the individual profile. When a customer is anxious to get to the application, there sometimes is an attempt to bypass the profile, either by not fully completing it or incorrectly filling it out. As one WIOA Youth worker said:

- *"The youth just skip to the very end... when really, you know, then we're missing the important information like contact phone number, a good email address."*

It was noted that adults similarly struggle with profile creation:

- *"Even with adults it's a cumbersome process too, in my opinion, when you're trying to explain to somebody. Okay first of all, you've got to go to the top of the page, then you have to go to my job search. Then you have to create a profile, but you have to hurry and get through those ten screens before we can get to the application. So they're not concerned with the ten screens, you know, with their personal information and making like a 100% accurate profile. They're more concerned with the application."*

DWS staff recognize that it is not always the customer (particularly with Youth in programs such as DCFS foster care, JJS, Job Corps) who completes the application and/or the seeker screens. When a third party submitted the application, the information often is incomplete, inaccurate, and not reflective of the customer's perspective and thoughts. It is not just Youth who apply for reasons other than personal interest in training. As one worker noted:

- *"We have a large amount of people who apply for training services and then when I call them they're like oh I thought I was supposed to do that for unemployment. I don't know where that disconnect happens to the customer, but there are a lot of them that think that."*

These challenges make it more difficult to guide customers into an appropriate pathway of engagement in the WIOA program. For those who are interested but not particularly invested in the process, these issues can be barriers to applying for the WIOA program. Resolving confusion in this area could reduce the number of involuntary, inappropriate, and incomplete applications submitted.

Eligibility

While all WIOA survey participants were selected after being determined eligible, the focus group included discussion of the eligibility *process*. WIOA staff, particularly long serving staff, expressed a desire to include questions regarding appropriateness in the eligibility process. Within the current process, there are customers who go through eligibility, even though it is

clear to the eligibility worker that either the person or their preferred program will be deemed ineligible. Comments on this phenomenon included:

- *"I would like a way for them to maybe not go through the whole eligibility process, which we require them to do, but to be able to have that conversation with that customer and to educate them upfront- which we're not allowed to do right now. That's not a policy, that's a management decision."*
- *"We're not supposed to be asking them any kind of questions towards their training until after we get the eligibility done. So technically you're having a person fill out an application for something that you know you're going to deny as soon as they get eligible. But when I go over the application and they say that they're getting a bachelor's degree at UVU and they have no education, I address that as I'm going through the application because it's on the application, but we're not supposed to. We're supposed to do just eligibility. Have you worked in the last six months? Do you have a birth certificate and then clients are eligible. Which I think is like really rude for the customer because you're making them go through all these hoops and you know darn well that you're going to deny him as soon as you get them eligible."*

Some employees believe being able to screen both customer and program appropriateness in an initial conversation would filter out individuals who will be denied soon after becoming eligible and prevent them from going through *"so many unnecessary hoops."*

One particularly difficult and confusing "hoop" is the 314 training agreement. This concern was mentioned in several groups, with one WIOA staff stating:

- *"We're strongly discouraged from discussing any appropriateness before they get through the eligibility process. But a lot of those questions come up when we have to go through that 314 to get them enrolled, because some of that is the appropriateness on that 314 that we could give them a lot of details... more details about it to better educate the customer... but we've been advised not to do so."*

Components of the agreement discuss terms that have not yet been explained to the customer, and thus both workers and customers experience concern about signing something they do not fully understand.

Assessment and Placement

After the eligibility process, determining an appropriate plan for a customer can be quite challenging. Some customers arrive at the employment counselor's desk with a clear sense of what they want to do, but many customers are unclear about education or training goals. For those who are unsure, Utah Futures is recommended as an effective career assessment tool. While this tool was described by some as being *"very helpful"* in assessing a client's interest and aptitude in various career options, it also was described as *"lengthy, clunky, and confusing."*

Additionally, some staff described Utah Futures as overwhelming for customers, because there is so much information that *"they could go on for days and days in that program."* Some workers recommend walking customers through the assessment and results. However, this is not possible for some workers due to lack of time or knowledge of the program. One

worker noted, *"I did the interest inventory myself (not that I am looking for another job!) and it gave me pages and pages of things I could do. It's too much and not specific."*

The frustration with Utah Futures revealed that, for some workers, this tool was understood to be the only resource available for provision of career counseling. When it does not help a customer find a direction, the worker does not know of alternative career counseling strategies. One worker described a common scenario when a customer asks, *"What can I do? Do you have a list?"* The worker went on to explain:

- *"And then that's when you try to redirect to Utah Futures or some other self-assessment and I've had customers where we've gone through all of that and they still come back and say, "What can I do?" I'm like this is not my choice. I don't get to decide for you. This is the rest of your life, not mine."*

Another assessment tool with which DWS staff struggle is the TABE Test. For some programs, staff reported that the TABE Test is ineffective and was described as "*pointless.*" WIOA staff suggested that it be waved from certain programs, or excusable for Youth. Workers reported some of their customers, especially Youth, become anxious when being required to take the TABE Test. In addition to test anxiety, one WIOA staff commented:

- *"A lot of the youth don't have a lot support from home, so we talk about the same issues with eligibility, them not being able to get there to take the TABE Test, things like that. It's already difficult for them to get here to do the assessment and the employment plan."*

For some severely disabled Youth, the support agency job coach completes the TABE test so they can continue the eligibility process and securing training for customized employment. In these and other cases, the TABE Test is an unnecessary road block to moving forward with the placement process.

In all focus groups, there was extensive conversation about the Employment Training Provider List (ETPL). There were many complaints about the list and how it is used. For customers, the list is "*not user friendly.*" Different schools have different names for the same program. As one staff said:

- *"If a customer wants to see all of the programs, they have to look under different names to see the different program, but they don't know that, so they just look under one name, and they're like, 'What?'"*

To resolve this problem, another WIOA worker stated:

- *"I'd like to see a search function on the ETPL. Where you can type, 'I want a nursing program' and it brings up all the nursing programs."*

Another worker mentioned they would like to see a more effective application process for adding programs to the ETPL. Additionally, workers would like the list to be more organized and to include more thorough contact information for the programs that are provided.

The ETPL also is a source of confusion and frustration for customers who are directed to go

to the list to determine what programs are eligible for WIOA support. As one worker said:

- *"It can also be confusing because our eligible training provider list is set up for all programs and so we have cosmetology on there because of ETV so our customers look at it and go "It's right here! It says it's an approved program!" But we have to explain but it's not approved in this funding."*

The ETPL also was mentioned as a possible resource when determining appropriateness. Workers would like the option of using that list during the application process. If a customer were completely set on a particular program or a particular institution that is not on the list, the WIOA worker would like to be able to inform the customer of this before misusing time and energy resources on a poor program match.

Retention

WIOA staff had many concerns surrounding issues with retention. From the workers' experiences, customers often drop off early due to unclear understanding of what they are applying for when submitting an application. There is confusion about what services are offered, the types of training services that are funded, and eligibility and appropriateness criteria for the program. Often, customers think financial assistance (cash) outside of training is available. As one worker noted:

- *"For instance… [some clients] don't even really have a firm understanding of what they applied for to begin with. S,o after I describe it to them they're just like I didn't want to go back to college or anything. I don't really have a goal like that in mind. I just really want to have a job in this field. Well, then, I pull up the jobs and I'm like there's a couple of things that are kind of related to that open right now. And I talk to them about it and they go off and they get that job."*

Also, customers with significant mental and physical issues are sometimes inappropriately directed to WIOA. Once barriers are discovered, it is clear they are more appropriate for vocational rehabilitation. This means repeating the application and eligibility process.

While "problem solving" was designed to be a retention strategy, workers generally referred to it as more of a problem itself. Commonly, by the time a customer is "put in problem solving," the customer already has disengaged from DWS and/or their training program. It tends to be difficult to re-engage a customer at this point and reflects negatively on the counselor. Two staff members provided examples:

- *"If they don't contact and we're on day 30 and it's like, oh, we're pushing the line and they haven't contacted us yet, so we're going to push and call and we still never get ahold of them. It's like, well why did I do that? Because now I have to take the negative. I wanted to have hope for them, but now I have to take the negative. And the thing about that too, taking the negative, it's not just that you can't just close them as a negative. You have to go through the problem solving process, which takes up to 90 days, of sending out correspondence, doing home visits, trying to get in contact with these people for a plan that you didn't even create yet."*
- *"I know in my gut that the only reason I'm putting this kid in the problem solving process is because I have to close the case. Not because they are going to re-engage. I give them*

chances before I actually put them in problem solving. This problem solving work that we do is ongoing."

For staff, the processes often did not align with what actually was happening with the customers. The principles of the process were thought to be well intended, but often were not perceived to match the reality of working with the customers.

WIOA staff recognize that building and maintaining relationships through different types of communication improves the likelihood of engagement with customers. Workers emphasized the importance of establishing a relationship with the customer from the beginning and shared experiences of customers returning to DWS to check in with them about how they are doing in life. It was suggested that meeting outside the office space can be important in building rapport. This was particularly true for WIOA Youth customers. One successful experience was shared:

- *"Kids in foster care, sometimes I'm all they have so there's nearly half that I talk to almost every day or every two days and if not its every two weeks, at the longest. Just cause if I don't talk to them that soon, they disappear. I help some of them find an apartment; we went grocery shopping, whatever they need."*

The Youth can be particularly challenging, as some are engaged simply to please the judge. They are not intrinsically committed to the program, but just going through the motions. Even when interested, lack of responsiveness on the part of a DCFS worker can interrupt communication with the Youth, making it more difficult to stay connected. One worker summarized this issue well:

- *"Lots of my youth case are from the JJS and a lot of times they'll have to have a tracker bring them to the meeting. They'll come and attend and a lot of times there could be some transportation issues, timing issues, and obviously if they've reoffended maybe their back in jail and so my emails go unanswered and so problem solving comes into play and sometimes I can't get ahold of their tracker to make the connection to find out what's going on. Once they get done with JJS, once they age out or once they've been terminated, we don't hear from them anymore, because they only were participating in our program because the courts were making them. As soon as the courts aren't involved anymore they're like 'I don't need to do that anymore' so then they just fall off and we end up closing their case. Even if we go to their house, most of the time they're never home. It happens a lot with DCFS customers too; once they lose that support or their case worker telling them what to do, I lose them too."*

The lack of direct customer connection and somewhat coerced participation does not support retention beyond what is absolutely necessary.

As mentioned above, different types of communication have improved customer engagement. WIOA staff have been successful in asking customers what form of communication is best for them and then using it. It was noted that text messages often works especially well with Youth, who prefer this form of communication. On the other hand, some groups can be difficult to keep in contact with, such as truck drivers who have unpredictable work schedules. It may be difficult to continue to get information that DWS needs after the customer has received what they need and is working on the road.

WIOA Policy and Staff Outcomes

During the time when the focus groups occurred, it seemed from an outside perspective that several policy shifts were in process. Significant frustration and confusion was expressed, along with a sense of insecurity around the "*right way*" to make the "*numbers*" work for those implementing the policy changes. The primary conflict seemed to be the challenge of balancing the interest of the customer and achieving the metrics that produced more job security. As one worker noted:

- *"So one of the things that have changed recently with enrollments, so it used to be you could get the eligibility done and then you could enroll them and if they didn't follow through you could close them as enrollment in error and we are no longer able to use that closure reason. And so the closures, if you can't ever get ahold of them are going to be negative closure. So that doesn't particularly motivate you to enroll them immediately after they're eligible. Because it will impact your performance basically."*

Making the link between services provided and outcomes also was a challenge. Several participants mentioned the frustration of working extensively with WIOA customers on job search and career counseling activities, but not feeling they got "credit" for this time-consuming work. The lack of connection between worker efforts and measurable outcomes is noted here:

- *"I had someone who was on an, on the job training, uh, gotten employment with this employer. But I got a task today saying I needed to report measurable skill gains and there wasn't really a measurable skill gain because there wasn't like a certificate or anything like that that they got. But they're like, if you just use employment and job searching those are not training services per se. So if we can close them as employed, then that's a positive. But they never had a training service on their plan, so it doesn't count as far as the WIOA training measures that they do. That's a service they could get done upfront with job connection."*

The lack of acknowledgement of career counseling activities was particularly frustrating for those who recognize this to be a service that is both significantly helpful to customers and something that gives them personal job satisfaction. As one worker said:

- *"I think sometimes it's kind of the fun part of the job in a way because then you're, you know, you're sort of invested in their goals and their outcomes and everything and it's just fun to watch them develop that, like get that 'Ah-Ha!' moment. Hey I hadn't thought about that!' And they take it and run with it and it's awesome! I think that's the best part of the job."*

The challenge to meet metrics clearly drives worker behavior in many ways. For example, some workers try to predict outcomes and act accordingly to avoid negative "dings." Two workers noted:

- *"Some people get a job and I know they are not going to keep it so as soon as they report work I close them – BAM!!! – so I get the positive closure!"*

- *"We have recently been on the track where we're encouraged to enroll as many adults and dislocated workers as possible and you know I think, a lot of us have been doing this long enough to know within the first couple of times we talk to someone if they are going to follow through. But we can usually take that 30 days we have after they're eligible before we enroll them. You can tell if somebody's going to follow through. And we can stretch that out, and have somebody that's really working, we can take that full 30 days and then you know, enroll them. But they want us to just, as soon as they are eligible, enroll. And you know for a fact that's going to be a negative closure. And we don't focus the numbers in this area. We focus on what's best for the customer. Until those numbers don't meet the demands. We've been told that if we didn't get a certain number of enrollments per month, in this area that they would have to look at eliminating positions...so firing some of us."*

WIOA staff repeatedly spoke of feeling stuck between doing what is in the best interest of the customer and achieving DWS outcome measures. As reflected above, some WIOA staff turn responsibility for "making it work" on the customer and design protections to better ensure positive outcomes. For others, this tension creates ethical dilemmas that bother them personally. A few "admitted" to breaking rules or stretching policy when needed or advocating for exceptions to be made, but one worker took a different approach:

- *"I'm here to say if it's not in the best interest of the client it's not in the best interest of DWS either. The numbers will work themselves out and if you're always looking to what's the very best thing for the client… what's the best outcome for them… it might not be what they came in with an expectation of, but if you're actually doing counseling… that's why we're called counselors… you help them discover what they really want as opposed to what their expectations are. The whole point of it isn't for the positive closure. It's to help these people improve their lives so that they're not coming back to us. And that's why we hold on to them. Because we risk having them lose that job so then we can still be there to help them find another job. It's like okay, 'why did you lose your job? Let's figure this out.'"*

Summary

WIOA staff were very open in sharing their ideas, suggestions and concerns. The tensions that arose and are reflected here most often reflect concern for being able to assist customers in the best way possible.

At several points in the focus groups, positive customer interactions were tied to including customers in simple aspects of the process. For example, asking questions such as, *"How would you like to be contacted? How often would you like contact? Will you let me know if your contact preferences change? Would you like me to keep your case open?"* Given the degree of investment shown through the focus group participation, this may also be an effective tactic in securing practical insights and ongoing support from WIOA staff as a whole.

QUALITY TOOL EVALUATION: UWORKS DATA REVIEW

The DWS case management system, UWORKS, serves as a repository for the majority of information reflecting WIOA worker and customer interactions. Evaluating information added to UWORKS by DWS workers (primarily employment counselors, but also eligibility workers) contributes another perspective on the case story. Actions and narratives of the DWS worker reflect the worker/customer interactions and reveal how the process may have contributed to case outcome.

This portion of the evaluation adds to an understanding of the relationship between DWS worker activities as reflected in UWORKS notes, customer experiences, and case outcomes. An evaluation of this information was completed to respond to the DWS research question related to fidelity of program implementation and the relationship between a WIOA worker and a customer (Research Question 3).

METHODS
Instrument Development

After exploring the DWS request for data regarding the implementation of WIOA policies and practices, it was determined that a review of specific UWORKS data elements would provide the information needed to respond to the question. DWS WIOA staff defined the scope of this portion of the WIOA evaluation and identified the specific data elements that could contribute to the case evaluation.

Building on the identified data elements, a Quality Tool (QT) instrument was created to document and record the findings of the case assessments. Each case assessment included the evaluation of five core components identified by DWS. These components included:

- Barriers to customer participation
- Customer contacts
- Case narratives (also referred to as "notes")
- Closure processes
- Relationship (worker/customer) building

The QT was built as a survey, with questions designed to respond to one or more of the components identified above (See Appendix 7 to review the Quality Tool). Case evaluators completed multiple choice, scaled, and open-ended questions on a google form while reviewing each case in UWORKS. In addition to scoring relative to individual components, evaluators also noted "red flags" (issues or concerns that stand out in a negative way) and "outstanding flags" (evidence of significant positive activity or exceeding standards) to highlight unique elements of a case.

Initially, case reviews were completed by both DWS and SRI staff. This helped the SRI staff learn how components should look, ideally, and the criteria to use when applying a rating. As SRI staff improved and were able to match ratings to the DWS representative, SRI staff assumed sole responsibility for conducting case reviews. In early stages of SRI rating, all cases were independently reviewed by two staff. Upon completion, the two sets of scores were compared. Once interrater reliability was achieved, the remaining cases were reviewed

and scored by a single SRI staff member. However, any cases determined to be complex or particularly unique continued to be evaluated by two staff to ensure reliability. Over half of all evaluated cases were double rated.

Group 1 cases were reviewed with a subset of QT questions, as these cases normally provided minimal information and limited interaction between customer and worker. Cases from Groups 2, 3, and 4 were reviewed using one question set. Evaluators periodically checked in with DWS staff to better understand components of the WIOA program and to receive feedback on complex cases.

In the WIOA survey, participants were recorded talking about many aspects of their experience with the WIOA program. After evaluating the cases using UWORKS data recorded in the QT, evaluators listened to each recorded transcription and made notes comparing the customers experience to that expressed by the worker through UWORKS. When applicable, relevant differences or similarities would be noted. Evaluators gave each case two overall scores: one prior to listening to customer perspective and one reflecting data from the QT and the customer perspective.

Sample Selection

Because customers were asked to describe their experiences with the WIOA process, it was decided that only respondents to the WIOA survey should be included. There also was an effort to obtain diversity in the sample so this subsample of cases might be representative of the larger whole. There was interest in reviewing cases from various WIOA groups (Groups 1 – 4), DWS Offices, and case workers. Cases were chosen at random within these groups.

FINDINGS

The findings for this portion of the sample reflect both quantitative and qualitative evaluations of the UWORKS data identified by DWS as relevant to the research question.

Qualitative comments are included to support quantitative findings from the QT. Italicized comments throughout this section represent evaluator qualitative feedback. When italicized comments are in quotations, the comments are direct quotes from participant transcripts. When appropriate, additional data from the WIOA Survey will be added to provide clarity and depth to the QT analysis.

Study Sample

Of the 335 individuals who participated in the WIOA study, 91 (27%) were selected for QT case reviews. Table 40 shows that the distribution of the QT sample was similar to that of the larger WIOA Study sample.

Of the 91 cases reviewed, 22 were WIOA Youth. Consistent with the WIOA survey outcomes, the majority of Youth (73%) were from Group 3. Because WIOA Youth is a somewhat different program, and with such a high proportion in one exit group, Youth outcomes will be presented as a group.

Table 40: WIOA Survey and Quality Tool Sample Comparisons

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Youth	Total
WIOA Survey	81 (24.2%)	65 (19.4%)	45 (13.4%)	80 (23.9%)	64 (19.1%)	N = 335
Case Review - QT	23 (25.3%)	19 (20.9%)	5 (5.5%)	21 (23.1%)	22 (24.2%) Grp 1 = 0 Grp 2 = 2 Grp 3 = 16 Grp 4 = 4	91

Analysis of pertinent demographic data was conducted to ensure that the QT sample was representative of the WIOA survey group. Table 41 shows that there are no significant differences between the two groups relative to age, gender and education.

Table 41: QT Participant Demographics

	Case Review - QT N = 91	WIOA Survey N = 335
Age	34	34.6
Gender		
Female	49 (53.8%)	176 (52.5%)
Male	41 (45.1%)	158 (47.2%)
Other	1 (1.1%)	1 (0.3%)
Education		
No HSD/GED	9 (9.9%)	25 (7.5%)
Has at least HSD/GED	82 (90.1%)	310 (92.5%)

Comparisons of regional distributions between the two samples is found in Table 42. A total of 56 DWS staff had at least one case assessed through the QT evaluation, and 25 workers had between 2 and 5 cases reviewed. All DWS offices are represented by at least one QT evaluation.

Table 42: WIOA Survey and Quality Tool Regional Comparisons

	Central	Northern	Mountainland	Eastern	Western
WIOA Survey	173 (51.6%)	50 (14.9%)	45 (13.4%)	48 (14.3%)	19 (5.7%)
Case Review - QT	39 (42.9%)	15 (16.5%)	17 (18.7%)	12 (13.2%)	8 (8.8%)

Core Component Evaluations

In response to DWS requests, the QT evaluation focused on five specific areas within each case. Findings from the questions related to each component are reported here.

Participation Barriers

It can be difficult for customers to participate in training activities due to specific barriers they are facing. DWS wanted to know how well employment counselors perform both in identifying participation barriers and, when identified, how effectively they assist customers in navigating these barriers.

Figure 17: Barrier Identification

"Participation barriers" are viewed as anything that could interfere with a customer's ability to engage in WIOA activities and eventually seek and retain employment. If a barrier is not identified and/or addressed, case outcomes can be negatively impacted. For this analysis, Group 1 participant cases are not included, because there was not enough information surrounding barriers to evaluate.
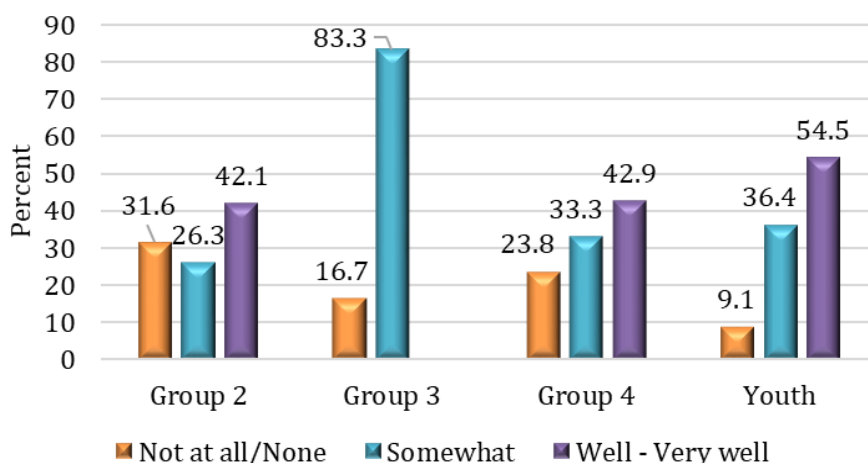
Figure 18: Barriers Addressed
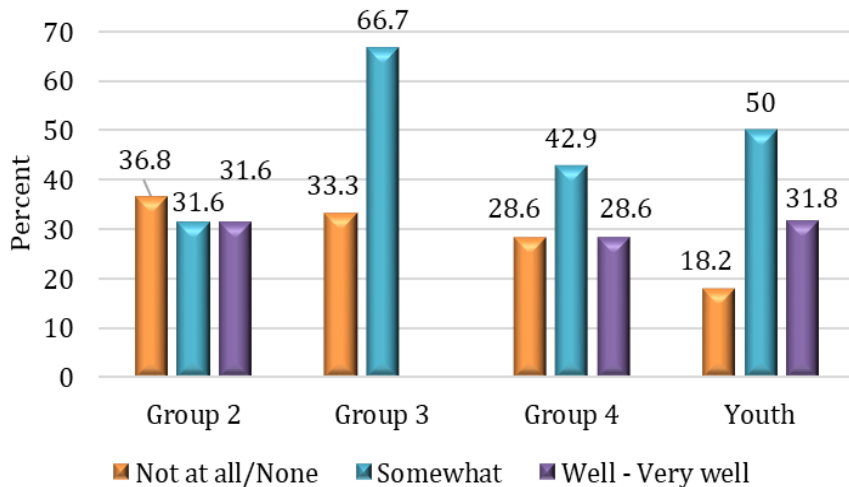
Barrier identification was determined by reviewing assessment screens and notes. As seen in Figure 17, barrier identification was lowest in Group 2 and highest among the Youth.

While in most cases participation barriers were, at least partially identified, Figure 18 shows that fewer cases provided evidence that the barriers were addressed.

Participation barriers are not always evident when a customer starts the program, and sometimes challenges come up along the way. Case notes revealed that, in general, employment counselors work with customers to adapt the employment plan when participation barriers arise. As Figure 19 shows, those in Groups 2 and 3 were least

Figure 19: Adapting Plan to Meet Barriers
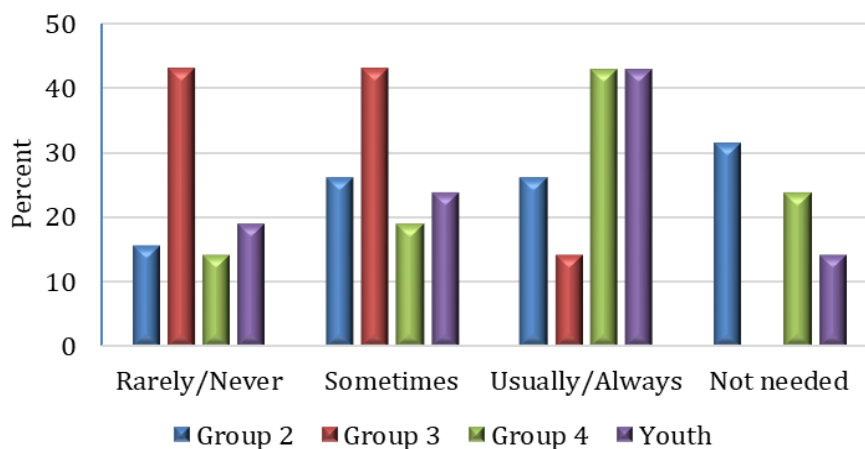
likely to receive assistance in adapting their plan when issues arise. Group 2 also was the group least likely to have barriers identified as needing accommodations. Of course, it is possible that the early exit of Group 2 WIOA participants could have resulted in a lack of barrier identification.

