

RESEARCH REPORT

Supporting Young Parents

Impacts of the New York City Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) on Young Parents' Outcomes

Theresa Anderson Alex Carther

with Alan Dodkowitz

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Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
Errata	v
Response Letter from the NYC P3 Collaborative	vi
Supporting Young Parents	1
Summary of the NYC P3 Program	2
Participant Characteristics	3
Differences in Activities and Impacts on Outcomes	5
In-Program Services	6
Education and Training, Employment, and Connection	8
Educational Credentials	12
Insights from the Data Walk	13
Discussion	14
Lessons from Program Successes	14
Lessons Learned along the Way	15
Programmatic Suggestions	15
Structural Challenges	16
Methods	17
Impact Evaluation	17
Employment and Earnings Outcomes	19
Stakeholder Data Walk	19
Notes	21
References	23
About the Authors	24
Statement of Independence	25

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Errata

This report was corrected on April 7, 2022. In figure 4, a cell reference error had produced incorrect x-axis labels. The labels now correctly read “Second quarter,” “Fourth quarter,” and “Any quarter.”

Response Letter from the NYC P3 Collaborative

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, the Mayor's Office of Youth Employment, and the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity Response to Evaluation of the Performance Partnership Pilot Evaluation

March 2022

In 2014, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, launching the Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) initiative. The P3 initiative allowed grantees to pool funding from various federal sources to test innovative program models to improve outcomes for youth who were out of school and out of work, and provided grantees with flexibility by easing some program requirements. New York City applied for a P3 grant, proposing an enhancement to federally funded Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Out-of-School Youth (OSY) services to serve the needs of young parents who were out of school and out of work.

New York City was awarded P3 funding in fall 2016, and starting in September 2017, the program enrolled 50 young parents who lived in NYC, were already enrolled in WIOA OSY programming, and were between the ages of 17 and 24. WIOA OSY works with young people to connect them with educational and training credentials and opportunities for up to one year. The NYC P3 initiative enhanced WIOA OSY supports in three key ways:

- Services were extended from one to up to two years.
- A child care navigator connected participants' children to child care, provided parenting support, and delivered additional supportive services.
- Programming was supported by multiple federal funding sources and had modified program performance monitoring metrics.

The NYC P3 program was spearheaded by a group of NYC offices and agencies that formed the P3 Collaborative: the Department of Youth and Community Development, the Administration for Children's Services, the Mayor's Office of Youth Employment, the Department of Education, the Children's Cabinet, and the NYC Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity. The program was implemented by Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT), a workforce development nonprofit, at two of their Brooklyn locations.

The evaluation of the NYC P3 program was conducted by the Urban Institute, which included a qualitative implementation study and a participant outcomes analysis published in April 2021, as well as an exploratory impact study. The researchers also hosted a Data Walk in April 2021 with NYC program and policy stakeholders from NYC agencies, nonprofit service providers, and educational institutions to share study findings and solicit input and feedback. The April 2021 report found that the program was implemented successfully despite challenges, and that the majority of participants recorded skills gains and achieved some educational or training credential during the program.

For the exploratory impact study, the research team used a quasi-experimental analysis to compare the outcomes of NYC P3 participants to participants in standard WIOA OSY services. The research team found that P3 participants were:

- more likely to complete occupational training and participate in other education and job-oriented program services;
- over four-and-a-half times more likely to complete a high school equivalency credential;
- more likely to be in education or training in the second quarter after exiting the program; and
- more likely to earn secondary and other credentials within a year after program exit.

Though the researchers did not observe any significant impacts on employment or earnings in the 18 months after program exit, findings around increased participation in other services and increased educational and training credential attainment suggest that P3 participants may have not been seeking employment in the follow-up period.

One finding of the study was that while the participants benefited from having a child care navigator to connect them to programming, they reported that the child care options available did not fit parents' needs, and in some cases, could create hurdles for parents. Common issues included complex application processes, long application timelines, limited infant slots, unanticipated out-of-pocket costs, and limited availability for low-income working parents. In total, only 34 percent of P3 participants used publicly funded child care while they were enrolled in the P3 initiative. One bright spot in the effort to secure child care was the NYC DOE District 79 LYFE centers in public high schools, which serve the children of DOE students and provide early childhood education to infants and toddlers. Thanks to a partnership with OBT, P3 participants were able to secure subsidized child care through the LYFE centers and had the opportunity to continue child care after program participation if they were enrolled in an education or training program.

While NYC P3 participants had positive outcomes in education and training, the small size of the program and single provider means any analysis is exploratory. Despite this, the findings suggest the NYC P3 program should be expanded in order to further explore the navigator model and its impacts on young parents who are out of school and out of work.

The P3 collaborative is exploring options to expand the P3 initiative model to include justice-involved, housing-insecure, and foster care youth. Any replication of P3 will be informed by this study and the recommendations put forward by the Urban Institute. Success for the program, however, also rests on a child care system for low-income participants with young children that is accessible, available, and high quality. This evaluation demonstrates that our current child care system lacks the resources to meet the demand for services, and that the system is burdensome for parents to navigate— even those being supported by a trained child care navigator. Child care is an essential service for many, and we look forward to working to improve access to child care for all New Yorkers.

The Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) is committed to investing in and studying navigator models that help support low-income residents in easily accessing the array of services that are available to them. The P3 study demonstrates that tailored service navigation support can connect participants to crucial services that increase their likelihood of success. The P3 initiative is just one example of programs and products that NYC Opportunity has supported that guide participants through resources to support them. This includes [Connections to Care](#), a program that reduces barriers to receiving mental health supports in community-based settings, and innovative digital tools, such as [AccessNYC](#), [GrowingUpNYC](#), [GenerationNYC](#), [Mental Health for All](#), and [WorkingNYC](#), which connect New Yorkers to benefits, programs, and resources. In the coming years, NYC Opportunity looks forward to piloting new programs and products that incorporate service navigation after we complete a research phase.

The Department of Youth and Community Development has already begun to use findings from the P3 pilot to inform other youth workforce development program models, including the Advance & Earn and NYC Unity Works programs. While these programs target different portions of the opportunity youth population, both include navigators and extended program timeframes to support comprehensive service delivery and participant retention in programs. It is anticipated that these findings will also inform the program model put forth in the upcoming Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) concept paper and request for proposal (RFP) for Out of School Youth programs.

The Mayor's Office of Youth Employment (MOYE), alongside NYC Opportunity and DYCD, has a keen interest in navigator-based service delivery to workforce programs for youth and young adults. In addition to supporting the Parent Empowerment Program and Unity Works, MOYE piloted a program called CareerLift to help invest in job retention and advancement services that reduce worker turnover, saving employers time and money and helping low-income workers stabilize their circumstances and build toward long-term success. Using lessons from this program, the city can work with employers to understand and address drivers of high turnover while connecting workers to wraparound services that can remove barriers to ongoing employment, such as child care, transportation, and housing.

This evaluation adds to a strong knowledge base on how to meet the needs of young people who are out of school and out of work. We will learn from this and other studies to continue developing initiatives to support our city's young parents and youth more broadly.

