United States Department of Agriculture

Evaluation of SNAP Employment and Training Pilots: Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report to Congress

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This annual progress report provides an overview of the SNAP Employment and Training Pilots Evaluation in fiscal year (FY) 2019. Sections I and II provide background information on the pilots and evaluation. Sections III and IV discuss activities that took place in FY 2019; Section III discusses activities related to the pilots, including the end of service provision and plans for sustainability, and Section IV describes activities related to the evaluation, including pilot monitoring and technical assistance, data collection, and reporting. Looking forward, Section V outlines evaluation-related activities scheduled to take place after FY 2019.

I. BACKGROUND

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a critical work support for many low-income people. SNAP's Employment and Training (E&T) program can provide SNAP participants with needed education, training, and support services so they can obtain meaningful employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. SNAP E&T assists SNAP participants in the form of job search support; job skills training; education (basic, occupational); work experience; and workfare.

Section 4022 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 authorized and funded the SNAP E&T pilots, which enabled the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and States to expand SNAP E&T programs and test innovative strategies to connect SNAP participants with good-paying jobs, thereby increasing their incomes and reducing the need for nutrition assistance benefits. This is the fifth annual report to Congress.

A. The pilots

In March 2015, through a competitive solicitation, USDA awarded grants ranging from $8.9 million to $22.3 million to pilots in 10 States: California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington. The pilots offered a range of services, as directed by the legislative mandate. Pilot strategies included lighter-touch approaches (such as resume and cover letter writing, interviewing and communication skills, and job search strategies) as well as more intensive services that connect participants with in-demand and emerging industries using strategies that were tested for the first time among SNAP E&T participants. These included career assessment, certified occupational skills training at community colleges and other institutions, and work-based learning opportunities, such as work experience, subsidized employment, or work study. In most of the States, grantees created new partnerships between State agencies that administer SNAP and other entities including workforce development agencies, employers, community colleges, and community-based organizations.

SNAP participants who enrolled in the pilots were randomly assigned to a treatment group that was offered an enhanced set of services or a control group that could participate in existing SNAP E&T programs or other workforce development programs in the community.

Pilot staff began enrolling SNAP participants into the pilots in 2016. Pilots completed enrollment between July 2017 and September 2018. Four pilots stopped providing services in December 2018, but most continued services into 2019.

B. The evaluation

The Agricultural Act of 2014 funded a rigorous, longitudinal evaluation of the 10 pilots. USDA contracted with Mathematica who, with MDRC, Insight Policy Research, Koné Consulting, and Decision Information Resources (referred to as the evaluation team), conducted the evaluation.

For the evaluation, SNAP participants were randomly assigned into either a treatment group or control group. The evaluation includes four components: (1) an ***impact analysis*** that identifies what works and for whom by examining impacts on employment and earnings, public-assistance receipt, and other outcomes such as food security, health, well-being, and housing; (2) an ***implementation analysis*** that documents the context and operations of each pilot as well as helps to interpret and understand impacts within and across pilots; (3) a ***participation analysis*** that examines the characteristics and service paths of treatment group members, the level of contrast in service receipt between the treatment and control group members, and whether the presence of the pilots and their services or participation requirements affects whether people apply for SNAP or continue to receive SNAP benefits; and (4) a ***benefit-cost analysis*** that estimates the return on each dollar invested.

In FY 2019, the evaluation team continued to collect data from multiple sources to support the evaluation. The primary sources of data on employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and service receipt are administrative records obtained from State and local agencies. Other data sources include baseline information collected from individuals at random assignment; data from surveys of individuals enrolled in the pilot, administered 12 and 36 months after random assignment; qualitative data from interviews with agency, partner, and provider staff, and focus groups with individuals enrolled in the pilot and employers; and cost data provided by pilot staff.

USDA will publish results of the evaluation first through 10 interim pilot evaluation reports and a cross-pilot summary report and later through a final set of evaluation reports. The interim reports (expected publication in 2020) will detail service use and short-term impacts over a 12-month period for individuals enrolled in the pilots between January 2016 and December 2017. Building on interim report findings, the final evaluation reports (expected publication in 2022) will examine the experiences of all individuals enrolled in the pilots and will follow individuals' outcomes over a period of up to 36 months after random assignment. The final reports will also examine the benefits of providing treatment group services relative to their costs.