When lack of progress was noted, Table 43 shows that, for the most part, workers actively attempted to reengage WIOA participants. Those who graduated the program were the least likely to have evidence of any disengagement. Yet, even graduates (Group 4) at times needed and received support in moving forward in the program.

Table 43: Attempts at Reengagement

	Group 2 n = 19	Group 3 n = 7	Group 4 n = 21	Youth n = 21	Total N = 68
How much did EC attempt to engage customer when there was a lack of progress?					
Not at all	1 (5.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.8%)	2 (2.9%)
A little	1 (5.3%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	5 (7.4%)
Somewhat	4 (21.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.8%)	4 (19%)	9 (13.2%)
Quite a bit	4 (21.1%)	2 (28.6%)	4 (19%)	3 (14.3%)	13 (19.1%)
Very much	2 (10.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.8%)	7 (33.3%)	10 (14.7%)
No lack of progress noted	7 (36.8%)	3 (42.9%)	14 (66.7%)	5 (23.8%)	29 (42.6%)

Overall, when there was evidence that barriers were identified and addressed, customers were more likely to be reengaged. When lack of progress was noted by employment counselors and adaptations were made, it was more likely that the customer would be reengaged. These trends became more evident when addressing questions related to service closure. In a significant portion of cases where service closure was not fully justified, researchers identified that insufficient supportive services typically were an issue. Evaluators noted:

- *"Employment counselor did not follow up on identified barriers: resume building and job interview skills." (Grp 3 Youth)*
- *"Assessment screens and notes were not very thorough so it was difficult to get an idea of where customer was starting, their goals in working with DWS, and barriers/strengths." (Grp 4)*
- *"Beginning of case unclear, what brought customer to DWS, more info about barriers/strengths." (Grp 4 Youth)*

Additionally, of 37 cases that received red flags, 7 (20%) were flagged for having "barriers not identified and/or insufficiently addressed." Red flags included:

- *"Learning disabilities not identified as barrier to training program." (Grp 3 Youth)*
- *"Health issue not addressed yet it was identified as a potential barrier in the career planning section." (Grp 3)*
- *"Not identifying and assessing barriers/strengths thoroughly, especially those around transgender identity." (Grp 3 Youth)*
- *"DUI not on assessment but EC did help with and no evidence of supporting customer with barriers outside of training (caring for children newly in custody), even though customer was successful." (Grp 4)*

Of 32 cases receiving outstanding flags, two were flagged for "effective barrier identification." One red flag stated, *"The EC did an excellent job documenting barriers as well as the actions taken to provide supportive services in response to these barriers." (Grp 4)*

Customer Contacts

Frequent communication between DWS workers and customers has been identified as a key to successful customer outcomes. DWS leadership expects employment counselors to be in contact with WIOA customers at least once every 90 days. DWS wanted to understand the frequency and quality of customer contacts as well as the potential relationship between contacts and case outcomes.

Figure 20: Frequency of Contact
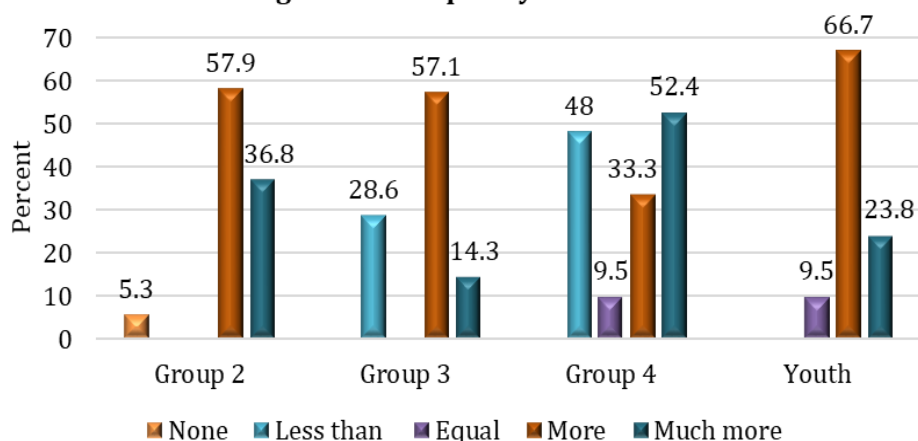
Frequency: As is clear from Figure 20, workers were typically in contact with customers more or much more than required in DWS policy. Most employment counselors (52.9%) contacted customers 1-2 times per month. More than a third (35.3%) were attempting contact nearly weekly. Frequency of contact is an area in which WIOA staff are consistently exceeding minimum expectations.

While DWS policy requires contact at least once every 90 days, some training programs are so short that this minimum requirement would not be an appropriate level of contact. In general, the frequency of contact matched the duration of the training program about 75% of the time. Interestingly, in cases where the customer was not progressing in the training program, employment counselors generally exhibited higher levels of contact and diverse contact methods (phone, email, home visits, etc.). This combination of frequent contact and customer progress was of particular note with cases in Group 3.

Evaluation of the frequency of contact of customers in Group 1 was conducted separately due to limited duration of services provided to these customers. It was noted that frequency of contact with Group 1 customers was significantly lower than that found in the other groups. When reviewing justification for case closures for Group 1 customers, lack of contact was often noted as a reason case closure was *not* fully justified.

Of the 91 cases evaluated, 14 (16%) were determined to have such little contact that this was a red flag issue. Noted lack of contact included:
- *"DWS worker did not document any interactions/attempts to contact customer. No attempt to reschedule missed appointment." (Grp 1)*
- *"The narratives indicate that the EC spent over a month trying to get in touch with the customer but had no success, just before customer fell out of contact, EC had not made contact in a month then another two week period. It seems EC started attempts at contact only after customer did not respond." (Grp 3)*

Quality: Contact quality, also an important component of successful customer outcomes, refers to the efficacy of the communication between employment counselor and customer. Contact quality was assessed by evaluating the details of conversations as recorded in case notes. Of the 91 cases evaluated, 38 (42%) received a "good" rating in terms of contact quality, 22 (24%) were rated as "fair," 19 (20%) were rated "excellent," and the remaining 13 (14%) were considered "poor."

Figure 21: Quality of Contacts
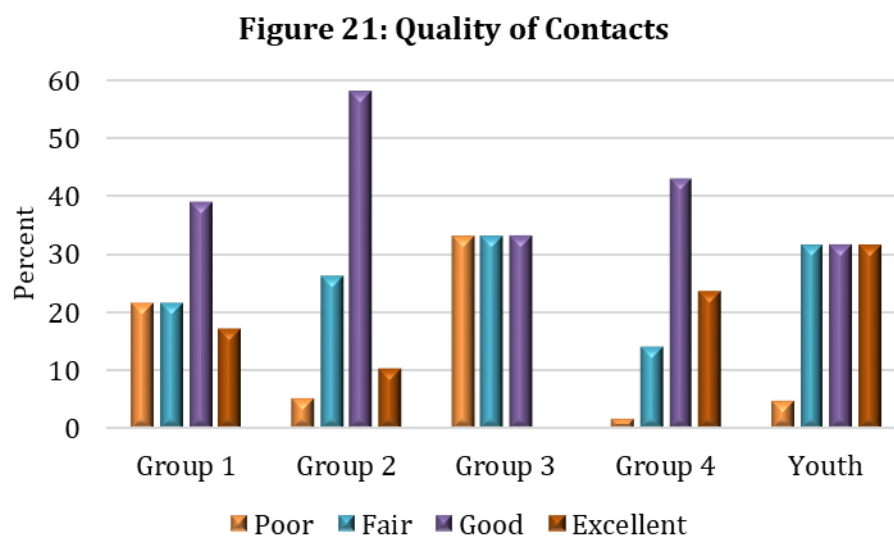
There are clear relationships between contact quality and groups (see Figure 21). Group 4 customers and Youth were most likely to have "good" or "excellent" contact quality. More frequently, there were issues noticed in contact quality related to Groups 1 and 3.

In evaluating trends in the case notes, a common theme was that case notes did not include specific details about communication. This made it difficult for evaluators to determine contact quality. As one evaluator noted:

- *"The case narratives provided few details regarding contact content between EC and customer. There was a note about a problem-solving assessment but no note was made regarding assessment content, conversation or details." (Grp 4)*

In 11 cases, high frequency, consistency, and/or quality of contact was identified as part of an outstanding flag noted on the case. Evaluators said:

- *"Frequent, supportive communication." (Grp 4)*
- *"E.C. did a great job providing consistent support & communication to customer." (Grp 3 Youth)*

Case Narratives

Case narratives or notes are a critical component of tracking changes in the progress of each WIOA case over time. DWS sought to have case narratives and documentation evaluated in terms of information provided, readability, consistency, and richness. Assessment notes ideally describe the initial goals of a customer, identify potential barriers to training, and outline basic personal information relevant to a customer's involvement with DWS services. QT questions targeted the presence and completeness of assessments, evidence of career planning, frequency of progress notes, justification of actions/next steps, and clarity of narratives.

Assessments: Assessment notes and assessment screens in UWORKS were used to evaluate the "completeness" of Group 1 assessments. Among Group 1 customers, 19 (82.6%) had an

assessment note or eligibility note equivalent. However, due to the limited amount of information in most Group 1 assessment notes, these were not evaluated for content.

For Group 2, 3, 4 and Youth cases, assessment notes and assessment screens were evaluated for both assessment completeness and clarity. In 44 (64.7%) of the cases, there was a current assessment note specifically identified as "assessment." As shown in Table 44, nearly a third (32.4%) of the Group 2, 3, and 4 cases were considered at least "quite" complete. Clarity of assessments was evaluated independently of completeness. Clarity focused on the understandability of the information provided (regardless of completeness). Nearly half (42.7%) of the cases were found to be at least "quite" clear in presenting assessment information.

Table 44: QT Evaluation of Assessment Notes

	Group 2 n = 19	Group 3 n = 6	Group 4 n = 21	Youth n = 22	Total N= 68
Was an assessment note made?					
Yes	14(73.7%)	3 (42.9%)	15(71.4%)	12 (57.1%)	44 (64.7%)
-Yes, but not labeled as assessment	1 (5.3%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (4.8%)	-0-	4 (5.9%)
-Yes, but not by current EC	2 (10.5%)	0 (0%)	-0-	4 (19%)	6 (8.8%)
-Yes, but older than most recent service/enrollment	0 (0%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	4 (5.9%)
No	2 (10.5%)	1 (14.3%)	4 (19%)	3 (14.3%)	10 (14.7%)
How complete is the assessment?					
Not at all	2 (10.5%)	-0-	-0-	1 (4.8%)	3 (4.4%)
A little	-0-	2 (28.6%)	6 (28.6%)	7 (33.3%)	15 (22.1%)
Somewhat	12(63.2%)	4 (57.1%)	7 (33.3%)	5 (23.8%)	28 (41.2%)
Quite	5 (26.3%)	-0-	8 (38.1%)	8 (38.1%)	21 (30.9%)
Extremely	-0-	1 (14.3%)	-0-	-0-	1 (1.5%)
How clear is the assessment?					
Not at all	2 (10.5%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.8%)	4 (5.9%)
A little	2 (10.5%)	-0-	3 (14.3%)	4 (19%)	9 (13.2%)
Somewhat	8 (42.1%)	2 (28.6%)	7 (33.3%)	9 (42.9%)	26 (38.2%)
Quite	9 (31.6%)	3 (42.9%)	9 (42.9%)	6 (28.6%)	24 (35.3%)
Extremely	1 (5.3%)	1 (14.3%)	2 (9.5%)	1 (4.8%)	5 (7.4%)

Evaluating cases without an assessment or eligibility note was a challenge both for readability of the case and for evaluation of appropriate service provision. Examples of challenges include:
- *"No updated assessment note from current E.C., last assessment note or screens updated was in 2016." (Grp 3 Youth)*
- *"Assessment screens and note were not very thorough so it was difficult to get an idea of where customer was starting, their goals in working with DWS, and barriers/strengths." (Grp 4)*
- *"Assessment is very minimal and unclear about customer's background, needs/goals, and how what they are doing with DWS is helpful to customer." (Grp 3 Youth)*

Career Planning: Career planning is important to DWS, because it increases the likelihood that a selected training program will be a positive fit for a customer and lead to a positive employment outcome. DWS expressed specific interest in learning how "career planning" activities are documented. The evidence for evaluating the quality of career planning was found in the UWORKS career-planning screen. There were two customers who never met with a WIOA worker. As shown in Table 45, of those who did meet with a worker, cases involving Youth showed higher levels of career exploration, whereas cases in Group 3 were less likely to have evidence of career planning.

Table 45: Career Planning

	Group 2 **n = 17**	**Group 3** **n = 6**	**Group 4** **n = 21**	**Youth** **n = 22**	**Total** **N = 66**
How well was career planning explored?					
Not at all	2 (11.8%)	-0-	-0-	-0-	2 (2.9%)
A little	5 (29.4%)	4 (66.7%)	8 (38.1%)	6 (27.3%)	23 (34.8%)
Somewhat	8 (47.1%)	2 (33.3%)	7 (33.3%)	7 (31.8%)	24 (36.4%)
Quite a bit	1 (5.9%)	-0-	6 (28.6%)	8 (36.4%)	15 (22.7%)
Extremely	1 (5.9%)	-0-	-0-	1 (4.5%)	2 (3.0%)

DWS was also interested in learning how well actions taken during a case (such as problem-solving but not including case closure) were documented and justified. As seen in Table 46, of those who noted actions or case decisions, the majority of employment counselors scored either "quite a bit" or "extremely" well in justifying actions and decisions, with Group 3 results lagging behind. There was a larger spread in ratings relative to the presence of "next steps" to be pursued, with Groups 2 and 3 falling behind Groups 4 and Youth. Again, Group 1 did not provide enough data to evaluate.

Table 46: Connecting Notes and Actions

	Group 1 **n = 15**	**Group 2** **n = 17**	**Group 3** **n = 6**	**Group 4** **n = 17**	**Youth** **n = 21**	**Total** **N = 61**
Do narratives justify actions & decisions?						
Not at all	1 (6.7%)	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	1 (1.3%)
A little	4 (26.7%)	- 0 -	1 (16.7%)	- 0 -	2 (9.5%)	7 (9.2%)
Somewhat	2 (13.3%)	5 (29.4%)	3 (50.0%)	3 (17.6%)	5 (23.8%)	18 (23.7%)
Quite a bit	5 (33.3%)	10(58.8%)	2 (33.3%)	10(58.8%)	11(52.4%)	38 (50.0%)
Extremely	3 (20.0%)	2 (11.8%)	- 0 -	4 (23.5%)	3 (14.3%)	12 (15.8%)
Are next steps outlined?						
Not at all		1 (5.3%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (9.5%)	4 (5.9%)
A little		7 (36.8%)	1 (14.3%)	4 (19%)	5 (23.8%)	17 (25%)
Somewhat		6 (31.6%)	4 (57.1%)	7 (33.3%)	7 (33.3%)	24 (35.3%)
Quite a bit		5 (26.3%)	1 (14.3%)	8 (38.1%)	6 (28.6%)	20 (29.4%)
Extremely		- 0 -	- 0 -	2 (9.5%)	1 (4.8%)	3 (4.4%)

Progress notes: Progress notes are used to indicate changes in the case relative to the activities. As with frequency of customer contacts, Figure 22 shows that employment counselors overwhelmingly exceeded minimum frequency expectations for noting customer progress in formal "progress notes."

One quality DWS wants in worker case notes is that they "read like a story." That is, after reading the notes, an outside

Figure 22: Frequency of Progress Notes
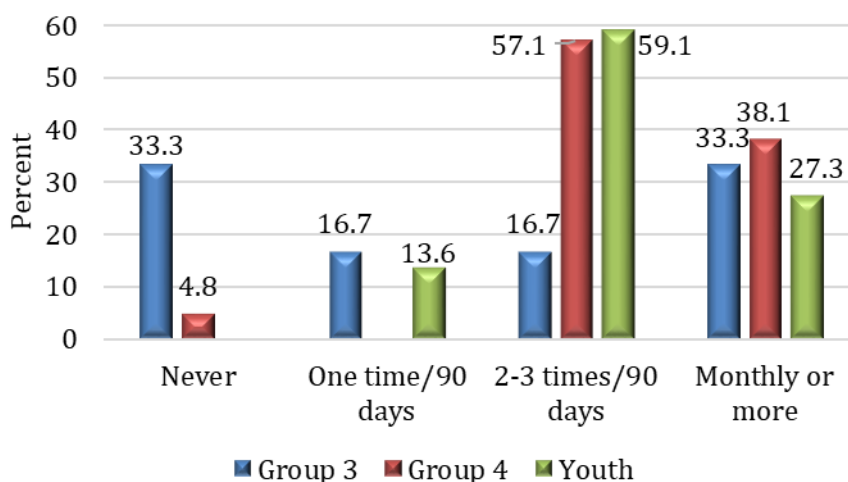
party should have a good sense of the customer, their needs, current plan, and next steps. As shown in Figure 23, a majority of scored cases (51.5%) were determined to read "somewhat" like a story. Cases that read "completely" like a story made up 41.2% and only 7.4% were determined to "not at all" read like a story. Missing elements that were identified which made the story more difficult to follow fell into five main themes: lack of customer perspective (25), insufficient/unclear notes (13), insufficient communication (9), barriers not identified/ not addressed (9), and insufficient assessment (7).

Figure 23: How Well Notes "Read Like a Story"

Assessment notes, progress notes, and other case notes varied significantly in the level of detail given and incorporation of customer perspective. The notes in each case were evaluated to identify the overall "tone or tones" of the case. Figure 24 shows that nearly

Figure 24: Tone of Notes

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every case was identified to have a neutral tone. Youth and Group 4 customers had the largest percentage of "supportive" toned notes, whereas there were no "supportive" toned notes among Group 3 customers. All cases were also reviewed for the presence of a "cold" or "aggressive" tone. Neither of these qualities were found in any of the cases evaluated. While "tone" was evaluated in case notes of Group 1 customers, additional relationship elements were not evaluated due to limited contact and information in notes.

Closure Processes

The processes surrounding service and case closures are of great interest to DWS, as this can provide information on how to limit avoidable negative closures and increase positive closures. Case closures, with and without service closures, were evaluated by reviewing each case and determining if there is any evidence that suggests case closure could have been prevented. The evidence was then reviewed to determine if a closure was justified in the narratives and if the narratives matched the reason for closure. Finally, evaluators attempted to identify who determined that the case and/or service would be closed.

Service Closures: Service closure decisions generally were more straightforward and justified than case closure decisions. As Groups 1 and 2 were not enrolled in an education program, service closures were evaluated for Group 3 and 4 customers only. Two themes arose indicating insufficient service closure justification: insufficient notes or narratives (3) and no evidence that supportive services were offered (2).

Case Closures: Of the 88 cases that were closed at the time of evaluation, 51 (58%) case closures were determined to be completely justified by narratives and assessments, 33 (37.5%) were somewhat justified, and 4 (4.5%) were not justified at all. Six themes emerged indicating insufficient case closure justification for Groups 2, 3, and 4: unclear or insufficient case closure notes (9), no case closure notes (2), minimal documented contact with customer during case (13), case closure not confirmed with customer (10), insufficient supportive services offered prior to or post case closure (11), and overall lack of information to determine why case closed (3).

Among the 23 Group 1 cases evaluated, over half provided evidence that a case closure could have been prevented. Three themes arose as researchers assessed for evidence suggesting that a case closure could have been prevented: lack of communication (10), lack of support (3), and unclear documentation (3).

While case notes and service outcomes were consistent for nearly all service closures, there were many instances where the case outcome codes were inconsistent with case notes. These inconsistencies surrounding case closure coding suggested this would be an important factor to include in the evaluation process. There were cases where the closure reasons were recorded as "employed" or similar varia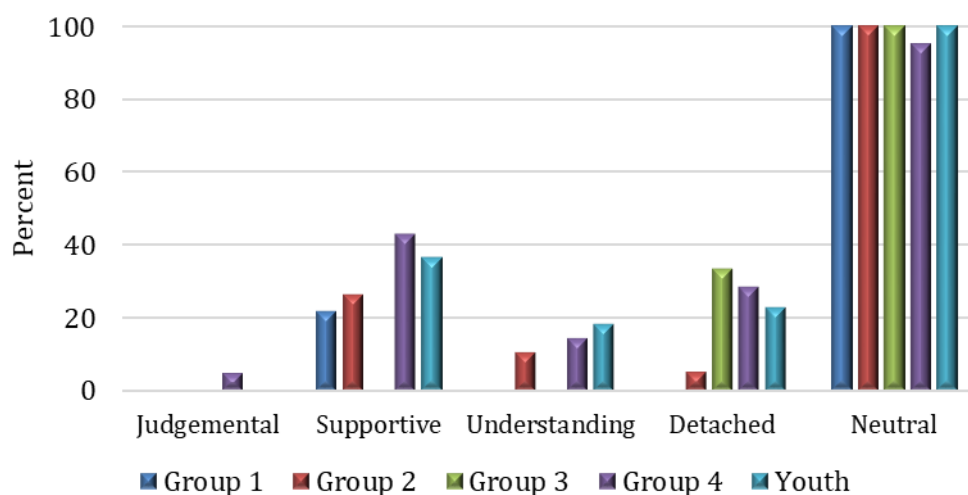tions, when notes indicated no contact with customer and case closed out of non-participation. This inconsistency also was observed when a customer requested that their case be closed. Case closure reasons were found inconsistent with both the case notes and at times the customer's perspective as reported in the WIOA survey.

Case notes were reviewed in an attempt to determine, from the notes, who decided that the case would close? It was noticed that customers frequently were uninformed about their

Figure 25: Who Decided Case Would Close?
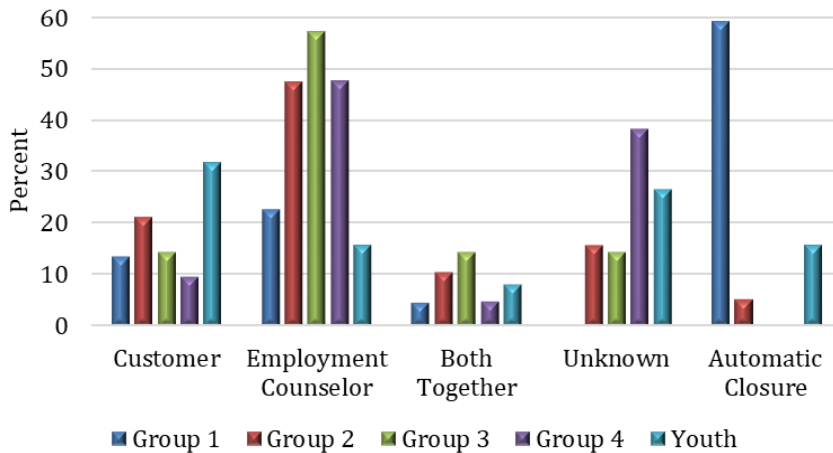
case being closed or circumstances surrounding their case closures. As seen in Figure 25, of the 88 cases that were closed at the time of evaluation, 31 (35.2%) contained case notes indicating the decision to close a case was made solely by the employment counselor. In only 7 (8.0%) cases was the decision to close a case noted as collaborative. In 17 (19.3%) cases, the notes were unclear as to who decided to close a case. This was typically due to missing information in case closure notes or that case closure notes were missing entirely. Group 3 closure decisions were split between worker and customer, but rarely was the decision noted as having been made collaboratively.

Relationship Building

Over the years, positive relationships between employment counselors and customers have been strongly correlated to positive outcomes. The quality of relationships between WIOA staff and customers was evaluated by identifying the tone of UWORKS notes, assessing attempts at collaborative decision-making, utilization of strength-based language and approaches, and evidence of positive regard and helping attitudes (see Table 47).

Table 47: Relationship Characteristics

	Group 2 n = 19	Group 3 n = 7	Group 4 n = 21	Youth n = 21	Total N = 68
Were decisions collaborative?					
Completely	1 (5.3%)	1 (14.3%)	6 (28.6%)	4 (19%)	12 (17.6%)
Somewhat	9 (47.4%)	2 (28.6%)	6 (28.6%)	4 (19%)	21 (30.9%)
Not at all	1 (5.3%)	- 0 -	- 0 -	1 (4.8%)	2 (2.9%)
Decision-making not noted	8 (42.1%)	4 (57.1%)	9 (42.9%)	12(57.1%)	33 (48.5%)
Evidence counselor identified & built on customer success?					
Almost always	2 (10.5%)	- 0 -	5 (23.8%)	2 (9.5%)	9 (13.2%)
Usually	3 (15.8%)	- 0 -	3 (14.3%)	3 (14.3%)	9 (13.2%)
Occasionally	7 (36.8%)	2 (28.6%)	6 (28.6%)	7 (33.3%)	22 (32.4%)
Almost never	7 (36.8%)	5 (71.4%)	7 (33.3%)	9 (42.9%)	28 (41.2%)
Evidence of positive, helping relationship?					
Almost always	2 (10.5%)	- 0 -	4 (19%)	7 (33.3%)	13 (19.1%)
Usually	7 (36.8%)	1 (14.3%)	5 (23.8%)	1 (4.8%)	14 (20.6%)
Occasionally	6 (31.6%)	4 (57.1%)	9 (42.9%)	11(52.4%)	30 (44.1%)
Almost never	4 (21.1%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (14.3%)	2 (9.5%)	11 (16.2%)

As "neutrality" was the most predominant tone identified in the notes, it is not surprising that it often was hard to find evidence of relationship building in the notes. Most case notes were limited to task-oriented communications, rather than evidence of customer support.

