



→ Ohio Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Statewide Evaluation

Statewide Implementation and Outcomes Report

March 31, 2024



Table of Contents

Introduction and Background.....	1
Overview of the CCMEP	1
Program Structure	2
Core Services	3
Previous Research	4
Performance Measures	4
Overview of the CCMEP Statewide Evaluation	5
Research Questions	5
Evaluation Methodology.....	6
Implementation Study.....	7
Document Review	7
CCMEP State Leadership Interviews.....	7
County Case Studies	7
State-Wide CCMEP Survey.....	10
Qualitative and Quantitative Coding and Analysis.....	10
Outcomes Study	11
Implementation Study Findings.....	13
Program Operations.....	13
Outreach Methods	13
Eligibility, Onboarding, and Enrollment.....	17
Services Provided	20
Communication and Engagement	27
Goal4 It!™ Coaching Model	30
Training.....	33
Challenges to Implementation	35
Promising Practices for Implementation.....	44
Program Context of Operation.....	47
Participants Served.....	48
COVID-19	51
Partnerships	55
Perceived Program Outcomes	58
Education and Employment.....	59

Barriers and Facilitators to Outcomes	60
Outcomes Study Findings	66
Program Operations	67
Program Context of Operations	69
Partnerships	74
Program Outcomes.....	75
Discussion and Recommendations	84
Appendix A. Consent Form and Data Collection Instruments.....	89
Introduction	96
Program Operation	96
Program Context of Operation.....	97
Program Successes and Challenges.....	98
Appendix B. Thematic Codebook.....	102
Ohio CCMEP Implementation Evaluation Codebook	102
Appendix C. Case Study County Profiles.....	105
Population of Case Study Counties	105
Median Household Income of Case Study Counties.....	105
Persons in Poverty of Case Study Counties	106
Youth in Poverty of Case Study Counties	106
Appendix C Sources	119
References.....	120

List of Tables

Table 1. CCMEP Participants Served and Exited by Program Year	2
Table 2. CCMEP Core Services.....	3
Table 3. Primary Performance Measures.....	5
Table 4. CCMEP Statewide Evaluation Research Questions	6
Table 5. Case Study Qualitative Data Sources and Sample.....	8
Table 6. Overview of Interview and Focus Group Moderation Guides.....	9
Table 7. CCMEP Statewide Evaluation Research Questions for Outcomes Analysis	11
Table 8. Targeted Outreach to Subpopulations	16
Table 9. Orientation Offered.....	18
Table 10. Passive or Active Orientation.....	18
Table 11. Skills Assessments used by Survey Respondents	19
Table 12. Services Provided by CCMEP.....	20
Table 13. Barriers by Type of Service.....	22
Table 14. TANF Summer Employment Program	25
Table 15. Summer Employment Programs Offered.....	25
Table 16. Effects of TANF-funded Summer Employment Program on Enrollment	26
Table 17. Ease of Engaging Sub-Populations	29
Table 18. Ease of Engaging Different Subpopulations by Goal4 It!™	32
Table 19. Number of Trainings Taken by CCMEP Staff	34
Table 20. Professional Background	35
Table 21. Frequency of Activities with Contracted Service Providers.....	57
Table 22. What Counties Named CCMEP	65
Table 23. Percent of Participants Who Used CCMEP Services.....	67
Table 24. Race and Ethnicity of All CCMEP Participants.....	70
Table 25. Age at Entry of All CCMEP Participants.....	70
Table 26. Sex of All CCMEP Participants.....	70
Table 27. Education Level at Entry of All CCMEP Participants.....	71
Table 28. Race and Ethnicity of All CCMEP Participants by County Size	71
Table 29. Age at Entry of All CCMEP Participants by County Size	71
Table 30. Sex of All CCMEP Participants by County Size.....	72
Table 31. Education Level at Entry of All CCMEP Participants by County Size	72
Table 32. CCMEP Participant Barriers	73
Table 33. Participant Barriers by County Size.....	73
Table 34. Participant Barriers by County Lead Agency Type.....	73
Table 35. Participant Barriers by Workforce Development Area	74
Table 36. Services and Expenditures for Participants Served.....	75
Table 37. Differences in Employment/Education Status between Baseline and Exit	76
Table 38. Participants that received a Diploma	76
Table 39. Participant Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs)	76

Table 40. Participant Credentials Earned	77
Table 41. Participant Wages	77
Table 42. Program Outcomes for Participants with a Disability.....	78
Table 43. Program Outcomes for Pregnant or Parenting Participants.....	79
Table 44. Program Outcomes for Justice-Involved Youth.....	80
Table 45. Outcomes by Race/Ethnicity	81
Table 46. Outcomes by Sex	82
Table 47. Outcomes by Age	83
Table 48. Outcomes by Age.....	83
Table 49. Outcomes by Education Status at Program Enrollment	84
Table 50. Outcomes by Education Status at Program Enrollment.....	84

List of Acronyms

ARIES	Advancement through Resources, Information and Employment Services (System)
CAA	Communication Action Agency
CBO	Community-based organization
CCMEP	Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program
CDJFS	County Department of Job and Family Services
CFIS	County Finance Information System
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
ELL	English language learner
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
IEP	Individualized education plan
IOP	Individual opportunity plan
IRB	Institutional Review Board
ISS	Individual service strategy
ISY	In-school youth
ITA	Individual Training Account
JFS	Job and Family Services
LVN	Licensed vocational nurse
ODJFS	Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
OFA	Office of Family Assistance
OHID	Ohio's state digital identity standard
OJT	On-the-job training
OMJ	OhioMeansJobs
OSY	Out-of-school youth
OWA	Ohio Workforce Association
OWF	Ohio Works First
PRC	Prevention Retention Contingency
RMS	Random moment sample
SNAP	Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program
STNA	State-tested nurse aide
SWIS	State Wage Interchange System
TABE	Test of Adult Basic Education
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
WDA	Workforce development agency
WIA	Workforce Investment Act of 1998
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

Introduction and Background

The Ohio Workforce Association (OWA) was commissioned by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to oversee an evaluation of Ohio's Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP). ICF was contracted by OWA to conduct a statewide evaluation of CCMEP to gauge its effectiveness. This evaluation comprised an implementation analysis and an outcomes assessment, drawing from five years of program operations data spanning from 2017 to 2022. The overarching goal of the evaluation is to enhance the efficiency of program activities by involving stakeholders and incorporating their insights into decision-making processes. Furthermore, it aims to provide evidence regarding the efficacy of program elements in achieving expected outcomes. Our evaluation endeavors to furnish constituents of Ohio's workforce system with a comprehensive understanding of whether CCMEP initiatives yielded the anticipated outcomes. A set of recommendations and best practices are shared to assist with program improvement and enhance the delivery of more effective and efficient services.

Overview of the CCMEP

The Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) is an innovative program to help low-income young adults build career paths, find employment, and break the cycle of poverty. CCMEP is designed to provide intensive holistic career coaching and case management while preparing participants for lasting employment. Most low-income young adults ages 14 to 24 are eligible to participate in CCMEP, which offers tailored services such as paid and unpaid work experiences, education and career training, tutoring, preparing for college or work credential training, supportive services (transportation, childcare, housing, uniforms, and work-related tools, etc.), help starting a business, budgeting assistance, high school equivalency training, counseling, mentoring, and leadership development.

CCMEP started as a temporary program in 2016 shortly after the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA superseded the 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and amended the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.¹ The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services took the opportunity provided by this change to restructure the way they offered workforce development services and cash assistance by braiding funding from WIOA and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for young adults receiving TANF-funded cash assistance, called Ohio Works First (OWF) and young adults volunteering for WIOA Youth. After a year as a temporary program, Ohio approved CCMEP into permanent law on June 30, 2017.

¹ https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/dc0a626e/files/uploaded/WIOA_YouthProgram_FactSheet.pdf Retrieved November 20, 2023.

Individuals ages 14 to 24 may choose to enroll in CCMEP if they are recipients of OWF, are TANF eligible or WIOA youth eligible. Ohio’s work eligible OWF participants are required to enroll in CCMEP to complete their work participation hourly requirements. The flexibility afforded by CCMEP helps OWF work eligible individuals work towards entering a career while meeting work requirements by participating in CCMEP services based on individual needs rather than core work activity requirements which limit time allowed to be spent on getting a high school diploma/equivalent or postsecondary training. Young adults enrolling in WIOA Youth as in-school and out-of-school youth receive workforce development services through CCMEP.

Ohio was the first state to attempt this degree of cross-program integration. Unlike many other anti-poverty programs, CCMEP engages participants in meaningful employment and training activities that can help them build lifelong, sustainable careers. It focuses on people, not programs, and gives career coaches the flexibility to offer more constructive services that build on participants’ strengths, increase their skills, and meet their unique needs.² Ohio administers human services programs through a state-supervised and county-administered system. Supervision of CCMEP resides with the Office of Workforce Development in the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) in collaboration with its Office of Family Assistance (OFA). Program implementation occurs at the local level and varies by both workforce development area and county. Table 1 shows the number of CCMEP participants served and exited during program year 2016 through program year 2022 (the program year is July 1 – June 30).

Table 1. CCMEP Participants Served and Exited by Program Year

Program Year (PY)	Participants Served	Participants Exited
PY 2016	14,504	4,098
PY 2017	22,808	6,078
PY 2018	25,634	7,800
PY 2019	22,025	8,593
PY 2020	18,942	6,489
PY 2021	18,779	7,628
PY 2022	18,845	5,784

Program Structure

Prior to implementation, each Board of County Commissioners designated either the County Department of Job and Family Services (CDJFS) or the county Workforce Development Agency (WDA) as the “lead agency” to oversee CCMEP. Ten of Ohio’s 88 counties are led by the WDA and the remaining 78 are led by the CDJFS. Each lead agency submits a CCMEP County Plan in collaboration with its local workforce development board (WDB) outlining how they plan to serve youth through CCMEP. The local WDBs must agree to contribute their WIOA youth funding allocation to implement CCMEP in their workforce

² CCMEP Fact Sheet, URL, retrieved July 15, 2022.

area for the program to operate and for the county(ies) lead agency in their workforce area to receive the additional state TANF funds allocated for CCMEP.

Lead agencies “shall provide CCMEP services to a program participant for the amount of time necessary to ensure successful preparation to enter unsubsidized employment and/or post-secondary education and training.”³ These services can come from a variety of sources as determined by the lead agency and any contracted WIOA youth provider. While workforce areas can choose to designate some of their WIOA youth services (typically case management) to their lead agencies, workforce areas are required to procure the WIOA Youth 14 program elements and contract out at least some of the services which they provide through CCMEP through competitive procurement or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)⁴.

Core Services

To support the primary objectives of CCMEP, including attaining a secondary school diploma (or its equivalent), progression into postsecondary education, and career readiness training, programs must make 14 services (13 core elements and 1 follow-up), explained in Table 2, available to participants. While services can be offered directly from the lead agency or through procurement or MOUs with local organizations, the lead agency and workforce area must ensure that services are provided with oversight and fiscal monitoring. A foundational element of CCMEP is providing labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration which is recommended for all participants as they explore career options and decide on a career pathway.

Table 2. CCMEP Core Services

1.	Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to the completion of a secondary school diploma or its equivalent.
2.	Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services such as basic education training, individualized academic instruction, English as a second language training, counseling, and educational plan development.
3.	Structured learning through paid or unpaid work experiences with academic and occupational education components, including summer employment, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities.
4.	Occupational skill training, prioritizing training programs that lead to recognized credentials that align with in-demand industries or occupations in the local area.
5.	Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation.
6.	Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors.
7.	Supportive services to enable a participant to participate in CCMEP.

³ CCMEP Rule 5101:14-1-05. <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-5101:14-1-05>. Retrieved November 20, 2023.

⁴ MOUs are available to organizations with funding that already provides the same service as CCMEP (e.g., an organization or bank which offers a financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills, or other relevant training).

8. Adult mentoring for at least 12 months.
9. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referrals to counseling.
10. Financial literacy education that provides basic financial information necessary to become self-sufficient, including but not limited to creating household budgets and savings plans; making informed decisions about education, retirement, home ownership, etc.; managing spending, credit, and debt effectively; understanding and evaluating financial products and services.
11. Entrepreneurial skills training.
12. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration.
13. Post-secondary preparation and transition activities.
14. Follow-up services which are offered for at least 12 months after exiting the program. These services are a subset of what is offered during enrollment and include: supportive services, case management, labor market information, financial literacy education, adult mentoring, and post-secondary and transition activities.

Previous Research

Early in the program, the Arnold Foundation provided funds for a preliminary evaluation of CCMEP. This [report](#) noted improvements were needed in local collaboration, participant recruitment, and participant engagement and better strategies to address the conflicting pressure of work participation rates were needed. The ODJFS Office of Workforce Development also received funds through a grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services to pilot a coaching case management process called Goal4 It!™ in partnership with Mathematica, a national research and consulting firm, as well as a newly developed career pathway strategy developed in partnership with Cygnet Associates, a boutique technical assistance consulting firm. Ohio is in the process of scaling the Goal4 It!™ coaching case management model and career pathway strategy throughout CCMEP delivery to promote the adoption of evidence-based practices statewide. In addition, ODJFS Office of Workforce Development partnered with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the American Institute of Research during the pandemic to pilot and evaluate the effectiveness of a behavioral insights intervention that sent encouraging text messages to youth each week for their first three months in the program. The results of this pilot, published in [Using Behavioral Insights to Increase Youth Use of Workforce Services in Virtual Contexts](#), showed both increased use and successful completion of services indicating increased participant engagement with CCMEP.