New York City Department of Youth and Community Development
Mayor's Office of Youth Employment
Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity

Supporting Young Parents

In New York City, the problem of early pregnancy and childbearing is acute. In 2018, there were over 2,800 children born to mothers ages 15 to 19 in the city.¹ Neighborhoods with poverty rates above 30 percent have a teen pregnancy rate of nearly seven percent, more than triple that of neighborhoods in the city with a less than 10 percent poverty rate (Yunzal-Butler et al. 2017). The city has nearly 60 youth programs, only a few of which target young parents (Disconnected Youth Task Force 2020). The city government has sought new ways to create opportunities for job training and placement to help young parents advance their education and skills and find permanent work.

This brief presents findings from an exploratory impact evaluation of the New York City (NYC) Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) program, an effort to enhance existing youth workforce services for young parents. NYC P3 extended program eligibility, added child care navigation and support, and offered flexibility in program financing. The NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) led the NYC P3 effort, coordinating a collaborative of six city-level agencies—called the P3 Collaborative—to run the pilot demonstration for young parents.² Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow delivered the NYC P3 services at two Brooklyn locations: Bushwick and Sunset Park.³ The intervention enhanced existing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Out-of-School Youth (OSY) programming.

Using a quasi-experimental analysis, we find that the NYC P3 participants were

- more likely to complete occupational training and participate in other education and job-oriented program services,
- over four-and-a-half times more likely to complete a high school equivalency credential,
- more likely to be in education or training in the second quarter after exiting the program, and
- more likely to earn secondary and other credentials within a year after exit.

NYC P3 participants earned high school equivalency credentials nearly four months sooner than comparison group members, on average.

We do not see significant impacts on employment or earnings in any of the six quarters after exit. One explanation is that participants might not have been seeking work in the follow-up period if they were enrolled in education and training. Still, NYC P3 offers program and policy opportunities to help young people build connections to employment.

We also summarize reactions and insights from a spring 2021 Data Walk⁴ in which city-level stakeholders responded to preliminary results and reflected on policy implications.

Summary of the NYC P3 Program

The federal P3 initiative was launched in 2014 following passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act. This initiative “offer[s] a unique opportunity to test innovative, cost-effective, and outcome-focused strategies for improving results for disconnected youth.”^{5,6} P3 allows grantees to blend multiple sources of funding from several different areas into one source and develop new means of serving disconnected youth. For this initiative, pilot sites can use funding from the US Department of Education, US Department of Labor, US Department of Health and Human Services, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the US Department of Justice, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The federal government offers additional flexibility to ease certain program requirements.⁷

New York City received a P3 grant as part of the third round of federal funding, issued in fall 2016. Between September 2017 and January 2019 (the study period), the NYC P3 program enrolled 50 young fathers and mothers between the ages of 17 and 24 living in the city.⁸ Each of these young parents enrolled in federally funded WIOA OSY services to obtain high school equivalency credentials, vocational training, and further employment and educational opportunities. OSY services include education and training, postsecondary bridging, various support services, internship opportunities, and career services, typically offered for up to one year.

The Bushwick and Sunset Park locations of Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow offered the NYC P3 program to young parents enrolled in their WIOA OSY services. As part of NYC P3, participants were offered three enhancements to the existing WIOA OSY offerings:

1. OSY services were extended from one to up to two years.
2. A child care navigator linked participants’ children to child care slots, provided parenting support, and delivered additional supportive services.
3. Programming was supported by multiple sources of federal funds and waivers, along with modified metrics to measure program performance

The child care navigator worked with a smaller caseload of participants than traditional WIOA case managers: 25 youth per navigator versus a typical caseload of 40 to 60 youth per case manager.

Navigators helped young parents in NYC P3 programming identify child care options, taught parenting workshops, and offered additional supportive services.⁹ A more complete description of the program and the problem it was established to address appears in Anderson, Carther, and Dodkowitz (2021).

Box 1 summarizes our research methods for the NYC P3 evaluation.

BOX 1

Summary of Research Methods

The Urban Institute's NYC P3 evaluation was informed by the following activities:

- **A qualitative implementation study:** This involved two rounds of site visits (June 2018 and May 2019), including interviews and focus groups with staff and participants, as well as regular discussions with the NYC P3 Collaborative.
- **A descriptive participation and outcomes study:** Using city administrative data, we described participant characteristics and mapped participant experiences and outcomes.
- **An exploratory impact study:** Using city administrative data, we conducted quasi-experimental propensity score matching to understand how participant outcomes compared with a similar group of WIOA OSY youth who did not participate in the program. The research was exploratory because the program pilot was small, with 50 enrollees in the evaluation period.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** We conducted a Data Walk in April 2021 to share preliminary findings with 26 program and policy stakeholders from NYC agencies, educational institutions, and nonprofit service providers. A Data Walk is an engaging session with program stakeholders (and sometimes also participants) to share preliminary research findings and solicit reactions and insights.

Note: A more detailed description of findings from the implementation and descriptive outcomes study appears in Anderson, Carther, and Dodkowitz (2021). More detail about the impact study methods and stakeholder engagement methods appear in the methods section.

Participant Characteristics

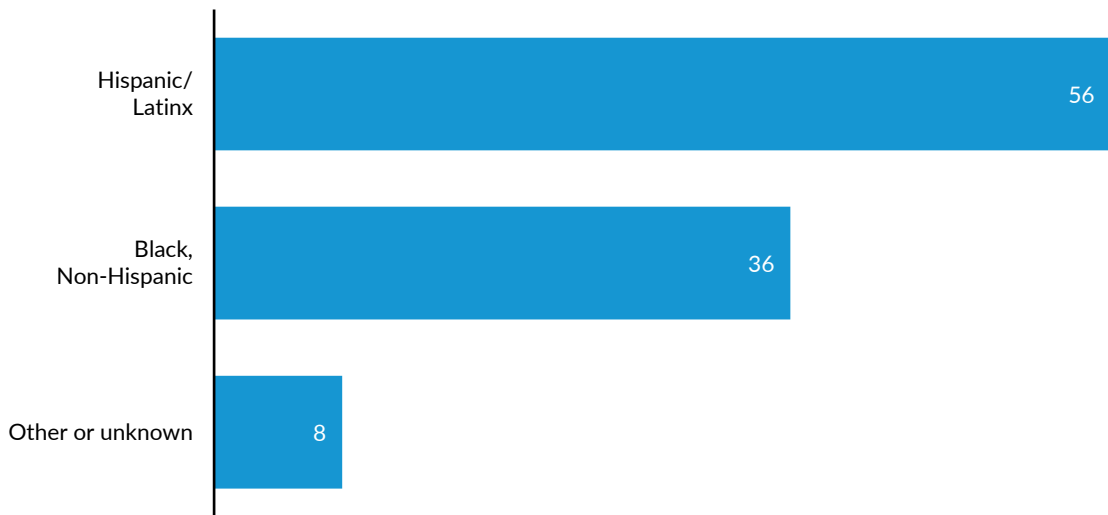
The NYC P3 program served 50 participants, who enrolled between September 2017 and January 2019 and continued to be served as late as June 2019. Participants were mostly female (88 percent). During the Data Walk discussion of preliminary findings, a stakeholder inquired about why so many participants were female. Program administrators clarified that when young people are parenting, the young woman is the one who tends to seek services and identify as the primary caregiver. The program did conduct outreach to fatherhood-serving organizations. NYC P3 saw more men enroll in the first year than in the second, though administrators are unsure of the reason. Urban Institute

researchers also noted that women are more likely to enroll in education and training programs, particularly programs focused on academics, such as high school completion and college enrollment.¹⁰

Participants represented various racial and ethnic groups. As summarized in figure 1, over half of the participants (56 percent) were Hispanic/Latinx, just over one-third (36 percent) were non-Hispanic Black/African American, and the remainder identified with another or an unknown race or ethnicity. Figure 2 shows that participants ranged from 17 to 24 years old at enrollment, with a median age of 21. On average, participants who identified as non-Hispanic Black/African American were slightly more likely than participants identified with other races and ethnicities to be younger than 20 years old.¹¹ Fewer than three participants had a disability, three (6 percent) were identified as homeless or runaway youth, and fewer than three were in foster care at program entry. Three-quarters of participants (76 percent) were unmarried parents; the remainder did not have this designation in the city's data system.