II. PILOT DESCRIPTIONS

For all pilots, USDA awarded the grant in March 2015 to the State Agency that administers SNAP and oversaw the pilots. State Agencies generally partnered with service providers—such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) agencies, community education or training providers, or community colleges—and non-provider partners—such as leadership councils, or university boards or centers —to help provide services and administer the pilots (Exhibit II.1). For most pilots, the grantee worked with some or all of its partners to plan pilot processes and activities in 2015. States then began enrollment into their pilots between January 2016 and April 2016.

When applying for the pilot grants, the States and their partners often saw the pilots as an opportunity to develop and provide more intensive services than were usually available, filling a gap in existing services. This could include offering more intensive case management, additional support services, work-based learning opportunities, or individualized services that were responsive to each person's specific needs. Some States were expanding their SNAP E&T services to align with what they offered in other programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or WIOA, while others were creating services that did not exist in the pilot areas.

Participation in the majority of the pilots was voluntary, but three—Georgia, Illinois, and Mississippi—administered mandatory programs in some or all of the pilot counties (Exhibit II.1). Under mandatory E&T programs, individuals enrolled in the pilots were required to participate in E&T activities (either pilot activities or activities offered through the existing SNAP E&T program) to retain their SNAP benefits. Those who did not participate—in either the treatment or control group—could be sanctioned for noncompliance, which means they lost their benefits and were ineligible to participate in SNAP (and the pilot) for a State-determined number of months or until they complied with program requirements.

Most of the pilots offered enhanced services in selected areas of the States, but Delaware and Vermont offered services statewide (Exhibit II.1). Pilots that did not offer services statewide generally targeted regions that were most in need of services, had the largest target populations, or had providers who could readily offer enhanced services. The pilot areas ranged from one county in California to 35 counties in Kansas. Most of the pilots served a mix of urban and rural communities, but pilots in Kentucky and Vermont targeted primarily rural areas.

All of the pilots targeted work registrants, but half of the pilots targeted a subset of this population or served additional groups. Georgia and Mississippi targeted able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs), as these individuals were mandatory participants in both States and pilot services could help this group meet their work requirements. Vermont and Washington targeted individuals who had significant barriers to employment such individuals with long-term unemployment, substance use disorders, mental health disorders, criminal histories, or unstable housing. Finally, in addition to work registrants, Illinois offered services to individuals working 30 or more hours per week but needing skill upgrades.

Exhibit II.1 Characteristics of SNAP E&T Pilots

State/ (Grantee agency)	Key partners and providers	Program type	Location	Target population	Key enhanced pilot services
California (California Department of Social Services and Fresno County Department of Social Services)	Reading and Beyond, Fresno County Economic Development Corporation	Voluntary	Fresno County	Work registrants with an emphasis on families with children, those who were unemployed or underemployed, had a criminal history, had limited work experience, and those without a high school diploma	18 months of intensive case management, basic and postsecondary education, training, subsidized employment, job search assistance, support services, job retention services, financial incentives for skill upgrades, and service retention
Delaware (Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services)	Eastside Rising, Food Bank of Delaware, Delaware Technical Community College, KraftHeinz, and Career Team	Voluntary	Statewide	New work registrants	Four tracks; three tracks included industry-specific training and employment (construction, culinary, and manufacturing with subsidized employment); the fourth track offered primarily job placement. Job readiness assistance, financial literacy counseling, criminal background remediation, and support services were available.
Georgia (Georgia Division of Family and Children Services)	Georgia Department of Labor, three Local Workforce Investment Agencies: DeKalb Workforce Services, Atlanta Regional Commission, Coastal Workforce Services	Mandatory	10[a] counties in and near the Atlanta and Savannah metropolitan areas	Able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs)	Job search preparation and training, job search assistance, job readiness workshops, occupational skills training, case management, and support services