Performance Measures

Because CCMEP combines TANF and WIOA funding streams, all CCMEP participants are measured via WIOA standards; thus, the local WDA and CDJFS agencies must become familiar with WIOA performance management. To streamline performance measurement and strengthen accountability across programs, the CCMEP lead agency is responsible for common performance measures at the county level. Each workforce area negotiates its

performance measure standards with ODJFS based on CCMEP’s six primary performance measures (Table 3) across education, training, employment, and earnings metrics. These performance standards apply to each lead agency in a particular workforce area and to each workforce area. See [rule 5101:14-1-07](#) for changes in performance measures.

Table 3. Primary Performance Measures

1.	Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment, education, or training in the 2 nd quarter after exit.
2.	Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment, education, or training in the 4 th quarter after exit.
3.	Percentage of participants that were in education or training while enrolled in CCMEP who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma during participation or within one year of program exit.
4.	Median earnings of program participants in unsubsidized employment in the 2 nd quarter after exit.
5.	Percentage of program participants in education or training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential, a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.
6.	Percentage of program participants in unsubsidized employment during the 2 nd quarter after exit who are employed by the same employer in the 4 th quarter after exit.

Overview of the CCMEP Statewide Evaluation

ICF used a mixed methods evaluation approach to answer research questions related to program operations, context of operations, partnerships, and program outcomes. The outcomes study used statewide program data (PY2017 to PY2021) to examine the characteristics, types of services offered and received, and outcomes of CCMEP participants. The outcomes study addressed research questions related to education outcomes, employment outcomes, differences in outcomes by demographic group, and participants’ level of engagement with program services. The implementation study provided qualitative context to the findings and included document review, interviews with CCMEP leadership, a statewide survey of state and county level staff and nine county case studies which included county-level document review, in depth interviews with county staff, program vendors, and program participants (both current and former). ICF, in collaboration with OWA, selected the nine case study counties to represent a range of geographies (northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest, and central Ohio), sizes (rural, suburban, urban), CDJFS and WDA lead agencies, and counties that have or have not implemented the Goal4 It!™ coaching model.

Research Questions

Table 4 presents the study research questions, refined in collaboration with OWA, that guided the evaluation activities for both the implementation and outcomes studies.

Table 4. CCMEP Statewide Evaluation Research Questions

Research Questions
Program Operations 1) How does the program provide services for CCMEP work-eligible participants? a) What are the considerations and priorities? b) What services are being provided to meet their needs? 2) To what extent is the program operating as intended? 3) What were the results of any changes made along the way, if any? 4) What are some promising practices and challenges in implementing the CCMEP program? a) What promising practices were most effective for vulnerable and/or diverse communities and participants (to include Latino enrollments, pregnant women, justice involved youth, homeless, disability, and foster youth)? 5) To what extent does the program include opportunities to increase equity? a) What are the opportunities? 6) What were the barriers and facilitators to meet the intended outcomes of the program? a) Were certain partners and/or program elements more or less successful in achieving desired outcomes? 7) What are the lessons learned that can inform the field or be useful for practitioners that work in this space?
Program Context of Operations 8) What types of communities are being helped by the CCMEP program? a) What are the characteristics of the communities and participants served through the program? b) To what extent are there differences in outcomes across communities? 9) What are the demographic characteristics of program participants (e.g., gender, age, race, ethnicity, education)? 10) How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect program operations?
Partnerships 11) What partner organizations (CCMEP vendors/service providers, community organizations, local agencies) are involved in the program? What services do they provide? 12) What is the breadth, quality, quantity, and strength of the partnerships (e.g., the number and type of partnerships, the number and frequency of joint activities)? 13) How were partnerships built and maintained? 14) Are there differences in Counties/Workforce Areas findings by vendor/service provider?
Program Outcomes 15) To what extent does participation in the program improve education outcomes? 16) To what extent does participation in the program improve employment outcomes? 17) How do the outcomes differ by demographic groups? 18) What was the participants' level of engagement with program services? 19) What changes should be made to CCMEP structure, policy and design moving forward? 20) What additional resources, partnerships, or approaches would make the program more successful?

Evaluation Methodology

In this section, we present the methodology used for this study, including the evaluation design, data sources, and analysis methods.

Implementation Study

Our implementation study included a document review, CCMEP state leadership interviews, county case studies, and a statewide survey of county staff. All data were collected virtually, and the evaluation plan and instruments were submitted and approved by ICF's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Document Review

ICF conducted a document review to strengthen our understanding of the history, goals, and objectives of the CCMEP and the current state of the program. Relevant key program documents were collected from OWA and ODJFS to examine CCMEP activities and services and provide context to inform ICF's evaluation. A template was developed to guide the review of all documents, categorizing them by type of document (e.g., annual report, research evaluation, etc.), content area, and/or related outcomes.

CCMEP State Leadership Interviews

ICF conducted eight interviews with program directors and members of state leadership directly involved in creating and developing the program to gain further understanding of the background and history of CCMEP, state-level perspectives on challenges the program has had or is having, and any recommendations for program improvement. ICF used the information gathered in these interviews to help create the survey questionnaire and other data collection instruments. These interviews were conducted between June 28th, 2023, and August 2nd, 2023.

County Case Studies

ICF worked with OWA to identify 9 programs across 11 counties (Mahoning/Columbiana and Defiance/Paulding run joint programs) with a mix of geographic locations, urbanicity, county size, use of Goal4 It!™, and lead agency type to create the sample of counties for our case studies. At each site, the evaluation consisted of interviews via Microsoft Teams with county leadership such as agency directors, county staff such as career coaches, contracted service providers (vendors), and current and former participants. To streamline the outreach and data collection process, ICF assigned a point of contact for each site who was responsible for conducting outreach, scheduling, and conducting interviews and focus groups, and following up as needed with the provided county contacts.

● Case Study Counties



In July 2023, the ICF team held introductory calls with county leadership at the nine participating programs during which we outlined the evaluation process and requested they identify one county leader (if not themselves), two county staff, up to four county vendors, and five participants for interviews. The proposed sample sizes, number of individuals identified in each group, the number interviewed, and our response rates are provided in Table 5. Data collection occurred between July 18, 2023, and September 15, 2023. As shown, the ICF team planned to interview 45 participants (five from each program), however, 52 of the contacted participants did not respond to the initial or follow-up outreach, did not follow through with scheduling after an initial response, or were no-shows for their interviews. Of the 27 CCMEP participants, 18 were current program participants and 9 were former. CCMEP participants received a \$30 Amazon e-gift card for their time; no other study participant was compensated.

Table 5. Case Study Qualitative Data Sources and Sample

Interview Group	Proposed	Identified	Interviewed	Duration	Response Rate
County Leadership	9	18	14	45–60 min.	78%
County Staff/Career Coaches	18	17	13	45–60 min.	76%
County Vendors ⁵	36 (up to 4 in each county)	18	12 (from 6 case study counties)	60 min.	75%
CCMEP Participants	45	80	27	20–30 min.	35% of identified 62% of desired

County Case Study Interview and Moderation Guides

The ICF team developed five tailored guides to capture the critical elements of program implementation not obtained through program documents or administrative data. All data collection instruments were semi-structured to ensure we obtained information to answer the research questions and to allow probes based on how participants responded. Table 6 provides an overview of each discussion guide and the topics covered for each respondent group. All interview guides are provided in Appendix A.

⁵ Includes focus groups and individual interviews.

Table 6. Overview of Interview and Focus Group Moderation Guides

Guide Title	Guide Focus
CCMEP Leadership Interview Guide	(1) CCMEP planning and operations (2) participant eligibility and application processes (3) the programs and activities offered (4) the development and use of the Goal4 It!™ model and tools (5) program infrastructure (6) systems and partnerships (7) program changes (8) achievements, challenges, and solutions
Case Study County Leadership Interview Guide	Detailed information about how their county administers the CCMEP to include: (1) program structure (2) funding allocations (3) overall challenges and solutions
Case Study County Staff Interview Guide	Detailed information about how the county serves participants: (1) implementation operations (2) use of Goal4 It!™ (3) outreach (4) programs and activities (5) partnerships (6) vendor/service provider relations (7) achievements (8) challenges posed by COVID -19 (9) overall challenges and solutions
Case Study County Vendor/Service Provider Focus Group Guide	Detailed information about: (1) programs and services provided (2) use of Goal4 It!™ (3) partnerships (4) county relations (5) achievements (6) challenges posed by COVID -19 (7) overall challenges and solutions
Case Study County Participant Interview Guide	Information about participants' experiences with the CCMEP including: (1) reflections on key challenges to employment and training that they and their peers experience (2) the success of the program in helping to overcome these challenges (3) reflections on Goal4 It!™ tools in relation to key intended outcomes (such as employment and earnings) (4) identify currently unmet needs/service gaps (5) suggest additional services they might find helpful

State-Wide CCMEP Survey

In collaboration with OWA and ODJFS, the ICF team created a survey questionnaire designed for online administration to assess program operations, the context of program operations, partnerships, program outcomes, and other implementation topics. To reduce burden and focus questions on individual's area of expertise, two survey paths were developed—one for leadership and another for frontline staff. All respondents answered questions about their professional background, the outreach and engagement conducted in their county, the services and training provided at the county level, perceived program outcomes, and demographics. Leadership (i.e., agency directors, job developers, program supervisors, and WDA directors) answered additional questions about funding while frontline staff (i.e., career coaches, contracted service providers, program managers, and youth employment specialists) answered additional questions about the Goal4 It!™ model and resources. After removing outliers, the average administration time was 33 minutes, and the median time was 19.

ODJFS requested that ICF send the survey invitation to 742 individuals affiliated with CCMEP across the state; of these, 625 were successfully delivered. In total, 171 individuals participated in the survey, resulting in a response rate of 28%. Data collection began with an email invitation on September 6, 2023. The ICF team distributed two reminders, one a week before the survey closed and another the day before the closure date. The survey was closed on September 29, 2023. We have included key survey results in this report. All survey responses were provided to OWA and ODJFS under separate cover, the Ohio Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Statewide Evaluation: Statewide Survey Report March 31, 2024.

Qualitative and Quantitative Coding and Analysis

The ICF team developed a thematic codebook for the interview and focus group data collected. Initial codes were tied to research questions and additional codes were added based on themes that emerged inductively as part of the interviewing and coding process. Prior to coding, the coding team went through training on the codes' inclusion and exclusion criteria. All coders were assigned the same document to code to compare the decisions on which codes were selected for different segments of text and where each coder drew the boundary of the text segment. Including a process to measure agreement among data collectors is essential in mitigating variability in data coding. An inter-rater reliability score of 75% or greater is generally required for a test to be considered reliable;⁶ we set our threshold at 80%. The ICF team used Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software, for inter-rater reliability and coding. The full codebook is available in Appendix B. Once inter-rater reliability was established, the ICF coding team coded 65 separate documents from the case study county interviews and focus groups.

⁶ [What is Inter-rater Reliability? \(Definition & Example\) \(statology.org\)](https://www.statology.org/inter-rater-reliability/)

We analyzed quantitative survey data using either the chi-square test or analysis of variance (ANOVA). ANOVA was used to compare means for Likert scale items and for computed variables that totaled the number of something provided (e.g., the number of outreach methods or the number of agencies or organizations respondents work with to find eligible participants). A chi-square test was used to determine if there was a relationship between two categorical variables, one classified as the independent variable (e.g., lead agency type, county size, use of Goal4 It!™) and the other as the dependent variable (e.g., whether respondents report targeting outreach to subpopulations). Specifically, a chi-square test allowed us to test whether the observed proportions for a variable differed from hypothesized proportions. It is concerned with the difference between the expected and observed distribution of responses in a cross-tabulation table. The null hypothesis is that the populations do not differ; the research hypothesis is that the differences observed reflect actual population differences.

Outcomes Study

Our outcomes study used CCMEP administrative data from ODJFS to understand service use and program participant outcomes. ODJFS provided ICF with CCMEP administrative and outcomes data covering July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2021. ODJFS also provided ICF with data from the County Finance Information System (CFIS) covering the same period. We identified how frequently specific services were used within CCMEP as well as the characteristics of program participants. ICF also described the educational and employment outcomes of CCMEP participants and investigated differences in outcomes for key sub-populations.

Research Questions

Table 7 presents the outcome study specific research questions, refined in collaboration with OWA and ODJFS, that guided the evaluation activities for the outcomes analysis.

Table 7. CCMEP Statewide Evaluation Research Questions for Outcomes Analysis

Outcomes Question Number	Evaluation Question Number	Research Question
RQ1	RQ1B	What services are being provided to meet participant needs?
RQ2	RQ8A	What are the characteristics of the communities and participants served through the program?
RQ3	RQ8B	To what extent are there differences in outcomes across communities?
RQ4	RQ9	What are the demographic characteristics of program participants (e.g., gender, age, race, ethnicity, education)?
RQ5	RQ14	Are there differences in Counties/Workforce Areas findings by vendor/service provider?
RQ6	RQ15	To what extent does participation in the program improve education outcomes?

Outcomes Question Number	Evaluation Question Number	Research Question
RQ7	RQ16	To what extent does participation in the program improve employment outcomes?
RQ8	RQ17	How do the outcomes differ by demographic groups?

Data Analysis

Quantitative analyses of the PY2017 to PY2021 data included descriptive analyses to understand the distributional properties of the data and statistical models that controlled for individual and county level characteristics. The quantitative methods used in each analysis depended on the specific research question, the type of outcome variable assessed (e.g., nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio), the completeness of the data, and the need to introduce covariates into the analysis. ICF analyzed the CCMEP administrative and outcomes data across specific sub-populations including but not limited to individuals with a disability, justice-involved youth, and pregnant or parenting youth.