Case Notes and Customer Perspectives

Following each case review, evaluators gave an overall QT score reflecting all aspects of the review. Once a final score was given, the evaluator listened to the recording of the customer speaking about their experience with the WIOA program. Completing initial scoring prior to listening to the recording ensured the evaluator would avoid bias during initial rating, but allowed for incorporation of customer experience in the final evaluation. The customer perspective often added components that had not been captured in the notes. The areas most influenced were the customers' perspectives on the working relationship and amount of contact between themselves and the WIOA staff. Discrepancies in reviewed cases and customer experience from interview data suggest that there may be a lack of notations being made in UWORKS.

It was not uncommon to rate a case highly, then after reviewing customer qualitative data, lower the score due to discrepancies and missing information that would have clearly reflected customer experience. The opposite was also true, with scores significantly increasing due to lack of positive details and customer experiences in case narratives. The average overall initial score was 6.09 with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest possible score. The average overall rating after listening to customer perspective was slightly lower, at 5.88.

As shown in Figure 26, adding customer perspectives brought down the score in 37 (40.7%) of the cases. The score remained the same in 29 (31.9%) cases and improved in 25 (27.5%) of cases. In cases where the score improved, the customer often added details regarding the positive qualities of WIOA worker and the frequency of contact. Differences between initial and post-recording scores were evaluated and not found to be

Figure 26: Pre - Post Evaluator Overall Score

statistically significant. Interestingly, when comparing graduates (Group 4) to non-graduates (Groups 1 – 3), graduates were significantly more likely to have an improved score when the customer perspective was added. Here are some examples of score differences and evaluator comments at initial and post-recording scoring periods:

Increased Scores:
> Initial overall score: 2
> - *Case was missing a lot of info about customer contact, assessment info, customer needs during or after program. Case seems straightforward but that may be because there is little info to work off of. The narratives contain little substance beyond monetary*

transaction information and tuition payment. The progress notes lack detail and description of the customer's experience. The customer was successful in completing their program goals, which may explain the lack of detail in the notes. However, a narrative indicating that the EC felt the case would be more hands off would have helped explain the lack of narrative detail. (Grp 4)

Post-recording score: 7
- *Customer had only great things to say about communication and support from EC. Customer felt like EC contacted them frequently/just enough, they gave them emotional support and encouragement and were always available to help. This perspective is different than what narratives portray. Case would've been rated much higher knowing EC kept in close communication and gave customer support/encouragement and if the case in UWORKS was more thorough. (Grp 4)*

Initial overall score: 3
- *This service was brief and only included new counselor letter, assessment meeting with limited information, and documentation of case closure. There is no evidence EC attempted to check in with customer during 20-day period between assessment meeting and case closing/expiring. Assessment note gave reader an idea of initial meeting. EC assisted with resume, but did not offer training options for this customer. (Grp 1)*

Post-recording score: 6
- *Customer reports that EC followed up with him via phone between the assessment meeting and case closure. He did not return her call. Customer felt that decisions were collaborative and that his EC was very helpful. With more information and evidence of support in narratives it would have been clearer to see contact being made and support provided and rate the case higher. (Grp 1)*

Same Scores:

Initial score: 10
- *EC did fantastic at noting entire case thoroughly, including supportive comments, details about customer experience, supportive services offered. This was a case with a lot going on but EC stayed consistent and communicated nearly daily at times to make sure this youth had the support they needed. EC is still working this case as of evaluation. (Grp 4 Youth)*

Post-recording score: 10
- *Customer's experience was consistent with case narratives. Customer said they thought EC did a great job with working as a team with customer, DCFS, parents, and other agencies involved. They had a positive experience. (Grp 4 Youth)*

Initial score: 9
- *Great case with very thorough narratives that included pasted conversations which give a great insight into communication between EC and customer and customer's perspective on their case. EC was encouraging, patient, and consistent with communicating not only with customer but with surrounding team members in VR, at the university customer attended, and other DWS team members. EC performance and investment in customer was excellent. Career exploration assessment screen was the only area that could have used more information. (Grp 4)*

Post-recording score: 9
- *Customer reports that she received constant positive affirmations from EC. Customer had no feedback about anything counselor could have done better to help her during program. Agreement between customer and EC about case throughout. (Grp 4)*

Lowered Scores:
Initial score: 7
- *There were several E.C.'s working with this customer. The E.C. being reviewed had the most contact with customer. E.C. offered support and frequently contacted customer when he did not respond. E.C. explained ways that DWS could help and offered to help in the future if he were to change his mind about pursuing an eligible training program. Though communication was limited, the notes that were written indicated supportive, helpful services. Notes were detailed and understandable. (Grp 1)*

Post-recording score: 4
- *Customer reports significant confusion about which department at DWS he was supposed to be working with. Switching between E.C.'s and departments was frustrating. Customer reports not knowing why he was denied and that the deadlines were not explicitly stated. He did not know if he was supposed to be working with VA or WIOA. Overall, he expressed that both he and the workers at DWS seemed confused by what direction he wanted to go in for training. (Grp 1)*

Initial score: 5
- *Regular communication with customer, although brief documentation and limited customer perspective; customer being primary caretaker for disabled family member was not addressed in assessment note; resume issues identified but no documentation that this was followed up on; EC was straightforward in notes and all documentation was clear; supportive documentation and actions surrounding customer needing more time for training. Overall, this case appeared to be straightforward and was easy for reader to understand. (Grp 4)*

Post-recording score: 1
- *Customer reports no emotional support and that EC tried to talk customer out of pursuing CDL, which is inconsistent with EC perspective. Customer reported no follow up from EC since completing CDL program. Customer identified lack of medical equipment and health problems as barriers to work/training, which were not identified anywhere in UWORKS case. (Grp 4)*

Summary

The QT findings offer rich information regarding case progression from DWS worker perspectives, as well as insights into similarities and differences between the experiences of DWS workers and customers interviewed in the WIOA Survey. Interestingly, customer comments, without prompting, often focused on the very areas in which DWS was seeking to better understand. Customers spoke of their relationship with the DWS worker, their desire for more contact and assistance, barriers to program success, and confusion over how and why cases open or close. This suggests that the core areas about which DWS was seeking information are well targeted and reflective of customer concerns and interests.

The challenge becomes, how can these quality case management activities be documented in the case notes? Clearly, these areas make a difference to the customer, and while it is not a formal WIOA outcome measure, there is a correlation between these activities (quality relationships, barrier identification, regular contact, etc.) and successful outcomes.

Key findings from this QT portion of the WIOA study include:

- *Frequency* of contact generally exceeds minimum expectations across all groups. Much more variety of contact *quality* seen between groups, with most issues observed in Groups 1 & 3**.**
- Decision to close a case is rarely evidenced to have been made collaboratively. Oftentimes, the case closure decision-making process and justification are unclear to reader due to lack of narratives.
- Case closure codes oftentimes do not match narratives or customer experiences.
- Case narratives lack evidence of positive relationship and emotional support, although customer experience oftentimes reported that these relational components in fact were present during their DWS involvement.
- Cases of Group 3 Youth scored higher than Group 3 Adult in a variety of target areas.
- When barriers are not identified or addressed, case outcomes are negatively effected.
- Among Group 1 cases, there was often limited or no contact leading up to case closure.
- Customers often have a very different view of their case than what is reflected in the notes. If cases are transferred or reviewed, asking a customer for their perspective would provide a wider view of the current case.

CUSTOMER TRAINING EXPERIENCE

A primary aim for this study was to learn more about why customers exit WIOA programs at various points in time. To explore these differences, during the customer interviews each individual was asked questions specific to their exit point. These questions are outlined in Appendix 8. For most customers, there was agreement between DWS data on the customer's point of program exit and the customer's experience. However, there was confusion or disagreement at times that made continuing a specific line of questioning difficult. The limitations introduced by these discrepancies will be discussed later in the report.

METHODS

As described above, each month of the WIOA study, DWS personnel provided a list of customers whose WIOA program had closed at a particular stage in the process. Customer experience related to participation in the program to that point, and the factors contributing to a specific time of exit, was captured via tape recording approximately halfway through the interview. The recording was later downloaded and transcribed in the data entry process.

During the interview, each WIOA respondent provided details regarding their specific case, including their goals of pursuing help through DWS, whether or not they had an institution and/or program in mind prior to applying to WIOA, and their experiences with the application process. The customer then spoke to their understanding of their case progression as well as the unique circumstances that led to closure of the WIOA services. In

the case of Group 4 respondents, questions regarding how DWS supported their successful completion of the training program were asked as well as questions about job readiness.

Each transcription was evaluated to understand various aspects of the customer experience, including their relationship with DWS workers, communication with DWS staff, case and/or service closures, and decision making processes. In addition to the evaluation or individual components, each case was rated as to the overall customer experience.

FINDINGS

As seen in the question pattern displayed in Appendix 8, some questions were asked of all participants, followed by questions regarding experiences specific to each particular group. General findings related to WIOA customer experiences will be discussed at the beginning of this section, and group-specific experiences will follow.

Total Sample Results

Learning About the WIOA Program

Table 48 presents the ways in which survey respondents first learned about the WIOA program. For all groups, the most common way of learning about WIOA was through family and friends or (for WIOA non-Youth) from a contact or program connected to DWS. While DWS referrals were grouped into one category, 38% of DWS-specific referrals came from the Unemployment Insurance Office. Other DWS referral sources mentioned include: Vocational Rehabilitation, the Yes Program, Work Success, and Medicaid workers. However, 45% of DWS referral sources were not specified. Interestingly, a significant source of information for WIOA Youth included a DCFS worker. These findings, along with other group-specific variations, will be discussed in more detail in the group-specific sections.

Table 48: Learning about WIOA

	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64
Family/friend	29 (35.8%)	11 (16.9%)	15 (33.3%)	28 (35%)	31 (48.4%)
DWS	23 (28.4%)	26 (40.0%)	11 (24.4%)	14 (17.5%)	2 (3.1%)
Criminal Justice System	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (2.2%)	3 (3.8%)	2 (3.1%)
Community Resource	1 (1.2%)	6 (9.2%)	3 (6.7%)	2 (2.5%)	6 (9.4%)
Found it online	12 (14.8%)	9 (13.8%)	2 (4.4%)	11 (13.8%)	1 (1.6%)
Other	3 (3.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (6.7%)	3 (3.8%)	2 (3.1%)
Educational Institution	3 (3.7%)	1 (1.5)	4 (8.9%)	11 (13.8%)	7 (10.9%)
DCFS	1 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.2%)	1 (1.3%)	12 (18.8%)
Current/past employer	6 (7.4%)	8 (12.3%)	2 (4.4%)	5 (6.3%)	1 (1.6%)
Don't know	1 (1.2%)	3 (4.5%)	3 (6.7%)	2 (2.5%)	0 (0%)

Training Program and Institution Selection

To learn more about the information or desires customers bring to the WIOA program, researchers asked whether or not the person had a particular program and institution in mind when they applied to the WIOA program. As seen in Figure 27, 90% of Group 4 participants had a particular program in mind when they applied to the WIOA program. This was significantly higher than that found in the other groups ($p \leq .001$). Having a predetermined institution to receive training was also found to be statistically significant in predicting the participant's likelihood to complete their program ($p = .004$). Youth were clearly less likely to know what type of training they were seeking or where to complete it.

Figure 27: Customer Knowledge at Entry
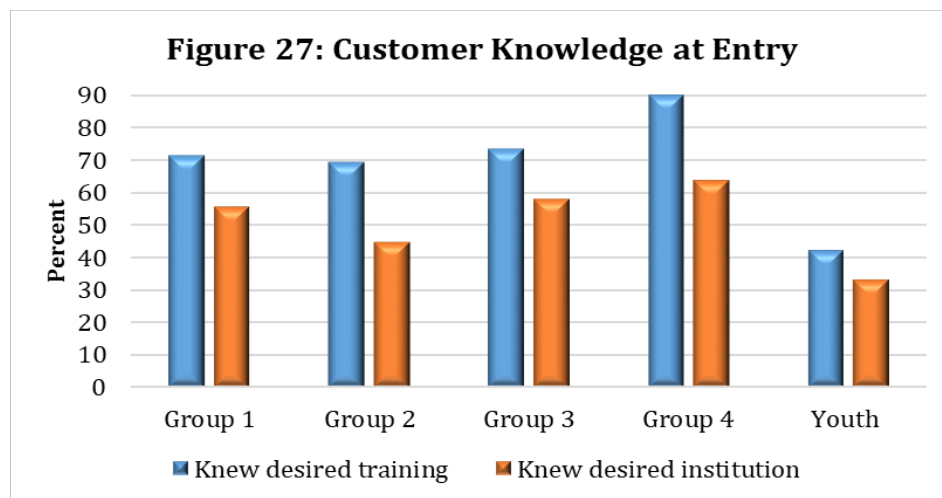
Main Reasons Customers Seek WIOA Assistance

All WIOA Survey participants were asked to describe the main reason they initially came to DWS for training assistance. Over half of respondents (54.9%) identified financial assistance with schooling as the primary reason for seeking help. One customer succinctly described this reason, stating, *"Financially, it made sense." (Grp 1)* Another went to DWS *"just to pay the difference on what I couldn't cover with financial aid." (Grp 1)*

Another large group of customers (67) were focused on employment goals, such as finding a job or pursuing a career, when they first came to DWS for help. Many customers within this category identified increased marketability (14) as their main reason for pursuing training. One customer explained the main reason they sought DWS assistance:

- *"To make me more marketable to employers. The one that I was working with mentioned the on the job training benefit as a way to tell employers that even if I didn't have all of the skills that they were looking for, I was a hard worker and the OJT benefit could help pay for part of my salary while I was getting up to speed." (Grp 2)*
- *"Um, I felt like it would be a good opportunity because my company ultimately shut down here in the U.S. It was a good opportunity to possibly get some funding for school, some discounted or free assistance. So, it was something that I didn't initially think I wanted and then once I was unemployed for a few months and started really soul searching after losing a job after 11 years. I mean that was hard. I kind of felt like I had lost my identity for a little bit. So, it wasn't something initially that I thought I wanted to do, but once I had time to be without a job I thought, you know yeah that's what I would like to see myself doing in 10-20-30 years." (Grp 1)*

Some customers had less specific reasons for seeking WIOA assistance. These reasons were generally related to accessing resources and information on jobs (33). One participant explained:

- *"Just because they have a lot of resource to tell you where to go and what to do past… like after you get it, they'll tell you, like they'll give you all the options. So I think it's just the only place that they will tell you I guess." (Grp 4)*
- *"Because I knew that they would help you find jobs quicker than training to do it on your own, because they had more knowledge about what was open. That was the same time I was trying to switch jobs as well." (Grp 1)*

Several respondents had individual and family reasons for seeking assistance (27). Improving one's life and finding direction were themes observed in this category. One customer went to DWS to *"Just kind of help to get me on my feet and stuff, since I had a bit of a slow start in life and stuff." (Group 3 Youth)* Another participant explained that they *"Went in for help because I think at that time it was like this shining beacon of hope. Yeah. That they would refer or be able to help me." (Group 3)*

Finally, some respondents came to DWS due to recent unemployment (6), other agency referrals (4), or for no identified reason (3). Interestingly, 7 (14%) Group 3 Youth came to DWS because their case worker applied on their behalf. This phenomenon will be further discussed in group-specific observations.

Overall Goals

Although similar to the previous question, it is important to assess the customers' long-term goals when they apply for a training program. While long-term goals were similar to the main reason for seeking help, there are some notable differences in general responses. The majority of respondents (51.6%) identified employment goals as their long-term reason for seeking training assistance. Within this group, just under a quarter (23.0%) identified specific career goals. Although most customers were initially seeking assistance with paying for school, the long-term goal of accessing the WIOA program was most often employment. The same customer who identified OJT and marketability as the main reasons for seeking help identified this long term goal:
- *"It was very simple, it was to help me get into a job. I was already confident in my skills and abilities, so really it was just kind of to get a foot in the door and to get employers to give me that chance to show them that I can learn new skills and such." (Grp 2)*

Other customers described their long-term employment goals:
- *"My long-term goal was to have longevity in my employment, because I was tired of always working for dead-end jobs for a little bit more than minimum wage." (Grp 1)*
- *"To be able to find a job where I could work at home. Because I had a job after I ended real estate that I worked at home and I really enjoyed working at home. And I could work the hours that worked best for me and still have some freedom." (Grp 3)*
- *"Um, to get a better job. I mean, regular jobs don't pay the bills. For me that's like the kind of society's like, reprehensible truth is that the base job doesn't allow you to get by. So, to get a job so that I can afford to live." (Grp 3)*

Some respondents identified education goals (103) as a long-term priority. As one person succinctly stated,
- *"To get my bachelors in something that I could enjoy doing." (Grp 1)*

- *"It was to become certified to become more marketable and hopefully get the jobs that I was searching for." (Grp 1)*

Improving one's life and/or one's family was the long-term goal for 59 customers. As one customer described her long-term goal:

- *"I want to actually make a, what's the word for it, I want to make an example for my kids, if you want something, you start working for it. I want to be able to show my family, hey I've done this now. Something to prove to my kids to have somewhere good to be at. Like a house instead of an apartment. Even though an apartment is still a house, but I'd really like to have a house at some point in my life." (Grp 1)*

A small group of customers (3) stated that financial assistance and resources were their long-term goals and only 2 respondents were unable to identify an overall goal.

Training Application Process

Respondents were then asked whether or not they experienced any challenges or barriers when completing the WIOA training application. Nearly half (48.7%) of respondents did not have any problems with the training application. Customers who had experienced application challenges were asked to describe what made it difficult. (It should be noted that some Youth did not personally submit an application, thus could not speak to the question.)

The most common challenge experienced (38) was the amount of work and time spent on the training application. These customers stated that there was too much paperwork, too many questions asked, and not enough time to submit application materials. For example:

- *"I did have some… not really, it did take a little bit of work because I did have some self-employment income and so I needed to provide ledgers for my income expenses and stuff. And it wasn't very much, so if they were to simplify that process, they could say "if you earned less than this amount of money with self-employment income don't worry about it" but yeah with that providing the ledgers, but even that wasn't that big of a deal. It just took a little bit of time." (Grp 2)*
- *"It's a very tight timeline. You gotta be on it. Uh, not having work was enough for me to be on it. But boy you had to be on it. You had to get in there. I actually didn't make the first take on it. They needed me to have what document, I didn't have a birth certificate. I needed to get another and the time that it took me to pay for the new birth certificate, fill in the application, and it get it from Orange County sent to here, and I missed it. But they said that there was a small 2 week window after that then I could reapply and I went in there and the lady was on it. She gave me a call and she helped me get through it. There was one lady that was really all about it and she helped pushed it through and she wanted to see me get it. So the challenge was just tight, tight timelines." (Grp 1)*
- *"It's not that it was confusing, it was all the hoops you have to jump through just to get to where you want to be. It's not a straightforward, hey apply for this part here and we'll get going, you got to jump through so many hoops just to get to the training." (Grp 1)*

Some customers reported feeling confused and unclear about expectations surrounding the application (31) and shared these thoughts:

- *"Honestly everything was confusing to me, it was really confusing, [worker] didn't really help me out at all, I tried telling him I was confused and he told me and that he's had worse people than me. So I felt kind of dumb. And I was like, I don't know. Everything that he said to me and him trying to help me, like he could have said it in less bigger words. I don't know. He could have helped me and I know I could have said something more, but I felt like he was being kind of rude too." (Grp 3 Youth)*
- *"She gave me a whole bunch of papers, I think. And the problem with that is that I was under a lot of stress to find another job so I didn't have the time to just sit down and read through everything and I'm pretty sure I missed some things. I'm pretty sure she asked me to do a couple of things, I don't remember what they were… she gave me a list. And I was supposed to, yeah, I feel bad about that. Because I feel like I missed the mark on something. But I mean despite that, it seemed like the counselor she sent me to, he was helping me, calling me once a week, I was seeing him once a week. So he didn't mention anything like, "Hey you still have anything still outstanding, you need to do this." (Grp 2)*

Some (22) experienced communication barriers during the application process, with one common issue being the hand off between eligibility and employment counselor. For some customers, this transition was not smooth. Other customers struggled with language barriers and not receiving calls back from their DWS worker. In the words of customers:
- *"I was assigned one person at the facility I went to to like follow up with me, and then it changed. And I mean that didn't bother me, but I felt like it was more confusing because I had met her in person and talked with her and got to know her, and then I never went in to meet the guy that was following me. Building that rapport I think would have been better." (Grp 4)*
- *"The communication was the biggest barrier. And It was very frustrating, because I didn't know which university I could go to, I didn't know how to use the website to find it out, I didn't know how much I qualified for, there was a lot of unknowns that I wished was more specific on the website, then I wouldn't have applied…" (Grp 1)*
- *"I would just say taking time off work. A lot of miscommunications with getting everything turned in. Just the counselor… like we'd send her stuff over, and then it would take a couple of days for her to respond. You have to meet with the counselor. And their schedule is the same as the regular work schedule." (Grp 3)*
- *"Communication on their end, and they kind of set up the meetings without asking me what my availability was. So I had a meeting with an employment counselor, and it wasn't at a location that was easily accessible to me. And it was way early. Like I have kids, I gotta go to school. They didn't even call me. They just sent me an email and said, "Hey, this is when I need you to be there." So I missed it, and I had to reschedule." (Grp 1)*

Difficulty navigating the DWS website (20) was also reported by customers as a barrier to completing the training application. In the words of some respondents:
- *"I couldn't find it. It was on there. I set up an appointment with her to go over it and that's why she ended up inputting all the information, because I couldn't find it on the website… hard to navigate through because there's so many tabs on the Workforce website." (Grp 4)*
- *"It was so obscure. First of all, to find it you have to dig around on the website… it's*

really long and it doesn't… it's not very intuitive. You can't even sign in on the website. You have to click four or five different times and places in order to get to it." (Grp 4)

- *"It was really round about, I ended up having to like write down the link tree that was going on because if I did a direct link it crashed. It wasn't anywhere on the navigation system easy to find so I'd have to go through an e-mail then go to the specific link and chain it down just to ever get back to the pages where the forms and the list of programs that were being offered and all of that. Yeah, it was something you had to like set aside a whole hour to do every time."* (Grp 2)

Finally, a group of customers (9) had problems with program requirements or other barriers specific to their desired training program. Examples of issues in this category include: income requirements, unsupported program, pre-employment letters, and placement testing issues. Some participants stated:

- *"So one of the kind of barriers, was that the EMT was really selective on where I could go. Like I had to drive like an hour and a half, so you know it was really difficult to work things out so I could attend class 5 days a week. I could do it but it was bad that there weren't any other options available, I was stuck with that one."* (Grp 4)
- *"They wanted a guarantee that I was going to have a job when I was done with school based on an education that I didn't have yet.… When I go out to these perspective employers they say well we can't give you a letter like that. You are going to be in school for 30 days and in 30 days we don't know what our situations are going to be."* (Grp 1)
- *"It's just that most of the stuff that I wasn't eligible for is because, you know, of my income. I was working part-time at the hospital and when I worked, or when I got called in, and if I made…I don't know…30 hours, I made too much and then I was constantly turning in my income and it was just a hassle."* (Grp 2)

Feedback on "Training Application" Title: DWS requested feedback from respondents regarding whether or not the title "Training Application" was an appropriate name for the WIOA application. A majority of respondents across all groups (77.4%) indicated that "Training Application" did indeed fit as a title for the application (although it was clear that most respondents did not remember that this was the title of the application and took the interviewer's word for it).

Respondents who did *not* agree with the title name were asked to provide alternative suggestions. Many customers stated that indicator words like "education" and "funding" in the title would make it more intuitive for customers. Some specific suggestions include:

- *"Training program sounds like it's specific to a certain program. Maybe career finder, career consulting, or education program would be a better name."* (Grp 1)
- *"It's incredibly confusing. And for people less educated than me, that must be so confusing because training & education do not always mean the same thing."* (Grp 1)
- *"If they had even done a few sentences to talk about the amounts. Because $4,000 isn't even going to pay for a quarter of a semester. Then it would help you recognize that their trainings are really for welding or something like that."* (Grp 1)
- *"I would say it was for the grant for the funding."* (Grp 4)

Customer's Experience of the Eligibility Worker or Employment Counselor

To better understand how DWS workers can support customers in the WIOA program, participants provided feedback on what the worker did well during time spent working with DWS and ways that their worker could have improved. Due to the differences in activities performed and time spent together, specific questions were asked targeting a customer's interactions with the WIOA Eligibility Worker or Employment Counselor.