State/ (Grantee agency)	Key partners and providers	Program type	Location	Target population	Key enhanced pilot services
Illinois (Illinois Department of Human Services)	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Southern Illinois University Center for Workforce Development, and 24 community-based organizations (providers)	Mandatory and voluntary	33 counties across seven local workforce investment areas (LWIAs)	Unemployed or underemployed work registrants with low skills or limited work experience, including ABAWDs, and individuals working 30 or more hours per week but needing skill upgrades	Assessment and career exploration; case management; adult basic education and GED services; occupational skills training; paid work experience, on-the-job training, and subsidized work; job readiness, job search assistance, and job retention services; and support services
Kansas (Kansas Department for Children and Families)	University of Kansas, Center for Partnerships in Research	Voluntary	35 counties	Work registrants	Intensive case management; job readiness preparation; job search assistance and job development and matching; occupational skills training; soft skills, life skills, and basic education; mental health and substance use disorder counseling; job retention services; and support services
Kentucky (Department of Community Based Services)	Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Kentucky Adult Education, Kentucky Community and Technical College System, and Jobs for the Future	Voluntary	8 rural counties in southeastern Kentucky	Work registrants	Coordinated team-based case management, extensive support services, basic adult education, postsecondary education, training, subsidized work-based learning opportunities, coaching while in training or employment settings

State/ (Grantee agency)	Key partners and providers	Program type	Location	Target population	Key enhanced pilot services
Mississippi (Mississippi Department of Human Services)	Mississippi State University's National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center, East Mississippi Community College, Itawamba Community College, Jones County Junior College, Mississippi Delta Community College, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, and Jobs for Mississippi Graduates	Mandatory	29 counties	ABAWDs	For the Enhanced Community College Services group: a four-week career readiness class; intensive case management; three pathways—academic (basic education or college vocational education), life skills (additional work or behavioral skills), or work (subsidized or unsubsidized employment or internships); and support services For the Basic Community Colleges Services group: three pathways, support services, and more limited case management
Vermont (Vermont Agency of Human Services, Economic Services Division)	Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Vermont Department of Labor, Community Colleges of Vermont, and Community Action Agencies of Vermont	Voluntary	Statewide	New work registrants with self-identified barriers including substance use disorders, mental health disorders, housing instability, and/or criminal histories	Clinical assessment and counseling, ongoing barrier reduction through support services, referral to employment services with a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor or Department of Labor case manager, and referral to classes through Community Colleges of Vermont to obtain a Governor's Career Readiness Certificate

State/ (Grantee agency)	Key partners and providers	Program type	Location	Target population	Key enhanced pilot services
Virginia (Virginia Department of Social Services)	Virginia Community College System	Voluntary	24 localities served by 22 social service agencies and 7 community colleges	Work registrants	Career counseling, intensive case management, digital literacy and job readiness training, group counseling, adult basic education and GED services, occupational skills training leading to certified credentials, and extensive support services
Washington (Washington Department of Social and Health Services)	Washington Employment Security Department, Washington Division of Child Support, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, local workforce development councils, 21 community-based organizations, and three community and technical colleges	Voluntary	4 urban and rural counties (includes Seattle and Spokane metropolitan areas)	New work registrants who were long-term unemployed, homeless, veterans, noncustodial parents with child support arrears, or who had barriers to employment, or limited English proficiency	Comprehensive case management, extensive wraparound and support services to address barriers, a mandatory six-week life skills course (Strategies for Success), and work-based learning opportunities (on-the-job training, subsidized and regular employment, and internships and externships), in addition to all available existing SNAP E&T services

[a]The pilot originally included 10 counties, but Georgia stopped enrolling individuals into the pilot in Cherokee county in January 2017.

III. FY 2019 PILOT ACTIVITIES

During FY 2019, grantees ended enhanced service provision and developed plans for future SNAP E&T service provision. This section summarizes pilot closeout activities and describes the sustainability plans that grantees proposed at the end of the pilot service period.[1]

A. Pilot closeout

Four pilots stopped providing enhanced services in December 2018, and six continued providing enhanced services into 2019 (Exhibit III.1). In fall 2018, the evaluation team discussed grantees' plans for closing out pilot services with pilot administrators. These discussions began during a round of site visits and continued during the evaluation team's regular check-in meetings with grantees through the end of the service period. During this time, most pilots were beginning to discontinue enhanced services and develop plans to provide other SNAP E&T services to individuals who had participated in the pilots and, more broadly, to all SNAP work registrants and E&T participants.