To examine program outcomes, we determined whether a participant had the following measurable skill gains: increased educational functioning level, a postsecondary transcript, a secondary transcript/report card showing the participant is meeting academic standards, reached a training milestone, and occupation-related skills progression. We examined whether a participant was employed two quarters and four quarters post-exit. Former participants self-reported whether they were still in-school in follow-up surveys at two and four quarters after exit. Employment data was from state administrative sources. We also determined if the participant earned any recognized credential including a high school diploma/equivalent, associate degree, bachelor's degree, and other occupational certificates. Only individuals who exited CCMEP above the age of 18 were included in those analyses. The analysis looked at high school graduation/equivalency outcomes for three populations: participants still in secondary school at program entry, participants 18 and younger who were not attending school and did not have a high school diploma or equivalent at program entry, and adults (participants 19 and older) who did not have a high school diploma/equivalent. If the participant exited CCMEP before age 19 without a high school diploma/equivalent they were not included in these analyses since those participants may be in the process of earning their high school diploma/equivalent. Note that some of these outcomes are short-term, such as measurable skill gains, and others are long-term, such as attaining a high school diploma/equivalent or other credential.

ICF examined whether CCMEP participants were either employed or in school two and four quarters after exit rather than in isolation. Many participants are connected to educational programs that will increase their employment opportunities in the future. Other participants join CCMEP to find better quality and higher paying jobs. Without the ability to untangle the participants' goals, combining them into one outcome allows our analysis to best capture

this outcome. However, there are some limitations to how we constructed this outcome. Data on whether the former participant is currently in school two or four quarters after exit is collected through follow up surveys. As a result, non-responses are assumed to not be currently attending school; thus, this measure likely biases the estimate downward. Additionally, ODJFS was unable to provide employment and wages outcomes received from the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) to ICF due to data sharing restrictions with other states. Combining these two measures may result in less downward bias than examining them individually, but the results of this analysis may be lower than the actual engagement in employment or school by CCMEP participants. For wages two and four quarters post-exit, ICF reported wages with and without the top .5% of values trimmed and adjusted for inflation.

We analyzed select outcomes by three county-level variables: lead agency type, workforce development agency, and county size based on population density (rural, suburban, or urban) and four individual-level variables: participant race/ethnicity, participant age at entry, participant educational attainment at entry, and participant sex. All WIOA programs are required to collect participants' sex assigned at birth to comply with Selective Service Registration.⁷ Thus, participant sex is analyzed as a binary variable.

Implementation Study Findings

In this section, we discuss the findings from the implementation study. These findings include data collected through interviews and focus groups with the nine case study counties and the statewide survey.

Program Operations

This section addresses outreach; eligibility, onboarding, and enrollment; services provided; communication and engagement; Goal 4It!™, training; and challenges to and promising practices for implementation.

Outreach Methods

Successful enrollment depends heavily on effective outreach strategies, both traditional and digital. Participants indicated the program was not well known and suggested a variety of strategies including billboards, YouTube ads, TV, radio, mail, emails, flyers (e.g., at libraries), social media (Facebook, TikTok, SnapChat), and attendance at in-person events such as job fairs and local community events to advertise the program and increase awareness. TikTok is only used for outreach by youth service providers which are not using state equipment based on state restrictions. County staff also wanted to increase awareness. While the staff we interviewed felt that social media was the best form of outreach, many participants found out about CCMEP through direct outreach and word of mouth. Word of mouth is a powerful recruitment tool (and it was used by 90% of survey

⁷ See [ODJFS eManuals > Workforce Development > Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act > WIOA Policy Letters > WIOAPL 15-04.1 \(Selective Service Registration\) \(ohio.gov\)](#).

respondents), but it can be complemented by other methods. Some participants noted that if they had not personally known anyone in CCMEP, word-of-mouth outreach would not have been effective. To assist with program awareness and enrollment, the state would like to create videos that positively message the benefits of CCMEP for both volunteers and OWF participants.

"This is a generation or two that are unaware of what is available to them. If it is not on social media, if they didn't see it on TikTok or something, then it doesn't matter." (Vendor Leadership)

"My mom was getting food stamps through the county, and I went with her one day and they offered the program to me. I really don't think [CCMEP] was advertised much or was well known to other families. I was with my mom on a random errand, we were just in the building, and that's how we came to it. But then I spread the word to a couple of my friends at school who I knew were in similar situations." (Participant)

"Advertise on a billboard, newspapers, Instagram, and Facebook. Go to other schools too and ask that counselors recommend the program for certain students." (Participant)

"Putting the word out to providers, probation, subsidized housing, and other agencies might benefit other counties." (County Staff)

"I want to grow the program a lot. I was the editor of the newspaper in our county, so I know a lot of people in our community. I want to use those contacts to meet with all the high school guidance counselors and economic development folks to brainstorm ways we can bring more people into the program. We live in a rural area with a lot of poverty. We have so many kids that could benefit from the program if we just get (to) them." (County Staff)

Participants and staff indicated that CCMEP presence in schools and community events, and employer outreach, were important tools for program outreach. Forty-seven percent of survey respondents indicated that they target outreach to high school students, the top reported targeted outreach population. Most counties we interviewed maintain relationships with the public schools in their counties with varying degrees of involvement. Some counties have staff members who spend time in the schools, which allows the services to be brought to the participant, rather than requiring the participant to actively seek out services. This is particularly helpful in counties which have barriers to transportation and a significant in-school population. And it allows easy access for career coaches to check in with participants more regularly. Several participants noted that they were introduced to the CCMEP through staff at their school, including direct referrals from teachers, guidance counselors, principals, and front office staff.

"If I never was sent to the counselor's office, I would never have had this opportunity. It was kind of just like fate I guess you could call it." (Participant)

"It is sitting right in the center of those populations and allows us to go into the community and participate in things like job or community fairs. We are right there where they are, so it allows us to be part of the community. We get to capture those that are underserved and that need to be served." (Vendor Leadership)

"They communicate to the employer to let them know if they have any youth who they see struggle with transportation, housing, etc. to send them our way so we can help remove these barriers to employment. They also talk to our employers about on-the-job training funding, work experience funding, and supportive services they can offer to the new employees. When a company hires someone new, they will send a screening sheet with general demographic information, and they call to screen for funding and explain services from there." (County Staff)

Most CCMEP participants did not think the program was a well-known resource among their peers and in their communities. Several participants reported that they heard about the CCMEP by chance, either by being somewhere in the community where a CCMEP representative was conducting outreach or by hearing about it in passing from a friend. Participants noted that having a full understanding of available supports and a clear mission statement and values to share with their friends would be helpful in getting the word out. Staff echoed this need, noting that they often need to remind interested participants that it is an employment program not just a supportive services program.

"I think all aspects of the program give us an opportunity to engage because there is nothing really like it out there. It is just getting people to understand what the program is and to take advantage of it. I'm perplexed by how many youth do not take advantage of the program, but our job is to go find them." (Vendor Leadership)

Most counties target their outreach efforts to multiple subpopulations served through CCMEP. From our statewide survey, 53% of survey respondents (n=90) reported their county targets outreach, while 40% (n=67) do not (the rest were unsure or uninvolved in outreach). These outreach initiatives derive from areas of need, leadership initiatives, or partnerships with community organizations with expertise in specific issue areas or populations. The backgrounds of county and leadership staff, and their relationships with other social service agencies, generally led to strong outreach initiatives. Staff noted that strong relationships with departments within the same agency or in close physical proximity were beneficial for referrals and outreach. Table 8 shows the number and percentage of survey respondents that target each subpopulation.

Table 8. Targeted Outreach to Subpopulations

Which of the following groups of individuals are targeted for outreach? (select all)	Frequency (Percent of 90 responses)
High school students	75 (83%)
Ohio Works First (OWF) Work Eligibles required participants	72 (80%)
Current or aged out foster youth	71 (79%)
Individuals who are pregnant or parenting	71 (79%)
Individuals who do not have a HS diploma or GED	68 (76%)
Individuals who need additional assistance	66 (73%)
Individuals who are basic skills deficient	65 (72%)
Individuals who are single parents	65 (72%)
Individuals who are interested or enrolled in postsecondary programs	64 (71%)
Individuals who are homeless or runaway youth	58 (64%)
Individuals who have a history of justice involvement	56 (62%)
Individuals with a disability	51 (57%)
SNAP benefit recipients	50 (56%)
Individuals with a history of substance abuse	47 (52%)
Ohio Works First (OWF) Volunteers	40 (44%)
English-language learners	30 (33%)

When looking at outreach differences by county size, the proportion of survey respondents who reported their county targets outreach to specific populations increased steadily from rural, suburban, to metropolitan counties (46%, 65%, 79%, respectively). The proportion of rural (61%) and suburban respondents (66%) who reported their county provides tailored messaging to OWF work eligible or cash assistance participants was significantly below that of survey respondents in metropolitan counties (94%). When looking at outreach differences by lead agency type, survey respondents in counties led by WDAs (90%) are significantly more likely than respondents in counties led by CDJFS (53%) to report their county targets outreach to specific populations.

Counties that do not target outreach may misunderstand program policies. For many counties, the typical outreach process is to put out a general message geared toward youth under 25 and out of school youth with an unclear future. Programs sometimes reported no variation in their outreach messaging between volunteers and required participants. Perhaps it is not surprising then that participants reflected that they did not believe people fully understand what services CCMEP can provide; and in fact, some participants were unaware of some of the available services. To expand their outreach, one county leadership participant indicated they need approval from the state to use more of their funding, stating:

"We need that flexibility to then take more of our money that's in the program. Outreach is a part of the program; how can you get work out if you don't have outreach as a piece of that?" (County Leadership)

State representatives reported that this is a misunderstanding of policy. Program allocations can be used for outreach and there's no limit as long as outreach is deemed reasonable and necessary (please refer to [TEGL 03-23.pdf \(dol.gov\)](#) for more information). Targeted outreach and marketing may help potential participants understand, or better understand, the available supports, process, and potential benefits of the program.

Eligibility, Onboarding, and Enrollment

Determining participant eligibility was often cited as a continuous struggle for counties.

TANF and WIOA Youth have different requirements and there are nuances to both funding streams. Disentangling the criteria can be confusing and even veteran staff admitted that they still struggle at times.

"I think our biggest struggle is determining eligibility. That is the most confusing thing—and I have been here for six years. I have to pause and think about things, or I have to go ask [leadership] and then they have to look up some things." (County Staff)

Most counties agreed that enrolling participants under the TANF route was easier, but a few career coaches with workforce backgrounds felt the WIOA Youth eligibility route was more straight forward.

Orientation and onboarding vary by county and program participants did not remember much about it. Typical orientation includes an overview of the program, paperwork, intake assessments, expectations, and assignment to a career coach. Some counties do orientation in group settings while others meet one on one. A few participants indicated the group setting was helpful for them and provided a sense of community. Participants did not recall the exact process they went through during their initial enrollment. Some remember participating in orientation meetings or workshops, others recall taking assessments, others just remember lots of paperwork.

About two-thirds of survey respondents reported their county had an orientation for new CCMEP participants (Table 9). The average length of orientation was 2.2 hours. Of respondents with an orientation in their county who answered the question, 77% characterized their orientation as active and 23% indicated it was passive (Table 10).

Table 9. Orientation Offered

Does your county/lead agency offer a program orientation for new participants?	Frequency (Percent)
Yes	99 (64%)
No	43 (28%)
I'm not sure/ I am not involved in this	13 (8%)
Total	155 (100%)

Table 10. Passive or Active Orientation

Does orientation consist mostly of...?	Frequency (Percent)
Active components such as discussions, Q&A, interactive exercises	73 (77%)
Passive components such as videos or "lecture style" instruction	22 (23%)
Total	95 (100%)

Survey respondents in counties led by CDJFS were significantly more likely than those led by WDA (84% compared to 36%) to have an active orientation.

Intake assessments vary by county, and several pose challenges for participants. The Comprehensive Assessment consists of two parts: completion of the Stepping Stones to Success Assessment (Goal4 It!™) and an assessment of basic skills. Basic skills assessment demonstrates a participants' current abilities in the areas of reading, writing, computing, and English language proficiency. It gives career coaches a starting point measure to establish needed supports and track progress. Due to the length of (some) basic skills screenings, one county noted they "do not test individuals unless they have an IEP or 504 plan." Other staff reported that participants did not want to take the TABE test since it can take up to four to five hours to complete. Although the TABE is one of the more popular assessments for basic skills, there are more streamlined options available, such as the TABE locator which only takes an hour. However, the state encourages locals to use previously taken standardized assessments to replace the TABE such as the SAT, ACT, state end of course tests, AP tests, or college placement tests. According to state leadership, county staff prefer to use CASAS or ACT WorkKeys if they need to conduct a youth assessment.

The Initial assessment CCMEP used to measure a participant's employability when the program was launched in 2016 was 10 pages. As part of the implementation of the Goal4 It!™ coaching model, Ohio switched to the much shorter Stepping Stones to Success Assessment (3 pages) which was developed based on motivation science. A few counties indicated that the state's decision to switch to the Stepping Stones assessment saves time and results in a much quicker intake process. However, some counties expressed frustration with the new assessment because they felt it is not comprehensive enough or useful for new staff who do not have experience having tough conversations with participants. A few counties reported that they still use the old assessment or use a combination of the old and new assessment to ensure they are getting a holistic picture of the participant.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, some counties switched to using the ACT WorkKeys for a basic skills assessment. While several counties enjoyed the time-saved by this change, others felt it was not an effective basic skills test. Additionally, new technology driven solutions for using WorkKeys have resulted in additional delays and frustration from staff and participants. Staff reported the registration process to take WorkKeys has become challenging due to the implementation of the OHID system with the OhioMeansJobs website; specifically, the two-factor authentication results in mobile accessibility challenges and presents a barrier for some CCMEP participants. To use the system effectively, they requested additional guidance for troubleshooting system accessibility challenges.