Participants were asked whether a DWS worker addressed topics related to their hopes, dreams, and goals. As reported in Table 49, a majority of respondents indicated that the worker had indeed asked about each of these areas. For 3 of the 5 questions there were significant differences between groups. Where there were significant differences, Group 4 always reported the highest level of experience with each area. Finally, respondents were asked whether any one had spoken with them about labor market information. Even after explaining this to participants, less than half (45.6%) remember such conversations.

Table 49: DWS Customer Conversations

Those whose DWS worker *DID* talk with them about....	**Group 1** **n = 78**	**Group 2** **n = 65**	**Group 3** **n = 45**	**Group 4** **n= 78**	**Youth** **n = 64**	**Total** **N = 335**
... Goals or dreams for the future (p = .011)	42 (53.8%)	41 (63.1%)	33 (73.3%)	61 (78.2%)	47 (73.4%)	224 (67.9%)
...What you were hoping to receive from DWS	53 (67.1%)	46 (71.9%)	35 (77.8%)	59 (75.6%)	44 (72.1%)	237 (72.5%)
...What type of program you wanted help with	61 (76.3%)	58 (90.6%)	40 (88.9%)	68 (86.1%)	51 (81%)	278 (84.0%)
...Next steps you wanted to take after completing the program (p ≤ .001)	31 (38.8%)	38 (59.4%)	28 (62.2%)	61 (77.2%)	34 (55.7%)	192 (58.4%)
...What supports you need to be successful in the program (p = .003)	26 (32.9%)	30 (48.4%)	26 (59.1%)	46 (61.3%)	37 (58.7%)	165 (51.1%)
Labor market information was provided	32 (40.5%)	35 (55.6%)	19 (43.2%)	37 (47.4%)	26 (41.3%)	149 (45.6%)

What the DWS Worker Did Well

All respondents were asked to expand on what their worker did well in regards to the questions in Table 49, as well as any other positive experiences with DWS workers. The largest number of respondents (83) identified that their DWS worker "did well" in providing active listening and support. As customers stated:
- *"I felt like, I felt that she heard and I felt that she had interviewed me and heard that. What I really wanted to do, what I was really looking for in the program." (Grp 1)*
- *"They were willing to listen and kind of explore what I needed. Yea, and just really positive and saying, "Yea, this would be great." Positive, hopeful, those kinds of things." (Grp 2)*

- *"She was very nice and had a soft voice and made me comfortable with answering her questions." (Grp 2)*
- *"You know, she made me feel comfortable enough that I was able to open up myself and just explain what was going on. There weren't anything like my personal choices, she was a very pleasant person to talk to. She seems to know how to help people through nursing school. It helped." (Grp 4)*
- *"Basically just everything. My worker is great at his job. But the thing that helped me most was that he was actually there for me when I felt like nobody else was." (Grp 2)*

Some customers were positively impacted when DWS workers were knowledgeable about training programs and/or DWS requirements (72). This allowed customers to make informed decisions and have clear expectations surrounding conditions of participation with the WIOA program. Customers describe these experiences:
- *"He didn't know if there was a specific QuickBooks course, but called a contact that he had at SLCC to ask. And she advised him that indeed there was. So he said that he was going to sign me up for it. And so he did the research because I had no idea. I didn't know what to expect. And I certainly didn't expect as much as I got. So I'm grateful." (Grp 4)*
- *"Asking when, like, tuition is due. 'Cause they helped me out with tuition and so finding out when deadlines were so that my classes wouldn't get dropped, which can also…He just made things very smooth. So making sure that things were processed when they needed to be processed and getting documentation to make sure that everything gets approved." (Grp 4)*
- *"Well she was really good about explaining all of the program does and how they help and what they do funding for and stuff." (Grp 3)*

Some customers (64) remarked on DWS workers providing good communication during their involvement with DWS. Frequency, effectiveness, and efficiency of communication were commonly referenced by participants in a positive way. Respondents commented:
- *"Um, I mean she just communicated, you know, any time that I had questions, I mean she was readily available, via either email or phone, and if I called and left a message and needed something, like something answered, I would get it that day." (Grp 2)*
- *"He was really fast. I mean, he just…when we talked about something, I'm like, "I want to go to this school. What can we do? How fast can I get in?" And he was right on it. He got back to me immediately and he goes, "Well we can pay this much towards your tuition. This is how much the tuition is and you can get started as soon as this week." And so…I mean, he was just really on top of it." (Grp 4)*

Goal setting and exploration of options was important to customers (57) and commonly identified as an area in which their worker did well.
- *"With my goals and stuff, how to achieve that and making a plan for what classes I could take and how to get through with the college and stuff. She was really good about those things." (Grp 3)*
- *"The worker helped me kind of bring out my goals for the future… helped me verbalize those and think about what kind of program would fit with my current CV and with my career path. They helped with that a lot, and they answered questions about the timing of the training which was kind of what I was more concerned about too." (Grp 1)*

- *"We would constantly make like new plans, like goal sheets, and so every time I would go in and like have a meeting with her we would make a new like, like, oh by the end of like January, like I want all of these done, and then when those are done we'll do this, and so we were constantly just making like lists and stuff and so I think that helps." (Grp 4)*

Assistance with navigating training (34) was also commonly referenced as an area in which workers did well.
- *"I feel like they worked really well in helping me just get it done. Like, any problem or any situation that'd come up...Like, one time when the car was broke down and I needed laundry...needed to laundry or whatever, she...I asked them for help, and she's like "Let me see what I can do." Well there's no dry cleaners here in Roosevelt, so she found one over in Vernal and was like, "But you'll have to take the bus over there, drop it off for a day, and then go back the next day, but we can make this happen." And I was like, "Dang." Like, these guys will help no matter what. Like, whatever your problem is, even if it is going clear to another county...They were there on everything. They just...They were supportive no matter what." (Grp 4)*
- *"I think she stayed on top of my case, at least in terms of making sure things were paid, and you know one time there was a problem with paying my tuition and she stayed on top of that." (Grp 3)*

Some customers (26) felt that their DWS workers did well in providing them with resources needed to be successful in their training program and in future employment. Both tangible resources and skills were viewed as beneficial to customers. Respondents stated:
- *"Well they hooked me up with a really good job, so there's that." (Grp 3 Youth)*
- *"The best thing, like the lights start opening. I started like understanding more. Like kinds of things like what employer likes, and how to get your foot in the job, I learned all those things, most of the stuff I thought in my life, it's racism, it's classified, but then I realized, no, most of what's going on is not just, it's my part too. The way you dress, the way you write your resume, the way you talk, the way you behave. Most of the stuff is like, oh. It's not just that, it's me too." (Grp 2)*
- *"Uh well she helped me with my resume. She broke it down plus she got me pre hired. On the spot so I could get accepted into the school since I had a DUI prior when I was 19 after I graduated high school and stuff. But it was so far back she got me a pre hired, they accepted me." (Grp 4)*

A small group of participants spoke of DWS workers exhibiting flexibility and customer-driven decision-making (20). Customers were satisfied when their worker helped them explore program options, while also allowing the customer to drive program selection. Also, customers noticed when workers created individualized plans and were flexible with program requirements. It should be noted that three-quarters of respondents with this feedback (15) were program graduates. Thus, customer ownership and autonomy in selecting a program, was significantly correlated to follow through and program completion. Some comments include:
- *"Maybe she gave me some advice, because when I finished the ESL program, I really didn't know about which program follow after my ESL finished. And she made some search on the internet about medical coding and book keeper. And she showed me about*

the salary here in Utah. And maybe she not influence, but she help me to choose a best decision about that." (Grp 4)

- *"I mean, when I first went to her she did really well in giving me job ideas out in Price. Like I said mining and she said truck driving and I think she brought up something else but I just didn't want to do the CDL thing right now. She talked about truck driving but that was I think 3 months worth of schooling when I needed to get into work immediately so she gave me the ideas and I kind of batted them around and we just went with mining, so quickest thing I could really get into. I'm thinking about next year maybe taking my CDL classes and stuff." (Grp 4)*

DWS Worker Areas for Improvement

While many customers could identify things their worker had done well, all participants were asked to provide feedback on areas they wish their DWS worker would have asked about or explored further with them. Again, just under half of participants (49.6%) said there

Figure 28: Percent who wish there worker would have discussed more issues with them
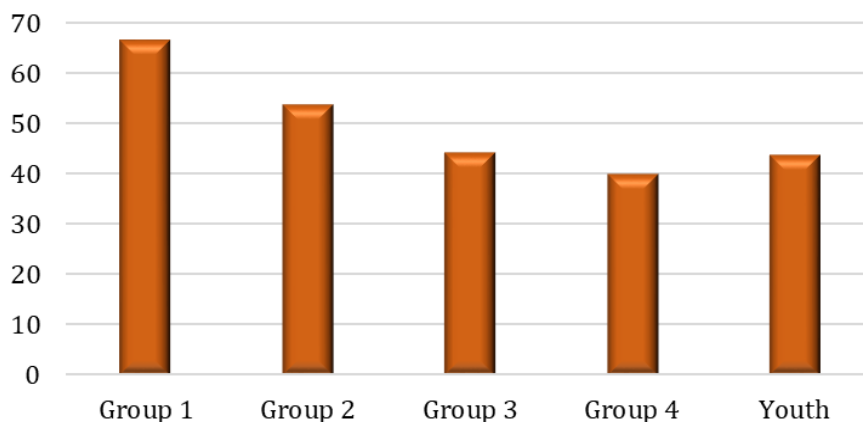
was "nothing more" the worker should have asked about or discussed. The remaining 169 (50.4%) respondents provided insightful feedback as to what they wish had been discussed. As shown in Figure 28, there were significant group differences ($p = .007$). The further a person went in the process the less likely they were to feel that something in the conversation was missing.

Overwhelmingly, customers wanted resources and support in order to effectively navigate their training program (51). Of those who needed more support from their DWS worker, 10 customers identified wanting more emotional support. Tangible resources, such as financial support and help navigating DWS requirements, were frequently discussed. Specific respondent feedback includes:

- *"Asked me about or explored with me… I think the training process more. I didn't quite understand how…I didn't quite understand how I could get through it. Like, get retrained to do another job. It just seemed unrealistic to me, so I didn't quite understand how to go about paying for school at this age when I'm so old…" (Grp 1)*
- *"Being more hands on with me as far as helping me get into the program I need to get into. Like help with the grant and all that you know. It's simple tasks but it's just complicated you know. All red tape and paperwork trying to get it all in." (Grp 2)*
- *"I think that it's probably more a personal and emotional support to get me to continue my studies. To prod me or encourage me to continue to the studies. Instead of just doing a follow up and ask are you done with the course, send me the form." (Grp 4)*

DWS worker knowledge of programs and DWS requirements was an area that was frequently described by customers as lacking (33). Feedback includes:

- *"Um, I just wish in the beginning that I would have known that I couldn't really do any part time unless I was making less that 1,200 a month working part time. I wish I would have known that because that's definitely what I was hoping for was the part time. So I wish I would have understood this whole thing instead of just like "it's fine and we'll talk to you more about it." (Grp 1)*
- *"I don't know that it was necessarily asking about I think it was more just that clarity maybe it was we had a lot of conversations and I was taking notes but having a written reference of the policies of the process and maybe it existed and I just didn't end up with it I don't know but I think something documented to help perfect consistency would have been good." (Grp 2)*
- *"I think, I think for both workers, kind of sitting down and being like, this is why you're in the program, this is what we can help with, and once you've completed, this is what we can help with as well. Kind of setting expectations for the kids that are in the program so that they know like, this is what I'm going towards. Because I had no idea like when it ended or when I would, like I had no idea, so." (Grp 4)*
- *"If she knows…they know ahead of schedule that you don't qualify, just come out and say "you don't qualify, I'm sorry." Instead of letting them think that they're going to be able to move forward." (Grp 1)*

Respondents believe that DWS workers should be more flexible and open to exploring different training options (32). Some customers felt pressured into enrolling in a training program that wasn't their preference or they were limited in the training options that were made available. Some stated:

- *"Actually she was pushing that pharmacy tech on me over and over, and I kept telling her no. And she almost had me sign up for it and I'm going, no. I go, because that's a 9 o'clock in the morning class, and I go, I can't do it, I go, I have to have a job. And I go, and I want a day job, and I go, I want to do my schooling before or after. So she about had me signed up and I kept telling her no." (Grp 2)*
- *"I actually had my employer write a letter of why that program would be great for me, and help enhance my growth with the company as a reference letter, and she just would do nothing. So that was just weird to me, that she was like, we don't see an opening in the job market for growth on this. And I'm like, well I'm telling you." (Grp 2)*

Communication is an area in which respondents feel DWS staff could improve (29). Respondents describe their feedback about communication:

- *"…or even just closing it out, calling me and saying, hey we're going to close this out, do you have any questions or concerns, just closing the loop would have been nice." (Grp 1)*
- *"I mean, I barely get ahold of 'em. When I started talking to them at the beginning they really preached, we'll help you with whatever is left over from your tuition, that's what we get the funds for, we'll be able to help you get whatever is necessary to help you get a job. And I contacted them a couple of months ago to see if they could help me with my driver's license. And they said, well if you needed to renew it that would be one thing but it's expired, you need to pay these fines, because a fine we can't do that." (Grp 4)*

Some customer's wish that their DWS worker had been more proactive in preparing them for the future, through job searching, post-training planning, and setting goals (19). Participants stated:

- *"Well maybe, you know, if he could have given me more help after I graduate, or if there's anything that could help me with, you know, after I get my degree." (Grp 3)*
- *"I mean it would have been nice if, I mean if we did talk more about it instead of just food stamps, or you know, money for school, it could have been better to go to the next step, you know, what can I do, or what I can do more to help me reach this goal to get there, you know." (Grp 3 Youth)*
- *"A little bit more about job placement and what happened after I got my license. It seems like a lot of it you have to be on your own." (Grp 4)*

Finally, another group of respondents (14) would have liked to have spent more time discussing background questions and personal barriers with their DWS worker. Some customers provided insightful feedback that effective identification of barriers and psychosocial issues could have prevented issues with their completion of training:

- *"The barriers I had. What could stop me and what could we do to help type of thing. What is going to stop me from going to school or what is going to stop me from going to work? And what we could do to solve the problem before it even becomes a problem. So we can prevent it." (Grp 3)*
- *"Um, like uh, I wish there was psychosocial evaluation with a person. Once you have family, have kids, it's really hard to have stability, because you don't know what to put in front of you, your family or school. School tells you you have to put your priorities on school, no family. But you have to balance that. So, I wish there was more psychosocial on your family what's going on and that dynamic because then they can help you with something. But they are really poor in that. They don't figure out what the psychosocial dynamic is or what's going on with a family. They treat you like you're just an individual. They don't think about that you have a family and work and school. So I wish that there was more questions like that." (Grp 3)*

Emotional Support

Group 3 respondents who had started a training program and all Group 4 respondents (N = 159) were asked to describe ways in which their worker provided emotional support and encouragement *during* their training program. (Group 1 and Group 2 respondents were not asked this question, as they never started a training program.)

There were 18 (25.4%) Group 3 respondents and only 13 (14.8%) Group 4 respondents who indicated they had *not* received any emotional or encouraging support. Some of these customers mentioned that they did not expect nor did they want emotional support during training. One customer stated, "*I didn't know that was a requirement. I'm a little old-school that I don't feel the need to get outside emotional support. So I'm gonna have to say no.*" Others would have liked to have received more emotional support, even though they were excelling in training. One customer explains:

- *"There was no emotional support. It was more just following through bi-monthly update whether or not I'm making progress as far as the term is concerned. I guess it could be that they had the impression that I was doing well and didn't offer that." (Grp 4)*

When providing feedback, this customer stated:

- *"I think it's probably more a personal and emotional support to get me to continue my studies. To prod me or encourage me to continue to the studies. Instead of just doing a follow up and ask, "Are you done with the course, send me the form." (Grp 3)*

For the majority of each group who did receive support, respondents identified similar types of emotional supports that were most impactful during their training. Respondents' feedback surrounding emotional support fell into three main categories: encouragement and general support (70), regular communication (60), assistance with tangible tasks and resources (30).

Similar to general feedback about what workers did well, the largest number of respondents reported that they felt emotionally supported through words of encouragement and supportive conversations with their training counselor. Customers frequently commented that their worker pushed them to excel in training and congratulated them on successes. In the words of some participants:

- *"Well, when I was struggling with the classes, I remember I told him, "I don't think I'm going to pass this class leadership." He says, "No, you can do it!" All the time. And that semester, I was in pharmacology I think here. I'm not going to do good in pharmacology. And he was like, "You're going to do it.' He was really nice." (Grp 4)*
- *"Yeah I would say he definitely was encouraging and definitely very happy once I finished the school congratulated me, gave me a call in congratulations and stuff like that so that was nice." (Grp 4)*
- *"Um, a lot of it was just telling me that I could do this. That yes, it would be hard because I had to stop working, period. But he basically told me that I could do this and that I was strong. But that I could do this it would be better for my daughter in the long run. So really, reassuring." (Grp 4)*
- *"She was really good, you know, she, it's like, we have a relationship where it's like a hard love. She pushes me but it's hard bashing heads love, you know, she's very blunt about it." (Grp 3 Youth)*

Regular communication was identified as supportive, because customers generally felt that their worker was invested in their progress and available to be helpful. Some customers describe this experience:

- *"Jolie checked in with me at least once a week to see how things were…or every two weeks she would give me a call and see how things were going and see where I was with the class. Carol actually stayed in touch with me also. So that…to me, that was moral support." (Grp 4)*
- *"I would say my case manager went out of her way to help me. Very supportive. She actually reminded me, sent me emails, to remind me "How is it going, and how was your study" for example, to remind you, touch base with you in the next months and then she did so it's kind of a, make me feel that if I didn't pass this, I feel like guilty, like I owe her that. And that really kind of, part of the drive force for me to pass this test." (Grp 4)*
- *"She would go and talk to everybody we needed to talk to, she would call me like anytime I needed something, she was always there for me. She would contact me, see how I'm doing, and just ask me." (Grp 3)*

A final group of respondents felt emotionally supported when their worker provided tangible assistance and connected them with resources. One customer describes the impact that tangible support had on their training experience:

- *"So I had already paid for to actually get into the schooling but they paid for the tuition. He paid for supplies like my books and pencils for my stethoscope. A watch. Scrubs. All of those sorts of things. Everything I would need to do my clinical. Everything. It was really nice." (Grp 4)*

Group-Specific Results

In this section questions specific to each group are presented. Due to the small number of Youth in each group, excluding Group 3, Youth experiences are incorporated with the adult findings.

Group 1

Group 1 includes the 81 individuals who were found eligible for WIOA funding but were never enrolled in a funding stream. Most individuals in this group had met with a DWS worker at some point, with a few who had done everything online or through a third party. Of the 82 Group 1 respondents, 73 (90%) were aware that they had been found eligible for the WIOA program. However, only 62 (77.5%) were aware that their WIOA case had closed.

Moving Forward with Training:
As Group 1 participants had dropped out prior to even being enrolled in a funding stream, it is important to learn, from the customer's perspective, who made that decision. As seen in Figure 29, more than a third of Group 1 (36.6%) felt that they had made the decision not to move forward with the training process. However, another third (39.0%) felt that their DWS worker made the decision. How the individual

Figure 29: Who Decided You Would *Not* Move Forward With WIOA?

learned the case was closed varied. Some spoke of the worker telling them they were not "appropriate" for WIOA while others received the news in the form of a denial letter. Finally, another 16 (19.5%) respondents indicated that the decision regarding case closure was made collaboratively. Interestingly, 18 (22.2%) Group 1 respondents were not aware they were no longer in the program and only found out through the interview process. Questions regarding the person's experience of case closure were not asked of those who did not know the case was closed. The level of perceived collaboration surrounding closure is notably smaller than the level of collaboration reported during WIOA involvement.

What Would Have Made a Difference: Respondents were asked what DWS or their worker could have done to help them stay engaged in the WIOA program. Nearly one quarter of Group 1 respondents (23.5%) indicated there was nothing DWS could have done to keep

them engaged in the process. They recognized that the decision to end participation was all on them. Of the 62 respondents who did offer a suggestion, over 25% (16) stated that better communication or follow-up from their DWS worker would have been helpful. As was noted:

- *"Uh, no, I mean, not being so like lackadaisical, like yeah I think that will work and we'll figure it out! Kind of having them ask me more questions like, how much do you think you're going to be making? I remember being so excited when they said I could probably do it part time. And at first the money had nothing to do with it and then afterwards I said I'm hoping to do it part time and the lady kind of looked at me like I was crazy. Like you can't work full time and go to school part time we won't pay for that."*
- *"Because, they showed me how to use the computer and find the list of schools or list of things that you could be trained for and then they just left and said look through these and find what you want. And it was kind of overwhelming because you don't know what you want. There's a whole bunch of stuff. So, I mean, getting a little bit more help in getting it narrowed down and figuring it out, which I guess would be more person to person while I'm doing that type of research. But I could see how they wouldn't necessarily have the ability to do that you know, the people or the time."*

Another 19 (24.4%) of respondents wanted more flexibility with the program requirements, such as waiving certain application requirements, being willing to consider programs that weren't on the approved list of institutions, not requiring pre-employment letters, or being willing to consider paying for part-time programs. As one person said:

- *"I would've liked to have seen… if they have the opportunity to provide the funding or services for training like this, I could provide all of the appropriate documentation to show that this was a valid organization. This was a valid training course I was trying to attend for a valid reason. It would've been nice to be able to provide that information and then have DWS sign off and say, "Okay, here's a reimbursement check for the cost of that training." The training courses that they have listed on their website, like I said, are oftentimes remedial in nature or more of a vocational, technical type training. But for individuals that are in the professional field, a lot of that training doesn't apply."*

There were also 18 (23.3%) respondents who wanted more support navigating the program itself, including doing research on schools, programs, or labor market information. Thoughts regarding this concern included:

- *"I think be more involved in…'cause he showed me how on the website, but for about five minutes, and then I was home to my own…by myself, and it's just…it's difficult. 'Cause I don't know what this program is. I mean, I'm so, like, not smart when it comes to college and things like that. You know? Or how to get there."*
- *"Been more hands on. Explained it more. Like I just think being more helpful and if that requires them having a night where okay well all these people want to go to school so let's have like a little orientation kind of thing, or something like that, that would be really cool. Like let me walk you through how to figure out what you want to do. Like, that makes sense to me."*

Other suggestions to help sustain program involvement included providing more upfront information about the WIOA program itself (9), providing more information regarding deadlines (5) and simply offering more funding (3).

Group 2

Group 2 respondents (71) are individuals who enrolled in a WIOA funding stream but not a training service. These respondents were most likely to learn about the WIOA program from a source within DWS (40%) or from a past/current employer (12.3%) instead of a family member or friend, as was the primary referral source for the other groups. Group 2 respondents were the least likely to begin the WIOA program seeking either a specific training program or to study in a specific institution. Questions unique to Group 2 included asking respondents to describe *why* they didn't enroll in a specific training program and what DWS could've done to help support their continued program involvement.

Understanding the End of WIOA Participation: Most Group 2 participants (62) agreed with DWS on how their program participation ended, confirming that they were either told that their training was "not appropriate" or that the individual had decided against pursuing training even after being found eligible and enrolling in a funding stream. However, 8 individuals (11.4%) had a different understanding of how their participation ended. Interestingly, two people were not aware that their funding had ever been approved. One participant was waiting for communication from DWS about her application, stating, "*I'm still waiting for her [DWS worker] to help me".* Two others believed that they had indeed already chosen a training program and two people said they had started a training program but had dropped out of their program, as indicated in the following conversation between the participant and the interviewer:

- ***Participant:*** *"Well no. I got all the grant and all the stuff but then I had to go to the hospital for two weeks. So that was basically the end of school. So yeah now they're calling me to pay them or the school and I didn't even go. So now I've got $3,000 of debt to them that I didn't do anything. I was there for maybe 3 weeks."*
  Interviewer: *"So you enrolled in classes?"*
  Participant: *"I enrolled in classes and I went to classes. I got books, I got tools but I had to quit for a couple weeks while my girlfriend was in the hospital."*

Participation in Decision Making Around Not Moving Forward with WIOA: When asked what impacted their early exit from the WIOA program, Figure 30 shows that 38 (53.5%) participants indicated that it was completely their own decision to not move forward with a training program. Another 15 (21.1%) individuals indicated their DWS worker decided that they would not move forward, and just 11 (15.5%) indicated the decision was made collaboratively. For the 4 (5.6%) respondents who indicated that another person made the decision for them. Two of the "other" individuals were employers, one was a

Figure 30: Who Decided You Would Not Move Forward With WIOA?
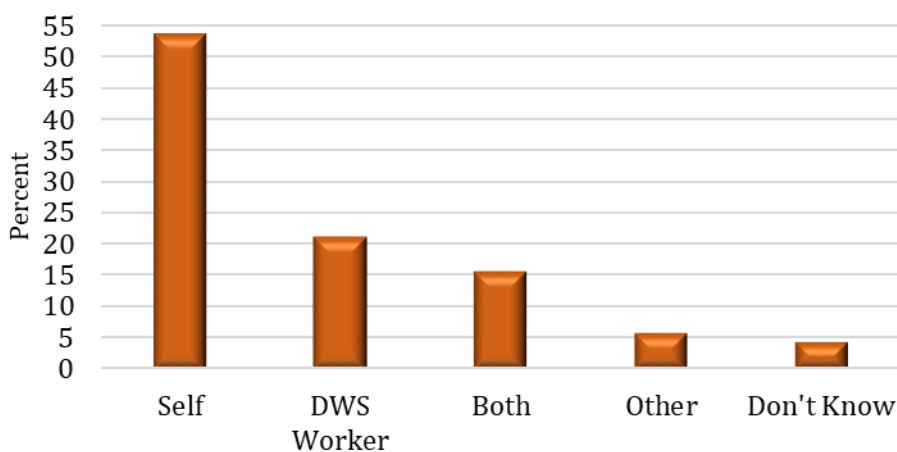
parole officer, and one decision was *"deferred to someone else who decided."* The three respondents who indicated not knowing who closed their case, one stated, *"no one, it just stopped,"* one indicated that they didn't know that their case was even closed, and the last individual simply didn't know.