Exhibit III.1. Pilot closeout dates

Grantee	Pilot closeout date
California	December 2018
Delaware	December 2018
Georgia	January 2019
Illinois	February 2019
Kansas	March 2019
Kentucky	April 2019
Mississippi	February 2019
Vermont	December 2018
Virginia	January 2019
Washington	December 2018

B. Plans for sustainability and future service provision

In FY 2019, grantees were developing plans for future SNAP E&T service provision. This section describes the grantees' prospective post-pilot programs and outlines how grantees

[1] Information presented reflects what grantees and providers expected to occur as of the closeout period. The evaluation team has not collected additional information from the grantees about what has actually occurred since pilot closeout.

planned to provide services to former pilot participants and current and future work registrants and other SNAP participants.

1. Post-pilot programs

In a number of States, grantee staff reported that they viewed many of the enhanced services as beneficial but too costly to maintain without the pilot funding. For this reason, some grantees chose to incorporate some, but not all, aspects of the enhanced services into their regularly existing SNAP E&T offerings:

- **Vermont:** The grantee received approval from FNS to expand existing SNAP E&T services to include services from Vermont Department of Labor case managers, including assisted job search, transportation and workforce-related support services, and Vocational Rehabilitation services. The grantee decided not to offer other enhanced services, such as the Governor's Career Readiness Certificate instruction, as part of the existing SNAP E&T services.
- **Washington:** The grantee planned to offer a modified version of the six-week life skills course Strategies for Success as a part of existing SNAP E&T services. The grantee did not plan to offer other aspects of the enhanced services (for example, comprehensive case management).
- **Kansas:** In the months leading up to pilot closeout, Kansas was considering retaining enhanced services as part of an E&T program, but the grantee had not finalized plans to offer enhanced services in the future.

Other States developed new SNAP E&T programs to offer enhanced services to SNAP participants or serve a new subset of SNAP participants. Grantees planned to offer the following programs, which would incorporate aspects of the enhanced pilot services into their design:

- **Delaware:** Delaware planned to develop a new program called WONDER Works, which would incorporate some of the pilot services and would serve both TANF and SNAP participations (using funding from the respective programs). Similar to the pilot, individuals enrolled in WONDER Works would receive intensive support from case managers and job placement staff.
- **Illinois:** Illinois planned to extend enhanced SNAP E&T services to a few counties that were not included in the pilot and eventually to expand services to all counties across the State. A planned new program (SNAP to Success) was to draw in part on the Washington SNAP E&T pilot model.
- **Mississippi:** Mississippi was developing a new program called Skills to Work, which would be implemented by community colleges in the State and offer work readiness and occupational skills training to ABAWDs.
- **Virginia:** Virginia was considering expanding services to provide work experience to some SNAP participants. The State also was considering how community colleges might adopt or incorporate some practices from the pilot into their offerings, such as expanding

support services. Partners were also discussing offering pilot-like services to subsets of SNAP participants at some point in the future on a smaller scale than in the pilot.

Changes in the SNAP environment also necessitated changes to States' post-pilot plans:

- **California:** At the beginning of 2019, part of California's ABAWD waiver expired, meaning that ABAWDs in certain regions of California could thereafter be limited to three months of SNAP benefits in any given 36-month period if they did not meet work requirements. The newly reinstituted requirement led Fresno County to develop a new program focused on the needs of the ABAWD population.
- **Georgia:** Effective January 1, 2019, Georgia ended the mandate that ABAWDs participate in the SNAP E&T program. Instead, the State planned to offer voluntary SNAP E&T services.
- **Kentucky:** Kentucky had no regular SNAP E&T program prior to or during the pilot in the eight pilot counties. At the end of the pilot period, Kentucky did not have plans to expand SNAP E&T services to the pilot area so long as the pilot counties continued to qualify for an ABAWD waiver.