The largest proportion of survey respondents reported that their county uses the WorkKeys test (n=98, 70%); this was followed by the TABE Locator test (n=88, 62%). Nearly half used the TABE 11 & 12 (n=67, 48%) or previously taken assessments such as the ACT or SAT (n=67, 48%). Respondents could select all that apply so a total percentage is not provided in Table 11.

Table 11. Skills Assessments used by Survey Respondents

What basic skills assessment does your county/lead agency use? Please select all that apply.	Frequency (Percent of 141 responses)
WorkKeys	98 (70%)
TABE Locator (Tests of Adult Basic Education Locator)	88 (62%)
TABE 11 & 12 (Tests of Adult Basic Education 11 & 12)	67 (48%)
Previously taken assessments (e.g., ACT or SAT)	67 (48%)
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS)	14 (10%)
BEST (Basic English Skills Test)	4 (3%)
MAPT (Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test)	2 (1%)
I'm not sure/ I am not involved in this	14 (10%)

Participants agreed that when they were provided with simplified information about what the program could do for them, it encouraged their enrollment and engagement. Several counties described the importance of open communication during intake to help participants orient themselves in the program. Most counties do not report differentiating their onboarding or enrollment process based on the type of participant. The process remains the same for everyone and participants receive information on what services are available and how the services can help them reach their goals. During orientation, many counties try to craft a narrative that the program's goal is to find youth a career pathway and become self-sufficient. For participants that receive or want to receive cash assistance, some counties are more transparent and provide them with information about the associated requirements and what the county is required to report to ODJFS monthly.

Slow enrollment, especially when there are minor children, is a barrier. Staff have suggested looking at ways to streamline the application process and make it more accessible for parents and participants. Until changes can be addressed, staff highlighted

the need to be transparent about the redundancy of paperwork to mitigate participants' frustrations. Program participants and staff noted that coordinating with parents when there are minor children involved sometimes presents an additional barrier. The state noted that there are several available options for increased flexibility within the current policies. For example, while Ohio prefers parent signatures, there is no state or federal requirement for parental signatures to serve youth.

Services Provided

All CCMEP staff survey participants were asked about the services provided through CCMEP. Almost every respondent said their county provided supportive services (n=146, 98%) and career awareness counseling and exploration services (n=144, 97%). Work experience and on-the-job training (n=134, 90%), financial literacy services (n=133, 89%), and occupational skills training (n=133, 89%) were also widely offered across Ohio. All survey responses are provided in Table 12.⁸ A total percentage is not provided since respondents could select more than one answer.

Table 12. Services Provided by CCMEP

Please indicate which of the below services are provided. Please select all that apply.	Frequency (Percent of 149 responses)
Career awareness counseling and exploration services (labor market and employment information, leadership development activities)	144 (97%)
Work Experience/OJT (paid if possible)	134 (90%)
Financial Literacy	133 (89%)
Occupational Skills Training/ITA	133 (89%)
Preparation Activities for Postsecondary employment and training (E&T)	115 (77%)
Alternative Secondary School offerings	112 (75%)
Unsubsidized employment (job placement)	109 (73%)
Dropout Prevention	109 (73%)
Tutoring	105 (70%)
Study Skills	99 (66%)
Adult Mentoring	99 (66%)
Entrepreneurial skills training	93 (62%)
Other*	6 (4%)

⁸ Due to a survey programming error, two services, "Comprehensive guidance and counseling" and "Education concurrent with workforce preparation activities," were combined into one response option. While 130 of 149 respondents (87%) selected this option, we have not included it since it is unclear which service respondents intended to select.

Transportation, childcare, and housing assistance are the hardest supportive services for counties to provide; yet remain critical for participants to attend college and maintain employment and engagement with the CCMEP. This was reflected in both interview and survey data. Leadership and staff described transportation in some areas using words like “terrible,” “horrible,” and “awful,” with some saying it was always the biggest barrier to getting youth where they need to go and noting how time intensive it is to secure those resources. Staff reflected, “it is a game changer when someone has a vehicle” in these communities. During our interviews, smaller counties often noted additional struggles overcoming transportation barriers due to the lack of reliable public transportation. From our survey, on a scale from 1 to 3 (not a barrier, small barrier, significant barrier), transportation was a significantly larger barrier in rural (2.64) compared to suburban and metropolitan counties (2.46 and 2.13, respectively). One staff member we interviewed noted the lack of public transportation in their county has hindered the creation of employer partnerships in areas that are not easily accessible to participants.

“There are a lot of manufacturers that are desperate for kids right outside where [a] metro bus will take them. I went to several meetings [with the employers] and I finally had to say that I’m not sure I can help because I can’t get kids here.”
(County Staff)

“We have so many individuals who do not have a driver’s license. They seem to have no desire to have one, and even if they did, they’d have no access to a vehicle. We have a transit system, but it is just so limited, and you can’t get them immediately set up. It is not like a big city where you can give them bus tokens. It depends on the individual they are picking up and where they are going, but sometimes it takes several weeks before we can get an individual on transit.”
(County Leadership)

A few participants mentioned transportation was the most important supportive service they received to help them achieve their goals. CCMEP offers flexibility in offering assistance for this barrier. Examples of transportation assistance include purchasing standard and electric bicycles and providing down payment assistance for cars. For participants that already have cars, the CCMEP provides gas cards and money for car repairs and maintenance as needed. Most counties do not limit transportation funds specifically but have an overall supportive services limit per individual (e.g., \$5,000). Transportation support “has allowed [participants] to go places or do things that they might not have been able to pursue before.”

Counties also want to improve their childcare services. Childcare offerings are a struggle due to strict income eligibility criteria and limited availability in certain areas. Some counties have begun offering a childcare pathway to CCMEP participants to address both the need for providers and the need for training for interested participants. In addition to training, the

state reported there are funds available to help individuals become home-based publicly funded childcare locations.

Table 13 shows how survey respondents answered questions asking them how much of a barrier it was to provide housing, transportation, childcare assistance, and a range of other services. The largest proportion in each row is bolded and Table 13 is presented in descending order based on the proportion who rated each a significant barrier.

Table 13. Barriers by Type of Service

How big of a barrier is providing....	Significant Barrier	Small Barrier	Not a Barrier	Total
Housing assistance	101 (69%)	40 (27%)	6 (4%)	147 (100%)
Transportation	94 (64%)	32 (22%)	21 (14%)	147 (100%)
Childcare assistance	77 (52%)	53 (36%)	17 (12%)	147 (100%)
Referrals to legal aid services	22 (15%)	53 (36%)	72 (49%)	147 (100%)
Assistance to access reasonable accommodations for disabilities	10 (7%)	65 (45%)	71 (49%)	146 (100%)
Assistance with educational testing	7 (5%)	56 (38%)	84 (57%)	147 (100%)
Payments and fees for employment and training related applications, tests, and certifications	4 (3%)	35 (24%)	108 (74%)	147 (100%)
Assistance with uniforms/appropriate work attire/work related tools	4 (3%)	32 (22%)	111 (76%)	147 (100%)
Assistance with books, fees, supplies, and other needs for secondary/post-secondary classes	3 (2%)	35 (24%)	109 (74%)	147 (100%)
Referrals to other community services	3 (2%)	33 (22%)	111 (76%)	147 (100%)

Offer additional career pathways and education options. County leadership, county staff and program participants noted some deficits in the career pathways and education opportunities available, noting they are restricted to “in demand” careers and lamenting the loss of options they used to have.

“Schools are really pushing these kids to find their dream. If they cannot do it on their own, they come to us. Then we have to say, ‘Sorry, that is not an in-demand job’ or ‘We cannot fund that’ and it bursts their dreams right there.” (County Staff)

“We no longer offer cosmetology and barbers, and I’d love to see construction in our area. We have so much in IT, but not everyone is IT bound.” (County Staff)

"My program had to be 12 months or less. It is easier for other people who need a GED. But going through nursing school, it could only be 12 months and I really wanted to get my associates and stay with the program, but I had to go for my LVN." (Participant)

"I wish there were more training and certification programs because it gives me something to put on my resume." (Participant)

The state clarified that only 85% of occupational skills training must be for in-demand careers and that this service is limited to two years but can be extended to four years for occupations identified as [critical jobs in Ohio](#).

Ensure work experiences are a good fit for program participants. The first interview excerpt is from a county staff member who identified a need for work experience partners that can provide a more meaningful experience. The second is from a county staff member who noted that some employers have unrealistic expectations for CCMEP program participants placed with them. This individual also identified knowledge gaps to close in their county.

"We need providers more than anything else, people who can provide the service, not just someone who will put them into 'work experience' that our participants don't get anything out of. Or more people willing to do job shadowing with our young people." (County Leadership)

"We need to ensure that the employers we are partnering with understand they are helping to train people to be employees, not just getting free labor. From the career coach side, we need to determine what more we can do. For example, should we have more targeted workshops that are paid? Also, a lot of work environments have changed since COVID. What is acceptable in terms of cell phone use and office attire? Is what we're teaching accurate?" (County Staff)

A few participants described disappointing work experiences where they were unsure what they should be doing or were engaged in work activities unrelated to their career desires. And the third participant recommended in-person networking and job events to counteract the ubiquity of jobs found and applied to online.

"Any company that is interested needs to write a curriculum sheet. They need to write out what this person might be learning, what they will be doing, what they are tasked with, what they might be expected to do every day—like a job description. I was not doing anything [at my job]. When I entered CCMEP, I was dealing with depression and a lot of my own thoughts. When you don't have a structure, it feeds into [that]. My anxiety was making me think, 'Am I not doing my job right?'" (Participant)

"Working directly with clients would have been better. I was doing a lot of computer work and Excel sheets and stuff. It was not really related to my field other than getting to know the certain services that JFS offers. I did not get a lot of one-on-one time other than a minute or two phone calls here and there. I just did a lot of irrelevant paperwork. With social work especially, working with people [should be] what you do." (Participant)

"I would like more networking events. Allow people to meet with industries and organizations that may be able to help them get positions they are interested in. A lot of jobs you find and apply for on the Internet are being filtered by a robot so you're not being considered by actual human beings. It will be so much more valuable to make connections with people directly." (Participant)

To ensure goodness of fit for all participants programs may look to expand remote opportunities. The state could assist with this through facilitating employer connections through the state chamber or state economic development agency to assist with the potential expansion of remote work and job shadow experiences. The State has a policy requiring that 85% of ITA (individual training account) enrollments must be a State in-demand occupation. However, the remaining 15% of ITA enrollments may be for occupations defined as in demand within the local area. For more information see [WIOAPL 15-11-3](#).

Summer Employment Program

TANF-funded summer youth programs, which date back to 2002, were created to provide short-term summer job opportunities to get young adults engaged in employment, give them some income, and expose them to work experiences. CCMEP tried to capitalize on that structure and turn it into a year-round program to provide more support to youth and encourage them to stay engaged throughout the year. This change in structure resulted in push back from several counties. The summer programs are easier to operate because they are shorter and do not involve outcome reporting requirements or impact counties' performance metrics. When CCMEP became permanent law, Ohio stopped funding the summer work program, thereby forcing counties to use CCMEP. Some counties ran great summer youth programs and were frustrated with the CCMEP rollout because they now had to enroll their youth through CCMEP and comply with all CCMEP requirements. Staff working on the TANF side complained to Ohio's OFA that the outcome reporting requirements were hurting their numbers and performance, and in response OFA opened back up the TANF summer youth program.

Many workforce boards believe TANF-funded summer employment programs can lead to new enrollments into CCMEP and are interested in exploring ways to incorporate yearly unspent CCMEP-dedicated WIOA Youth funding through Board-initiated activities such as summer programming that may or may not be directed through the CCMEP Lead Agency.

TANF-funded summer youth employment programs are both a challenge and a facilitator to implementing CCMEP and there were mixed feelings and various approaches to offering them. From our survey, of 157 respondents that answered the question, 70% (n=110) reported that their county provides a TANF-funded summer employment program, 24% (n=37) said it does not, and 6% (n=10) were unsure or were not involved in that program. Of respondents in counties with a summer employment program, 86% (n=94) offer a TANF-funded summer employment program and 81% (n=88) offered a CCMEP-funded program, as shown in Table 14.

Table 14. TANF Summer Employment Program

	Yes	No	Total
Is the TANF-funded Summer Employment Program used?	94 (86%)	15 (14%)	109 (100%)
Is the CCMEP-funded Summer Employment Program used?	88 (81%)	20 (19%)	108 (100%)

Counties led by CDJFS were significantly more likely than counties led by a WDA (89% compared to 64%) to offer the TANF-funded Summer Employment Program.

As shown in Table 15, almost three-quarters of respondents (n=78, 72%) said their county offered both the TANF and CCMEP-funded Summer Employment Programs, 14% (n=15) offered only TANF, 9% (n=10) offered only CCMEP, and 5% (n=5) did not offer either program.