Why Participants Did Not Pursue Program Enrollment: Group 2 participants were asked to *respond* to the question: "What happened that you either never decided on or were never enrolled in a specific training program?" Answers to this question were mixed with 13 (20.0%) respondents indicating their overall lack of interest in receiving training services or that it was not the right time to do the program.

- *"They kept asking me if I was ready to do it or not and I was starting to get more involved with sport and stuff with my son and I worked full time so I was just like I do not have time to do this right now. As much as I wanted to I didn't have time to do it."*
- *"Yeah because nobody would hire me and the timing I need and that time I was like a mess, my mom had a stroke and we went to three different, what do you call it, rehab or nursing, they were all terrible, I had a bad time."*

Another 11 (16.9%) participants stated that they got a job and did not pursue training, while four people realized they could not balance work and school obligations. As one participant said, *"I got a job because I needed to move and so there was no way I could commit to full time school and a full time work.* Several (5) people were referred to services at Vocational Rehabilitation and two others found an alternative funding source for their program. Finally, six people did not even realize they had been enrolled in a funding stream.

For 14 individuals, program enrollment ended due to a DWS-related issue, often related to various DWS program requirements or limitations. A common issue was the participant's desired program not being an approved program or that DWS wouldn't cover enough of the tuition costs (8).

- *"I was referred to a program that didn't exist. When I went to the school, that program was not something they offered. So there was a disconnect between what the school actually offered and what DWS showed as programs that were available. And I couldn't find another… another, um, another school, and my DWS person was not helpful, so I gave up."*
- *"CED Solutions was not a qualified provider."*
- *"There was a, some sort of certificate, business certificate…it was going to cost I think like $2500, maybe $3000. And whatever it was, and it was only six months to eight months, and that would have been perfect for me but [DWS] wouldn't pay."*

What Could DWS Have Done to Increase Customer Engagement: Group 2 customers also provided perspective on the question: "What, if anything, could DWS have done to help you move forward with the training program?" Of those questioned, 24 (33.8%) respondents identified that there was *nothing* DWS could have done to help them pursue training. One customer described her personal life situation as the only barrier to completing training: *"No they did very good, they helped me a lot, and it's just they talked to the jobs and stuff, just how my life… Happening, yeah. Because every time I'm starting progress, something happens."*

For Group 2 participants with feedback in this area (47), one theme was related to additional support and information about WIOA-specific processes. Several customers wished that DWS had supported them in pursuing the program that they wanted. Other respondents wanted more information about program options. Participants spoke to wanting information about WIOA supported training options earlier in the process of pursuing training. One customer explained:

- *"I will say in speaking with colleagues that have kind of gone through this whole process there doesn't seem to be a lot of consistency about the answers that were given about things like if I were to get a job while going to school what impact is there, what is approved and what isn't approved, what are the requirements for that. It didn't feel like I was getting the same answers other people were getting. There did seem to be inconsistences from counselor to counselor based on conversations I had with other people."*

Communication issues were another issue that deterred customers from remaining engaged with WIOA. Two customers stated:

- *"The communication was slow. I would have to say. I would reach out to her or the DWS worker and I wouldn't hear back from her for a good week. And then I would finally hear back from her but I was doing something else or I got an interview at some other place so I would do that and then get back to her you know within 24 hours but then it would be another week before I heard anything from her. So it kind of like slowed the whole process down. So it just became a lone phone tag kind of a deal where I would I call them and it would take them a significant amount of time I think to get back to me. And so I just did what I thought was best for me."*
- *"I want to go to school before, the only reason I didn't was because I didn't know I could. If they would have told me I was approved I would have gone."*

Finally, several customers provided feedback about WIOA policy changes that would have encouraged them to continue participation. One customer suggested that DWS should change program requirements. Changing income limits was mentioned by four customers. Others wished that DWS had more efficient processes. One customer suggested that DWS provide additional funding, stating, "*Pay the application fee. They do it for everybody else. It was just a weird situation."* Another customer spoke to efficiency issues, stating, *"They could have made their decision a bit quicker, maybe second start date or maybe they could've helped with child care."*

Group 3 - Adults

Group 3 includes individuals who were enrolled in a WIOA funding stream and registered for a specific training program but never began the program or began the program but did not complete. As was noted above, Group 3 was initially the largest group with 94 respondents. However, Youth comprised more than half the group (52.1%). As the components of the WIOA Youth program and the Youth themselves are different from the adults in significant ways, it was decided that these two groups should be discussed separately.

Understanding the End of WIOA Participation: All 45 Group 3 adult respondents were asked: "DWS shows that you and the employment counselor decided on a training program, but were not able to either start or complete the training program, does that sound right to you?" Nearly all (95.6%) respondents confirmed that this was how their enrollment with WIOA ended; only 2 (4.4%) answered "no" as both of those individuals stated that they were still enrolled in their training program.

Reasons Why Participants Did Not COMPLETE Their Training Program: A majority of Group 3 adults (88.1%) were able to start their selected training program. The most common types of training programs being pursued by participants included CDL (6) and CNA (4). Another 18 different programs were being pursued by 2 or fewer participants.

As with previous groups, 56% (22) of Group 3 adult participants dropped out of the program due to personal issues such as general life circumstances (pregnancy, moving, family issues, etc.) or needing to work. Another 8 (21.0%) participants stopped training because their selected program was too hard (5) or it was not what they expected (3).

- *"I started the program. I finished two, they signed me up for 3 classes. I passed 2 but I failed the most important one, the accounting."*
- *"I was doing, it's kind of crazy, it was a CDL, and I did that because they told me that it would make good money. But when I was getting into the training, and I saw everything, I was like no, my mind is not good to be in charge of a big truck or risk my life and someone else's life, so and with that I just decided to stop doing it."*

Interestingly, 9 (13.2) participants indicated having issues with funding (i.e. delays in receiving funding from DWS or not receiving enough support to cover their expenses) that ultimately resulted in leaving the program. One participant indicated that the amount of funding they were receiving from DWS wasn't "worth the hassle" of meeting DWS program requirements to maintain the funding.

- *"I needed all my tools up front before a certain date in the class, and Workforce Services would not give me all of the funding to get the tools, they'd give it to me in $500 chunks. But I had to wait a week between $500 payments...which caused me to fall heavily behind in class because I didn't have all the proper tools that I was supposed to have."*
- *"And like I told you earlier too, they really didn't pay for a whole lot. Like I'm not saying that... Yes she paid for a bus pass for a couple months and then a calculator. Like. I dunno. I just felt like she was on my a** and it wasn't worth it."*

Again, 3 respondents indicated that they did not realize their participation with WIOA had ended.

Reasons Why Participants Did Not START Their Training Program: Of the 5 (11.9%) respondents who did not start their selected program, two left to manage personal issues; one left due to a background check issue, one person started a job, and one received other program funding. The programs being pursued by these individuals included: Medical Billing/Coding (2), CDL (1), GED (1), High School Diploma (1), and a Radiology degree (1).

What Could DWS Have Done to Increase Customer Training Engagement: Group 3 adult customers were asked: "What, if anything, could DWS have done to help you (start/

complete) the training program?" One-third of the respondents (15) identified that there was *nothing* that DWS could have done to help them continue pursuing training.

- *"They did about as much as they could honestly. It was something my fault.*
- *"She was very nice. She wanted to support me. But I am a single mom and I needed a job.*

Of the 20 customers who provided specific feedback, 15 were in need of more support to help them succeed in their training program. Some customers expressed needing more financial assistance (6) and others were in need of referral to outside resources (5). Some customers provided feedback about needing additional support:

- *"Pay my rent. Then I wouldn't have to worry about work. No I'm kidding. More financial assistance for, to keep up, but that's, I know you can't do that. I do have a card but I really, like I put some gas on it one time, but I didn't really go to ask for money. Because I felt embarrassed."*
- *"They could have extended unemployment. That's what I would have hoped for. They could have helped out with the unemployment and let me finish that training and had that kind of a thing to fall back on."*
- *"Maybe help me find tutors. Yeah I think that would have been something. Because I was taking math and I was struggling also, so maybe like help them like see if we can find tutors to come to our home, instead of me. Yeah because I know the school has those resources, but it was hard for me to like get out there to make use of those resources. So maybe if they had like people who were like, they can pay to tutor."*
- *"If they could have helped get my kids in daycare that would have helped. Other than that, nothing."*

Some customers would have benefited from more flexibility with program options and DWS requirements. As one person explained:

- **Participant**: *"Probably more time, if possible, for the ones who are working full-time."*
  Interviewer: *"So more than, like, a two-year period?"*
  Participant: *"Yeah. Or...yeah. 'Cause technically, right, associate's is for full-time student. You'll finish in two years. So...yeah. Maybe like another year. Three years or so."*

Three customers referenced improved communication as a way DWS could have helped them remain engaged. One customer spoke to wanting more emotion-focused communication:
- *"I think instead of pushing they should do more counseling like what can they do to help emotionally. Because people go through a lot of things when they are in school. Like, I have a family, I have kids. So for me, and I have a kid with disabilities and they don't know what's going on in the family. Its just what you do, get in and out, like you are a number, you cannot succeed if you are just a number. So, they should probably interview and say hi can you tell us what's going on? What can we do to help you? Instead right now they just say this is the program if you can't do it then you are out of the program. It's kind of frustrating. Like, we have a lot of pressure from all different sides. You don't feel right."*

Monetary Support: Group 3 adult participants who had started a training program were asked to describe the various types of support, both monetary and tangible, that DWS provided while they were enrolled in their training program. Table 50 shows the breakdown of support received by participants.

Table 50: Monetary Supports Provided (Group 3 - Adults)

	N = 45
Tuition/Program Fee	30 (83.3%)
Books	21 (58.3%)
Child Care	1 (2.8%)
Transportation	9 (25%)
Grant Assistance	5 (13.9%)
Work Supplies (Scrubs, boots, etc.)	13 (36.1%)
Daily Living Supports (Rent, utilities, etc.)	2 (5.6%)

Group 3 - Youth

Group 3 Youth respondents (49), part of the WIOA Youth program, were enrolled in a WIOA funding stream and a specific training program but either never began the program or began but left prior to completion. Group 3 Youth respondents were the group most likely to learn about DWS services from a family or friend, with 48.4% (31) reporting this as their referral source. The other primary referral source for Youth respondents was DCFS, with 18.8% (12) Youth reporting learning of WIOA this way.

Understanding the End of WIOA Participation: All respondents were asked: "DWS shows that you enrolled in a training program, but were either not able to start the training or not able to complete the program, does that sound right to you?" Again, a majority (89.8%) of Group 3 Youth agreed that their participation in WIOA ended in that way. However, 5 (10.2%) did not feel it happened in that way. Of these participants, three indicated they had indeed actually graduated from their training program, 1 said they were still enrolled, and 1 said they were still receiving support (work clothing, support) from DWS.

Reasons Why Participants Did Not COMPLETE Their Training Program: Of the Group 3 Youth, 34 (77.3%) respondents reported being able to start their program. As consistent with the other WIOA groupings, over a third (33%) of Group 3 Youth dropped out of their training program due to personal circumstances. There were 4 who said they dropped out due to wanting or needing to work. Another 3 reported they "*needed a break*" from school, as described in the following conversation:

- ***Interviewer:*** *"So you started in the fall, but then did you drop out in the middle of the semester, or did you finish the semester?"*
  Participant: *"No I finished the semester. I just, I finished the fall semester and I'm taking a break this spring to do my work."*

> *Interviewer: "So what was the main reason why you decided to take a break?"*
> *Participant: "You know, the first semester is always hard."*
> *Interviewer: "Oh yeah, oh for sure."*
> *Participant: "I kind of had some bad grades, but yeah it was rough."*
> *Interviewer: "First time in college."*
> *Participant: "Yeah my first time in college. Mentally, emotionally, it hit really bad. But I think now that I know how college works a little more, I can finally get in the right set of mind and finish it off really well."*
> *Interviewer: "And you said you think you're going to start back in the fall?"*
> *Participant: "Yes this fall I will be going back".*

Similar to the Group 3 adults, 7 (16.4%) Group 3 Youth also indicated that a lack of support from DWS led them to leave the WIOA program, including not feeling like they had enough financial support (3) or not feeling supported in general (4). Two (4.1%) individuals said that DWS had enrolled them in the wrong classes while 3 (7%) others said that their program was different than they had expected.

- *"I called (worker) and told him I couldn't do it, and I didn't tell him I was confused or anything, because I just, he just gave me a little bit of attitude that I was just scared so I just told him, sorry I can't do the training thing and he was like, okay it's totally fine and that was it."*

Again, 7 (16.4%) participants did not realize their program enrollment had ended. One Youth stated, "*I wasn't told that I wasn't finished with it and I assumed that I was since I graduated from [program] after the three months. They never told me that I didn't complete it.*

Reasons Why Participants Did Not START Their Training Program: There were 10 (22.7%) participants who were unable to begin their program. Half (5) cited personal circumstances as the reason why they did not begin. One participant decided to pursue a different program while another was offered a job. Other reasons included: not being accepted into their program and not able to find an "On the Job" training site. One Youth simply said, *"I got scared."*

What Could DWS Have Done to Increase Customer Training Engagement: Group 3 Youth were asked to give their perspective on the question: "What, if anything, could DWS have done to help you (start/complete) the training program?" Of this group, 20 (40.8%) identified that there was *nothing* DWS could have done to help them pursue training. One customer explains how DWS supported them completely:

- *"Nothing! I felt they were doing a great job. Even after everything was going on, my case worker was still calling me to try to figure things out, it was just, every time I tried to figure something out, it seemed like work would just push me a step behind so it just made it harder for me to try and get to school. They were doing everything possible. It was just personal work."*

Among the 29 Group 3 Youth participants with feedback, several themes arose in the ways that DWS could have better supported them in pursuing training. These themes include: communication (10), more support and information surrounding training process (10), and

the provision of additional resources (3).

Regarding communication, this group reported that they would have benefited from improved communication both directly with their DWS worker (7), as well as between the DWS worker and training institution (3). One respondent, who was unaware that their case had closed at the time of the interview, explained they needed DWS to "*Basically communicate better, like, I wasn't completely finished. Or like, that I have anything to sign or anything. I wasn't told anything about that.*"

Some respondents referenced wanting more support leading up to and/or during their training program. For some (2), information about how to navigate training was specifically mentioned. Two customers felt unsupported when they were not enrolled in the correct program. One customer wanted more flexibility in program requirements. In the words of some customers:

- *"I don't know specifics, but I think a little bit more support could've been helpful… like if I could've had maybe more than one person working on something for me or just like I don't know if my worker just had a lot of kids that she was over but I just felt like she was really busy… so sometimes she couldn't get my stuff done. But at the same time I needed it, so that was hard for me too."*

Additional resources were mentioned by 3 Youth customers as a way that DWS could have helped them continue with WIOA involvement. One customer specifically mentioned wanting more financial assistance to help with training.

Monetary Supports Provided: Group 3 Youth were also asked to describe the supports DWS provided to help them complete their training program. Table 51 shows what monetary supports were provided to customers who started training. "Other" supports for Youth included a tutor and DWS paying for a financial literacy workshop. This group has the lowest level of support being provided for tuition or program fees. This is likely due to the high portion of Youth who were in high school diploma/GED courses which are free.

Table 51: Monetary Supports Provided

	N= 49
Tuition/Program Fee	19 (57.6%)
Books	7 (21.2%)
Child Care	1 (3%)
Transportation	4 (12.1%)
Grant Assistance	3 (9.1%)
Tuition Incentives	9 (27.3%)
Work Supplies (Scrubs, boots, etc.)	12 (36.4%)
Daily Living Supports (Rent, utilities, etc.)	4 (12.1%)
Other	2 (6.1%)

Group 4

Group 4 respondents (88) are individuals who enrolled in and successfully completed a WIOA funded training program. Group 4 respondents were asked questions about their training goals, the application process, their experience with DWS during training, and ways that DWS may have supported them in finding employment post-training.

Training Program Details: All Group 4 respondents confirmed they were aware that they had completed their training program. This is the only grouping in which there were no respondents experiencing confusion about the outcome of their training program.

Group 4 participants were asked what type of training they completed, as well as the name of the institution where they attended training. The most common trainings completed by participants include: CDL (29), RN/BSN (9), CNA (8), Heavy Equipment Operations (5), GED (3), ESL (3), and Law Enforcement (3). All other programs were completed by 2 or less participants. In regard to training providers, the most frequently attended institutions include: Davis Technical College (8), SLCC (6), USU-Eastern (6), AmeriTech (5), Apex Trucking (5), Sage Trucking (4), Mountain West Trucking (4), Mountainland Technical College (4), and Bridgerland Technical College (4).

Monetary Supports: As with Group 3 participants who had started a training program, Group 4 respondents were asked to describe what monetary and tangible supports DWS provided to help them complete their training program. Table 52 shows what supports were provided to customers who completed training. "Other" supports included paying for things such as testing fees, temporary permits, and even dental work.

Table 52: Monetary Supports Provided

	N = 88
Tuition/Program Fee	86 (97.7%
Books	28 (31.8%)
Child Care	1 (1.1%)
Transportation	18 (20.5%)
Grant Assistance	1 (1.1%)
Work Supplies (Scrubs, boots, etc.)	31 (35.2%)
Daily Living Supports (Rent, utilities, etc.)	8 (9.1%)
Other	2 (2.3%)

Seeking Assistance - Immediate and Long-term Goals: Customers were asked to reflect on the primary reasons they sought training help from DWS. Over half of Group 4 respondents (52) stated that financial assistance for training was the main reason they came to DWS. Another large group (26) identified short-term employment goals, such as a better job or expanded work opportunities, as the main reason they initially came to DWS for help. Some participants (8) reported less specific goals of learning about work and school options. A few respondents (4) sought help simply due to being referred from another agency (foster care) or DWS department (unemployment, disability, and vocational rehab). Finally, three respondents said that being laid off was the main reason they initially sought help.

Participants considered what their long-term goals were at the time that they applied for WIOA training assistance. The most common long-term goals for Group 4 participants (56) surrounded employment, whether it be simply getting a job or finding a better, higher paying job. Within these responses, 13 spoke to specific career goals and 3 identified wanting to be more competitive in the workforce.

Barriers to the Application Process: As noted above, a majority of Group 4 respondents did not experience barriers with the WIOA application process. In fact, many respondents felt that it was straightforward and easy to complete. Notably, some of the customers who reported a smooth application process initially had some challenges, but then were provided individual help in completing it by their DWS worker. One customer described needing assistance from their DWS worker:

- *"I didn't do it online. I actually went in and spoke to my counselor. I couldn't find it. It was on there. I couldn't find it, so she... I set up an appointment with her to go over it and that's why she ended up inputting all the information, cause I couldn't find it on the website. She helped me fill it out."*

Of those who experienced barriers, 13 (14.7%) respondents believed the application was too time consuming and/or that it was too much to do. Some customers (13) had specific issues with the website, such as locating the application or confusion navigating the application online. Another group of customers (8) expressed general confusion with the application process. Communication issues (2) and changing employment counselors during their application process (3) were barriers for some respondents. Two customers had a barrier in applying, because the program that they wanted to pursue was not supported by DWS. Finally, one person identified that the application was difficult to complete because there was not a version in her native language.

Preparedness for Employment: As one of the goals of the WIOA program is to help prepare people for employment, these program graduates were asked a couple of questions regarding employment activities post-graduation.

 Training graduates were asked to consider their feelings surrounding work preparedness and how involved the DWS worker had been in preparing them for work. As seen in Figure 31, a majority of participants (68.2%) felt "very" prepared to start a job. Only 6 (6.8%) respondents felt "not very" to "not at all" prepared for work, indicating that the majority of WIOA graduates are receiving training that creates a sense of work readiness.

Respondents were then asked what more they wish the DWS worker had done to help them prepare for employment. More than half (51.1%) felt the worker had already provided all the support they wanted. Another 20 (22.7%) respondents wanted no more support. They were "done with" DWS. The remaining 23 (26.1%) respondents had ideas on the type of support they wished would have been provided.

Figure 31: How Prepared Do/Did You Feel to Start a Job?

6%   1%
25%
68%

■Very ■Somewhat ■Not Very ■Not at All
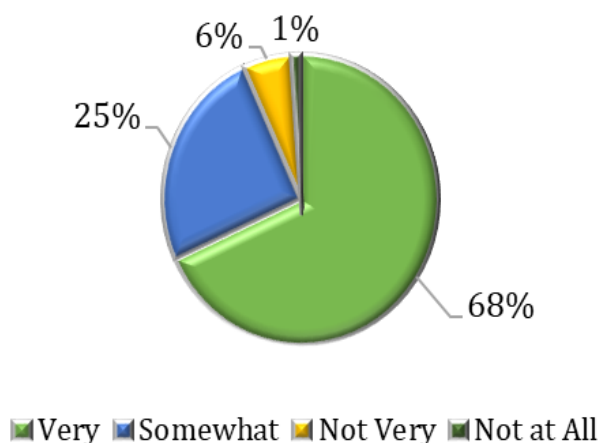
Several respondents felt that once the training was done that the worker was no longer available to them for resources and support. As one person noted, *"Probably more one-on-one mentoring instead of just using the website."* However, most comments involved help in getting job interviews and "getting a foot in the door" in a new line of work.

- *"I wish that they had like interviews set up. The issue is trying to get the interview. For me, that's always been my problem is landing the interview. I am a strong, in my opinion, I am very strong, I'm a very strong person, I can get into that interview and I can rock it and probably wind up with the job. But the issue is getting the interview. Sometimes they don't give you the time of day. Companies, they're always busy. They're always looking for qualified candidates. You can't just hire some regular steep off the street, you know. So that's kind of made it hard in my field."*
- *"I've been working for a lot of years now and so it's not like I don't know how things work in offices or all of that stuff. Or like I'm changing industries and need help figuring out the lingo and stuff like that. That wasn't really so important to me. Really the biggest part was getting my foot in the door."*
- *"That department can help now if I go to the unemployment department, the only thing they can do is just let me use the computer. Sometimes what they have, they have videos, say you have to respond to questions in an interview, what to wear, how to look for interview. So they have resources that I could go see and learn I guess how to handle interviews."*

Though Group 4 participants overwhelmingly felt prepared to start working upon graduation, there is more variation in the involvement of their DWS worker in helping with actually finding a job. Figure 32 shows that under half the respondents (47.8%) felt their worker was "somewhat" or "very" involved in assisting with job search activities. For these individuals the assistance was much appreciated. As noted:

Figure 32: Involvement of DWS Worker in Finding a Job

27.3
35.2
17
20.5

Very Somewhat Not Very Not at All

- *"She checks up on me every other day. She gives me new job opportunities. She helps me call um ya know, the different worker if that person isn't working or whatever. Yeah no she helps completely, she's way cool."*
- *"The help that I got from them is to use the website for several openings available, DWS has a good listing of any new employment opportunities. And they also provided resume building, interview guidance. And training seminars. They did a good job."*

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However, more than a third (35.2%) report that their worker was "not at all involved." These findings are confirmed by participant's feedback about ways they wish their worker had better supported them in finding a job. Much of the critical feedback for Group 4 participants surrounded job search support post-training completion. In the words of customers:

- *"I had called and left a message for her to get back to me. And I told her I also needed some help with job placement. And I just never heard back, so I just kind of started doing it on my own."*
- *"I think I called him a lot more in the beginning to be like, "I'm having a hard time finding a job. Can you get something going?" So I feel like I was the first one to kind of initiate that. He would just call and ask how's the job hunt going. I wish he's been a little bit more proactive in the job hunt. Especially, when I spoke to him about it prior, I told him I've never... this is the first time I've been on this side of the field. I'm usually on the receiving end of a trucking business, not on the actual driving. So, yeah, I wish he would have initiated a little bit more."*

As was noted above, some customers just felt that once the training was complete the worker was no longer interested or available for assistance in moving into a job.

- *"In my area there wasn't many places that you could go to find a job. She just seemed like it was more of a task than anything and that just kinda put me off."*
- *"We, she was just very, I don't know, very to the book, very like, no I'm doing this because it's my job and not because I care about you as a person. So it just made the relationship hard to keep that. So she did send an email and was like, if you need help finding a job, like we have services, but that was it."*
- *"Well I don't think she can help me, maybe. I don't think there's much she can do for me. Because yeah they were a different department from unemployment or job finding, they were in a different so totally separate department so they have nothing to do with getting a job when you are unemployed."*
- *"Honestly I wish that they narrowed the search. All they gave me was just like resources. Like okay, go here, go here, and it's like, that's really not helping me. That's like directing me. Like in the trade world, it's our duty becoming apprentices that as soon as we hit our marks, as soon as we get our own apprentice, we kind of got to guide them in a way. You got to be that guiding light. And I was hoping that DWS would help me in a way where I could make things easier for myself. But they kind of just made it where I'm like a fish in water, here swim. And it was kind of ridiculous in my eyes."*

Subjective Evaluation of Training Experience

In addition to evaluating the responses of participants to the specific questions asked, each training experience story was reviewed to explore themes that were mentioned beyond the specific questions. For example, customers were not asked specifically about the frequency of contact with their DWS worker. However, it was spontaneously mentioned so often that it seemed relevant to note. Findings from this subjective review of the training stories are presented in Table 53. No significant differences were identified between groups, but trends regarding what areas are significant to customers can be identified.

