



Evaluation Technical Assistance for Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT) TechHire/Strengthening Working Families Grantees¹

The evaluation team (Eval TA) will offer technical assistance (TA) to the TechHire and Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) grantees selected for the randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to ensure research procedures are followed correctly and the program services at each of the RCT grantees are given a fair test. There are 5 grantees selected to participate in RCTs (see below):

TechHire	SWFI
LaGuardia Community College	Community College of Aurora
Daytona State College	Vermont Technical College
Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance d.b.a. CareerSource	

For the TechHire and SWFI grantees selected to participate in the RCT, evaluation technical assistance will be offered in three main topic areas: marketing and recruitment, research procedures, and maintaining program and control group contrasts, with the level of intensity varying depending on the issues that arise at each grantee locale. Our evaluation technical assistance will be offered to:

- 1) help grantees with **marketing and recruitment**, should they need assistance in identifying and enrolling participants for the study;
- 2) prepare and train staff on how to **administer the study procedures**; and
- 3) ensure a **strong contrast between the program and control groups** by supporting grantees and ensuring that individuals identified to receive program services are participating in those specific services.

What follows is a brief description of technical assistance provided under each of these categories.

Evaluation TA is different from programmatic TA. Programmatic TA is provided to all TechHire and SWFI grantees via their programmatic TA coach, Federal Project Officer (FPO), and DOL National Office program staff. Evaluation TA is only offered to grantees who are selected to participate in the RCT, and this is to ensure that all procedures are conducted as efficiently as possible.

¹ The evaluation technical assistance is part of a larger evaluation contract between Westat and DOL CEO. MDRC is Westat's subcontractor and responsible for providing evaluation TA. More information on the evaluation can be found at: <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/currentstudies/TechHire-and-Strengthening-Working-Families-Initiative.htm>.

Evaluation Technical Assistance

1) *Marketing and Recruitment:* It is often the case in which programs that are evaluated at the US Department of Labor (USDOL) experience challenges in identifying prospective study participants and providing effective messages to communicate the value of the proposition offered to them. This study is no different, and we anticipate that TechHire and SWFI grantees will experience recruitment challenges, given the need to recruit double the number of program eligible individuals than the number they expect to receive TechHire/SWFI services during the RCT intake period.

The Eval TA team will assist both SWFI and TechHire grantees in addressing their marketing and recruitment challenges. MDRC will also review the grantee's marketing materials and will recommend changes to improve reaching grantees' higher recruitment goals. Using our experience applying behavioral science principles to messaging, we can help grantees refine the message used so the program is described and presented in a more compelling way. This may also expand into how grantee staff communicates with interested participants, as it is also common for staff to focus more on the process of enrollment as opposed to the value of the opportunity that their respective programs have to offer. Within this area of TA, MDRC staff are available to help identify successful marketing strategies and diagnose which recruitment sources are proving to be more successful in identifying prospective study participants so that grantees spend less effort focused on outreach strategies that are less successful.

2) *Random Assignment Intake Procedures:* The integrity of the research design hinges upon the proper implementation of the study procedures as well as the fair treatment of the study participants. To educate and train grantees on how to properly administer the study procedures, MDRC staff will prepare random assignment toolkits, which will be tailored to each grantee, and will provide step by step instructions on how to implement the study intake procedures that have been inserted into grantees' program intake processes. The toolkit will be used for an in-person grantee-specific training on how to implement the study enrollment procedures. The TechHire and SWFI grantee staff will learn how to access MDRC's web-based random assignment system, how to collect informed consent, and how to administer the baseline survey and answer questions pertaining to the study or forms participants must complete.

For grantees who are planning to inform study participants of their random assignment designation directly, our training will review the procedures and messaging associated with random assignment designation. The RA training will provide grantee staff with hands-on experience and role playing so they are comfortable answering questions. Following the launch of random assignment, a member of the evaluation team will conduct one site visit to monitor the study enrollment process and suggest any necessary adjustments.

3) *Study and Program Participation:* Once random assignment begins, the evaluation team will focus attention on ensuring that grantees' programs are given a fair test. Eval TA team will meet regularly by phone with grantees to monitor their study enrollment against their overall study enrollment goals, and review data on the participation of program participants to determine if they are completing training and getting placed into full

time employment. If the study enrollments are less than expected, the evaluation staff will provide additional technical assistance on marketing and recruitment.

Similarly, if individuals randomly assigned to the TechHire/SWFI program groups are not participating in services, the evaluation team will work with grantee staff to diagnose where drop off is occurring and work on identifying strategies for re-engagement. The evaluation team will conduct bi-weekly phone calls with grantee staff for monitoring study and program participation.

CONTACTS WITH GRANTEES SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN RCT – IN 2018

Grantee	Marketing & Recruiting	Random Assignment Procedures	Study and Program Participation	Lead Eval TA Team Member
LaGuardia Community College	<p>Prior to study launch, review marketing materials and strategy as requested.</p> <p>Based on bi-weekly calls and sample enrollment, provide additional TA as needed.</p>	<p>Training: February 27, 2018</p> <p>Study launch: May 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly phone calls once study is launched to trouble shoot any issues Site visit in Q3/18 to monitor enrollment procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly phone calls to discuss: study enrollment compared to established goals, and program participation 	<p>Betsy Tessler Betsy.Tessler@mdrc.org 212-340-7591</p>
Daytona State College	<p>Prior to study launch, review marketing materials and strategy as requested.</p> <p>Based on bi-weekly calls and sample enrollment, provide additional TA as needed.</p>	<p>Training: April 10-12, 2018</p> <p>Study launch: April 24, 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly phone calls once study is launched to trouble shoot any issues Site visit in Q3/18 to monitor enrollment procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly phone calls to discuss: study enrollment compared to established goals, and program participation 	<p>Barbara Fink bfink@finkresearch.org (267) 992-7000</p>
Career Source Tampa Bay	<p>Prior to study launch, review marketing materials and strategy as requested.</p> <p>Based on bi-weekly calls and sample enrollment,</p>	<p>Training: June TBD</p> <p>Study launch: June 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly phone calls once study is launched to trouble shoot any issues Site visit in Q3/18 to monitor enrollment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly phone calls to discuss: study enrollment compared to established goals, and program 	<p>Barbara Fink bfink@finkresearch.org (267) 992-7000</p>

	provide additional TA as needed.	procedures	participation	
Community College of Aurora	<p>Prior to study launch, review marketing materials and strategy as requested.</p> <p>Based on bi-weekly calls and sample enrollment, provide additional TA as needed.</p>	<p>Training: April 18, 2018</p> <p>Study launch: April 24, 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly phone calls once study is launched to trouble shoot any issues Site visit in Q3/18 to monitor enrollment procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly phone calls to discuss: study enrollment compared to established goals, and program participation 	<p>Frieda Molina Frieda.Molina@mdrc.org (212) 340-8660</p>
Vermont Technical College	<p>Prior to study launch, review marketing materials and strategy as requested.</p> <p>Based on bi-weekly calls and sample enrollment, provide additional TA as needed.</p>	<p>Training: June 7, 2018</p> <p>Study launch: June 7, 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly phone calls once study is launched to trouble shoot any issues Site visit in Q3/18 to monitor enrollment procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-weekly phone calls to discuss: study enrollment compared to established goals, and program participation 	<p>Betsy Tessler Betsy.Tessler@mdrc.org (212) 340-7591</p>