Table 15. Summer Employment Programs Offered

How many counties offer both summer employment programs?	Frequency (Percent)
Offer TANF and CCMEP--funded Summer Employment Programs	78 (72%)
Offer TANF Summer Employment Program only	15 (14%)
Offer CCMEP funded Summer Employment Program only	10 (9%)
Do not offer either TANF or CCMEP Summer Employment Program	5 (5%)
Total	108 (100%)

A few individuals in state leadership roles suspect that dual summer programming is one of the biggest barriers to implementation and negatively impacts CCMEP enrollment. Survey respondents disagreed. Of the 94 survey respondents with a TANF Summer Employment Program, half (n=47, 50%) felt it increased CCMEP enrollment and 47% felt it had no impact (Table 16).

Table 16. Effects of TANF-funded Summer Employment Program on Enrollment

Would you say the TANF Summer Employment Program...	Frequency (Percent)
Decreases enrollment in CCMEP	3 (3%)
Has no impact on CCMEP enrollment	44 (47%)
Increases enrollment in CCMEP	47 (50%)
Total	94 (100%)

From our interviews, some counties continue to participate in the TANF-funded summer employment program and reported that it helps engage youth and facilitate enrollment into CCMEP, again, a finding strengthened by our survey results. They reported that many youth are looking to make money over the summer and connect with the agency to secure summer work experience. This was supported by a few participants we spoke with who reported they got involved with CCMEP when looking for summer jobs. A few counties use their summer program as an enrollment launch—an opportunity to enroll youth for the summer and lead them into the year-round program. Two counties reported being successful in that venture and saw increased enrollment into CCMEP; however, one county reported that this strategy has not worked well for them as there have been very few CCMEP enrollments captured through their summer program.

Administrative Data Insights

After the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, monthly enrollment in CCMEP dropped significantly. However, enrollment from the last week of August through the end of September held steady between 2018 and 2021. If that period had the same decline between 2019 and 2020 as the rest of the calendar year, there would have been about 200 fewer enrollees in CCMEP.

A couple of the counties operating the TANF-funded summer employment program indicated that their summer programming is geared toward their younger population, 14 to 16-year-olds. High school youth don't necessarily have time to participate in the year long program and many don't have reliable transportation throughout the year. Some of the summer programs offer transportation which attracts youth and boosts summer enrollment. One county has blended the programs together and offers them under the same umbrella, braiding the elements and funding from both. Other counties have modified their approach and offer summer only employment in other departments or programs but not as a component of the CCMEP. This allows youth looking only for a summer job to still access employment. A few counties have enjoyed the change to a more year-round experience and have removed all mention of summer programming. They are very much invested in the idea that this is a year-round opportunity and do not want participants or providers to come in with the belief that CCMEP is a summer program. Other counties reported the change in framework from a summer program to a year-round offering was a big hurdle to overcome. Counties had to rebuild their program structure to incorporate all the pieces of a year-

round program, which included revising their community partner agreements and conducting additional training.

Communication and Engagement

Open, consistent, and frequent communication are important factors for keeping participants engaged. While the state requires outreach every 30 days, almost all career coaches reach out to their participants more frequently—every three weeks, every other week, weekly, and even daily. Participants likewise indicated they were in frequent contact with their career coaches through texts, emails, phone calls, and in-person meetings (e.g., to sign something, pick up a check, complete paperwork, etc.). Staff and participants indicated phone-based communication was preferred (text, call, google voice, Facebook messenger). However, since text communication was preferred over phone calls by participants, many career coaches indicated they rely on a combination of text and one-on-one in person communication. Staff acknowledged that not every conversation is appropriate for texting and some counties reported establishing a guide of what is and is not appropriate for texting and what would require a face-to-face appointment or phone call.

*"I like to think of myself as being one phone call or text message away."
(Participant)*

*"Having Facebook accounts with messenger has been a huge, good thing for us. Most of them do message through Facebook. We are a rural community so a lot of times they may not have cell phone service, but they may be somewhere with Wi-Fi. It is just easier to connect with them on Facebook, but we do allow phone calls and emails if they would rather email. So, whatever is easier for them."
(County Staff)*

*"For our high schoolers, youth career coaches go to the school and meet with them there for workshops and those types of things. I have made it a best practice for my career coaches to make weekly contact with those young professionals. Obviously for our individuals who are in college or are working, they do not need to do that. So, it just depends on the youth and what stage they are at in life."
(County Leadership)*

Participants indicated that the accessibility of their career coach and flexible means of communication were important. Several counties tailor their communication style and frequency to the needs of the participants. For example, individuals with lots of needs or barriers receive more frequent communication. Some counties report that while their marketing of CCMEP does not vary by participant, once they enroll someone their messaging and case management methods change because of the varying requirements for those on cash assistance. To try and avoid participants from being sanctioned or not receiving their cash, most counties provide specific information about the stipulations set by ODJFS, the expectations of what they have to comply with, and the reasons why they

might not have to (e.g., medical releases). These OWF work eligible participants are also provided with more frequent, detailed, and hands-on case management. One county reported that they meet daily with these participants and have an after-hours phone where career coaches can be reached in case of emergency. Another county holds a weekly reflection meeting with their cash assistance participants where they present on different topics (e.g., budgeting).

"I have only seen my career coach three or four times this year, but she will text me about stuff I need to sign, or check up to see how I am doing, and I will give her an update. It is not really that often since my case is close to being closed. I do not really talk to her that frequently—but it's enough to keep in touch and make sure I am doing well and staying on top of what I need to." (Participant)

For youth that become unengaged or unresponsive, follow-up and communication can be a challenge. Staff reported that communication is more frequent with active cases than participants who are on follow-up. Likewise, frequent engagement will happen with participants starting out and will gradually give way to less frequent engagement as participants become established in training, education, or employment. Participants "humming along" will receive a monthly communication, especially if they are working or their case is closed but are in the follow-up period. This approach was also taken with participants who are unresponsive to communication attempts.

"Active youth are communicated with at least once a week. Sometimes it is just a simple text like, 'Hey is everything ok? Are there any services you need?' If they need additional services, then we communicate with them more than once that week." (County Staff)

When dealing with participants on follow up, some counties have tried using small incentives like \$5 gas cards to get youth to reach out to them but have had little success. Some counties complained about the required number of attempts a career coach must make before exiting participants from the program (i.e., five attempts with no contact). To some, the five attempts seemed arbitrary and many reported that after the third attempt, they were confident the participant was not coming back. According to state leadership, the state implemented the "five occasions" guidance to discourage career coaches from exiting a youth prior to trying multiple methods of re-engagement. There is no federal regulation that requires five attempts nor is a time frame during which these attempts must be made.

"If I have someone who's disengaged and they just never get back to me even when I send a text or email or leave a message, it's once a month." (County Staff)

Survey respondents rated the ease with which their county could keep different subpopulations of CCMEP participants engaged, or indicated they did not serve the population in question. Table 17 provides their responses in descending order based on the

proportion that indicated it was “very hard” to engage the group of CCMEP participants (total sample size was 158). The largest proportion of respondents (n=36, 23%) indicated it was very hard to serve OWF Work Eligible required participants; this was followed by individuals who are homeless or runaway youth, and English-language learners. However, English-language learners and OWF volunteers are the two groups most likely not be served. The largest proportion of respondents (n=50, 32%) indicated it was easy to serve individuals interested/enrolled in post-secondary programs. Other than these, the largest proportion of respondents rated each subpopulation as either somewhat easy or somewhat hard related to ongoing engagement. The largest proportion is bolded in each row.

Table 17. Ease of Engaging Sub-Populations

Sup-Population	Very Easy	Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Hard	Hard	Very Hard	Not served
Ohio Works First (OWF) Work Eligibles required participants	7 (4%)	15 (10%)	28 (18%)	28 (18%)	31 (20%)	36 (23%)	13 (8%)
Individuals who are homeless or runaway youth	2 (1%)	9 (6%)	17 (11%)	53 (34%)	37 (23%)	31 (20%)	9 (6%)
English-language learners	0 (0%)	8 (5%)	16 (10%)	39 (25%)	15 (10%)	29 (18%)	51 (32%)
Individuals with a history of substance abuse	0 (0%)	5 (3%)	23 (15%)	58 (37%)	33 (21%)	26 (16%)	13 (8%)
Current or aged out foster youth	0 (0%)	5 (3%)	34 (22%)	59 (37%)	33 (21%)	23 (15%)	4 (3%)
Individuals who have a history of justice involvement	1 (1%)	17 (11%)	33 (21%)	53 (34%)	26 (16%)	22 (14%)	6 (4%)
Ohio Works First (OWF) Volunteers	2 (1%)	22 (14%)	20 (13%)	37 (23%)	16 (10%)	20 (13%)	41 (26%)
SNAP benefits recipients	4 (3%)	17 (11%)	47 (30%)	46 (29%)	17 (11%)	14 (9%)	13 (8%)
Individuals who are single parents	11 (7%)	23 (15%)	52 (33%)	37 (23%)	17 (11%)	13 (8%)	5 (3%)
Individuals who do not have a HS diploma or GED	2 (1%)	18 (11%)	51 (32%)	43 (27%)	29 (18%)	13 (8%)	2 (1%)
Individuals who are pregnant or parenting	11 (7%)	22 (14%)	55 (35%)	39 (25%)	17 (11%)	11 (7%)	3 (2%)
Individuals who are basic skills deficient	6 (4%)	28 (18%)	41 (26%)	51 (32%)	22 (14%)	9 (6%)	1 (1%)

Sup-Population	Very Easy	Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Hard	Hard	Very Hard	Not served
Individuals with a disability	1 (1%)	23 (15%)	45 (29%)	53 (34%)	23 (15%)	10 (6%)	3 (2%)
High School students	10 (6%)	33 (21%)	45 (29%)	37 (23%)	22 (14%)	7 (4%)	4 (3%)
Individuals who need additional assistance	2 (1%)	36 (23%)	57 (36%)	35 (22%)	18 (11%)	7 (4%)	3 (2%)
Individuals interested/enrolled in post-secondary programs	16 (10%)	50 (32%)	49 (31%)	28 (18%)	9 (6%)	4 (3%)	2 (1%)

The ease or difficulty of serving OWF work eligible participants differed significantly by county size. With higher scores equating to more difficulty on a six-point scale (1=very easy to 6=very hard), difficulty serving OWF work eligible participants increased steadily from metropolitan (3.50), to suburban (4.08), to rural (4.43) respondents.

Goal4 It!™ Coaching Model

After the CCMEP rollout, counties were struggling with participant engagement, developing trusting relationships, and the additional required case management tasks. Goal4 It!™ was introduced in response to those struggles through a grant received from HHS to address and enhance the case management quality of CCMEP. The Goal4 It!™ coaching case management model was incorporated into CCMEP to increase the quality and consistency of case management. The state began with a volunteer implementation of Goal4 It!™ coaching model so some counties have not yet implemented the model, others are using only certain components of the model (e.g., they only use Stepping Stones to Success assessment), and others have integrated it more fully. About two thirds of all counties have been trained and begun implementation. Leadership has tried to encourage increased participation in training because Goal4 It!™ will soon be required.

The Goal4 It!™ coaching rollout has varied widely across counties. Staff indicated that the Goal4 It!™ tools are user friendly and facilitate conversations, shifting questions from closed responses to open-ended discussions on goal planning. Finding that some participants were resistant to using the tools on an ongoing basis, one county stated that they use the Goal4 It!™ sheets in the very beginning to set up an individual opportunity plan (IOP) for small attainable goals related to training or work experience. They noted that while the model is designed to teach participants to brainstorm and problem solve, it only works if you have consistent buy-in from participants. Other counties that are not using Goal4 It!™ coaching reported that they still use a similar structure that incorporates short and long-term goals when meeting with customers and establishing their IOPs.

Respondents indicated that the Goal4 It!™ coaching model allows them to dig deeper into personal, educational, and career goals than the previous tools did. We spoke with a few staff who do not think the model is in-depth enough because it lacks important questions about substance abuse, mental health, and criminal history. However, most counties that use the entire Goal4 It!™ coaching model report liking the tools and those in leadership reported the model has been well received by their staff. Many staff noted they like Goal4 It!™ because it provides a structured way for youth to “drive their plan” and identify what they are hoping to get out of the program. One county has had such success that they have integrated some of the framework for their Benefit Bridge pilot with OFA and other workforce programs. A career coach even admitted using it with her kids and another said she uses it on herself.

“What is your why? Why are you here? Why do you want to go to school? Is that intrinsic or extrinsic motivation? Most of the young ladies we talk to want to create a better life for their children. That is why it is a big motivator and if I can understand their why, I can always bring it back to them. This is to help your kids, it is not about anybody else, it is not about you getting a check from JFS. It is about you being able to take care of your kids on your own without depending on other [people]. That is what I love about Goal4 It!™; it is going to be a strength going forward with the whole program. If we lose that, then people are going to go back to the old way where we are just asking 50 million questions that don’t really give us an honest answer. You don’t get to the meat of the matter.”
(County Leadership)

The coaching model strives to increase the skills and understanding of career coaches and change the career coach and youth interaction from a transactional model to one based on participant motivations. One of the goals of CCMEP was to establish intimate and intense case management to meet people where they are and help them achieve their goals. It is used as a method to engage with youth in planning life, career, and education goals to help alleviate and overcome challenges and guide the youth in identifying goals, goal planning, goal completion, and reflection to increase youth self-regulation skills. Staff reflected that the Goal4 It! coaching model helps career coaches provide agency to participants and allows youth to drive planning and decision making. This approach is trauma-informed and avoids any potential for inadvertently limiting the participant’s goals based on career coaches’ priorities.