2. Future service provision and the service embargo

Both treatment and control group members in the pilot may participate in States' existing SNAP E&T services after pilot closeout. However, to ensure that the evaluation is able to detect the long-term impacts of the enhanced services, for 36 months after their dates of random assignment, individuals enrolled in the pilots generally may not receive post-pilot services that are more comprehensive than those available to them during the pilot. This is the "embargo period" and helps uphold the integrity of the evaluation design. For example, during the embargo period, individuals in the control group may not receive the types of services the treatment group received if a State continued to offer enhanced services after the pilot ended. However, when the embargo period ends for each SNAP participant in either the treatment or control group, individuals eligible for SNAP E&T services may receive any SNAP E&T services offered in their States.

Toward the end of the pilot service provision period, grantees developed systems to track the embargo period for each individual enrolled in the pilot. Most grantees developed a flag in the management information systems used for SNAP eligibility and benefit determination to identify the individuals who participated in the pilot, whether they were assigned to the treatment or control group, and the date that their embargo period would end. Grantees then made staff aware of these flags and communicated to staff when and how they should check for the flags to determine eligibility for services. For example, grantee staff in Washington provided instruction on how to use the flags during quarterly meetings with providers. Similarly, grantee staff in Mississippi issued a bulletin to county staff, explaining how to implement properly the service embargo.

The services that treatment and control group members can or cannot receive during the embargo period differ by State. Some States, like Vermont and Washington, offered enhanced services

post-pilot through their existing E&T programs. In these States, control group members are not eligible to receive existing E&T services during their embargo periods because the services now offered as part of existing SNAP E&T resemble those offered to the treatment group as a part of the pilot. Participation by control group members in services similar to the services available to treatment group members is likely to reduce the evaluation's ability to detect the long-term impacts of the pilot services. Other States, such as Illinois, did not plan to expand the types of services available through their existing SNAP E&T program in the locations that had been part of the pilot, so it was not necessary to embargo control group members from certain types of services.

After identifying which services individuals in the treatment and control groups would be eligible to receive after the end of pilot service availability, grantees developed plans to transition individuals out of pilot services or into new services. The paths individuals could take as part of the transition varied by State, depending on the services States offered. Generally, grantees provided trainings for staff on how to transition individuals smoothly out of pilot services and, if applicable, into new services.

IV. EVALUATION PROGRESS IN FY 2019

Many evaluation activities took place in FY 2019 as grantees ended service provision and completed the pilots. These included continued monitoring of pilots' performance, collecting a variety of data to address the evaluation's research objectives, conducting interim analyses, and producing interim evaluation reports.

A. Monitoring and technical assistance

In FY 2019, the evaluation team conducted monitoring through periodic conference calls with pilot staff, focusing on pilot operation and evaluation procedures. Through the monitoring, the evaluation team and the grantees discussed ongoing performance, increasing rates of receipt of services and participation in activities, improving communications with providers and partners, and providing requisite data to the evaluation team. As grantees approached the end of their pilots in 2018 and 2019, the evaluation team discussed grantees' plans for ending service provision, closing out the pilot, and upholding the integrity of the evaluation design through careful monitoring of non-pilot services offered to treatment and control group members. Since the end of grantees' pilot service periods, communication with grantees has focused on specific data collection efforts or questions that the grantees had related to pilot closeout, sustainability, and the evaluation.

B. Evaluation data collection

The evaluation requires many types of data to address its research objectives. Some analyses use baseline data collected from individuals before their random assignment to a treatment or control group. The analyses also use participant survey data, administrative records from State and local agencies, qualitative interview data, and cost data (cost workbooks and time use survey data). The evaluation began collecting most types of data in FY 2017 and continued to collect data throughout FY 2018 and FY 2019.

1. Baseline data collection

The evaluation team completed baseline data collection in FY 2018. In FY 2019, the evaluation team reviewed the quality of the data, prepared the data for analysis, and analyzed the data. USDA will present results from this analysis in the interim evaluation reports.