FIGURE 1
NYC P3 Participants' Race and Ethnicity

Percent

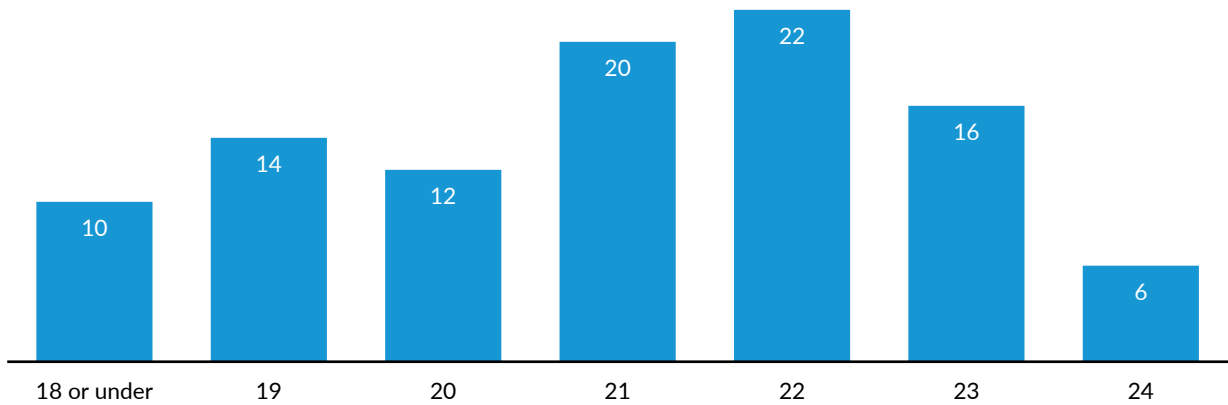


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Source: NYC Department of Youth and Community Development Capricorn data system.

Note: *n* = 50. Other or unknown race/ethnicity comprises the following racial categories: White, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, and unknown. NYC P3 = New York City Performance Partnership Pilot.

FIGURE 2
NYC P3 Participants' Age at Program Entry
Percent



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Source: NYC Department of Youth and Community Development Capricorn data system.

Note: n = 50. NYC P3 = New York City Performance Partnership Pilot.

None of the 50 participants were enrolled in school at the time of program entry. None had a high school diploma or equivalent, though all had completed at least a year of secondary school, with the highest completed grade ranging from 9th to 11th. Eighty-two percent of participants had low basic skill levels (called “deficient” by WIOA terminology), which meant they had computing or English reading or writing skills at or below the 8th grade level, or they were unable to compute, problem solve, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function in a job. In addition, all NYC P3 participants were identified as having low-income status, and none were employed at the time of program entry. None were justice involved (“ex-offender status” by WIOA terminology) at program entry, and none were flagged as English-language learners.

Differences in Activities and Impacts on Outcomes

Using quasi-experimental impact estimation methods, detailed in the methods section, we examine differences in the program activities NYC P3 participants chose and the impact of participation on the outcomes listed in box 2. This analysis compares NYC P3 participant activities and outcomes with a well-matched comparison group of young parents in WIOA OSY who were not in the NYC P3 program. The comparison group and NYC P3 participant group were equivalent at baseline on all characteristics included in the model.

Because the number of participants was small—only 50—this impact analysis is exploratory. It complements and provides additional insight on earlier mixed-methods research about the NYC P3 program (Anderson, Carther, and Dodkowitz 2021). Future impact research on a larger group may produce different findings. We also do not estimate subgroup impacts because of the small sample size.

BOX 2

Activities and Outcomes Examined in Exploratory Impact Analysis

We considered whether an NYC P3 participant

- completed any occupational training while in the program,
- received other program services (financial literacy services, educational achievement services, labor market information, work experience services, and postsecondary transition and preparatory activities),
- was in education or training in the second quarter after exit,
- was in education or training in the fourth quarter after exit,
- was in education or training in the second *or* fourth quarter after exit,
- was employed in each of the first through sixth quarters after exit,
- was employed *or* in education or training in *any* of the four quarters after exit,
- had earned a secondary (high school) credential by the fourth quarter after exit,
- had earned an occupational credential by the fourth quarter after exit,
- had earned any other credential by the fourth quarter after exit, and
- had earned *any* credential by the fourth quarter after exit.

In addition, we examined participants' average earned income in each of the first through sixth quarters after exit.

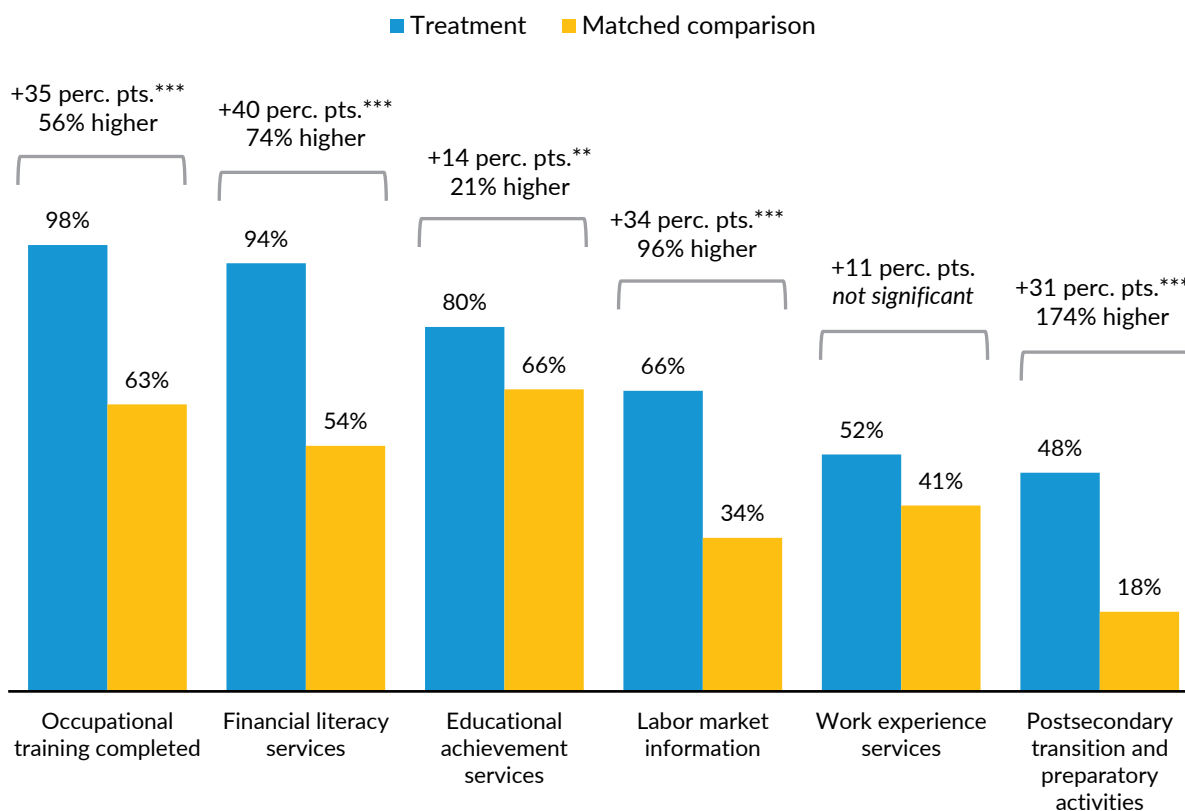
Note: A more detailed description of methods and findings from the implementation and descriptive outcomes study appears in Anderson, Carther, and Dodkowitz (2021).