“[The shift is] funny to watch in person. We had a Goal4 It! meeting a few weeks ago and there was a lady who said, “Why would I tell them to go to college if no one in their family has gone to college?” I was like well, what does that have to do with anything? It just helps people think different not tell people what to do.”
(County Leadership)

Staff reported participants often give short answers or say “I don’t know” when working through assessments. One suggestion from a career coach was to leverage these “I don’t know” moments to introduce a growth mindset. For the most effective use, they recommend spreading out the assessments to allow for more reflection and relationship and trust building prior to discussing strengths and weaknesses.

*“I’ll ask them, ‘What are some barriers you feel like you have? But don’t tell me right now. I want you to sit on it, and then when we meet again tomorrow, let me know.’ I let them marinate in their head a little bit and then that way they can kind of give a real answer instead of just telling you something you want to hear.”
(Vendor Leadership)*

From our survey, the ease or difficulty of engaging several subpopulations differed significantly by whether the county uses Goal4 It!™ materials. With higher scores equating to more difficulty, survey respondents not using Goal4 It!™ in their county rated engaging eight different subpopulations as significantly more difficult than respondents using Goal4 It!™. These analyses are shown in Table 18.

Table 18. Ease of Engaging Different Subpopulations by Goal4 It!™

Use Goal4 It!™ How easy or difficult is to keep subpopulation engaged	Yes Mean (Frequency)	No Mean (Frequency)
High school students*	2.98 (n=66)	3.80 (n=20)
Individuals who are basic skills deficient***	3.22 (n=69)	4.15 (n=20)
Individuals who are pregnant or parenting*	3.15 (n=68)	3.95 (n=20)
Individuals who are single parents**	3.17 (n=66)	4.00 (n=20)
Individuals who do not have a HS diploma or GED*	3.60 (n=68)	4.25 (n=20)
OWF required participants*	3.86 (n=64)	4.78 (n=18)
OWF volunteers***	3.50 (n=52)	5.07 (n=14)
SNAP benefit recipients**	3.38 (n=66)	4.31 (n=16)

* p< .05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

1=very easy; 2=easy; 3=somewhat easy; 4=somewhat hard; 5=hard; 6=very hard

Comments on Goal4 It!™ coaching trainings were mixed. While some staff found Goal4 It!™ training useful, others remarked that the training focused too much on how to use the model with the “ideal participant,” but was less helpful for how to work with participants who are more difficult to engage and have more barriers to overcome. One county suggested that the trainings be revised with examples from the counties themselves using

interactions that didn't go well with a range of participants. This would provide some guidance on how to handle and work through those situations. Another suggestion was to restrict training to topics that were universally relevant to counties; for example, remove training about how to exit participants because counties vary so much in their methods. Instead of webinars, which some indicated were redundant, one county recommended a monthly roundtable discussion with other counties to share ideas, best practices, and challenges when using the Goal4 It!™ coaching model. Beginning in February 2024, the state is offering a monthly community of practice meeting where counties using the coaching model can share their challenges and best practices. Excerpts from our interviews make these points.

"If we had the ability to have [someone come in and show our team how to use the model] then we would use more of the tools but now we just use the Stepping Stones and move it into ARIES." (County Staff)

"We do use the [Goal4 It!™ tools] if we're really struggling. We're not officially trained, but we'll use some of the worksheets if we need that additional help to make some goals make sense to the participants." (County Leadership)

"The state offers assistance with Goal4 It!™ so that helps. But with that, if you have never been to the Goal4 It!™ training before, the model [will be hard to use] because you're not going to understand." (County Leadership)

"I think that we should bring examples to the table. Let us give you a couple examples ahead of time of how it went wrong or bad, and then work through that. Have the person who is doing the training work through it like, 'What could we have done?' Then they'll know how to handle it after that point or at least have some direction to go in. I think we all should turn in a story or two of how it went awry, or one of our customers that it didn't work for and see how we work through that." (Vendor Leadership)

Staff would like more Goal4 It!™ training that focuses on the whole process, especially since some counties are using the tools despite not having training. As noted, county staff like the model, and some are even training their vendors to use it but have indicated that turnover and the number of providers with differing approaches can make training difficult. One vendor reflected that the volume of resources within the model can be intimidating for staff.

Training

Training attendance and attitudes varied widely across counties. Some counties reported attending training as often as they could while others stated they hardly ever attend since there are few available times. These data are supported by our statewide survey, which asked respondents to indicate which of 12 state-led trainings they had participated in since the beginning of 2023. All 12 items were summed to create an index. The index, shown in Table 19, ranged from 1 to 12 and had a mean was 7.3. As shown, around

Ohio Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Statewide Evaluation Report

20% (n=24) of respondents had attended four or fewer trainings and 63% (n=80) had taken between 7 and 12.

Table 19. Number of Trainings Taken by CCMEP Staff

How many trainings have CCMEP taken?	Frequency (Percent)
1	4 (3%)
2	9 (7%)
3	6 (5%)
4	5 (4%)
5	11 (9%)
6	13 (10%)
7	16 (13%)
8	19 (15%)
9	11 (9%)
10	11 (9%)
11	10 (8%)
12	13 (10%)
Total	128 (100%)

In addition to structured onboarding, staff indicated they appreciate formal trainings put on by the state. While staff largely reported the training is appreciated, and the online repository is helpful, they often referred to the webinars as redundant. Staff would like more tailored and hands-on training opportunities that differentiate content delivery for various roles and learning styles. For more complex training, like the Advancement through Resources, Information and Employment Services system (ARIES) (state case management data entry system) and Goal4 It!™, staff suggested breaking training courses out over two to three days and providing in-person options when possible. Vendors reported the need for more training on how to fill out paperwork, submission instructions, and nuances of their grants.

*"We were just given it and [the county] was like figure it out. We did and we still are, but I wish we had more training on the grant itself because it's giant."
(Vendor Leadership)*

The State is invested in improving trainings. During our interviews, state leadership underscored their focus on improving and expanding trainings and improving the training technology. They are working on a new onboarding training, monthly coaching case review trainings, coaching model trainings, regional trainings, and a strategy training for program leaders that will be offered on their online platform. The state recognizes that trainings can be redundant and is working on a process to streamline and focus trainings for the right individuals. Additionally, the state is working to identify local Ohio trainers that can provide in-person coaching model training as needed.

Training is vital since CCMEP career coaches have a range of experience and come from a variety of backgrounds. Survey respondents indicated the area in which they had most of their professional background. As shown in Table 20, about half (n=89, 52%) had a background in workforce development and the next most common response (n=29, 17%) was public assistance. “Other” responses included “addiction,” “administration,” “eligibility,” “just started,” “nonprofit management,” “various county roles,” “youth case management,” and “youth development.”

Table 20. Professional Background

Professional Background	Frequency (Percent)
Workforce Development (e.g., career coaching, job development, employment)	89 (52%)
Public Assistance (TANF, SNAP)	29 (17%)
Child Welfare	12 (7%)
Finance and Business+	6 (4%)
Criminal justice, Courts, and Law Enforcement+	4 (2%)
Medicaid	3 (2%)
Customer Service+	3 (2%)
Childcare	2 (1%)
Child Support	2 (1%)
Education+	2 (1%)
Human Resources+	2 (%)
Unemployment	0 (0%)
Other*	17 (%)
Total	171 (100%)

+ Response option added during coding.

During our interviews, one career coach reflected how challenging it was for her to come into this role from a completely different career background. However, she received great training that enabled her to apply her corporate career skills and thrive. Several counties have used their funds to provide additional support and training for their staff. One county cross-trained their entire staff to provide more support and flexibility. For example, even if someone is not necessarily a career coach, they still know the basics of the youth program and can jump in and help if needed.

Challenges to Implementation

In this section, we begin by addressing one of the primary challenges to implementing CCMEP—program complexity in eligibility requirements, funding, and reporting. Next, we address issues related to staffing and staff turnover. We close this section with challenges related to data systems.

Program Complexity Challenges

CCMEP is very complex. State leadership, staff, and vendors reported that learning the intricacies of the program takes time and can be overwhelming. Vendor leadership reflected that, “understanding the program is the first challenge... Sometimes the red tape is difficult to get through when you have someone at your door asking for help. You have to really intimately know the program to know what you can do and what you can’t do.”

“There is a reason the other 49 states don’t do this. It is hard, it is really hard. At the local level, the more versed someone is in TANF the better off you are going to be, but you need [to know] both [workforce and TANF].” (State Leadership)

“I think how complex the program is, how much you have to learn, contributes to staff turnover. I started and then the coach who trained me left. I had one month with them, and I probably only trained with them for a few days...It is a lot of information, a lot of rules, and every case is different.” (County Staff)

“Why is WIOA eligibility so difficult? Why does it have so many caveats? There is a lot of room for error. Whereas TANF is very clean cut, WIOA has 1,000 different situations it could be that are beyond annoying. Even being here this long, we still second guess ourselves and have to consult each other.” (County Staff)

Front and Back Stage

Despite the complexity and frustration from staff, participants were mostly unaware of the behind-the-scenes nuances of program service delivery. From the participant point of view, services were delivered by CCMEP or their career coach, rather than separate entities.

The different funding streams of TANF and WIOA contribute to CCMEP’s complexity.

While CCMEP state leadership feels that funding is one of the biggest strengths of the program because the influx of TANF dollars allows workforce development professionals and case managers to expand workforce programming opportunities and the ability to braid funds makes a large difference in the number of people they can serve, it is not without challenges. While state leadership indicated that braided funding is better understood than when the program got underway, there is still confusion among several counties. None of the nine case study counties we spoke with had the same understanding or definition for braiding funds. In fact, the level of understanding was so different that one county who “braided funds” had the same process as another county who indicated they did not “braid funds.” Some programs reported that the differences between TANF and WIOA have led them to not braid funds to keep things streamlined. Other counties reported that tracking participants across funding streams was problematic. Still other counties reported no difficulties in allocating cost between TANF and WIOA—stating it comes down to the youth’s circumstances and identifying what funding stream or program element they are eligible for.

Fewer funds, but more reporting, are features of WIOA. At the beginning, counties indicated they were excited about the program, but when the reporting requirements came from DOL, many counties pushed back. The bulk of the funding comes from the TANF side and there is more flexibility in how funds can be used. On the WIOA side, there is less funding available, yet there are more burdensome outcome reporting requirements. Several counties did not want to enroll participants into CCMEP because they were being held to the WIOA outcome reporting requirements, which they felt heavily impacted program implementation. This level of pushback from the counties resulted in state level changes to the program operation or concessions for compliance (e.g., adjustments to the required number of hours and rules relating to pregnant individuals for both OWF and volunteer participants). Some in state leadership felt that these concessions helped bring about a culture shift for CCMEP that allowed counties to be less compliance-focused and more person-centered.

Co-enrollment decisions contribute to CCMEP's complexity. Several counties reported co-enrolling youth whenever eligible for both funding streams. This allows them to better maximize their funding and serve more youth. Some counties reported co-enrolling TANF-eligible participants to avoid potential lapses in services if a participant were to lose their TANF eligibility. Other counties do not see the benefit, and simply don't co-enroll. They find more success in prescreening individuals during intake to determine what pot of money to use for that individual. One county that does

Dual Enrollment for Other Programs

Career coaches reported co-enrolling youth in non-WIOA programs like Youth Build to help eliminate funding and regulation barriers. One county noted that dual enrollment in other supportive programs like Goodwill's State Tested Nursing Assistant training program was "like double support. They tend to be the most successful at finishing, passing the test, and being employed."

braid their funds reported they are hesitant to co-enroll participants from the start. They recognize that there are advantages and disadvantages and believe they have more flexibility with their funding when they don't co-enroll. Another county who stated they do not co-enroll participants reported prioritizing TANF enrollment to maximize the use of available funds. They only opt to enroll their TANF-eligible participants under WIOA if they are at risk of losing their TANF eligibility. This approach was chosen to avoid participants having to meet outcome performance measures across both TANF and WIOA and maximize the use of TANF funds. For example, when an individual is going to start earning money that may affect their TANF eligibility, but still needs other CCMEP services, the program starts WIOA enrollment prior to the job starting "because once they start getting that income, they lose TANF eligibility. But we already have them enrolled in WIOA, so we can keep them in CCMEP." The state clarified that all CCMEP participants are included in outcome measures, however, some areas and counties are more concerned about their WIOA Youth participant outcomes due to the potential consequences of failing measure for these participants. A

workforce area that fails to meet the standard for a WIOA program for two consecutive years may be redesignated by the state. Redesignation means that the state could reorganize which counties are included in that workforce area.

There is variation in how counties allocate their funds across the program. Counties reported spending funds on direct services, supportive services, RMS (random moment sample) costs, and work experiences for program participants. During our interviews, one county reported a 50/50 split between direct and supportive service spending, while others reported more emphasis on either direct or supportive services. From our statewide survey, of the 61 respondents that answered the question, most respondents (n=38, 62%) reported that their county's funding was more directed towards individualized services such as training, paid work experiences, and tutoring and 38% (n=23) reported more of the funding was spent on supportive services.

Most counties prioritize the use of TANF dollars first when serving participants, because that is where the bulk of the funding lies. However, some counties struggle with their number of TANF eligible participants, which presents challenges to service delivery. Due to less WIOA funding, some counties go through their allotted funds quickly and must waitlist interested parties who are not TANF eligible.