2. Impact data collection

The impact analysis examines the effects of the pilots on employment and earnings, public assistance receipt, and other outcomes such as food security, health, well-being, and housing. It also assesses how impacts vary for different groups of individuals enrolled in the pilots. The primary sources of data on employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and service receipt are administrative records obtained from SNAP, State unemployment insurance (UI), and other agencies. The impact analysis also uses baseline data from individuals after they enroll in and consent to the evaluation and surveys administered to individuals enrolled in the pilots at 12 months and 36 months after random assignment. We describe these data sources further, below.

SNAP administrative data. The evaluation team regularly collects SNAP administrative data from grantees and will continue to do so through 2020. All grantees have submitted SNAP administrative data through November or December 2018. The evaluation team continues to ensure the data files are complete and contain the requisite information for all individuals enrolled in the pilots.

UI wage record data. The evaluation team obtained UI wage record data containing quarterly earnings records from grantees through March or June 2018. State UI agencies will continue to regularly provide quarterly earnings records. For all grantees, the administrative records extend back to more than one year before pilot launch and the evaluation team will collect UI wage records through 2020.

Follow-up survey data. The evaluation team administered surveys to individuals enrolled in the pilots (treatment and control group members) at 12 months after random assignment from January 2017 to December 2018. In all, the evaluation team collected 12-month survey data from more than 18,500 individuals enrolled in the pilots across the 10 grantees. The team began administering 36-month surveys in February 2019. The evaluation team will collect data through December 2020.

3. Implementation data collection

The implementation analysis documents the context and operations of each pilot and helps provide context for and interpret the pilots' impacts. The data come from three rounds of site visits, which include in-depth interviews with pilot staff, focus groups with individuals enrolled in the pilot and employers providing training, observation of operational activities, and document reviews.

The evaluation team originally planned to conduct the third round of site visits in the summer of 2018; however, because many pilots extended their enrollment periods and some extended their service delivery periods, FNS and the evaluation team decided to move the data collection to the fall of 2018. This allowed the evaluation team to obtain more complete information about the close-out of the pilots. The evaluation team began conducting site visits at the end of FY 2018, with this work continuing into FY 2019. The visits included interviews with key pilot staff, interviews with individuals in the treatment group and observations of activities in which they were involved, and focus groups with treatment group members and employers providing training. The third round of interviews focused on changes to services or process in the last year, lessons learned from operating the pilots, and close-out and sustainability plans.

During the site visits, the evaluation team conducted approximately 20 to 30 interviews per site with grantee staff, provider administrators, and provider frontline staff, and with non-provider staff who facilitated the pilots but did not provide direct services to participants. The team also interviewed individuals in the treatment group (two individuals in each of the pilots) to better understand their experiences in the pilots and what challenges they faced participating in training and finding employment. In addition, the evaluation team conducted focus groups with individuals in the treatment group (both those engaged in services and those who had left the pilot before completing services) to learn about the types of services the individuals received,

their participation goals, their perceptions of the pilot services, and the types of barriers they faced. In some pilots, the team also conducted focus groups with employers who provided work-based learning opportunities to explore why they participated in the pilot, their staffing needs, and how well individuals in the treatment group met their needs.

4. Participation data collection

The participation analysis examines the characteristics and service paths of individuals enrolled in the pilot. For each pilot, provider staff documented the types of training, education, and services they provided to each individual enrolled in the treatment group and, in some cases, individuals enrolled in the control group. These data included entry and exit dates for specific E&T activities. Grantees stored this information in their management information system and submitted periodic extracts to the evaluation team for analysis.

In FY2019, the evaluation team received extracts of data from grantees that described participants' receipt of pilot services. The evaluation team cleaned the data, assessed its quality, prepared the data for analysis, and conducted interim evaluation report analyses.

5. Cost data collection

The benefit-cost analysis estimates the return on each dollar invested in each pilot. All participating pilots provide cost data quarterly and complete annual staff time-use surveys for the analysis.