In-Program Services

As described in the NYC P3 implementation and outcome report (Anderson, Carther, and Dodkowitz 2021), NYC P3 parents participated in a wide range of education and job-oriented services. Relative to the comparison group, NYC P3 participants were more likely to complete occupational skills training and engage in financial literacy services,¹² educational achievement services (such as tutoring and

study skills training), labor market information, and postsecondary transition and preparatory activities (figure 3). Notably, NYC P3 participants were 35 percentage points more likely to complete an occupational skills training, 56 percent higher than the comparison group rate, and 31 percentage points more likely to participate in postsecondary transition and support services, almost three times the comparison group rate. In addition, all NYC P3 participants and all members of the comparison group received general support services, general youth services, and youth follow-up services (not graphed).¹³

FIGURE 3
Impact of NYC P3 Participation on Enrollment in Education and Employment Services while in WIOA OSY Programming



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Source: NYC Department of Youth and Community Development Capricorn data system.

Note: $n = 50$ in the treatment group and an equal number of weighted cases in the comparison group. Impact estimates come from propensity-score matching with three nearest neighbors, with replacement (see methods section). Impact estimates may not equal the difference between the treatment and matched comparison group means because of rounding.

NYC P3 = New York City Performance Partnership Pilot; perc. pts. = percentage points; WIOA OSY = Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Out-of-School Youth.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Additionally, 53 percent of NYC P3 participants completed a 100-hour internship, and 8 percent completed two internships. Though all WIOA OSY youth may complete internships, internship participation data are not available for the comparison group. Attendees at the Data Walk discussed why some participants completed two internships while others did not complete any. Program administrators clarified that the internships were contingent on a young person's original goals and interests. They noted that a second internship was helpful for young people who wanted to try different things and explore new opportunities. Some participants were unable to complete an internship because of timing—because enrollment was rolling, some participants who enrolled in the second year could not fit in an internship. Participants may also have chosen to focus on other services that aligned more with their goals in lieu of an internship.

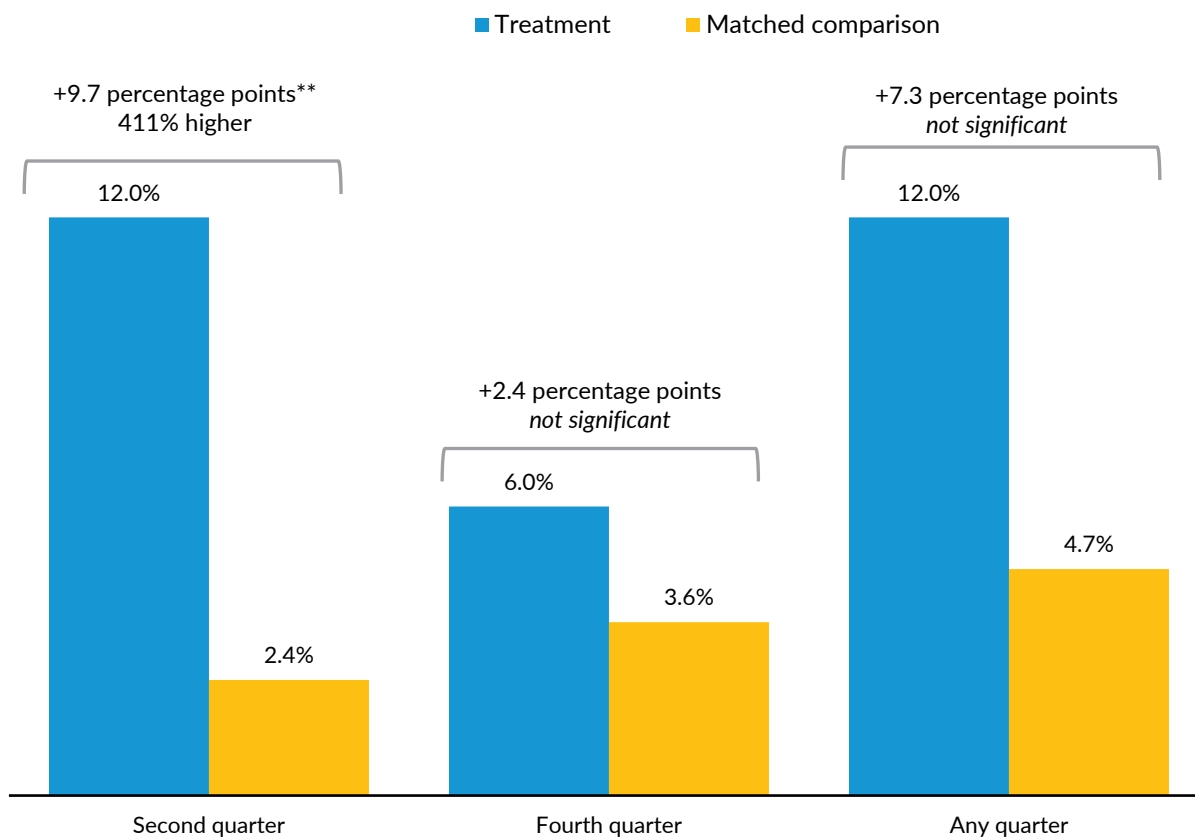
Finally, 34 percent of participants used publicly funded child care while enrolled in NYC P3 programming. Data on child care receipt are not available for the comparison group. Data Walk participants further clarified the child care offerings, which was a point of confusion for participants: there was one free child care option, while other options required parents to contribute a small subsidy, which some were unable to afford. Enrolling in subsidy-based child care may also have triggered a citywide benefits review, which some parents were reluctant to accept. Program operators also learned that proximity of child care to the family's home and the parents' school mattered, meaning the offerings were not appealing to everyone.

Education and Training, Employment, and Connection

We track participant outcomes for four to six quarters after program exit. Data on education and training participation are only available in the second and fourth quarters after exit, while employment and earnings are tracked for each of the six quarters. NYC P3 participants were 9.7 percentage points more likely to be in education or training in the second quarter after exit, which is statistically significant and over 400 percent higher (i.e., more than five times higher) than the comparison group, of whom very few were in education or training (figure 4). While NYC P3 participants were more likely to be in education or training in the fourth quarter and any quarter, these differences were not statistically significant (which means we cannot be confident the differences are not actually zero).

FIGURE 4

Impact of NYC P3 Participation on Probability of Being Enrolled in Education or Training in the Second Quarter, Fourth Quarter, and Any Quarter after Program Exit



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Source: NYC Department of Youth and Community Development Capricorn data system.