"If funding were not a problem, I'd absolutely love CCMEP. Everyone knows me as the biggest cheerleader, I've seen a lot of successes. [CCMEP] works. It really, truly works. If funding wasn't a barrier. I have a lot of TANF funding but not everyone is TANF eligible – that's the biggest barrier." (County Leadership)

A few counties pool their funds and let their fiscal department handle the billing and budgeting. This seemed to be a more common practice among counties that had several service providers where each agency is allotted a certain amount of money for client services or client assistance funds (e.g., transportation). Programs that described having good relationships with their county budget offices or indicated having access to strong fiscal staff reported having more success spending their funds. They appeared to have more flexibility with juggling funds and moving money to various accounts as needed to cover different expenses. It was the opinion of one county that several counties are careless and not strategic enough with their TANF funding. TANF funding is more flexible and can be used to serve the larger program community, but some counties continuously spend their money in one lump sum just to get rid of it. Instead of funneling it back into training, work experiences, or supportive services, they dump their TANF funds into community giveaways for book bags, laptops, or back-to-school clothes. To mitigate confusion around allocating funds, the state associations could provide more assistance by examining co-enrollment, sharing WIOA/TANF "braiding/spending" promising practices, and sharing those practices with all CCMEP Lead Agencies and local workforce boards.

The inability to access immediate funds outside of formalized vendor agreements presents barriers for supportive services. Another commonly reported challenge was the

use of vouchers and the lack of a corporate credit card. A few counties reported feeling strapped in situations where they wanted to provide support for participants but were unable to access funds in a timely manner due to county procedures and limitations. County staff members can use the County Finance Information System (CFIS) to write a voucher for the purchase of goods through a vendor. The CFIS acts like a checkbook—the county issues a voucher to a customer to give to a vendor for a service (e.g., \$100 for new tires for their car). The vendor must then provide the county with a receipt or invoice that is submitted to the county fiscal department; a check is issued in about two to three weeks. Despite reimbursement being guaranteed, it is not immediate which can cause issues for companies with small operating margins. Counties noted they would have more flexibility and could provide more support for participants if they had access to a shared credit card that allowed for more immediate payment. According to the state, the use of a credit card is not prohibited, however, some counties have local policies that prohibit them. The state suggests partnering with a local vendor, such as the local community action agency (CAA) or youth service provider, which might have more flexibility to assist with these services and immediate needs.

While some counties reflected that WIOA funds are easier to allocate since it was designed to be a workforce program, counties feel that the WIOA in-school youth (ISY) versus out-of-school youth (OSY) funding split presents additional challenges.

The federal guideline mandates a minimum expenditure of 75% WIOA funds for OSY. Several counties report frustration with this guideline because they feel more money should be allocated to ISY as OSY can be

harder to engage. One county career coach stated they do not even attempt to enroll ISY in CCMEP because one year they went slightly over 25% and their county was penalized. Both leadership and front-line staff felt that they could improve their CCMEP programs if the split was reversed. Engaging youth earlier while they are still in school allows the counties to provide support before additional barriers develop.

A different perspective on OSY

A county reporting great success with their OSY population indicated that 99% of their focus is geared toward the 18- to 24-year-olds. They feel 14- to 15-year-old participants don't have the maturity level or possess the thinking necessary to be successful in the program. In their eyes, counties spending a lot of time and resources on the younger population, particularly those ages 14 and 15, is a mistake because they cannot work for themselves or become self-sufficient.

Counties also reported frustration with the inability to change the federal regulation of a participant's enrollment status from ISY to OSY or vice versa for WIOA funded participants. Once the youth are enrolled under a certain status, they are linked to that funding stream even if their status changes. To change their status, the individual must be completely exited from the program and then re-enrolled after a waiting period. But most counties report that during that waiting period the youth is long gone and they are unable to serve them.

"We can only spend 25% on in-school youth with WIOA dollars. They still need services after graduation, but they retain their in-school status, and we can't really serve them." (County Leadership)

"We could really increase enrollment if we could go after more in-school youth and have more of a presence in the schools." (County Leadership)

"My wish is that WIOA dollars would be WIOA dollars for youth across the board and it wouldn't matter what age they are or if they're in-school or out. Let us serve the population that wants to be served." (County Staff)

"If CCMEP removed how much money can be spent on in-school youth, it would be helpful because if we could start while they are still in school, we'd have a better chance of being able to help them change direction before they make a lot of decisions that are hard to overcome." (County Staff)

"Open it to more in-school kids. Sometimes when they come to us and they have been out of school for 2-3 years, the world has already jaded them, and it is a lot harder compared to if we could get them when they are younger." (County Staff)

"There are a lot of people in school that need the same things as those that are out of school. It is a disadvantage and I think it should be a little bit more balanced." (County Leadership)

"There are years where I could have served double if I had the funds to do it. I've worked with out-of-school youth, so I know the challenges they face and how fortunate I am serving the in-school population. But every year I have to cut it off because that's all we can enroll." (County Staff)

While all CCMEP programs are encouraged to follow the OSY expenditure policy, the state has indicated there is much confusion over the requirement. First, there is no TANF spending limitation and there is no requirement for WIOA funds to be used to provide services to ISY⁹. Second, the local workforce boards may determine their own minimum expenditure rate above 75%. Additionally, the state operates under two waivers from DOL to help alleviate this challenge. The first waiver allows the expenditure requirement to be measured at the state level, so not all counties or workforce areas have to individually meet the 75% expenditure requirement. However, a few counties felt that the CCMEP programs were not experiencing the impacts of this relief effort at the local level. The second waiver allows for any TANF funds spent on co-enrolled OSY to count toward the 75% OSY WIOA expenditure requirement, which has resulted in the state exceeding this minimum requirement. The state reassures counties that stress over this requirement isn't necessary,

⁹ [ODJFS eManuals > Workforce Development > Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act > WIOA Rules > 5101:10-3-01 Workforce innovation and opportunity act youth program: eligibility requirements. \(ohio.gov\)](#)

and communication would be provided if the state were at risk of not meeting the 75% expenditure requirement.

Staffing Challenges

Staff reported various challenges related to hiring and onboarding. Due to its temporary status when the CCMEP launched in 2016, some counties did not staff the program the way it was designed (i.e., hiring social workers for holistic case management). While some counties did hire more skilled staff at a higher salary, most used their existing public assistance staff or had staff working on CCMEP and multiple other programs at the same time (i.e., OWF, SNAP, Medicaid, etc.). Counties spend significant time screening and talking to individuals before bringing them on board, but often still struggle with hiring the right staff. Counties noted that individuals apply for a CCMEP position thinking they want to be career coaches and feel they know what intensive case management looks like, but they often do not have a good handle on what the job entails. Due to the intensive nature of the program, not having strong career coach staff has caused some counties to struggle with implementation. Despite the fact the CCMEP requires a higher skill level, state leadership reported that some counties pay their CCMEP staff the same rates as other positions which do not require the skills needed for CCMEP.

Staff turnover, a significant challenge in CCMEP, has roots in misunderstanding the role, wages, caseload size, and burnout. Since its inception, state and county leadership noted that staff turnover, at both the front line and leadership levels, has been one of the biggest challenges they face. Veteran staff providing their thoughts on turnover felt that many people were just not prepared for the challenges or high demands of the job. During our interviews, the most reported reason for turnover was low wages, with some employees leaving for higher paying roles with other counties or the state. County leadership has recognized that there are better opportunities out there and understand why many of their staff move on when they are unable to match the wages of other growing sectors. In fact, one county reported that some of their coaches have left for better opportunities they found in the CCMEP programs when working with their participants. Inadequate pay also impacts turnover rates for contracted providers and seems to result in lower quality candidates. One county leadership member said, “the provider does not pay well, so the individuals they hire lack the polish or the skills. When we start applying some performance pressure, they usually crumble and leave.” One proposal put forward by a state representative is for counties to consider mandating specific qualifications and/or minimum pay standards within procurement requests for proposals (see [WIOA Policy Letter No. 17-03](#) for more information). Another state leadership suggestion was for counties that are not fully spending their TANF and/or WIOA youth allocations to allocate program funds to pay for higher skilled workers and/or increase the number of staff dedicated to CCMEP.

Large and growing caseloads are a common complaint among staff and relate to both burnout and turnover. However, this is a difficult issue to disentangle because of its cyclical nature. Staff turnover leads to an increase in caseloads which impacts burnout and in turn exacerbates turnover. Another factor in burnout is the type of caseloads that some career coaches have. Some counties have designated career coach roles for handling certain cases (e.g., TANF or WIOA, ISY or OSY, foster youth, justice-involved populations, etc.). According to a few career coaches, foster youth and cash assistance cases tend to be the most difficult to handle. If someone solely oversees those types of cases, it can take a toll. A few counties have seen success in spreading and sharing the burden of these types of cases among their career coaches as opposed to creating focused case portfolios. Staff turnover has impacted staff capacity for outreach in some counties because effectively engaging and supporting individuals who are experiencing many barriers to work readiness takes a lot of time.

Staff indicated that the caseload size negatively impacts their ability to provide high-quality comprehensive case management. State leadership indicated that the ideal number of cases is 25 active and 25 on follow up. During our interviews, the ideal caseload size varied based on county size and program structure. Smaller counties reported that 10–15 was ideal and 30 was too many, especially if the individuals had many barriers. Larger counties noted a typical caseload size of 50–60 participants.

"I think how complex the program is [impacts staff turnover], how much you have to learn.... Our case numbers are not crazy; they want our case numbers to be higher. When we get 15, I feel that that is enough for one career coach, but they want our case numbers to be into the 30s. I feel that when we do get to that 15 rate, then the caseload gets too overwhelming for an individual to do." (County Staff)

"Sometimes we do not really get to holistically deal with the individuals, which from my background, I always have a systems perspective in mind. I know families operate in systems and society operates in systems, so we know that this affects that. So, we are looking at somebody being employed, we are looking at a whole bunch of things that affect them being able to be employed or stay employed. Sometimes I feel that we don't get to address those things because everything is so rushed. I feel that the contacts could be more meaningful if we had more time." (County Staff)

Staff Onboarding Challenges

New staff reported that the program is overwhelming in the absence of formal onboarding and program training. Given its complexity, new staff would like a structured introduction to CCMEP. While some counties offer job shadowing for new career coaches, and staff were quick to point out that colleagues provide support, there is so much to learn, and new staff are often overwhelmed. Program leadership echoed this sentiment and

Ohio Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Statewide Evaluation Report

recognized that peer training is difficult due to other job responsibilities. These difficulties highlight why even smaller counties shouldn't expect staff members to simultaneously work in CCMEP and other program areas. The complexity of the program and the personalized, proactive coaching required necessitate dedicated attention from coaches. One suggestion was that the state could provide technical assistance in the form of a "training roadmap" for counties to follow when onboarding new hires and providing refresher trainings for existing staff.

"There is so much to learn, and it is so confusing. There are just so many aspects of [the program] so it is hard to pick everything up without any kind of formal training." (County Staff)

"Can't we create trainings to give them the basics to do their job? Because honestly, as a leader, it takes a lot of time. When you are a very small agency, I do not have the time to give new individuals a detailed training." (County Leadership)

The need for a structured onboarding process was highlighted by high rates of staff turnover due to COVID. This was especially true in relation to the use of the Goal4 It!™ coaching model. Some counties that had integrated the coaching model into their program stopped using it because they experienced high rates of turnover, and no longer had resources. The state has announced that they are currently in the final stages of procuring a training content creation tool that will enable them to develop formalized online training with tracking capabilities. The primary focus for this content will initially be on training new CCMEP career coaches.

Data System Challenges

The ARIES system rollout was challenging for staff. Many individuals we spoke to reported they would have benefited from more transparency about the system change to ARIES prior to its rollout. Individuals at the state level acknowledged that the abrupt switch to the new system, and transparency around the change to states and counties, was challenging. Not only has it been difficult for veteran staff to quickly learn a new system, but it has also been difficult to train new staff when existing staff are unfamiliar with the system. Staff have requested more hands-on training and technical assistance led by someone who regularly uses the system.

"Nobody at my agency knew how to transition, what it looked like...there was no information other than we're stopping this and starting this. It was a 'Figure it out' kind of thing. There was no guide or handbook at the time of the transfer, so everyone had to learn as we went. I would [have appreciated] more transparency and reassurance that it's going to be okay and that everyone was going through it. I felt no one knew what they were doing." (Vendor)

The ARIES system is still challenging for staff. While one county reported being able to leverage ARIES reports to identify areas for strategic improvement, the changes to merging information in the new system has negatively impacted performance, which has created stress for several counties. Although the state is aware of the errors within ARIES, it is time consuming for counties to both ensure that all the skill gains and performance measures are accurate and to constantly report back to the state when an error is discovered. One county staff reflected that monitoring these reporting errors takes valuable time away from the program. Counties are also struggling with uploading documents, the inability to rely on their performance data, and the loss of access to wage data. The state pointed out that the absence of access to wage data might be attributed to SWIS¹⁰ data sharing challenges rather than being solely a result of ARIES.

Data systems other than ARIES can be challenging. We spoke with several counties where multiple systems are in play and staff must duplicate information across them. For example, Goodwill uses its own system so counties who use Goodwill services must maintain records for the state ARIES system in addition to the Goodwill system. Other counties use their own systems in addition to ARIES, which require vendors in those areas to learn and navigate both systems. On the other hand, other counties reported that the automation of systems across the state and counties has improved communication and response times (e.g., responding to referrals within 24 hours). While the state is open to simplifying processes to alleviate redundancy, they have no control over duplicative systems used at the county and vendor levels.