The evaluation team continued to collect cost data in FY 2019 from grantee, partner, and provider organizations. With few exceptions, data collected from grantees, partners, and providers cover the duration of the pilot services. The team developed and provided each pilot with cost data-collection workbooks to collect costs incurred operating the pilots. For the interim reports, the evaluation team processed, assessed the quality of, and analyzed data for all pilots through 2017. Through preliminary data quality assessments, the evaluation team did not identify any issues with the post-2017 cost data that would prevent the evaluation team from performing the planned benefit-cost analysis for each pilot, which the evaluation team will include in the final evaluation report and will cover costs through the end of the pilot.

C. Interim evaluation analysis and reports

Using the data collected, during FY 2019, the evaluation team prepared initial drafts of 10 interim pilot evaluation reports and a cross-pilot summary report for anticipated publication in 2020. The reports will describe 1) how each pilot was implemented; 2) what services individuals received; 3) whether these services led to impacts on individuals' employment, earnings, and other outcomes in the 12-month period following their random assignment into the pilot, and 4) the costs of planning for and operating the pilot through 2017. The following sections provide a brief overview of the content of the interim reports and describe the approaches that the evaluation team used to answer the evaluation's research questions.

1. Introduction

The first chapter of each report will provide an overview of the pilot, including its location within the State, key partners and providers, number of enrolled individuals, existing SNAP E&T services available to the control group, and enhanced services offered to the treatment group under the pilot.

2. Implementation analysis

The second chapter will describe the planning and early implementation of the pilot, covering the period from when the pilot grants were awarded (March 2015) through spring 2017. The evaluation team based findings on data collected through several sources, including telephone calls and in-person interviews with grantee, partner, and provider staff, focus groups with individuals enrolled in the treatment group and employers involved in treatment group services, and case studies of specific individuals' experiences in treatment group services.

The chapter will provide background on the existing SNAP E&T services that State agencies had in place before the pilot began enrollment, if any existed in pilot locations. This information helps explain why the grantee chose to deliver certain types of enhanced services and provides important context for understanding later analyses of contrasts in service receipt between the treatment and control groups. Pilot startup activities will be described, including contracting with partners and providers, beginning enrollment and starting services, and how those services changed over the course of the pilot up to the spring of 2017. The discussion of each pilot's implementation challenges and successes will frame later findings about the services treatment group members received.

3. Participation analysis

Chapter three will summarize the participation analysis, which examines the extent to which treatment group members started any pilot services or activities, the types of services or activities individuals started and completed, the typical order of services and activities, and how long individuals engaged in services and activities. The evaluation team used administrative service use data provided by grantees, partners, and providers to conduct the analysis.

The chapter will examine engagement in services and activities as well as common drop off points. The chapter will present participation rates overall, as well as cumulative participation rates, and examines how long, on average, individuals engaged with the pilot. Rates of participation in each employment and training-related activity, such as job search assistance or training, occupational skills training, basic education, and work-based learning, are examined. The chapter will also explore the type of education and training obtained as well as any degrees or certifications earned.

To understand the full set of pilot services that individuals in the treatment group received, the participation analysis explores the receipt of support services and case management. The report will identify what types of support services participants most often received, the average dollar amount of support services received, the number of case management contacts received overall

and per month, and the modes of case management contacts. Support services could include assistance with transportation, personal care, and training or work supplies that were necessary to help individuals reduce their barriers and promote their involvement in activities and employment.

4. Difference in service receipt for the treatment and control groups

Chapter four will describe the analysis of differences in engagement and service receipt between treatment and control group members. Without a meaningful difference in the type, frequency, or amount of services received by the treatment and control groups within a pilot, impacts on labor market and public assistance outcomes are unlikely to result.

Like the participation analysis, the analysis of differences between treatment and control groups in service receipt will first present participation rates in services overall, followed by participation rates in specific employment and training activities, including job search training and assistance, job readiness activities, general job skills training, occupational skills training, education, and work-based learning activities. The analysis of service contrasts also explores treatment-control differences in the receipt of support services and case management contacts.