Table 53: Subjective Evaluation of Training Experience

	Group 1 n = 81	Group 2 n = 65	Group 3 n = 45	Group 4 n = 80	Youth n = 64
Did R refer to frequency of contact with their Employment Counselor?					
Yes	41 (51%)	36 (55%)	24 (53%)	46 (58%)	36 (56%)
No	39 (49%)	29 (45%)	21 (47%)	33 (42%)	28 (44%)
If yes, what was the frequency of contact noted? A lot	18 (43.9%)	14 (38.9%)	12 (50%)	24 (52.2%)	15 (41.7%)
Some	7 (17.1%)	7 (19.4%)	5 (20.8%)	8 (17.4%)	7 (18.6%)
A little	12 (29.3%)	14 (38.9%)	6 (25%)	10 (21.7%)	11 (29%)
None	4 (9.8%)	1 (2.8%)	1 (4.2%)	4 (8.7%)	3 (7.1%)
How did R perceive the quality of the contact between the EC & R?					
Positive	16 (39.0%)	19 (52.8%)	13 (54.2%)	26 (56.5%)	17 (47.2%)
Neutral	10 (24.4%)	8 (22.2%)	6 (25%)	8 (17.4%)	13 (36.1%)
Negative	13 (31.7%)	8 (22.2%)	4 (16.7%)	12 (26.1%)	6 (16.7%)
Mixed, Positive & Negative	2 (4.9%)	1 (2.8%)	1 (4.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Did R refer to the relationship with their Employment Counselor?					
Yes	62 (77.5%)	58 (89.2%)	35 (77.8%)	72 (91.1%)	53 (82.8%)
No	18 (22.5%)	7 (10.8%)	10 (22.2%)	7 (8.9%)	11 (17.2%)
If yes, how did R experience the relationship with their EC?					
Positive	35 (56.5%)	37 (63.8%)	19 (54.3%)	42 (58.4%)	31 (58.5%)
Neutral	14 (22.6%)	13 (22.4%)	11 (31.4%)	10 (13.9%)	12 (22.6%)
Negative	13 (21.0%)	8 (13.7%)	5 (14.3%)	20 (27.8%)	10 (18.9%)
Was R unaware of case opening?					
Yes	7 (8.8%)	3 (4.6%)	5 (11.1%)	3 (3.8%)	2 (3.1%)
No	72 (90%)	62 (95.4%)	38 (84.4%)	74 (93.7%)	62 (96.9%)
No reference to case opening	1 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.4%)	2 (2.5%)	0 (0%)
Was R unaware of a case or service closure? Yes	16 (20%)	8 (12.3%)	6 (13.3%)	7 (8.9%)	5 (7.8%)
No	63 (78.8%)	56 (86.2%)	37 (82.2%)	70 (88.6%)	58 (90.6%)
No reference to closure	1 (1.3%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (4.4%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.6%)
Did R reference how case decisions were made? Yes	64 (80%)	51 (78.5%)	30 (66.7%)	65 (82.3%)	48 (75%)
No	16 (20%)	14 (21.5%)	15 (33.3%)	14 (17.7%)	16 (25%)
If yes, who made the decisions?					
Respondent	25 (39.1%)	20 (39.2%)	13 (43.3%)	22 (33.8%)	23 (47.9%)
DWS Worker	14 (21.9%)	8 (15.7%)	7 (23.3%)	14 (21.5%)	8 (16.7%)
Both	20 (31.3%)	14 (27.5%)	5 (16.7%)	24 (36.9%)	13 (27.1%)
Other	5 (7.8%)	9 (17.6%)	5 (16.7%)	5 (7.7%)	4 (8.3%)
What was the overall tone of the experience?					
Positive	28 (35%)	31 (47.7%)	17 (37.8%)	32 (40.5%)	26 (40.6%)
Negative	19 (23.8%)	10 (15.4%)	10 (22.2%)	20 (25.3%)	9 (14.1%)
Neutral	26 (32.5%)	21 (32.3%)	16 (35.6%)	20 (25.3%)	24 (37.5%)
Mixed, Positive & Negative	7 (8.8%)	3 (4.6%)	2 (4.4%)	7 (8.9%)	5 (7.8%)

DISCUSSION

The WIOA Study was designed to provide a 360° view of the program and respond to the research questions identified by DWS WIOA leadership. The general findings suggest that these research questions were well targeted and produced significant results.

There certainly are limitations to this study. Evaluation staff did not access real-time data regarding customer participation in WIOA, thus findings were based on customer report of past training experiences. Respondents sometimes were confused when DWS data did not match what they believe happened with their case. The researchers sometimes only had part of the picture relative to WIOA involvement and that was confusing for all. Even when evaluation staff did have the whole picture, DWS offices do not necessarily follow the same procedure for engaging potential WIOA customers. Office size, customer demand, and the availability of local resources impact the enrollment process. Where possible, these factors were considered in data analysis and interpretation.

The brief discussion presented here integrates the findings from the three study components: customer interviews, DWS staff focus groups, and a review of UWORKS case records. This integration highlighted several important themes that could provide ideas for consideration as DWS continues to shape WIOA program policy and practices moving forward.

Who Are WIOA Customers?

In a word, WIOA customers are diverse! There is no other way to say it. The broad eligibility criteria for the four funding streams used to support WIOA participants lends the program to drawing diverse training candidates. WIOA customers present with a variety of family backgrounds, educational levels (nearly 1/3 have an Associate's Degree or higher), and family situations. They range from 17 – 71 and reside in all corners of the state. The current annual earnings of several individuals are in the six figures, while others are at or below minimum wage. With this diverse a population, it is more critical than ever that quality, targeted assessments form the foundation for working with each customer.

Initial assessments often focus on information for determining eligibility, training interests, and overall appropriateness. This certainly is critical information to gather. In reviewing UWORKS notes, though, there were clear links between barriers not being identified and/or addressed and negative outcomes. In addition to gathering this concrete information, there also is a need to get to know the person and their individual strengths and needs. Some customers are quite capable of doing the footwork needed to explore schools, get a provider added to the ETPL, or navigate the DWS job search website. Being too directive or "parental" with this type of customer might undermine the customer's autonomy and the worker-customer relationship. On the other hand, for a variety of reasons, others clearly need a partner in DWS to navigate even basic steps. If the goal is to serve the wide range of customers, understanding and case managing to an individual's capacity is critical for creating successful outcomes. This principle is even more critical when working with WIOA Youth. Barrier identification, customer strengths, executive functioning capacities, and case management and communication style preferences could be areas worth prioritizing with customers during assessments in order to improve case outcomes for all.

WIOA Youth: Throughout all aspects of the WIOA study, WIOA Youth were identified as a group set apart. The WIOA Youth Program includes targeted incentives and features designed to serve this population. In some areas, DWS workers are specifically assigned to work with WIOA Youth. Some workers expressed great appreciation for the opportunity to work with these young people. Others find work with Youth to be overwhelming and a source of frustration. However, differences between adult and Youth WIOA customers are more than just age.

Overall, WIOA Youth are entering young adulthood, generally with more challenges than other WIOA participants. Often these young adults are already involved with many "systems" and are more likely to have been introduced to WIOA through these systems, rather than personally seeking out training services. The Youth had higher ACE scores than other WIOA participants and significantly higher scores than the general population. They also were more likely to have experienced homelessness as a child and lived in homes where external financial support was often required.

Early life adversity (particularly high ACE scores) has been correlated with difficulties in adulthood. The WIOA Youth sample is no exception. The WIOA Youth Group experienced more problems related to reading, writing and learning disabilities, educational achievement, mental health, and transportation. There also were issues related to being involved with state agencies such as DCFS and juvenile justice, oftentimes leaving Youth feeling like they had no personal autonomy in making life decisions.

Given the many challenges experienced by WIOA Youth, there is a clear need for extra support, attention, patience, and shared decision-making in the WIOA process. This would suggest that this sub-population of WIOA recipients could benefit from engaging with workers who are aware of and sensitive to these unique challenges. Given what is known about building resilience, connecting a young person with a caring, competent worker and / or additional collaborative resources could have positive personal and future implications. If a young person's needs are met in this way, it is more likely that this young person might gain life skills necessary for independence and avoid passing on similar challenges to the next generation.

Graduates and Non-Graduates: Throughout data analysis, attention was paid to factors that were significantly correlated with completion/graduation of a WIOA program. Appendix 4 summarizes all factors related to this level of success. While this does not suggest that customers should be *screened* for these factors, it is helpful to recognize what tends to help and hinder successful completion.

Several factors associated with graduation involve resources for managing family needs while in school. For example, having a spouse or partner as a close support was associated with success. Stable transportation, housing, mental and physical health, and family life were associated completion. Even when a person is engaged and attempting to complete their program, these outside barriers can interfere and make completion impossible. As one person said, *"life just got in the way!" (Group 3).*

In addition, simply entering the WIOA program with a focused area of study and preferred institution predicted completion. To support their focus, the customer needs to be working with a DWS staff person who is willing and able to support customer-driven decision-making

and program selection process. Graduates often referenced appreciation for the workers respect and support for their expressed goals

There also are other factors related to having specific training goals which could be impacting the outcomes. For example, there certainly are those who arrive at DWS with a desired program and provider in mind but find out that: 1) DWS does not support their program or 2) there is no local employer who is willing to engage in an "on the job training" program (a particular issue for Group 2). Or, it is perceived by some that unemployment benefits are contingent upon that one applying for training (commonly noticed in Group 1). When a DCFS worker *decides* a Youth is going to participate in WIOA, the matter of choice is often secondary to compliance. Focus group comments suggest that some workers do not feel competent engaging in career counseling services. Thus, if a customer arrives looking for assistance with deciding what to study, they are less likely to get the help needed to go the next step.

Program Components and Management

Several specific aspects of the WIOA program were identified as helpful or a hindrance to participation. Interestingly, many participants wondered why WIOA isn't more widely known about. Some of these customer comments include: *"Why don't they tell people about this great program?"; "Why do they hide the application and make it so hard to find?"; "This is the best kept secret at DWS."* There were even offers to become the official WIOA community spokesperson. Many felt "lucky" to have stumbled upon this resource and now spread the word to others. While many appreciated all that WIOA programs had to offer, there were common areas of frustration both among WIOA staff and customers.

While the eligibility process is time intensive, there were few complaints about this process from those in Groups 3 and 4. These individuals were able to find DWS programs that matched their interests. However, WIOA staff and participants from Groups 1 and 2 commented about how frustrating it was to go through the extensive eligibility process to then be found "inappropriate" for something that DWS knew about from the start. DWS staff also felt that having the option to educate customers upfront would save both the customer and themselves time and frustration in the long run. As one staff noted, *"I would like a way for them to maybe not go through the whole eligibility process, which we require them to do, but to be able to have that conversation with that customer and to educate them upfront- which we're not allowed to do right now. That's not a policy, that's a management decision."*

Many WIOA participants perceived their DWS worker as knowledgeable about DWS programs. This was critical to WIOA customer success, as much of the positive feedback across all survey groups referenced WIOA staff providing information on other DWS resources. This knowledge was most helpful when the worker could recognize the level of assistance any particular WIOA customer might need in accessing the resource. While some customers can simply be directed to "go to our website" and find it, others need further assistance, without which the resource will never be found or used.

Along with knowledge of other DWS programs, customers expect DWS staff to have thorough knowledge and be able to explain all aspects of the WIOA program. Customers expressed frustration when information and decision-making processes were not consistent between DWS workers, especially when there was an Employment Counselor change midstream. One

such frustration surrounded programs of study being approved and then later denied. There also was mention that there are programs listed on the ETPL which are not actually supported by DWS. This created confusion, as initial expectations later were left unmet. The lack of notes, as evaluated by the QT review process, often evidenced little justification of critical case decisions. This lack of information makes it difficult to explain to the customer what is happening.

Even when steps in the process were clear, there was significant inconsistency in whose role it was to complete tasks. Sometimes customers are sent to an institution to have their name added to the ETPL, where in other cases the worker attempted this task. Sometimes rules and regulations appeared flexible (such as allowing a customer to attend a program part time and also work), whereas other times they were rigid. Inconsistent policies and unmet expectations can be potential barriers to program participation and completion. Clarifying roles and responsibilities and matching requests for participation with customer capacity could be very helpful in improving completion rates among WIOA participants.

The input from the WIOA staff focus groups, the QT review, and customer feedback support the idea that many issues are tied to workers feeling their decisions are influenced by a need to meet specific outcome performance metrics. Case closure codes oftentimes do not match narratives or customer experiences, policies across areas of the state are inconsistent, shorter training programs are encouraged, and workers acknowledge a lack of support for engaging with customers in activities that do not influence metrics. Efforts to align performance metrics with desired worker activities are certainly areas for exploration and growth in improving the experiences and outcomes for both customers and DWS staff.

Building an MI Alliance: Agreed Upon Tasks, Goals, & a Warm Relationship

Over the past few years, DWS has been training all staff to implement motivational interviewing (MI) skills. The quality of the "alliance" created between worker and customer is key to multi-level success. The alliance includes: agreed upon tasks, agreed upon goals, and a warm relationship. All three components are necessary for success in the WIOA program.

In past DWS evaluations, it often has been noted that quality relationships are key to successful case management. This remains true with WIOA customers. However, the type of relationship required is about more than being "nice." It is a relationship with the purpose of sharing in tasks to achieve specific goals. Together, these MI alliance components guide the development of the strong working relationships upon which success can be built.

As with most relationships, communication is a key element of success. The diversity of the WIOA population can be a significant hurdle, as communicating with an 18-year-old in foster care looks very different from listening to a 50+ businessman who was laid off from a long-term job. We all have opinions about people and circumstances, which can lead to judgmental communication. However, active listening and providing encouragement and support were the most common characteristics respondents appreciated in their WIOA workers and was most identified as a contributor to customer success. As one person said, *"I needed someone to listen and to believe in me."*

Building an enduring, trusting, and caring relationship with customers is critical. Encouraging and supporting regular engagement, particularly during the early stages of the

process, communicates investment in the customer's success. Communication issues created doubt in DWS's commitment. Group 1 respondents, those who fell out most quickly, often experienced little or no communication with the DWS worker prior to case closure.

Respondents, without prompting, often expressed that contact frequency reflected the worker's level of interest and concern. Interestingly, a few respondents noted that the level of contact was *"over the top" or "too much!"* This is a reminder of the need to work from a trauma-informed perspective. With this lens, one remembers that giving voice and choice when possible is empowering. For example, a worker might say, "I am interested in keeping up on how things are going for you in your program, how often would you like me to reach out? What is the most convenient time and way to connect?" This communication invitation contains two components of the MI alliance, a warm relationship and agreed upon tasks.

Supporting MI Principals by Incorporating a Trauma-Informed Approach: Recalling the principles of a trauma-informed approach (safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment, voice and choice, cultural, historical and gender issues (SAMHSA, 2014)) can be considered best practice, particularly with the high number of ACES within this population. This lens is especially critical when working with Youth who report even higher levels of ACES and recent (and sometimes ongoing) experiences of traumatic events. Practically, this approach might entail initially providing more time and resources for relationship building.

Trauma-informed principles can be employed when developing agreed upon tasks and goals. It is critical to allow workers to be transparent with customers about what is possible and what is not. Once trust is broken, it is difficult and time-consuming to regain. Collaborative decision making, at any point in the process, was rarely documented in the case notes, although respondents identified other ways in which they worked collaboratively with their WIOA staff. Enhancing notes with this type of information, including customer perspective, is helpful when reviewing cases and provides important information should a case be transferred.

The MI alliance or partnership suggests a level of investment and transparency on the part of both the customer and the WIOA worker. As the service provider in the relationship, the WIOA worker sets the tone by extending a supportive hand and opening communication. Over time, each partner engages in specific tasks, creating mutual commitment and ownership of the process. Commitment to these steps provides the best opportunity for WIOA staff and customers to reach both personal and agreed upon goals.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: WIOA Program Basic Overview

Eligibility for the WIOA Adult program is based on:
- Citizenship: US citizenship or status as an employment-eligible non-citizen
- Age: 18 years and older at the time eligibility is determined.
- Selective Services: Registered or meeting a waiver reason (males 18 yrs old and older)
- Income: Member of a low-income family determined by Lower Living Standard Income Level (See chart below) or member of a family receiving a public assistance benefit including TANF, Food Stamps, or a customer currently homeless, or in DCFS or DJJS custody.

Eligibility for the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program is based upon:
- Citizenship: US citizenship or status as an employment-eligible non-citizen
- Selective Services: Registered or meeting a waiver reason (males 18 yrs old and older)
- Dislocated Worker Status: Individuals must have been laid-off or have received a notice or termination or layoff from employment, including active military service, and have met other dislocated worker status eligibility requirements. Individual could also have been a displaced homemaker or dislocated from employment due to spouse actively serving in the military.

Eligibility for the WIOA Youth program is based on:
- US citizenship or status as an employment-eligible non-citizen
- Age – 14 to 24 when eligibility is determined
- Registration for Selective Service (males 18 years old and older)
- Income: Member of a low-income family determined by Lower Living Standard Income Level (See chart below) or member of a family receiving a public assistance benefit including TANF, Food Stamps, or a customer currently homeless, or in DCFS or DJJS custody.
- Barriers – possessing one or more characteristics that interfere with succeeding in school or obtaining and retaining employment. Examples: Foster Child, Aged out of Foster Care, Disabled, Refugee, Basic Skills Deficient, English Language Learner, School Dropout, Attendance Issues, Homeless, Runaway, Pregnant/Parenting, Offender, child of Currently Incarcerated Parent, Native American, Victim/Witness of Domestic Violence or other abuse, and Substance Abuse.

Eligibility for the TANF Non-FEP program is based on:
- Citizenship: US citizenship or status as a qualified and eligible non-citizen
- Age: No Age Restriction
- Dependent: Must have at least one dependent who is under age 18 or is 18 but enrolled full time in high school and is expected to graduate before the month of their 19th birthday
- Income: Member of a low-income family determined by Federal Poverty Guidelines (See chart below) or member of a family receiving a public assistance benefit including TANF, Food Stamps, Medicaid, CHIP, Refugee Cash Assistance, SSI, or WIC.

Appendix 2: WIOA Flow Chart from Application to Graduation and Case Closure

Apply for Training on jobs.utah.gov → Review Application & Contact Customer → Collect Required Documentation → Determine Eligibility → NO(NotEligible) → Send Denial Notice

Determine Eligibility → YES (Eligible)

We start here – Grp. 1

Once eligible only meets with employment counselor

YES (Eligible) → Schedule Appointment with Employment Counselor → Complete Assessment & Discuss Career/ Training Goals → Determine Appropriateness → YES - Appropriate for Training

Determine Appropriateness → NO–NotAppropriate for Training → Determine interest in Basic Career Services → NO–NotInterested in Additional Assistance → Send Notice Do NOT Enroll

Determine interest in Basic Career Services → YES – Interested in Additional Assistance → Enroll in Funding Stream

YES - Appropriate for Training → Enroll in Funding Stream

Grp. 1 end

Grp 2 Enroll in funding But never in Training service

Enroll in Funding Stream → Create Employment Plan & Set Goals → Monitor Goals & Progress → ProvideSupport & CelebrateSuccess → Obtained Employment/ Complete Training → Close Case

Grp 3 - enrolled in service but never starts or Starts and does not finish

Graduate: Group 4

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Appendix 3: Respondents vs Non-respondents

	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4		Youth		Total	
	Resp. n = 81	Non-Rsp n = 79	Resp. n = 65	Non-Rsp n = 58	Resp. n = 45	Non-Rsp n = 44	Resp. n = 78	Non-Rsp n = 108	Resp. n = 66	Non-Rsp n = 76	Resp. N = 335	Non-Rsp N = 365
Age - years	39.7	36.6	39.8	40.1	37.5	38.0	39.1	38.2	20.2	20.6	35.5	34.4
Sex*												
Female	50 (61.7%)	38 (48.1%)	33 (50.8%)	31 (53.4%)	26 (57.8%)	16 (36.4%)	33 (42.3%)	40 (37.0%)	31 (47.0%)	32 (42.1%)	173 (51.6%)	157 (43.0%)
Male	31 (38.3%)	41 (51.9%)	32 (49.2%)	27 (46.6%)	19 (42.2%)	28 (63.6%)	45 (57.7%)	68 (63.0%)	35 (53.0%)	44 (57.9%)	162 (48.4%)	208 (57.0%)
Region*												
Central	55 (67.9%)	52 (65.8%)	33 (50.8%)	41 (70.7%)	24 (53.3%)	23 (52.2%)	36 (46.2%)	38 (35.2%)	25 (37.9%)	27 (35.5%)	173(51.6%)	181(49.6%)
Northern	1 (1.2%)	3 (3.8%)	6 (9.2%)	4 (6.9%)	15 (33.3%)	12 (27.3%)	11 (14.1%)	37 (34.3%)	17 (25.8%)	32 (42.1%)	50 (14.9%)	88 (24.1%)
Mountnlnd	12 (14.8%)	11 (13.9%)	10 (15.4%)	3 (5.2%)	- 0 –	6 (13.6%)	13 (16.7%)	16 (14.8%)	10 (15.2%)	13 (17.1%)	45 (13.4%)	49 (13.4%)
Eastern	10 (12.3%)	11 (13.9%)	10 (15.4%)	7 (12.1%)	4 (8.9%)	1 (2.3%)	15 (19.2%)	10 (9.3%)	9 (13.8%)	1 (1.3%)	48 (14.3%)	30 (8.2%)
Western	3 (3.7%)	2 (2.5%)	6 (9.2%)	3 (5.2%)	2 (4.4%)	2 (4.5%)	3 (3.8%)	7 (6.5%)	5 (7.6%)	3 (3.9%)	19 (5.7%)	17 (4.7%)
Outcome – No Service												
Got Employed			49 (75.4%)	39 (67.2%)								
Enrllmnt Clsd			7 (10.8%)	14 (24.1)								
Family Care			- 0 –	1 (1.7%)								
Health/Med.			9 (13.8%)	4 (6.8%)								
Outcome with Service					Adults				Youth			
					N = 35	N = 44			N = 48	N = 51		
Did not Cmplt					35 (77.8%)	34 (77.3%)			41 (85.4%)	40 (78.4%)		
Health					5 (11.1%)	2 (4.5%)			3 (6.3%)	2 (3.9%)		
Institutlized					- 0 -	2 (4.5%)			- 0 -	1 (2.0%)		
Srvce in Error					5 (11.1%)	6 (13.6%)			4 (8.3%)	8 (15.7%)		

*** = $p \le .05$

Appendix 4: Graduate vs. Non-graduate Comparisons

	Graduate N = 88	Non-graduate N = 247
Demographics		
Single never married ($p = .019$)	30 (34.1%)	120 (48.6%)
Do they have children ($p = .010$)	64 (72.7%)	141 (57.1%)
Currently living with spouse or partner ($p = .040$)	43 (53.1%)	81 (39.7%)
Currently living with anyone ($p = .033$)	81 (92%)	204 (82.6%)
Respondent Characteristics		
Average Monthly Income ($p = .006$)	$2,259	$1,678
In special education or resources classes as child ($p = .026$)	19 (21.6%)	85 (34.4%)
Is currently in school ($p = .022$)	7 (8.0%)	45 (18.2%)
Physical health good - excellent ($p = .047$)	81 (92%)	206 (83.4%)
Experienced homelessness as an adult ($p = .003$)	15 (17.6%)	85 (34.7%)
Was physically abused after age 18 ($p = .001$)	12 (14.1%)	80 (32.9%)
Was sexually abused after age 18 ($p = .017$)	4 (4.7%)	35 (14.5%)
In past year mental health such a problem could not take a job ($p = .001$)	8 (9.1%)	65 (26.3%)
Diagnosed with mental health issue ($p = .009$)	29 (33%)	121 (49%)
Diagnosed or screened positive for PTSD ($p = .048$)	65 (26.3%)	14 (15.9%)
Diagnosed or screened positive for depression ($p = .003$)	31 (35.2%)	132 (53.4%)
Experienced severe domestic violence – past 12 mo. ($p = .011$)	1 (1.1%)	23 (9.3%)
Experienced severe domestic violence – ever ($p = .037$)	29 (33.0%)	113 (45.7%)
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) ($p = .050$) Zero ACES 1 – 3 ACES 4+ ACES	16 (18.2%) 37 (42.0%) 35 (39.8%)	30 (12.1%) 82 (33.2%) 135 (54.7%)
Experience with DWS		
Balancing my DWS activities and the needs of my family felt impossible ($p = .009$)	2 (2.3%)	28 (11.6%)
It is good to require people receiving training assistance to find a job ($p = .044$)	82 (93.2%)	206 (84.8%)