Note: $n = 50$ in the treatment group and an equal number of weighted cases in the comparison group. Impact estimates come from propensity-score matching with three nearest neighbors, with replacement (see methods section). Impact estimates may not equal the difference between the treatment and matched comparison group means because of rounding.

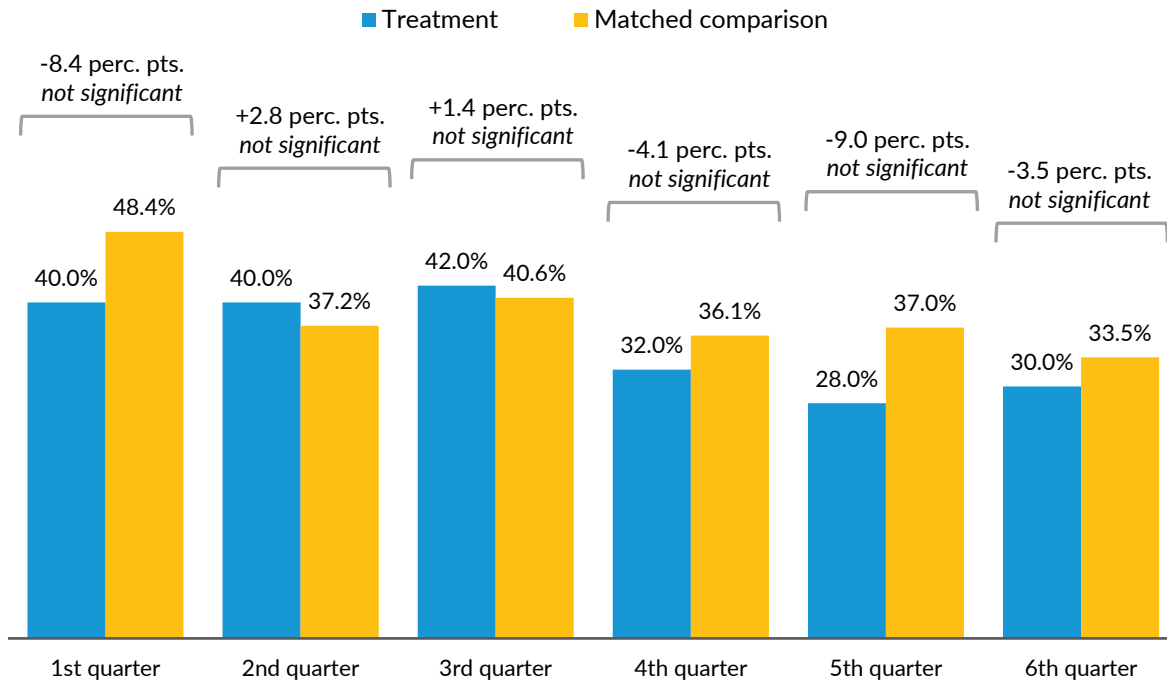
NYC P3 = New York City Performance Partnership Pilot.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

P3 participants were not more likely to be employed in any quarter after exit (figure 5). Though there are some slight differences between groups, they are not in a consistent direction and none are statistically significant. We may not expect to see employment effects if participants were not seeking work in the follow-up period because they were enrolled in education and training.

FIGURE 5

Impact of NYC P3 Participation on Probability of Being Employed in Each of the Six Quarters after Program Exit



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Source: New York State Department of Labor wage records.

Note: $n = 50$ in the treatment group and an equal number of weighted cases in the comparison group. Impact estimates come from propensity-score matching with three nearest neighbors, with replacement (see methods section). Impact estimates may not equal the difference between the treatment and matched comparison group means due to rounding.

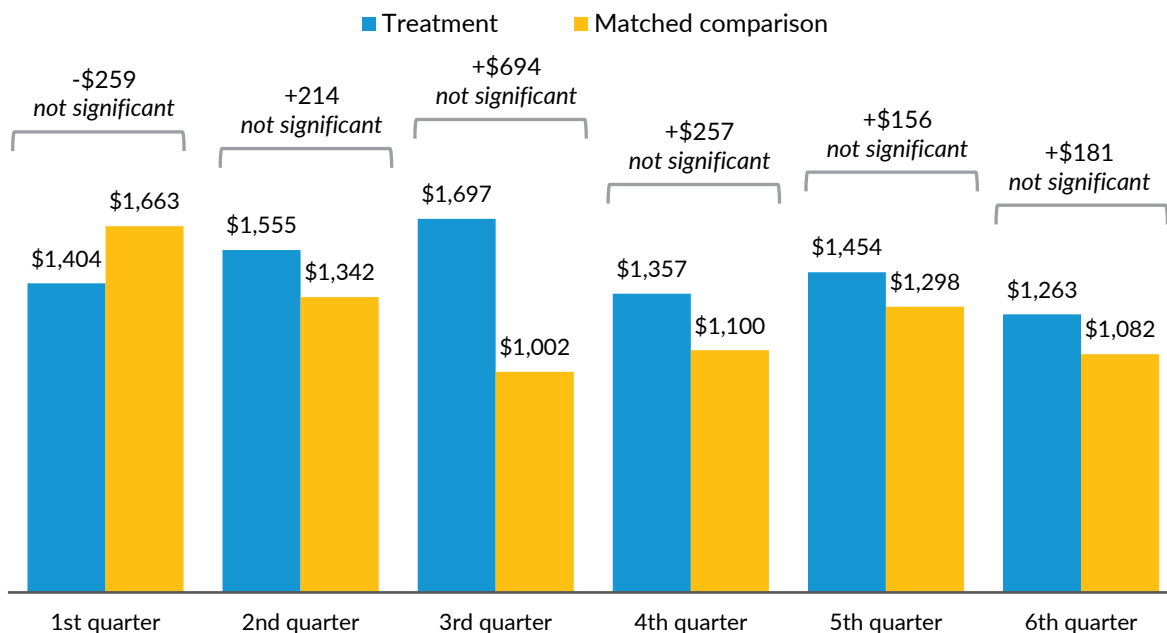
NYC P3 = New York City Performance Partnership Pilot; perc. pts. = percentage points.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

P3 participants also did not earn significantly more than the comparison group members in any quarter after exit (figure 6). (Earnings estimates include those with no earnings, capturing both entry into the labor market and earnings among those employed.) These quarterly earnings translate into very low wages, even accounting for unemployed P3 participants and comparison group members being included in the averages. *Among those employed*, average earnings for any given group in any given quarter ranged between \$2,470 and \$5,200.

FIGURE 6

Impact of NYC P3 Participation on Earned Income in Each of the Six Quarters after Program Exit



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Source: New York State Department of Labor wage records.

Note: $n = 50$ in the treatment group and an equal number of weighted cases in the comparison group. Impact estimates come from propensity-score matching with three nearest neighbors, with replacement (see methods section). Impact estimates may not equal the difference between the treatment and matched comparison group means because of rounding.

NYC P3 = New York City Partnership Pilot.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

P3 participants were also not significantly more likely to be connected to education/training or employment when looking across all four quarters (not graphed).