5. Impacts on employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and well-being outcomes

Chapter five will examine whether treatment group members' engagement and service receipt translated into short-term impacts on employment and receipt of public assistance and/or earnings, job characteristics, food security, health, well-being, and housing. To estimate how the treatment group services affected these outcomes, the chapter will compare average outcomes of the treatment group and the control group over the 12 months following random assignment, using data from State UI wage records, SNAP administrative data, and 12-month follow-up survey data.

Analyses estimate the impact of enhanced services on employment-related outcomes, such as overall employment rate, quarterly earnings, number of hours worked, and the characteristics of current jobs. A second set of analyses estimates the impact of enhanced services on individuals' receipt of public assistance, such as participation in SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid. The evaluation team estimated impacts by comparing outcomes for treatment and control group members over a 12-month follow-up period.

6. Analysis of pilot costs

Chapter six will describe the overall costs of planning and implementing the enhanced services through calendar year 2017. Grantees, partners, and providers provided cost data once for the planning period—the period of time before enrollment into the pilot began—and quarterly during service delivery.

The chapter will present total costs and costs by the FNS grant or through in-kind funding leveraged from other sources. The chapter also describes costs by category: staff, direct service, supplies and equipment, and overhead and operating costs. In addition, the analysis estimates the

costs of specific treatment group services, such as case management, occupational skills training, and work-based learning opportunities. The report will present the time direct service staff reported spending on key activities such as recruiting and enrolling individuals into the pilot, providing case management, and administering assessments.

7. Conclusion

In addition to summarizing key findings from earlier chapters, Chapter seven describes the additional questions that will be answered in the final report. Together, the interim and final reports will provide key information regarding the short- and long-term effectiveness of the enhanced services on individuals' labor market and public benefit outcomes.

V. EVALUATION-RELATED ACTIVITIES FROM FY 2020 TO FY 2021

The evaluation team plans the following evaluation activities for FY 2020 to FY 2021, organized according to the pilot's four evaluation objectives and the reporting of evaluation findings.

A. Impact data collection

- **Follow-up survey data collection.** The evaluation team will continue administering the 36-month follow-up surveys to people who responded to the 12-month survey. The evaluation team will administer this survey through December 2020.
- **SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid administrative data collection.** The evaluation team will continue to collect administrative data describing SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid program participation for all grantees through December 2020.
- **UI wage records data collection.** The evaluation team will continue to obtain quarterly UI wage data from State UI agencies for each of the 10 grantees that covers employment through at least the spring of 2020. The team will continue to clean and prepare the UI wage records to use in the impact analysis.

B. Implementation data collection

- The evaluation team completed primary data collection and does not plan to collect new data for this component. The evaluation team will analyze information from the third round of implementation data collection site visits and incorporate a discussion of key takeaways into the final evaluation reports.

C. Participation (service receipt) data collection

- The evaluation team completed primary data collection and does not plan to collect new data for this component.

D. Cost data collection

- The evaluation team completed primary data collection and does not plan to collect new data for this component. The evaluation team will process and clean the cost data and will analyze the data as part of the final report analysis. It will also conduct the full cost-benefit analysis and present findings in the final evaluation report.

E. Reviewing and reporting study findings

- **Congressional report.** The evaluation team will share study findings through an annual progress report to Congress. FNS has submitted four prior reports, each describing accomplishments and challenges during the fiscal year and activities planned for the remaining years of the evaluation. The evaluation team will prepare the sixth and final report to Congress in FY 2020.

- **Technical working group meeting.** The evaluation team conducted the second of three technical working group meetings in Washington, D.C., in September 2019. (The first meeting took place in 2015.) The second meeting focused on interim findings. The third meeting will take place in 2021 and will focus on final findings.
- **Reports.** For each pilot, the evaluation team will share study findings through interim and final study reports. The interim reports will detail service use and short-term impacts over a 12-month period, while final evaluation reports will examine outcomes over a period of up to 36-months after random assignment. Interim and final study reports will synthesize findings across pilots. Each report will discuss all four study components—impact, implementation, participation, and cost analyses. (The interim reports will include a cost analysis and the final reports will include the full cost-benefit analysis.). USDA will publish the interim and final evaluation reports in 2020 and 2022, respectively.