Employment Supports		
Has current driver's license (p = .012)	80 (90.9%)	195 (78.9%)
Generally dissatisfied with social supports (p = .011)	5 (5.7%)	41 (16.6%)
Hourly Wages (p = .027)	$19.48	$16.52
Closest support is spouse or partner (p = .011)	43 (48.9%)	83 (33.6%)
Attended religious services in the past month (p = .012)	38 (43.2%)	70 (28.6%)
In the past year going to school was such a problem that they could not take a job (p = .001)	32 (36.4%)	46 (18.6%)
Employment		
Currently Employed N= 221	**n = 72**	**n = 149**
Currently working for pay ($p \leq$ .001)	72 (81.8%)	149 (61.1%)
Had trouble understanding or following directions for doing your job? (p = .018)	2 (2.8%)	19 (12.9%)
Experience with WIOA Program		
Knew what training program they wanted at WIOA entry ($p \leq$ .001)	79 (89.8%)	155 (63.0%)
Knew where they wanted to receive training at WIOA entry (p = .016)	55 (62.5%)	117 (47.6%)

Appendix 5 – Tables Requiring Landscape View

Table 3: Respondent Demographics

Personal Characteristics	Group 1 n = 82	Group 2 n = 71	Group 3			Group 4 n = 88	Total N = 335
			Adult n = 45	Youth n = 49	Total N = 94		
Age	38.62 years Range: 18-60	37.39 years Range: 18-64	36.44 years Range: 18-71	19.76 years Range:17-31	27.74 years Range: 17-71	36.13 years Range: 17-70	34.63 years Range: 17-71
Sex*							
Female	51 (62.2%)	37 (52.1%)	27 (60%)	23 (46.9%)	50 (53.2%)	38 (43.2%)	176 (52.5%)
Male	31 (37.8)	34 (47.9%)	18 (40%)	25 (51%)	43 (45.7%)	50 (56.8%)	158 (47.2%)
Other	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (2%)	1 (1.1%)	-0-	1 (0.3%)
Race/Ethnicity							
White (non-Hispanic)	66 (80.5%)	46 (65.7%)	23 (51.1%)	29 (59.2%)	52 (55.3%)	54 (61.4%)	218 (65.3%)
Hispanic	9 (11.0%)	15 (21.4%)	17 (37.8%)	11(22.4%)	28 (29.8%)	14 (15.9%)	66 (19.8%)
Black (non-Hispanic)	3 (3.7%)	3 (4.3%)	3 (6.7%)	4 (8.2%)	7 (7.4%)	6 (6.8%)	19 (5.7%)
Asian – Pacific Islander	1 (1.2%)	2(2.9%)	2 (4.4%)	2 (4.1%)	4 (4.3%)	6 (6.8%)	13 (3.9%)
Am.Indian/Alaskan Native	1 (1.2%)	2 (2.9%)	-0-	1 (2%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (2.3%)	6 (1.8%)
Other	1 (1.2%)	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (0.3%)
Mixed Race	1 (1.2%)	2 (2.9%)	-0-	2 (4.1%)	2 (2.1%)	6 (6.8%)	11 (3.3%)
Marital Status*							
Single – never married	22 (26.8%)	34 (47.9%)	20 (44.4%)	44 (89.8%)	64 (68.1%)	30 (34.1%)	150 (44.8%)
Married	20 (24.4%)	19 (26.8%)	8 (17.8%)	4 (8.2%)	13 (13.8%)	33 (37.5%)	84 (25.1%)
Divorced	29 (35.4%)	13 (18.3%)	14 (31.1%)	-0-	14 (14.9%)	17 (19.3%)	73 (21.8%)
Separated	7 (8.5%)	4 (5.6%)	2 (4.4%)	1 (2%)	2 (2.1%)	6 (6.8%)	20 (6%)
Divide "separated group:							
Still working on it	2 (28.6%)	-0-	1 (50%)	-0-	-0-	1 (16.7%)	4 (20%)
Permanent Separation	5 (71.4%)	4 (100%)	1 (50%)	1 (100%)	2 (100%)	5 (83.3%)	16 (80%)
Widowed	4 (4.9%)	1 (1.4%)	1 (2.2%)	-0-	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1%)	7 (2.1%)
Other	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	1 (1.1%)	1 (0.3%)
Relationship Status – single vs. couples*							
Single Adult Household	**54 (65.9%)**	**41 (57.7%)**	**30 (66.7%)**	**39 (79.6%)**	**69 (73.4%)**	**44 (50.0%)**	**208 (62.1%)**
Two Adults HH	**28 (34.1%)**	**30 (42.3%)**	**15 (33.3%)**	**10 (20.4%)**	**25 (26.6%)**	**44 (50.0%)**	**127 (37.9%)**
Married	20 (71.4%)	19 (63.3%)	8 (53.3%)	4 (40%)	12 (48%)	33 (75%)	84 (66.1%)
Domestic Partnership	6 (21.4%)	11 (36.7%)	6 (40%)	6 (60%)	12 (48%)	10 (22.7%)	39 (30.7%)
Separated - working on it	2 (7.1%)	-0-	1 (6.7%)	-0-	1 (4%)	1 (2.3%)	4 (3.1%)

*p< .05

Table 26: Computer Literacy and Access

	Group 1 n = 82	Group 2 n = 71	Group 3			Group 4 n = 88	Total N = 335
			Adult n = 45	Youth n = 49	Total N = 94		
Has regular access to computer	64 (78%)	63 (88.7%)	39 (86.7%)	44 (89.8%)	83 (88.3%)	76 (86.4%)	286 (85.4%)
Location of most used computer:							
Home	57 (89.1%)	53 (84.1%)	28 (71.8%)	38 (86.4%)	66 (79.5%)	63 (82.9%)	239 (83.6%)
Work	2 (3.1%)	3 (4.8%)	1 (2.6%)	2 (4.5%)	3 (3.6%)	4 (5.3%)	12 (4.2%)
School	-0-	1 (1.6%)	1 (2.6%)	-0-	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.3%)	3 (1%)
Family/friend's place	3 (4.7%)	-0-	3 (7.7%)	-0-	3 (3.6%)	1 (1.3%)	7 (2.4%)
Library	2 (3.1%)	1 (1.6%)	4 (10.3%)	3 (6.8%)	7 (8.4%)	4 (5.3%)	14 (4.9%)
DWS	-0-	5 (7.9%)	1 (2.6%)	-0-	1 (1.2%)	3 (3.9%)	9 (3.1%)
Other	-0-	-0-	1 (2.6%)	1 (2.3%)	2 (2.4%)	-0-	2 (0.7%)
Has internet access on computer	62 (96.9%)	61 (96.8%)	37 (94.9%)	44 (100%)	81 (97.6%)	74 (97.4%)	278 (97.2)
Other devices with internet access where computer not available	**n = 20** 19 (95%)	**n = 10** 10 (100%)	**n = 8** 7 (87.5%)	**n = 5** 5 (100%)	**n = 13** 12 (92.3%)	**n = 14** 13 (92.9%)	**N = 57** 54 (94.7%)
Level of confidence using computer to job search/apply for jobs							
Very	68 (82.9%)	54 (76.1%)	34 (75.6%)	35 (71.4%)	69 (73.4%)	68 (77.3%)	259 (77.3%)
Somewhat	12 (14.6%)	12 (16.9%)	10 (22.2%)	12 (24.5%)	22 (23.4%)	14 (15.9%)	60 (17.9%)
Not very	1 (1.2%)	3 (4.2%)	1 (2.2%)	2 (4.1%)	3 (3.2%)	4 (4.5%)	11 (3.3%)
Not at all	1 (1.2%)	2 (2.8%)	-0-	-0-	-0-	2 (2.3%)	5 (1.5%)
Level of confidence using computer to write letter or resume							
Very	50 (61%)	49 (69%)	34 (76.5%)	35 (71.4%)	58 (61.7%)	55 (62.5%)	212 (63.3%)
Somewhat	20 (24.4%)	11 (15.5%)	10 (22.2%)	12 (24.5%)	25 (26.6%)	24 (27.3%)	80 (23.9%)
Not very	9 (11%)	8 (11.3%)	1 (2.2%)	2(4.1%)	11 (11.7%)	5 (5.7%)	33 (9.9)
Not at all	3 (3.7%)	3 (4.2%)	-0-	-0-	-0-	4 (4.5%)	10 (3%)
Level of comfort using computer to manage DWS case: Very	41 (51.2%)	36 (51.4%)	30 (66.7%)	17 (37.8%)	47 (52.2%)	48 (55.8%)	172 (52.8%)
Somewhat	25 (31.3%)	19 (27.1%)	7 (15.6%)	14 (31.1%)	21 (23.3%)	14 (16.3%)	79 (24.2%)
Not Very	11 (13.8%)	9 (12.9%)	5 (11.1%)	9 (20%)	14 (15.6%)	20 (23.3%)	54 (16.6%)
Not at all	3 (3.8%)	6 (8.6%)	3 (6.7%)	5 (11.1%)	8 (8.9%)	4 (4.7%)	21 (6.4%)

Table 28: Employment – Currently Employed

	Group 1 n = 42	Group 2 n = 47	Group 3 n = 32	Group 4 n = 64	Youth n = 36	Total N= 221
Average hours worked per week: (p = .01)	34.1	40.3	38.7	43.9	35	39.1
Average length of time at job - (median)	2.8 months	2 months	4.8 months	2.5 months	3.5 months	3 months
Time at job breakdown:						
Less than 3 months	21 (50%)	25 (53.2%)	5 (15.6%)	33 (51.6%)	16 (44.4%)	100 (45.2%)
3 - 6 months	12 (28.6%)	18 (38.3%)	15 (46.9%)	15 (23.4%)	8 (22.2%)	68 (30.8%)
7 - 12 months	4 (9.5%)	3 (6.4%)	11 (34.4%)	7 (10.9%)	7 (19.4%)	32 (14.5%)
More than 12 months	5 (11.9%)	1 (2.1%)	1 (3.1%)	9 (14.1%)	5 (13.9%)	21 (9.5%)
Average hourly income (p = .003)	$19.28	$16.69	$16.43	$20.03	$12.44	$17.72
Job is temporary or seasonal	11 (26.2%)	6 (12.8%)	5 (15.6%)	6 (9.4%)	4 (11.1%)	32 (14.5%)
Main source of transportation to work:						
Own car	32 (76.2%)	38 (80.9%)	22 (68.8%)	52 (81.3%)	19 (52.8%)	163 (73.8%)
Partner/family/friends	---	2 (4.3%)	3 (9.4%)	7 (10.9%)	7 (19.4%)	19 (8.6%)
Public transportation	6 (14.3%)	3 (6.4%)	2 (6.3%)	1 (1.6%)	6 (16.7%)	18 (8.1%)
On foot	---	2 (4.3%)	2 (6.3%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (5.6%)	8 (3.6%)
Worked from home	3 (7.1%)	2 (4.3%)	1 (3.1%)	1 (1.6%)	---	7 (3.2%)
Boss/co-worker picked up	1 (2.4%)	---	1 (3.1%)	1 (1.6%)	---	3 (1.4%)
Other	---	---	1 (3.1%)	---	2 (5.6%)	3 (1.4%)
Degree of opportunity for advancement to a higher position that pays more:						
A great deal of opportunity	9 (21.4%)	20 (42.6%)	17 (53.1%)	23 (35.9%)	14 (38.9%)	83 (37.6%)
Some opportunity	10 (23.8%)	10 (21.3%)	9 (28.1%)	22 (34.4%)	15 (41.7%)	66 (29.9%)
A little opportunity	14 (33.3%)	8 (17%)	5 (15.6%)	9 (14.1%)	6 (16.7%)	42 (19%)
No opportunity	8 (19%)	9 (19.1%)	1 (3.1%)	10 (15.6%)	1 (2.8%)	29 (13.1%)
Don't Know	1 (2.4%)	---	---	---	---	1 (0.5%)

Currently Employed (Con't)	Group 1 n = 42	Group 2 n = 47	Group 3 n =32	Group 4 n =64	Youth n =36	Total N= 221
Benefits available at job site:						
Paid sick days/vacation	24 (57.1%)	31 (65.9%)	18 (65.3%)	43 (67.2%)	15 (41.7%)	131 (59.3%)
Health insurance	25 (59.5%)	32 (68.1%)	21 (65.6%)	46 (71.9%)	16 (44.4%)	140 (63.3%)
Retirement program	20 (47.6%)	28 (59.6%)	19 (59.4%)	38 (59.4%)	14 (38.9%)	119(53.8%)
Respondent HAS NOT job searched past month (p = .044)	18 (42.9%)	27 (57.4%)	22 (68.8%)	36 (56.3%)	27 (75%)	130 (58.8%)
Main reasons WHY not looked for work:	**n = 18**	**n = 27**	**n = 22**	**n = 36**	**n = 27**	**N = 130**
Satisfied with current job	15 (62.5%)	22 (81.5%)	18 (81.8%)	35 (97.2%)	27 (100%)	117 (90%)
Lacks necessary school, skills, experience	3 (12.5%)	---	1 (4.5%)	1 (2.8%)	---	5 (3.8%)
In school or training	2 (8.3%)	2 (7.4%)	2 (9.1%)	1 (2.8%)	2 (7.4%)	9 (6.9%)
Ill health/physical disability/mental health	1 (4.2%)	3 (11.1%)	1 (4.5%)	---	---	5 (3.8%)
Other	2 (8.3%)	1 (3.7%)	---	1 (2.8%)	1 (3.7%)	5 (3.8%)

(5.4% of respondents did not know if they received sick or vacation days, 1.4% of respondents did not know if they received insurance and 6.8% of respondents did not know if they received retirement benefits)

Table 30: Employment Comparisons – Currently Unemployed

	Group 1 n = 38	Group 2 n = 18	Group 3 n= 13	Group 4 n = 16	Youth n = 26	Total N= 111
Average hours worked per week (p = .001)	44.8	35.9	30.6	41.1	31.5	38.0
Average length of time at job - (median)	6 months	9 months	5 months	4.5 months	3.8 months	5 months
Time at job breakdown:						
Less than 3 months	9 (23.7%)	2 (11.1%)	4 (30.8%)	4 (25%)	8 (30.8%)	27 (24.3%)
3 - 6 months	11 (28.9%)	6 (33.3%)	3 (23.1%)	6 (37.5%)	11 (42.3%)	37 (33.3%)
7 - 12 months	4 (10.5%)	4 (22.2%)	3 (23.1%)	2 (12.5%)	4 (15.4%)	17 (15.3%)
More than 12 months	14 (36.8%)	6 (33.3%)	3 (23.1%)	4 (25%)	3 (11.5%)	30 (27%)
Average hourly income (p = .001)	$15.88	$17.37	$13.36	$15.96	$10.23	$14.51
Job is temporary or seasonal (p = .041)	7 (18.4%)	-0-	4 (30.8%)	4 (25%)	10 (38.5%)	25 (22.5%)
Main source of transportation to work:						
Own car	33 (86.8%)	14 (77.8%)	8 (61.5%)	13 (81.3%)	8 (30.8%)	76 (68.5%)
Partner/family/friends	1 (2.6%)	1 (5.6%)	---	1 (6.3%)	11 (42.3%)	14 (12.6%)
Public transportation	1 (2.6%)	1 (5.6%)	4 (30.8%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (7.7%)	10 (9.0%)
Bike	1 (2.6%)	---	---	---	---	1 (0.9%)
Other	2 (5.3%)	2 (11.1%)	---	---	---	4 (3.6%)
Degree of opportunity for advancement to a higher position that pays more:						
A great deal of opportunity	8 (21.1%)	1 (5.6%)	3 (23.1%)	5 (31.3%)	7 (26.9%)	24 (21.6%)
Some opportunity	6 (15.8%)	9 (50%)	2 (15.4%)	4 (25%)	5 (19.2%)	26 (23.4%)
A little opportunity	13 (34.2%)	3 (16.7%)	2 (15.4%)	1 (6.3%)	8 (30.8%)	27 (24.3%)
No opportunity	11 (28.9%)	5 (27.8%)	6 (46.2%)	6 (37.5%)	6 (23.1%)	34 (30.6%)

Currently Unemployed (Con't)	Group 1 n= 38	Group 2 n= 18	Group 3 n=13	Group 4 n=16	Youth n=26	Total N= 111
Benefits available at job site:						
Paid sick days/vacation	19 (51.4%)	10 (58.8%)	6 (46.2%)	7 (50.0%)	9 (34.6%)	51 (47.7%)
Health insurance* (p = .009)	22 (61.1%)	8 (44.4%)	6 (50.0%)	9 (60.0%)	4 (16.0%)	49 (46.2%)
Retirement program	16 (42.1%)	8 (47.1%)	2 (16.7%)	6 (46.2%)	3 (13.0%)	35(34.9%)
Respondent HAS NOT job searched in the past month	9 (23.7%)	5 (27.8%)	3 (23.1%)	3 (18.8%)	11 (42.3%)	31 (27.9%)
Main reasons WHY not looked for work:	n = 9	n = 5	n = 3	n = 3	n = 11	N = 31
Lacks necessary school, skills, experience	---	---	---	---	1 (9.1%)	1 (3.2%)
In school or training	2 (22.2%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (27.3%)	7 (22.6%)
Ill health/ physical disability/ mental health	4 (44.4%)	5 (100%)	---	2 (66.7%)	2 (18.2%)	14 (45.2%)
Child Care problems	---	---	---	---	2 (18.2%)	2 (6.5%)
Family Responsibilities	1 (11.1%)	---	1 (33.3%)	---	1 (9.1%)	2 (6.5%)
Don't want/need to work	2 (22.2%)	1 (20.0%)	---	---	5 (45.5%)	9 (29.0%)
Transportation Problems	1 (11.1%)	---	---	---	---	---
Other	1 (11.1%)	---	1 (33.3%)	1 (2.8%)	4 (36.4%)	7 (22.6%)

 (3.6% of respondents did not know if they received sick or vacation days, 4.5% of respondents did not know if they received insurance, and 7.2% of respondents did not know if they received retirement benefits)

N = 335	Barrier (Frequency)						Greatest Barrier (Frequency as greatest barrier)						Frequency as Greatest Barrier (Impact)					
	Group 1 n=81	Group 2 n=65	Group 3 n=45	Group 4 n=80	Youth n=64	Total N=335	Group 1 n=81	Group 2 n=65	Group 3 n=45	Group 4 n=80	Youth n=64	Total N=335	Group 1 n=81	Group 2 n=65	Group 3 n=45	Group 4 n=80	Youth n=64	Total N=335
Needs of dependent child	n=21 5 (23.8%)	n=10 2 (20.0%)	n=5 1 (20.0%)	n=13 4 (30.8%)	n=2 - 0 –	n=51 12 (23.5%)	3 (14.3%)	1 (10.0%)	- 0 -	1 (7.7%)	- 0 -	5 (9.8%)	60%	50%	- 0 -	25%	- 0 -	41.7%
Need of depend family member	6 (7.4%)	4 (6.2%)	4 (8.9%)	4 (5.0%)	6 (9.4%)	24 (7.2%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (3.1%)	1 (2.2%)	- 0 -	- 0 -	5 (1.5%)	33.3%	50%	25.0%	- 0 -	- 0 -	20.8%
Lack of child care	n=36 5 (13.9%)	n=25 10 (40.0%)	n=16 5 (31.3%)	n=35 5 (14.3%)	n=8 3 (37.5%)	n=120 28 (23.3%)	- 0 -	1 (4.0%)	4 (25%)	1 (2.9%)	2 (25%)	8 (6.7%)	- 0 -	10%	80.0%	20%	66.7%	28.6%
Lack of education/ training	28 (34.6%)	15 (23.1%)	9 (20.0%)	16 (20.0%)	6 (9.4%)	74 (22.1%)	5 (6.2%)	5 (7.7%)	1 (2.2%)	5 (6.3%)	1 (1.6%)	17 (5.1%)	17.9%	33.3%	11.1%	31.3%	16.7%	23.0%
Alcohol or other drug issues	n=27 2 (7.4%)	n=25 6 (24.0%)	n=15 3 (20.0%)	n=26 1 (3.8%)	n=27 5 (18.5%)	n=120 17 (14.2%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (4.0%)	- 0 -	1 (3.8%)	2 (7.4%)	5 (4.2%)	50%	16.7%	- 0 -	100%	40.0%	29.4%
Physical health issues	13 (16.0%)	17 (26.2%)	6 (13.3%)	13 (16.3%)	11 (17.2%)	60 (17.9%)	6 (7.4%)	6 (9.2%)	5 (11.1%)	5 (6.3%)	5 (7.8%)	27 (8.1%)	46.2%	35.3%	83.3%	38.5%	45.5%	45.0%
Mental health issues	21 (25.9%)	14 (21.5%)	11 (24.4%)	7 (8.8%)	20 (31.3%)	73 (21.8%)	9 (11.1%)	5 (7.7%)	5 (11.1%)	5 (6.3%)	9 (14.1%)	33 (9.9%)	42.9%	35.7%	45.5%	71.4%	45.0%	45.2%
Transport problems	12 (14.8%)	10 (15.4%)	9 (20.0%)	17 (21.3%)	19 (29.7%)	67 (20.0%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.1%)	- 0 -	3 (3.8%)	4 (6.3%)	10 (3.0%)	8.3%	20.0%	- 0 -	17.7%	21.1%	14.9%
Lack of Job Skills	36 (44.4%)	23 (35.4%)	9 (20.0%)	21 (26.3%)	11 (17.2%)	100 (29.9%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.5%)	- 0 -	4 (5.0%)	1 (1.6%)	8 (2.4%)	5.6%	4.3%	- 0 -	19.1%	9.1%	8.0%

(Continued)	Barrier (Frequency)						Greatest Barrier (Frequency as greatest barrier)						Frequency as Greatest Barrier (Impact)					
	Group 1 n=81	Group 2 n=65	Group 3 n=45	Group 4 n=80	Youth n=64	Total N=335	Group 1 n=81	Group 2 n=65	Group 3 n=45	Group 4 n=80	Youth n=64	Total N=335	Group 1 n=81	Group 2 n=65	Group 3 n=45	Group 4 n=80	Youth n=64	Total N=335
Housing problems	11 (13.6%)	3 (4.6%)	7 (15.6%)	6 (7.5%)	8 (12.5%)	35 (10.4%)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (4.4%)	1 (1.3%)	4 (6.3%)	9 (2.7%)	9.1%	33.3%	28.6%	16.7%	50.0%	25.7%
Problems reading or writing	n=27 6 (22.2%)	n=27 7 (25.9%)	n=15 6 (40.0%)	n=20 3 (15.0%)	n=27 8 (29.6%)	n=116 30 (25.9%)	- 0 -	- 0 -	1 (6.7%)	- 0 -	3 (11.1%)	4 (3.5%)	- 0 -	- 0 -	16.7%	- 0 -	37.5%	13.3%
Criminal record	23 (28.4%)	13 (20.0%)	8 (17.8%)	11 (13.8%)	5 (7.8%)	60 (17.9%)	9 (11.1%)	2 (3.1%)	1 (2.2%)	6 (7.5%)	1 (1.6%)	19 (5.7%)	39.1%	15.4%	12.5%	54.6%	20.0%	31.7%
Spouse/ partner objects	6 (7.4%)	4 (6.2%)	7 (15.6%)	3 (3.7%)	9 (14.1%)	29 (8.7%)	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	1 (1.3%)	- 0 -	1 (0.3%)	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	33.3%	- 0 -	3.4%
Wages too low	50 (61.7%)	33 (50.8%)	20 (44.4%)	39 (48.8%)	19 (29.7%)	161 (48.1%	7 (8.6%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (4.4%)	3 (3.8%)	1 (1.6%)	15 (4.5%)	14.0%	6.1%	10.0%	7.7%	5.3%	9.3%
Going to school	8 (9.9%)	8 (12.3%)	11 (24.4%)	30 (37.5%)	21 (32.8%)	78 (23.3%)	3 (3.7%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (4.4%)	11 (13.8%)	6 (9.4%)	24 (7.2%)	37.5%	25.0%	18.2%	36.7%	28.6%	30.8%
Choose to stay home w/kids	n= 47 15 (31.9%)	n=32 6 (18.8%)	n=20 6 (30.0%)	n=44 6 (13.6%)	n=11 2 (18.2%)	n=154 35 (22.7%)	3 (3.7%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (2.2%)	- 0 -	- 0 -	5 (1.5%)	20.0%	16.7%	16.7%	- 0 -	- 0 -	14.3%
Lack of good jobs available	29 (35.8%)	23 (35.4%)	15 (33.3%)	26 (32.5%)	24 (37.5%)	117 (34.9%)	2 (2.5%)	4 (6.2%)	1 (2.2%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (3.1%)	11 (3.3%)	6.9%	17.4%	6.7%	7.7%	8.3%	9.4%
No barriers	12 (14.8%)	21 (32.3%)	11 (24.4%)	25 (31.3%)	18 (28.1%)	87 (26.0%)	12 (14.8%)	21 (32.3%)	11 (24.4%)	25 (31.3%)	18 (28.1%)	87 (26.0%)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Other:	18 (22.2%)	13 (20.0%)	16 (35.6%)	10 (12.5%)	9 (14.1%)	66 (19.7%)	15 (18.5%)	7 (10.8%)	7 (15.6%)	6 (7.5%)	5 (7.8%)	40 (11.9%	83.3%	53.9%	43.8%	60%	55.6%	60.6%