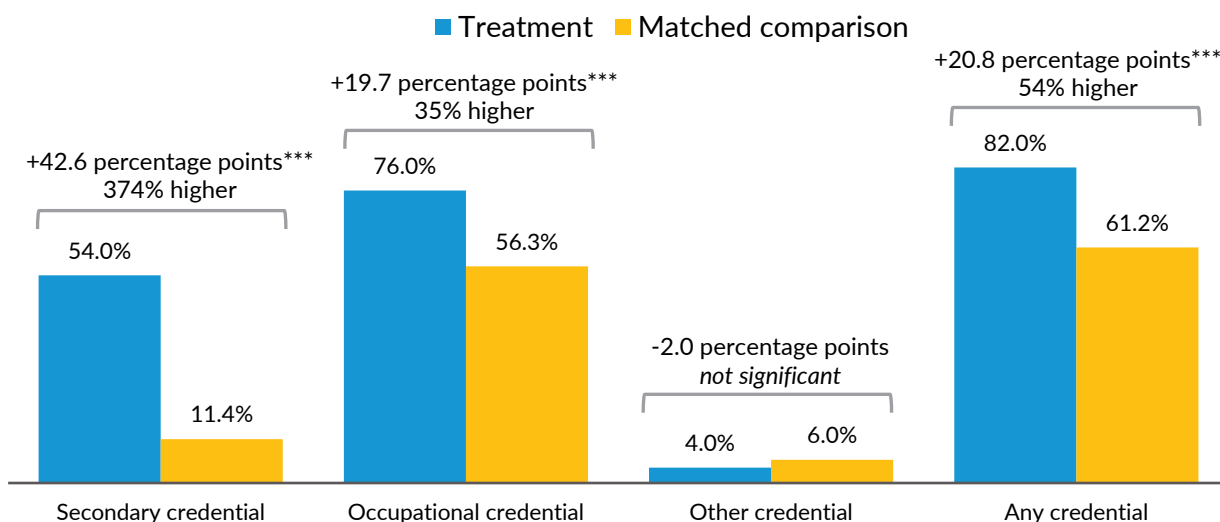
Some fourth- through sixth-quarter outcomes for NYC P3 participants and members of the comparison group may have been disrupted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020. Of the 50 NYC P3 participants, 4 exited WIOA OSY services in the fourth quarter of 2018, 6 exited in the first quarter of 2019, and 16 exited in the second quarter of 2019. One to three of the follow-up quarters for these participants would have fallen during or after the second quarter of 2020, when pandemic-related shutdowns heavily affected New York City and the country overall. However, if NYC P3 participants and comparison group members were similarly affected by the pandemic, the impact estimates would not be biased. We do see some decline in the level of employment across both groups in the second half of the follow-up period, suggesting a pandemic effect across both groups.

Educational Credentials

NYC P3 participants saw large positive impacts on credential attainment. NYC P3 participants were 42.6 percentage points more likely to have secondary education (high school equivalency) credentials, 374 percent higher than the comparison group (figure 7). NYC P3 participants were also 19.7 percentage points more likely to have occupational credentials than the comparison group, an increase of 35 percent, though they were not more likely to have an “other,” noncollege credential.¹⁴ NYC P3 participants were 20.8 percentage points more likely to have any credential, an increase of 54 percent.

FIGURE 7

Impact of NYC P3 Participation on Probability of Holding Credentials at the Fourth Quarter after Program Exit



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Source: NYC Department of Youth and Community Development Capricorn data system.

Note: $n = 50$ in the treatment group and an equal number of weighted cases in the comparison group. Impact estimates come from propensity-score matching with three nearest neighbors, with replacement (see methods section). Impact estimates may not equal the difference between the treatment and matched comparison group means because of rounding.

NYC P3 = New York City Performance Partnership Pilot.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

These findings confirm a descriptive outcome highlighted in the implementation and outcomes study, which described how NYC P3 staff members believed that program participants earned high school equivalency credentials at higher rates. We noted, “Staff perceived that P3 participants’ [high school equivalency] attainment rates were double that of similar populations not receiving this enhancement” (Anderson, Carther, and Dodkowitz 2021, 31). In reality, NYC P3 participants

completed high school equivalency credentials at a rate over *four and a half times* higher than similar young parents in non-P3 WIOA OSY services. And participants received the credentials an average of 117 days (nearly four months) sooner than those in the comparison group who also earned these credentials, which means credential attainment by NYC P3 participants was not solely a result of the longer program.¹⁵

Insights from the Data Walk

The Urban Institute research team presented these findings at a Data Walk in April 2021. Attendees were asked to reflect on how NYC P3 outcomes relate to broader issues and their own work. Several themes emerged.

There are big issues in the NYC labor market. For young people, transitioning into better-paying jobs that align with their interests is challenging in a tight labor market. It can also be difficult for participants to find an internship opportunity that matches their interests and gets them into a high-paying, permanent job. Labor market challenges are particularly acute for Black and Latinx parents. An attendee noted that addressing the challenges with getting good jobs should be the top priority, to help people transition off public assistance.

Child care challenges were surprising to some. One attendee noted that child care “shouldn’t be as hard” and that NYC can be doing better to meet the immediate needs of student-parents and young parents as they go to school and work.

Few young parents in programs like NYC P3 are prepared for higher education. Few participants took advantage of higher education, which raised questions for attendees about how to create access and success. What do student parents need to thrive in a college setting? What could the partners have done in a project like this?

Young parents need more basic supports. It is challenging to navigate available supports in the city, and some supports have restrictions. For example, an attendee noted that those who receive cash assistance also receive child care and transportation assistance to help offset barriers, though these may come with limiting conditions that make them less useful. Lack of necessary supports can lead people—especially young parents—to leave education before they finish their degrees.

Virtual programs are only a partial solution. Many services transitioned to a virtual setting during the COVID-19 pandemic. While participants working and learning remotely do not need

transportation and need less child care, they do need equipment and internet. In addition, parenting a child while learning online can make it difficult to separate home from work or school. An attendee noted that sometimes it is better for parents to bring a child along to an in-person class or training, when public health conditions allow for it.

Discussion

These findings show that the NYC P3 pilot was successful in helping young parents access occupational training and other education and job-oriented services and continue training after exiting the program. NYC P3 also helped participants gain secondary and occupational credentials relative to very similar young parents in WIOA OSY services who did not have access to NYC P3 enhancements. We did not see these impacts translate into employment or earnings gains in the follow-up period. However, one explanation could be that NYC P3 participants were engaged in education and training during the follow-up period, so they may not have been actively pursuing employment. Our analysis was exploratory, so these findings suggest important patterns, but the program would benefit from additional research on new cohorts.

It is difficult to know which component of the NYC P3 program should be credited for the positive education and training outcomes. Because few participants chose to use the child care options, it may have been a combination of factors, including the *offer* of child care assistance, the support of a navigator, additional engagement with program and navigator-provided services, and the extra time to benefit from WIOA OSY services. Future research could examine the causal pathway of impact in light of these findings.

We developed lessons and recommendations based on qualitative insights reported in Anderson, Carther, and Dodkowitz (2021), findings from the impact study, and the Data Walk discussion. The list below builds on those highlighted in the earlier publication.

Lessons from Program Successes

- **Build and maintain strong partnerships among organizations.** Building on existing organizational relationships where possible, with clear lines of responsibility, smooths implementation, even when challenges arise. This allows for creative solutions, such as identifying an alternative publicly subsidized child care provider, if initial plans do not work.
- **Extend program length.** Allowing youth to engage in services for longer reduces pressure on staff and participants, gives participants more opportunity to meet milestones even if they

experience unanticipated disruptions (e.g., childbirth), and allows for better postprogram planning. Programs might consider routinely offering longer guaranteed service windows (e.g., more than one year for WIOA OSY).

