

STUDY PROFILE

Individual Placement and Support for Individuals Receiving TANF or SNAP Benefits

by Madelyne Lynam and Caroline Mage

Four community-based programs are offering Individual Placement and Support (IPS) employment services to a subset of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. These services are being evaluated as part of the Building Evidence on Employment Strategies (BEES) Project.

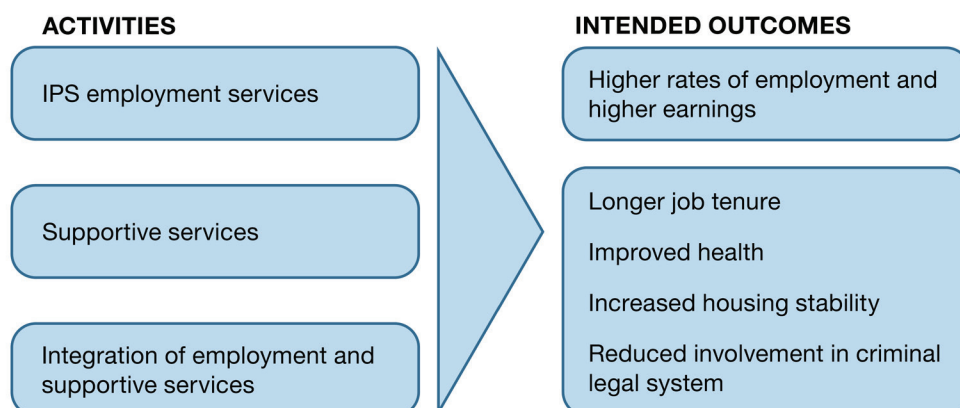
Finding and maintaining stable employment can be a challenge for many people including those receiving TANF or SNAP benefits, some of whom may be facing systemic and individual-level barriers such as mental health issues, housing instability, limited education, legal system involvement, and domestic violence.

The IPS employment services model was originally designed for people with serious mental illness receiving services through community mental health centers, and there is [extensive evidence](#) of the model's effectiveness for this population. Building on that earlier research, the IPS TANF-SNAP study is examining the effectiveness of the model for a different population, by evaluating four programs that provide IPS services to individuals receiving TANF or SNAP benefits.

The four programs in the study tailor IPS employment services to meet the unique needs of TANF or SNAP recipients. The four programs are:

- [Compass Career Solutions](#). Compass Career Solutions offers employment programs and services throughout Washington State. Compass is delivering IPS services as part of the BEES Project in Spokane, Washington.
- [CORE Health](#). Headquartered in Cowlitz County, Washington, CORE Health is a nonprofit behavioral health service provider offering employment and mental health services for adults and youth and treatment for substance use disorder (SUD). CORE is delivering IPS services as part of the BEES Project in Cowlitz and Lewis counties.
- [Sunrise Services](#). Sunrise Services operates in five counties in Western Washington State. Offerings include home care and treatment for SUD. Sunrise is delivering IPS services as part of the BEES Project in Snohomish County.
- [Impact Behavioral Health Partners](#). Impact Behavioral Health Partners is a social service organization that offers employment services, clinical support, and permanent supportive housing services to communities in the Chicago metropolitan area.

IPS TANF-SNAP Logic Model



THE EVALUATION

MDRC, in partnership with Abt Associates and MEF Associates, is evaluating the IPS programs that are being implemented in Washington State and Chicago. The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is funding the study through the BEES Project. BEES is part of OPRE’s [Innovative Strategies for Addressing Employment Barriers Portfolio](#), which seeks to rigorously evaluate the next generation of employment strategies and is partnering with the Social Security Administration on select evaluations, including this one. The IPS Employment Center, which developed the IPS model, is advising on delivery of IPS services at the four study sites.

The evaluation presents an opportunity to learn whether and how this implementation of the IPS model can help individuals who are receiving TANF or SNAP benefits, including its impact on employment and earnings. The evaluation will include an impact analysis, an implementation study, and a cost study:

- The **impact analysis** will use a [randomized controlled trial design](#), which evaluates the effectiveness of a program by assigning individuals at random to a program group and offering them the program services, or to a control group that is not offered the program services but can access existing services in the community. The outcomes for these two groups will be compared over a 15-month period to determine whether IPS increased employment, earnings, and job tenure among

program participants. Additionally, the study will examine whether IPS participants saw reductions in TANF or SNAP benefits, were less likely to apply for Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance, experienced fewer arrests and convictions, achieved greater housing stability, and saw improvements in physical and mental well-being after enrollment.

- The **implementation study** will use various data sources—including participant, staff, and partner interviews and program participation data—to document and gain a better understanding of program operations and contextual factors affecting service delivery.
- The **cost study** will address the cost of implementing the IPS program for TANF and SNAP recipients.

LOOKING AHEAD

Study enrollment began in July 2022 and will continue through July 2024. Data collection and analysis will continue until 2026. In addition to collecting administrative data, the evaluation team will administer a follow-up survey 15 months after study enrollment to both program group members and control group members, covering domains such as service receipt, health, and material hardship. Interviews with program staff members and study participants will provide insights into how the program is being implemented at each site. The evaluation team anticipates releasing findings based on these analyses in 2028.

Anticipated Timeline of Project Activities