Table 34: Attitudes toward Work and Family

	Group 1 n = 79			Group 2 n = 65			Group 3 n = 44			Group 4 n = 80			Youth n = 63			Total N = 331		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
My children would benefit when I work outside the home	n = 43 34 (79%)	n=43 7 (16%)	n = 43 2 (5%)	n = 32 26 (81%)	n = 32 4 (13%)	n = 32 2 (6%)	n = 19 14 (74%)	n = 19 3 (16%)	n = 19 2 (11%)	n = 41 33 (81%)	n = 41 6 (15%)	n = 41 2 (5%)	n =10 9 (90%)	n = 10 -0-	n = 10 1 (10%)	N 145 116 (80%)	N 145 20 (14%)	N 145 9 (6%)
I'd rather work outside home than be stay at home parent* (p = .021)	n = 43 19 (44%)	n = 43 14 (33%)	n = 43 10 (23%)	n = 32 25 (78%)	n = 32 3 (9%)	n = 32 4 (13%)	n = 19 6 (32%)	n = 19 8 (42%)	n = 19 5 (26%)	n = 41 25 (61%)	n 41 9 (22%)	n = 41 7 (17%)	n = 10 8 (80%)	n = 10 -0-	n = 10 2 (20%)	N 145 83 (57%)	N 145 34 (23%)	N 145 28 (19%)
I would rather to stay home and raise my kids rather than work outside the home	n = 43 11 (26%)	n = 43 16 (37%)	n = 43 16 (37%)	n = 32 11 (34%)	n = 32 5 (16%)	n = 32 16 (50%)	n = 19 8 (42%)	n = 19 4 (21%)	n = 19 7 (37%)	n = 41 11 (27%)	n = 41 11 (27%)	n = 41 19 (46%)	n = 10 3 (30%)	n = 10 3 (30%)	n = 10 4 (40%)	N 145 44 (30%)	N 145 39 (27%)	N 145 62 (43%)
It is good to have people receiving assistance looking for a job	64 (80.0%)	9 (11%)	7 (9%)	55 (85%)	5 (8%)	5 (8%)	39 (87%)	6 (13%)	-0-	74 (93%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	56 (92%)	3 (5%)	2 (3%)	288 (87%)	26 (8%)	17 (5%)
When kids are young single parents should not work outside the home	22 (28%)	22 (28%)	36 (45%)	6 (9%)	22 (34%)	37 (57%)	9 (21%)	28 (39%)	18 (41%)	11 (18%)	31 (39%)	38 (48%)	11 (18%)	20 (33%)	29 (48%)	59 (18%)	112 (34%)	158 (48%)
Single parents can raise a child just as well as married couples	55 (70%)	9 (11%)	15 (19%)	43 (66%)	8 (11%)	15 (23%)	28 (62%)	7 (16%)	10 (22%)	45 (56%)	17 (21%)	18 (23%)	45 (74%)	9 (15%)	7 (12%)	216 (66%)	49 (15%)	65 (20%)
I felt torn between DWS demands and the needs of my family	4 (5%)	26 (33%)	49 (62%)	7 (11%)	22 (34%)	36 (55%)	3 (7%)	14 (31%)	28 (62%)	8 (10%)	13 (16%)	59 (74%)	2 (3%)	15 (25%)	44 (72%)	24 (7%)	90 (27%)	216 (66%)
Balancing DWS activities and the needs of feels impossible* (p = .046)	10 (13%)	17 (22%)	52 (66%)	8 (12%)	11 (17%)	46 (70%)	7 (16%)	8 (18%)	30 (67%)	2 (3%)	9 (11%)	69 (86%)	3 (5%)	15 (25%)	43 (71%)	30 (9%)	60 (18%)	240 (73%)

(Continued)	Group 1 n = 79			Group 2 n = 65			Group 3 n = 44			Group 4 n = 80			Youth n = 63			Total N = 331		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Single parent who gets job to support children is being a responsible parent	25 (32%)	29 (37%)	25 (32%)	36 (55%)	14 (22%)	15 (23%)	25 (56%)	13 (29%)	7 (16%)	60 (75%)	12 (15%)	8 (10%)	46 (73%)	7 (11%)	10 (16%)	294 (57%)	75 (23%)	65 (20%)
I feel confident I can manage my own finances and resources* (p = .016)	53 (66%)	14 (18%)	13 (17%)	51 (78%)	5 (8%)	9 (14%)	33 (75%)	6 (14%)	5 (11%)	68 (85%)	4 (5%)	8 (10%)	48 (76%)	5 (8%)	10 (16%)	252 (76%)	34 (10%)	45 (14%)
I could not go to DWS office, I would be ok if EC meet with me outside DWS office	35 (45%)	38 (49%)	5 (6%)	40 (62%)	21 (32%)	4 (6%)	29 (64%)	11 (24%)	5 (11%)	58 (73%)	17 (21%)	5 (8%)	47 (75%)	8 (13%)	8 (13%)	209 (63%)	95 (29%)	27 (8%)
My circumstances are different than most others receiving training assistance	35 (44%)	23 (29%)	21 (27%)	43 (66%)	8 (12%)	14 (22%)	34 (76%)	7 (16%)	4 (7%)	64 (80%)	7 (9%)	9 (11%)	43 (68%)	9 (14%)	11 (17%)	219 (66%)	54 (16%)	59 (18%)

Table 36: Specific Aspects of Relationship with DWS Worker

	Group 1 n = 79			Group 2 n = 65			Group 3 n = 44			Group 4 n = 80			Youth n = 63			Total N = 331		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
.. treated me with dignity and respect.	68 (86%)	6 (8%)	5 (6%)	60 (92%)	3 (5%)	2 (3%)	40 (91%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	74 (93%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	56 (89%)	5 (8%)	2 (3%)	298 (90%)	19 (6%)	14 (4%)
.. made me feel heard and understood. (p=.049)	52 (66%)	14 (18%)	13 (17%)	54 (83%)	5 (8%)	6 (9%)	37 (84%)	4 (9%)	3 (7%)	71 (89%)	6 (8%)	3 (4%)	49 (78%)	6 (10%)	8 (13%)	263 (80%)	35 (11%)	33 (10%)
.. really seemed to care about what's best for me & my family (p=.012)	46 (58%)	19 (24%)	14 (18%)	50 (76%)	11 (17%)	4 (6%)	34 (76%)	8 (18%)	3 (7%)	67 (84%)	7 (9%)	6 (8%)	51 (81%)	5 (8%)	7 (11%)	248 (75%)	50 (15%)	34 (10%)
.. overwhelmed me with too many things I was likely to fail. (p=.010)	15 (19%)	18 (23%)	46 (58%)	10 (15%)	6 (9%)	49 (75%)	7 (16%)	6 (13%)	32 (71%)	4 (5%)	6 (8%)	70 (88%)	6 (10%)	10 (16%)	47 (75%)	42 (13%)	46 (14%)	244 (73%)
… believed in me (p <.000)	38 (48%)	32 (41%)	9 (11%)	46 (71%)	15 (23%)	3 (6%)	34 (76%)	10 (22%)	1 (2%)	67 (84%)	9 (11%)	4 (5%)	49 (78%)	9 (14%)	5 (8%)	234 (70%)	75 (23%)	23 (7%)
.. helped me feel confident. (p=.001)	36 (46%)	26 (33%)	17 (22%)	46 (71%)	13 (20%)	6 (9%)	35 (78%)	6 (13%)	4 (9%)	64 (80%)	9 (11%)	7 (9%)	46 (73%)	12 (19%)	5 (8%)	227 (68%)	66 (20%)	39 (12%)
.. .really tried to understand me and my situation. (p=.010)	45 (57%)	15 (19%)	19 (24%)	51 (78%)	6 (9%)	8 (12%)	33 (73%)	7 (16%)	5 (11%)	66 (83%)	4 (5%)	10 (13%)	49 (78%)	3 (5%)	11 (18%)	244 (73%)	35 (11%)	53 (16%)
.didn't let me explain what brought me to DWS & what I need	6 (8%)	21 (27%)	52 (66%)	6 (9%)	11 (17%)	48 (74%)	2 (4%)	4 (9%)	39 (87%)	5 (6%)	8 (10%)	67 (84%)	4 (7%)	13 (21%)	45 (73%)	23 (7%)	57 (17%)	251 (76%)
.helped me move closer/ improve employment situation. (p <.000)	25 (32%)	29 (37%)	25 (32%)	36 (55%)	14 (22%)	15 (23%)	25 (56%)	13 (29%)	7 (16%)	60 (75%)	12 (15%)	8 (10%)	46 (73%)	7 (11%)	10 (16%)	294 (57%)	75 (23%)	65 (20%)

(Continued)	Group 1 n = 79			Group 2 n = 65			Group 3 n = 44			Group 4 n = 80			Youth n = 63			Total N = 331		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
.. got back to me in reasonable time after I left message.	53 (66%)	14 (18%)	13 (17%)	51 (78%)	5 (8%)	9 (14%)	33 (75%)	6 (14%)	5 (11%)	68 (85%)	4 (5%)	8 (10%)	48 (76%)	5 (8%)	10 (16%)	252 (76%)	34 (10%)	45 (14%)
.. flexible when family concerns interfered with DWS activities ($p <.000$)	35 (45%)	38 (49%)	5 (6%)	40 (62%)	21 (32%)	4 (6%)	29 (64%)	11 (24%)	5 (11%)	58 (73%)	17 (21%)	5 (8%)	47 (75%)	8 (13%)	8 (13%)	209 (63%)	95 (29%)	27 (8%)
.. My DWS worker and I worked together as a team. ($p <.000$)	35 (44%)	23 (29%)	21 (27%)	43 (66%)	8 (12%)	14 (22%)	34 (76%)	7 (16%)	4 (7%)	64 (80%)	7 (9%)	9 (11%)	43 (68%)	9 (14%)	11 (17%)	219 (66%)	54 (16%)	59 (18%)
.. My DWS worker and I were able to work through hard situations	25 (32%)	44 (56%)	10 (13%)	28 (43%)	30 (46%)	7 (11%)	28 (62%)	12 (27%)	5 (11%)	43 (54%)	27 (34%)	10 (13%)	33 (52%)	22 (35%)	8 (13%)	157 (47%)	135 (41%)	40 (12%)
.. only focused on doing paperwork and putting notes in the computer. ($p = .001$)	25 (32%)	21 (27%)	33 (42%)	12 (19%)	6 (9%)	47 (72%)	9 (20%)	8 (18%)	28 (63%)	11 (14%)	8 (10%)	61 (76%)	10 (16%)	8 (13%)	45 (72%)	67 (20%)	51 (15%)	214 (65%)
.. took the time to explain program rules so I could understand. ($p = .017$)	60 (63%)	15 (19%)	14 (18%)	52 (80%)	7 (11%)	6 (9%)	40 (89%)	3 (7%)	2 (4%)	69 (86%)	6 (8%)	5 (6%)	48 (76%)	5 (8%)	10 (16%)	259 (78%)	36 (11%)	37 (11%)
.. talked with me about things important to me. ($p = .009$)	45 (57%)	14 (18%)	20 (25%)	44 (68%)	11 (17%)	10 (15%)	37 (82%)	4 (9%)	4 (9%)	62 (78%)	13 (16%)	5 (6%)	51 (81%)	5 (8%)	7 (11%)	239 (72%)	47 (14%)	46 (14%)
.. told me about DWS resources I could use.	47 (60%)	15 (19%)	17 (22%)	49 (85%)	6 (9%)	10 (15%)	32 (71%)	5 (11%)	8 (18%)	64 (80%)	5 (6%)	10 (13%)	48 (76%)	8 (13%)	7 (11%)	240 (73%)	39 (12%)	52 (15%)
.. connected me to community resources ($p = .004$)	26 (33%)	26 (33%)	27 (34%)	35 (54%)	11 (17%)	19 (29%)	24 (53%)	11 (24%)	10 (22%)	43 (54%)	23 (29%)	14 (18%)	43 (68%)	10 (16%)	10 (16%)	171 (52%)	81 (24%)	80 (24%)

Appendix 6: WIOA Staff Focus Groups

- Who here does what????
- What challenges do you experience customers facing with the eligibility process?
- What keeps a customer from being determined eligible?
- What other things determine appropriateness?
- People sometimes say these customers often come in with no direction or goals, how does this match with your experience?
- What kind of tools do you have to help a person do a self-assessment? Do you sit down with them or direct them to certain assessments?

- How would you describe a "typical client?"

- What are the main reasons why people drop out at each stage of the process?   Stage 1, 2, 3, 4
- After graduation or once they are done, how long do you typically stay connected with a customer?

- What are the different stages customers on your caseload are in?
     - What portion are in each stage?
     - What do you do in each stage?

- How often do you get transfer cases? What if any special challenges do you have with these type of cases?

- What kind of role does career counseling play in your job?
- How have you talked to customers about career planning/pathways and how have you career counseled?
- How does labor market information get incorporated into the conversation with customers?
- Is on the job training something that happens frequently?
- What keeps them from being enrolled?

- What do you do when a customer faces a barrier?
- What types of activities do you do for problem solving?
- In what ways do you feel the current problem solving process is effective or ineffective?
- If you could change or get rid of one step or phase in the process what would it be?
- How integrated are WDD's in your process? Are there any barriers that get in the way for you in being able to engage with this?

YOUTH
- What particular things or needs have you noticed that are unique to the youth population that should be changed or addressed?
- Is there any part of the process that makes it more difficult for youth? Could things be changed to make it more appropriate for youth?
- Would you be surprised to find out that as we're interviewing people, one of the things we hear most often is they wish their worker would have connected with them more, even the adults?

- How are you evaluated on your work?
- How do these measures influence the way you do your job?

Wrap-up
- What do you wish you could do more?
- What do you consider your greatest successes?
- What have I not asked about that you want to say or should be included in future focus groups?

Appendix 7: WIOA Case Quality Tool

Customer and Rating Information

- Rater Name   - Date of Rating   - PID   - Employment Counselor   - Group

Group 1 Section **(Answer questions in group 1 section and case closure section, then skip to 21 and final comments)**

G1. Type of contact (EC only)

- Phone Calls   - Text   - Email   - Postal Mail   - In Person (at DWS)   - Home Visit   - None Noted

G2. How many contacts occurred between case open and closure? (EC only)

Answer here

G3. What is the quality of contact?

1-   Poor   2- Fair   3- Good   4- Excellent

G3a. Is there evidence of a positive, helping relationship between EC and customer?

1.   Almost never   2- Occasionally   3- Usually   4- Almost always   5- Not enough information

G4. What is the tone of notes? (Check all that apply)

- Judgment   - Aggressive   - Support   - Understanding/Compassion   - Detached   - Cold   - Neutral

G5. Is there an assessment note or an eligibility note equivalent?

1-   Yes   0- No

G6. Do narratives justify actions and decisions made (excluding closure)?

1-   Not at all   2- A little   3- Somewhat   4- Quite a bit   5- Extremely   6- No actions or decisions

G7. Is there evidence customer was unaware of case opening?

1-   Yes   0- No

G7a. If yes, what evidence is present?

Answer here

G8. Is there evidence that suggests closure could have been prevented?

1-   Yes   0- No

G8a. If yes, what evidence is present?

Answer here

Barriers

1. How well are barriers defined/identified?
    1-   Not at all **(skip to 3)**   2- A little   3- Somewhat   4- Quite a bit   5- Excellent   6- None identified
2. How well are barriers to employment/training addressed?
    1-   Not at all   2- A little   3- Somewhat   4- Quite a bit   5- Excellent   6- None identified
3. How well was career planning explored?
    1-   Not at all   2- A little   3- Somewhat   4- Quite a bit   5- Excellent   6- Never met customer
4. When a challenge is identified, how often alternative options or resources offered (including supportive services)?
    1-   Never   2- Rarely   3- Sometimes   4- Usually   5- Always   6- Not needed
5. How much did the EC attempt to engage the customer when there was a lack of progress?
    1-   Not at all   2- A little   3- Somewhat   4- Quite a bit   5- Very much   6- No lack of progress noted

Contact

6. What is the frequency of contact?
    1-   Not at all   2- Somewhat less than required   3- Equal to requirement   4- Somewhat more than required   5- Much more than required
7. What is the quality of contact?
    1-   Poor   2- Fair   3- Good   4- Excellent

Notes

8. Was an assessment note made?
    1-   Yes   2- No   3- Yes, but not labeled as assessment   4- Yes, but not by current EC   5- Yes, but older than most recent service or enrollment
9. How complete is the assessment?
    1-   Not at all   2- A little   3- Somewhat   4- Quite a bit   5- Extremely
10. How clear is the assessment?
    1-   Not at all   2- A little   3- Somewhat   4- Quite a bit   5- Extremely
11. Do narratives justify actions and decisions made (excluding closure)?
    1-   Not at all   2- A little   3- Somewhat   4- Quite a bit   5- Extremely   6- No actions or decisions
12. Are next steps outlined?
    1- Not at all   2- A little   3- Somewhat   4- Quite a bit   5- Extremely
13. Does the case read like a story?
    1-   Yes   2- No   3- Somewhat
13a. What is missing from the narratives to make it more complete?
    Answer here
14. What is the tone of notes? (check all that apply)
    -    Judgment   - Aggressive   - Support   - Understanding/Compassion   - Detached   - Cold   - Neutral
15. How often is progress noted?
    1-   Never   2- Once in 90 days   3- 2-3 in 90 days   4- Once a month or more   5- Not applicable
15a. Were progress notes labeled as progress notes? (**If 15 is "never" or "not applicable," skip this question)**
    1-   Yes   2- No
15b. Does frequency of contact match length of the program? (**If group 2, skip 15b- S4 & go to case closure section)**
    1-   Completely   2- Somewhat   3- Not at all
16. Did case closure and service closure happen together?
    1-   Yes, both closed same date **(skip S1)**   2- No, case stayed open after service closure, but both are now closed   3- No, case is still opened **(skip case closure section)**

Service Closure

S1. What happened that the service closed and the case stayed open?
    1-   Supportive services/career counseling was ongoing   2- Other training service opened or on going   3- Grace period after final service   4- Unknown
S2. Is closure justified by narratives and assessments?
    1-   Completely   2- Somewhat   3- Not at all
S2a. If "Not at all" or "somewhat", what was missing from narrative?

Answer here

S3. Is there a mismatch between reason of service closure and narrative?

    1-   Completely   2- Somewhat   3- Not at all

S4. Who decided service would close?

    1-   Customer   2- DWS worker   3- Both together   4- Unknown   5- Closure was automatic   6- Other:

Case Closure (If group 1, skip C2 since there are no closure codes/reasons)

C1. Is closure justified by narratives and assessments?

    1-   Completely   2- Somewhat   3- Not at all

C1a. If "Not at all" or "Somewhat", what was missing from the narrative?

    Answer here

C2. Is there a mismatch between the reason for closure and narratives?

    1-   Completely   2- Somewhat   3- Not at all

C3. Who decided case would close?

    1-   Customer   2- DWS worker   3- Both together   4- Unknown   5- Closure was automatic   6- Other:

Relationship

17. Were decisions collaborative between EC and customer?

    1-   Completely   2- Somewhat   3- Not at all   4- Unknown

18. Is there evidence the counselor identified and built on success of the customer?

    1-   Almost never   2- Occasionally   3- Usually   4- Almost always

19. Is there evidence of positive, helping relationship between EC and customer?

    1-   Almost never   2- Occasionally   3- Usually   4- Almost always

20. How many training services are currently open in case?

    Answer here

Case Quality

21. Overall quality of case:

    1-   Poor ..... 10- Excellent

21a. General Comments/Write Up

    Answer here

21b. Overall quality of the case (after listening/reading customer perspective)

    Answer here

22. Agreement between EC and customer about case

    Answer here

Red Flags:

Qualitative section for rater to write in oddities and things that stand out in a negative way.

Outstanding Flags:

Qualitative section for rater to write in where EC and case went really well, used creative methods, or other positive noteworthy comments that stand out.

READ: Now these questions have to do with your experiences with the training programs at DWS. To clarify – I will use the word "training" but it means any type of training or education program.

*******Introduce RECORDING: Permissions received: YES NO If yes, START NOW**

xJ1. How did you find out you could go to Workforce Services for help with training?

   1 - Parent   3 - Other family   5 – I found it online myself

   2 - Sibling   4 - Friend(s)   6 – Other:

   -1 - Don't Know   7 – Education/training institution

            7a: Name of institution: _____

xJ2. When you applied for training services, did you know what specific type of training program you wanted to pursue?

       1 - Yes   0 - No **(Go to xJ3)**

  xJ2a. What type of program were you pursuing?

xJ3. Did you have a specific institution where you wanted to go for training?   1 – Yes   0 - No **(Go to xJ4)**

    xJ3a. If yes, what institution?

xJ4. What was the main reason you came to DWS for help with training?

xJ5. What was your overall, long term goal when you applied for the training program?

xJ5a. When you first saw the application for the program online, did you feel like the title "Training Application" fit what you were looking for?

         1 – Yes **(Go to xJ6)**   0 - No

   xJ5b. **If no,** What would have made it feel like a better fit for you? [for example a different title?; in a different location on the website, etc.]

xJ6. What barriers or challenges did you experience with the DWS training application process? For example, with things like finding the application, understanding the requirements, submitting paperwork, or anything else?

                    0 – None

Check Box WIOA Group: 1 – Continue 2 – Below	3 – mid p. 23 4 – Go to p. 24
Appropriateness denial letter: Y or N	N/A

xJ7. DWS shows you completed the eligibility process and were approved for funding for the training on about _____.

      Does that sound about right to you?   1 - Yes **(Go to xJ8)**   0 - No   2 – Unsure

      xJ7a.   What does not sound right or are you unsure about? [Note: include their thoughts on when/how they think it happened]

Read: Then things stopped, and either you never met with an employment counselor or you did and it was decided that training was "not appropriate."

xJ8.   Does that sound right to you?   1 – Yes   0 – No   -1 – Don't know

xJ9.   **If yes,** what happened that you didn't meet with an employment counselor or it was decided that training was not right for you at this time?
        If no/DK, what happened that you didn't keep working with DWS?

Go to xJ12

READ: So DWS shows that you completed the eligibility process. Then you met with an employment counselor and had funding approved but never signed up for a training service OR were told that training was "not appropriate."

xJ10: Does that sound right to you?   1 – Yes   0 – No   -1 – Don't know

xJ11.   **If yes,** what happened that you never decided on or were enrolled in a specific training program?
       If no/DK, what happened that you didn't keep working with DWS?

xJ12. Who determined that you would not move forward with the process?

         1- Self   2- DWS Worker   3- Both together   4- Other:

xJ13. What, if anything, could DWS have done to help you move forward and get help with training?

                                         0 – Nothing
Go to xJ29

READ: So DWS shows that you and the employment counselor decided on a training program, but were not able to either start or complete the training program.

xJ14. Does that sound right to you?   1 – Yes   0 – No **(Go to xJ28)** -1 – Don't know **(Go to xJ28)**

xJ5. What type of program were you pursuing?

xJ16. Were you able to start the program?   1 – Yes   0 – No

xJ17. What happened that you were **not able** to *(start/complete)* the training program?

xJ18. What, if anything, could DWS have done to help you (start/complete) the training program?

                                                                    0 – Nothing

CHECK: If did not start – **Go To xJ29**	If Started but did not complete - **Go To xJ22**

Group 4: Client Approved – Enrolled in Funding Stream & Training Program and completed

READ: DWS shows that you have completed your training program. (Congrats!)

xJ19. Does that sound right to you?   1 – Yes   0 – No **(Go to xJ28)**   -1 – Don't know **(Go to xJ28)**

xJ120. What type of program did you complete?

xJ21. Where did you attend training [Name of training institution]:

xJ22. What type of monetary or tangible supports did DWS provide to help you complete the program?
                (circle all that apply)

1 – Paid tuition/fee for program	6 - Gave incentives for progress (youth only)
2 – Paid for books	7 – Paid for required supplies (ex. scrubs, tools)
3 – Paid for Child Care	8 – Pay for things to support school (rent, utilities)
4 – Helped with transportation	9 – Other:
5 – Help finding grants to fund program	

xJ23. In what ways did your worker provide emotional support or encouragement during your training?

                                                                    0 – None given

Group 3 Check: **GO TO xJ29** **Group 4 Check**: Is R currently working?   **Yes** – use first word set   **No –** Use second word set

xJ24. Now that you have completed training, how **involved** has your worker been in helping you find a job? **READ**

    1- Very   2- Somewhat   3- Not very   4- Not at all

xJ25. What more do you wish your worker (*had done or was doing now*) to help you find a job?
                                         0 – Nothing more – I'm done with them
                                         1 – Nothing more – they are doing enough

xJ26. How prepared (*did you feel/do you feel*) to start a job? **(READ)**

     1- Very   2- Somewhat   3- Not very   4- Not at all

xJ27. What more do you wish your worker was doing to help you prepare for employment?

                         0 – Nothing more – I'm done with them
                         1 – Nothing more – they are doing enough

                                 GO TO xJ29

xJ28. How do you believe your training program with DWS ended?

****

xJ29. During your time working with DWS, did anyone ever talk with you about:

	YES (1)	NO (0)	DK (-1)
xJ29a. …..your goals or dreams for your future?	1	0	-1
xJ29b. …..what you were hoping to receive from DWS?	1	0	-1
xJ29c. …..what type of program you wanted to get help with?	1	0	-1
xJ29d. …..the next steps you wanted to take after completing the program?	1	0	-1
xJ29e. …..what supports you might need to be successful in the program?	1	0	-1

xJ30. When you think about the areas I just mentioned, what do you feel like your worker *did really well* in exploring these questions?

                                    0 – Nothing

xJ31. What *more* do you wish your worker would have asked you about or explored with you?
                                  0 – Nothing more

xJ32. Did any DWS worker talk to you about "labor market" information? That would be like giving you information on how many jobs are available in certain fields, how much they pay, where they are etc.?

        1 – Yes   0 – No **(Go to Sec. K)**   -1 – Don't know **(Go to Sec. K)**

     xJ32a. If yes, what kinds of things did you talk about in this discussion?

                                                      STOP RECORDING