- **Reconsider case management.** Caseloads should be scaled to allow staff and participants build meaningful relationships and help staff work with participants through unanticipated challenges. This pilot reduced caseloads by about 40 to 60 percent from standard WIOA OSY practice. In addition, programs may want to move away from the term “case manager” or be more discerning in staff titles.¹⁶

Lessons Learned along the Way

- **Make participant recruitment clear and consistent.** Advertising regarding key program components (e.g., cost of child care) should be clear so participants know what to expect. In addition, recruitment may be challenging during a strong economy, but positive program experiences help word-of-mouth recruitment. Finally, to increase male enrollment, it may be necessary to explicitly target outreach and program services to young fathers, including their perceived role as a parent.
- **Meet participants where they are.** Staff found that curricula used for young parents should be appropriate for youth, given their developmental stage and life experiences. In addition, internships and other work experience opportunities that interest participants and clearly help them move toward their goals may help them build momentum toward positive outcomes. Finally, virtual programs can be a good long-term option for “make-up” work or to provide flexibility for participants who might otherwise have to withdraw temporarily because of life circumstances.
- **Plan for staff turnover.** Staff turnover is common in direct-service programs, but succession planning for key staff—perhaps with cross-training or job shadowing—can help smooth transitions, shorten onboarding time, and maintain connection with participants. Though the reasons for navigator turnover were not specified in this study, staff members may need more personal supports as they help participants navigate complex and traumatizing situations that go beyond the staff members’ training.

Programmatic Suggestions

- **Strengthen connections to higher education.** A first step is for program staff to help young people see themselves as worthy of being in higher education and help them envision a career pathway. Providers should also inform young people about the risks of predatory institutions that will get them into deep student debt. High-quality postsecondary institutions could make an extra effort to welcome students transitioning out of WIOA OSY services. Programs may

also wish to connect young people with existing supportive bridge programs, such as those available through the City University of New York.

- **Strengthen connections to employment.** While NYC P3 participants had better success in education than the comparison group members, they did not see these gains translate into more employment or higher earnings in the follow-up period. Strengthening employment outcomes may require more employer engagement and explicit pathways to employment, such as guaranteed interviews, subsidized employment arrangements, or other opportunities for direct placement.¹⁷
- **Improve access to basic supports for young parents.** Helping young people understand the supports available for them and their families is crucial. In addition, the New York City government could increase accessibility by allowing cash assistance clients pass-through eligibility for other supportive services. Finally, restrictions on the use of some supports, such as Metro cards, could be eased.
- **Build out data.** Tracking measures of well-being and outcomes after program exit would provide more valuable insights into program experiences and effectiveness for different types of participants: family or household composition (and changes), child care receipt (during and after programming), dosage of services (e.g., hours), service location, details about credentials received, whether internships lead to permanent employment, and additional well-being measures.

Structural Challenges

- **Funding constraints:** Cuts to and challenges accessing the Community Services Block Grant excluded one anticipated funding source that might have otherwise supported the NYC P3 program. Different flexible funding sources (e.g., City tax levy funds) might be explored to cover costs other funding streams restrict or to fill gaps in authorization from core funding streams (e.g., to anticipate a longer tenure in navigator job descriptions).
- **Barriers to accessing child care:** Challenges to helping young parents access publicly funded child care (which helps their educational and employment growth) include complex application processes, long application timelines, extensive documentation requirements, limited infant slots, unanticipated out-of-pocket costs, frequent holidays and breaks in NYC Department of Education programs, loss of access to some programs when status changes (e.g., after completing high school equivalency credentials), burdensome recertification requirements, and limited availability for low-income working parents (who are reportedly subject to a waiting period after they begin employment, which may in turn endanger their employment because they do not have reliable child care). As much as possible, child care options offered during and following the program should be easy, convenient, and affordable (or free) and should not put other benefits at risk. One way to lower these barriers to child care would be for the city to give young parents and student-parents priority for public child care supports.

- **The labor market:** It can be hard to find a career-track job in New York City without substantial education, experience, and luck. Agency and organizational stakeholders may want to explicitly discuss labor market challenges among each other and with former out-of-school youth so they can work together to identify strategies for improving career opportunities.

It may not be reasonable for the NYC P3 program to meet all of these recommendations. One potential solution is for NYC P3 and other programs like it to purposefully connect young people exiting the program with next-step programs or supports that will help them make further progress in education and employment.

Methods

The Urban Institute's NYC P3 evaluation was informed by a qualitative implementation analysis, a descriptive participation and outcomes study that used city administrative data, a quasi-experimental impact study, and a Data Walk that offered stakeholder perspectives. This section describes methods that informed new information reported in this brief: the impact evaluation, the analysis of employment and earnings outcomes, and the stakeholder Data Walk. A description of other methods appears in the implementation and outcome report (Anderson, Carther, and Dodkowitz 2021).

Impact Evaluation

We estimated the program impacts using propensity-score matching, a method that statistically aligns treatment group members with similar members of a comparison group based on their probability of receiving treatment (Caliendo and Kopeinig 2008). Using this method, we calculated the probability of receiving treatment as a probit regression of individual characteristics (summarized in table 1), which produced a "propensity score." We matched members of the treatment group with members of the comparison group who had a similar propensity score. In this case, we matched each of the 50 treatment group members with three comparison group members who had the closest propensity scores and weighted each of those three comparison group members at one-third, so the matched comparison group had the same weight as the treatment group. We allowed each comparison group member to be matched with more than one member of the treatment group if that person was the best match (known as matching *with replacement*). The most often the match used a single comparison group member was six times, giving that most-used comparison group member a total weight of 2.0 (1/3 weight*6 matches).

Before we completed the matching, we made some definitional cuts to the comparison *pool*, which is the group of non-P3 WIOA OSY participants allowed to match (those actually matched form the comparison *group*). We included in the comparison pool only WIOA OSY participants who were pregnant or parenting, who did not have a high school credential at enrollment in services, and who were not previously justice-system involved. The first two restrictions matched the rules about program eligibility, while the restriction on justice-system involvement was because no NYC P3 participants were identified as having previous justice-system experience. From an original comparison pool of 3,386 WIOA OSY youth recorded in the NYC DYCD Capricorn data system,¹⁸ these restrictions left 134 potential matches for the 50 NYC P3 participants. This comparison pool already had much in common with the NYC P3 participants, given these definitional cuts, but we further matched on the variables listed in table 1. Table 1 also shows how well the treatment and comparison pool aligned before matching and how much better they aligned after matching.

TABLE 1
Propensity Score Matching Variables and Quality of Matches

Baseline variable	Treatment	Unmatched comparison	Matched comparison
Gender (mean %)			
Female	88	93	93
Male	12	7	7
Race/ethnicity (mean %)			
Non-Hispanic/Latinx Black	36	43	41
Non-Hispanic/Latinx other	8	13	4
Hispanic/Latinx (any race)	56	44	55
Age at entry (years)	20.98	21.61 *	20.93
Other characteristics (mean %)			
Single parent at entry	76	85	79
Homeless at entry	6	16 *	6
Low basic skills at entry	82	84	89
Individual with a disability	4	2	5
Highest grade at entry (mean %)			
9th	22	20	21
10th	28	32	26
11th	50	48	53
Exit quarter	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q3 2018
Number of observations	50	134	72

Source: NYC Department of Youth and Community Development Capricorn data system.

Note: Other race/ethnicity includes the following racial categories: white, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, and unknown.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

After we completed this procedure, the two groups were well matched. No individual characteristics were significantly different from each other after matching. The universal balancing

test had a p value of 0.988, for which 1.0 would indicate that there are no statistically distinguishable differences in the characteristics of the treatment group and the matched comparison group. Therefore, we are highly confident in the internal validity of these results, even though this was a quasi-experimental impact study with a small sample size.

After matching, we compared the groups using a regression equation that included the same variables used in matching. This alleviated any remaining observable mismatch between the treatment and comparison groups and increased the precision of the estimates. This approach may not account for unobserved differences between the groups, such as intrinsic motivation. It would have been useful to match each group on city borough, personal characteristics like motivation, and employment activity before joining the program, but we did not have these data. Nonetheless, we believe that the comparison group is a highly similar group—they enrolled in the same WIOA OSY services as the NYC P3 group, presumably for similar reasons. Comparison group members likely enrolled at locations that did not offer P3 enhancements. Assuming the groups are well-matched, the regression coefficient on NYC P3 enrollment yields the estimated impacts of program participation on the specified outcomes.

Employment and Earnings Outcomes

We were able to use New York State Department of Labor wage records to track employment and earnings for NYC P3 participants and the comparison group. However, because of state data disclosure restrictions, the Urban Institute research team could not access the individual-level records. Instead, the research team conducted the match as described above and then prepared a data file and analysis code for the city to run on our behalf. Through a partnership between the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity and the NYC Human Resources Administration, city staff ran the analysis for the research team and shared the regression results and descriptive data elements (mean, standard deviation, and sample size) following disclosure review. This analysis enhanced the quality of the evaluation, though the research team was not able to use the preprogram employment or earnings data for matching, and we were not able to further investigate patterns in employment or earnings outcomes (such changes in employment patterns caused by the pandemic).

Stakeholder Data Walk

The Urban Institute conducted a Data Walk on April 13, 2021, with 26 participants (besides the facilitators) from Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, City University of New York, the NYC Department of Education, the NYC Center for Youth

Employment, the NYC DYCD, the NYC Human Resources Administration, and the Partnership for New York City. Members of the NYC P3 Collaborative identified invitees, though there were some “snowball” invitations.

In the 90-minute session, the Urban Institute presented a slide deck with four virtual “stations” of study findings, focusing on participants, services, outcomes and impacts, and lessons learned and issues raised. Each station included time for questions and brief discussion. The attendees were then invited to choose a breakout room for a focused discussion of policy implications or program updates. The sessions ended with attendees reporting from the small group sessions and further reflection on the findings.¹⁹

Notes

- ¹ “Vital Statistics of New York State, 2018,” New York State Department of Health, Table 30, revised October 2020, accessed June 24, 2021, https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/vital_statistics/2018/.
- ² The P3 Collaborative included the Department of Youth and Community Development; the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS); the New York City Department of Education (DOE), particularly the Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) child care centers and District 79 Pathways to Graduation; the Center for Youth Employment; the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity; and the Children’s Cabinet.
- ³ Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow is a nonprofit service provider contracted by the New York City government to deliver Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Out-of-School Youth services at multiple locations across the city. The P3 Collaborative partnered with Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow because of their “historically strong and highly integrated” high school equivalency preparation services, according to a Collaborative member.
- ⁴ See more information about Data Walks in Murray, Falkenburger, and Saxena (2015).
- ⁵ “P3 Fact Sheet,” Youth.gov, <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/reconnecting-youth/performance-partnership-pilots/fact-sheet>.
- ⁶ The Consolidated Appropriations Act defines *disconnected youth* as individuals between the ages of 14 and 24 who are low income and homeless, in foster care, involved in the juvenile justice system, unemployed, or not enrolled in or at risk of dropping out of an educational institution (Pub. L. No: 113-76 § 526).
- ⁷ “Round 4 Program List,” Youth.gov, <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/reconnecting-youth/performance-partnership-pilots/round-4-program-list>.
- ⁸ Expectant parents were also eligible for P3 services, but we refer to the service population as “young parents” for simplicity.
- ⁹ In the Data Walk discussion, attendees clarified the differences between a child care navigator and a traditional WIOA case manager. The navigator role was conceptualized as someone focused on parenting support and child care services, rather than having a broad case management directive (though navigators did blend in other case management functions). Navigators had smaller caseloads than traditional WIOA case managers. NYC P3 program operators reported that participants wanted a higher-intensity program with substantial engagement, so they considered the lower caseloads a major component of success. Navigators developed the supports they offered following an evidence-based curriculum that accounted for developmental milestones. Over time, navigators then improved the services based on participants’ feedback and their own experiences.
- ¹⁰ For example, enrollees in WIOA youth and adult programs are more likely to be female, according to program performance reports available at “Workforce Performance Results,” US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/results>.
- ¹¹ To protect participant confidentiality, we cannot report detailed race by age.
- ¹² Financial literacy services include services that help recipients with creating budgets, opening checking and savings accounts, applying for and managing loans and credit cards, learning about credit reports and credit scores, and detecting identity theft.
- ¹³ Data for the comparison group were not available for all services reported in Anderson, Carther, and Dodkowitz (2021). We report differences in services with receipt data across groups.
- ¹⁴ No member of the treatment or comparison group held a college credential one year after exit, so those results are not shown.

- ¹⁵ There was no significant difference between program and comparison groups in time to completion of an occupational credential.
- ¹⁶ Data Walk attendees noted that human service professionals have debated moving away from the term “case manager” because it carries stigma around the concept of managing a person as a “case,” which comes off as a dehumanizing or clinical term. “Case manager” can also sound like an entry-level position, while “navigator,” “specialist,” or “coach” can be helpful in identifying specialized positions.
- ¹⁷ Strategies to connect education with better employment outcomes are discussed in Madeline Brown and Lauren Eyster, “Four Strategies Community Colleges Are Using to Connect Their Students to Employment,” *Urban Wire* (blog), Urban Institute, January 16, 2020, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/four-strategies-community-colleges-are-using-connect-their-students-employment>.
- ¹⁸ See Anderson, Carther, and Dodkowitz (2021) for more detail about the dataset and source.
- ¹⁹ This format was an adaptation of the Data Walk concept developed by the Urban Institute (Murray, Falkenburger, and Saxena 2015).

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About the Authors

Theresa Anderson is a principal research associate at the Urban Institute. She is a member of the Building America's Workforce cross-center initiative in the Income and Benefits Policy Center and is affiliated with the Education Data and Policy Center. She leads teams in conducting in-depth, mixed-methods research on important policy issues, primarily evaluations of workforce, education, and social safety net programs and policies. She is particularly interested in improving access to and success in education throughout the life course—from early childhood to adulthood. Her work has focused on student-parents, low-income families, opportunity youth, adult education students, underprepared college students, high school students from historically underserved populations, and public housing residents. She holds a master's degree in public policy and a Ph.D. in public policy and public administration, both from the George Washington University.

Alexander Carther is a research assistant in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute. He is involved in research focusing on welfare and policies of the social safety net. Before joining Urban, Carther supported research in the Development and Early Education Lab at Northwestern University, where he earned his undergraduate degree with a major in economics. His research interests include income inequality, unemployment, and the impact of race and gender on financial health and stability.

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500 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20024

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