Promising Practices for Implementation

While there's a preference for new hires with degrees or previous case management experience, mindset is more important for program success. There are no formally mandated hiring requirements at the state level, which allows hiring managers to look for individuals with varied backgrounds—we heard of successful staff with backgrounds in education, business, or social work as well as those with a DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) mindset, compassion, lived experience, understanding, interpersonal skills, and a desire to help. It was well recognized that the most important quality of a good career coach was strong communication skills to include personality, relatability, and being a good listener. Other important skills included organization, multitasking, the ability to take good notes, write reports, and do follow-up. Several counties we spoke with have removed their degree requirements for career coaches, indicating that previous workforce, public assistance, or child welfare experience or experience working with the population that CCMEP serves is most important. Additionally, counties give discretion to vendors to do their own hiring, but they do require background checks. However, the state notes that this might not be the best practice given the staffing challenges mentioned above. Counties

¹⁰ SWIS is the data sharing agreement that the state of Ohio has with DOL that allows data sharing with other states. However, this agreement strictly limits its use to reporting employment outcomes to only DOL. Ohio is unable to share any employment information obtained from SWIS with other parties, which can negatively impact the look of employment outcomes.

could require greater qualifications, skills, or experience and set minimum pay requirements in the RFPs.

"In my experience the thing that matters most is experience working with this population—not that they have the degree. I'm looking for people who think more 'grey' than black and white. Black and white is good for policy, like processing food stamps, but when it comes to a kid, I don't want them put into a category right off the bat. I'm really looking for someone with interpersonal skills and experience dealing with trauma and things like that. My interview questions are based on motivational interview techniques. I ask questions like, 'Tell me something about yourself that I wouldn't get from a resume. I want to know who you are.' Those types of answers let me know how they fit in our team." (County Leadership)

"You have to build participants up. You have to change the mindset of how they operate and what they know because we see a lot of generational poverty. You have to change everything they've ever learned in their life and show them the rewards of working and being self-sufficient versus being on public assistance and that takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of effort and I think if your career coaches are invested in that mission and have that passion then that's going to lead to success in your staffing." (County Leadership)

Since the rollout of CCMEP several counties have changed or adapted how they administer CCMEP to align with state changes and better suit their needs. Staff have taken advantage of the flexibilities offered by CCMEP to make ongoing programmatic changes and provide tailored support. For example, some counties began by contracting out all or some of their provided services. These counties noted that there were too many "cooks in the kitchen" and they did not have a good handle on how the program was running. Bringing the services back in house has given them more control over program structure and operation. In contrast, other counties started by providing all services in-house and quickly realized they didn't have sufficient resources to handle it all. They have since started using community resources and contract out some or all their services. It seems that larger metro counties rely more heavily on contracted providers.

"CCMEP does change a lot so as things change at the state level or we find better ways to do things, we're constantly changing and adapting to make sure it makes sense." (County Leadership)

"CCMEP is very flexible. We are a supportive service. We help with any realistic and reasonable request." (County Staff)

Counties have also made changes to their staffing. One county hired a CCMEP coordinator to assist with implementation. Another county created a leadership council and divided them into sub-groups responsible for different program areas. For example, one group was responsible for learning ARIES, another invoicing, another work experiences etc. They would then meet biweekly to teach and train other staff and address any questions. A few counties have created dedicated job roles for certain activities like participant program exit and follow-up, while other counties have trained up their staff to handle both WIOA and TANF participants and assist them with other key services like financial literacy or mentoring.

Collaborative Eligibility Determinations

To facilitate eligibility determinations, one county established weekly meetings where staff come together to discuss and work through cases they are struggling with.

Connection points within and across counties supplement the formal training provided by the state. County-level collaboration is taking place in the form of leadership councils, bi-monthly implementation meetings, and resource development. These cross-county collaborations work through ways to best use Goal4 It!™ coaching and discuss current participant challenges and successes.

“Essentially, we all came together and said there’s a lot of misunderstanding going on and people do things differently. It was creating confusion for our people that provide approvals, so we had to figure out a way to get over this hump [in our county]. We created a leadership council and divided the council into sections [so that members could identify] what needed to be fixed and how we could fix it. We’re creating a handbook for all agencies so there will be a uniform way to do everything.” (Vendor)

Starting the week of February 22, 2024, the state initiated a monthly community of practice meeting to bolster coaching model endeavors. During these sessions, two counties exchange insights on successful cases or procedural improvements, as well as discuss challenging cases or process issues. Local leadership is also looking at ways they can provide staff support through open door policies, training, and flexible work arrangements. Programs provide ongoing support to their staff through a variety of training and professional development opportunities in areas such as mental health, first aid, trauma informed care, compassion fatigue, and peer recovery.

“If I’m here, [staff] know they can walk right in. They’ll lay out all kinds of issues or let me know if they need help. We have weekly meetings every Monday afternoon to just decompress and go over things, bounce ideas off each other, and go over what’s coming up and celebrate things. It’s about being available and flexible and supportive.” (County Staff)

"Honestly, in CCMEP, if you want to keep your good career coaches, you have to figure out ways to make sure you are always giving them the support they need."
(County Leadership)

At the state level, they are continuing to adapt the program and provide written resources such as newsletters and desk aids. State staff reported adjusting rules on tracking requirements for individuals who are not receiving cash assistance based on local feedback. Additionally, the state can potentially help facilitate contracts with community-based organizations (CBOs) and access to career navigators.

"We're working on an RFP so that we can get an app created to help support the program and the coaching model. Once that's available, it will help a lot because it'll be less data entry for staff, and participants will get nudges to work on their goals. It will also make communication between participants and career coaches easier and more convenient. We're trying to do things to make it easier on staff and help participants achieve their goals." (State Leadership)

Counties have highlighted that they value the input of their participants; for instance, one county regularly hosts focus groups for current and exited participants to reflect on the program. The county uses the feedback to make programmatic changes. Youth focus groups provide deeper context for counties to understand additional barriers participants are facing and allow for more targeted funding allocations and service delivery. This initiative could be expanded (to other counties and/or the state) so that other potential program improvements could be identified by integrating even greater feedback from program-involved youth.

Supporting Staff Mental Health

Working with participants who are experiencing trauma and difficult circumstances can take a toll on career coaches' own well-being. A year after implementation, the CCMEP leadership team recognized that many career coaches needed additional support. The team collaborated with the Mental Health Board's program, STARS, and offered a series of training courses geared toward their experiences when dealing with youth. Career coaches confirmed the importance of training, especially related to secondary trauma, because it helps them feel empowered and better prepared to provide support to participants.

Program Context of Operation

This section provides information and the findings regarding the context of which the CCMEP operates across the various counties (e.g., participants served, impacts of COVID-19, etc.).

Participants Served

CCMEP serves youth and young adults with mental health needs. Staff noted that participants are often experiencing generational poverty, a lack of familial support, and multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. One of the most common barriers to maintaining employment faced by CCMEP participants, according to vendor and county staff, is mental health needs. Many participants are struggling with mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, ADHD, schizophrenia, and bi-polar disorder. Staff identified COVID-19 as a major contributor to the high prevalence of mental health needs and reported difficulty engaging participants during COVID-19 due to mental health challenges, stating “I think mental health and apathy during that time and the apathy towards education continued long after they came back to school. It was challenging both during and after COVID.” An individual at the state level suggested a state level procurement may be effective to help address the gap in available mental health services, specifically telehealth options.

“In one way or another, whether they’ve been diagnosed or not, I feel like we have a lot of mental health [needs]. I feel like there are not enough services for mental health in the community, which may be why they are not keeping their jobs.” (County Staff)

Current or aged-out foster youth are a common target for outreach and services. Of the 93 survey respondents who target outreach to various subpopulations, 77% target outreach to current or aged out foster care youth (behind high school students at 82% and OWF work eligible required participants at 78%). Many of the counties we interviewed reported that they serve emancipating or aged-out foster youth, with staff from two counties stating this group represents a significant portion of their caseload. Staff from one of those counties attributed their high foster youth caseload to a strong foster youth initiative that is closely connected to the Children’s Services Division. They developed a position within their Department of Jobs and Family Services that is dedicated to coordinating the needs of emancipating foster youth among all the agencies they interact with. This is especially beneficial as 37% (n=59) of survey respondents reported that engagement with this group was “somewhat hard,” with 21% (n=33) and 15% (n=23), respectively, reporting it was “hard” or “very hard.” One staff member noted that they see a lack of follow through with foster care emancipators, stating “they’ve seen so many service providers during their time in care that they just disengage once they’re out.”

Pregnant or parenting youth, especially single parents, are a common target for outreach and services. Of the 93 survey respondents who target outreach to various subpopulations, 77% target outreach to individual who are pregnant or parenting (tied with current or aged-out foster youth). While 56% of survey respondents felt engaging these individuals were “very easy,” “easy,” or “somewhat easy,” multiple interviewees reported that these clients are often harder to engage or require more support than non-parenting clients. In all counties, parents who just gave birth can request a waiver from work

participation requirements, but the waiver usually is limited to 6–12 weeks per child. One county allows a 12-month waiver even though cash assistance participants can only get a waiver for a maximum of 12 months during their lifetime regardless of the number of children they have. Half of our survey respondents reported that their county exempts individuals that are pregnant or just gave birth from work participation requirements. CCMEP programs encourage clients to limit their use of the waiver to a few months to ensure they have coverage for any future pregnancies and to maintain engagement in the program.

Several programs encourage clients to engage in activities that prepare them for after the baby's arrival, such as obtaining a credential, participating in work experience, or connecting with additional supportive services. Some counties encourage mothers to consider becoming county daycare providers. Staff reflected that reengaging mothers after birth can be challenging depending on their initial reasons for enrolling; however, programs have found success in beginning outreach during maternity leave and leveraging relationships built prior to birth. Staff noted that a supportive relationship was critical to reengaging new mothers after birth. A lack of childcare is another major barrier for pregnant and parenting participants that impacts their ability to engage in program services and employment opportunities.

"We really try to keep them engaged as much as possible while they're pregnant and postpartum. A lot of times if things are done right, and the person wants to cooperate, they're excited to share their new family member with us. We've become important to them, and they've become important to us. We're trying to keep them engaged so we don't lose them." (County Staff)

Individuals who are homeless or runaway youth are another significant subpopulation in CCMEP. Multiple counties reported that homelessness is a major issue in their communities and homeless youth are one of the primary populations they serve. Of survey respondents with targeted outreach, 63% target outreach to these populations. A common avenue for reaching homeless youth is through referrals from community partners. Staff noted that they receive referrals from county homeless service providers, churches, and nonprofit organizations. Three-quarters (77%) of survey respondents reported some degree of difficulty engaging these youth, with 34% reporting engagement was "somewhat hard," 23% reporting it was "hard," and 20% that it was "very hard."

English Language Learners (ELL) are the least targeted group for outreach and one of the least served. Just 33% of survey respondents reported they target outreach to ELLs and 32% reported they do not serve this group. This is likely because ELLs in Ohio are concentrated in cities and metro areas including Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Akron, and Dayton as well as a large population in Holmes and Tuscarawas Counties.¹¹ Both CCMEP agencies and providers in counties with high ELL populations reported they serve many ELL clients and partner with schools and CBOs for interpretation services and language learning programs. Some counties highlighted the benefit of having Spanish-speaking staff but noted that they serve clients that speak a diverse array of languages. To meet the needs of clients from diverse backgrounds, they partner with CBOs that have a wider range of language services available. One county staff member noted that while their county is majority White and non-Hispanic, they have noticed increased diversity and a need for ELL services. One staff member stated, “I notice that clients who identify with a minority group are more likely to be drawn towards career coaches who are also a member of a minority group. It is a challenge and I know that my coworkers who identify with a minority group find it difficult as well.”

Expanding Reach through Mobile Services

When reflecting on challenges reaching specific sub-populations, such as migrant workers, one county reported they were going mobile. By bringing a mobile unit to underserved communities they increased their outreach efforts and expanded their reach.

Collaborating to Increase Enrollment

Through a collaboration with the Department of Youth Services, the State is establishing new processes to assist with the enrollment of youth who were incarcerated. The new process provides counties with notification of release, a contact letter template, and recent assessments

Having strong connections with other agencies and the court system was highlighted as a strength in serving youth involved in the justice system. For some counties, eligible youth on probation are required to connect with CCMEP, though not required to enroll. In others, CCMEP staff have

established strong relationships with and receive referrals from juvenile probation departments and the court system. Among survey respondents, 61% indicated their county targets outreach to justice-involved youth. About two-thirds (64%) of survey respondents reported some degree of difficulty engaging these youth, with 34% reporting engagement was “somewhat hard,” 16% reporting it was “hard,” and 14% that it was “very hard.” Staff in one county shared several outreach initiatives they employ for reaching justice-involved

¹¹ [Our Nation's English Learners \(ed.gov\)](https://www.ed.gov/our-nation/english-learners)

youth, including programming in local jails, referrals from jail chaplains, and CCMEP staff that work with the court system or day reporting/probation programs.

COVID-19

Counties are still recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A common theme across the counties we interviewed was the significant and negative impact COVID-19 had on participation and engagement as the pandemic forced schools online, employers to close, and limited work experience opportunities and other in-person activities. Counties have struggled to get their participation and engagement back to pre-pandemic levels.

"Our numbers decreased [during COVID] and we are still playing catch up and having a hard time with placement; there are still a lot of people who do not want to go back to work yet." (County Leadership)

"The work experience program really never bounced back after COVID – we used to serve 200 kids, now it's only 40-50" (Vendor)

Participants and potential participants also may have found other sources of money as COVID relief funds became available or they received unemployment. As a result, counties reported decreased numbers of participants, challenges keeping participants engaged, and difficulty spending funds. According to the state, a lot of counties were using minimum wage or other pre-pandemic rates for work experiences and some counties are still doing unpaid work experiences. To help re-engage participants and use funding, the state recommends meeting the local market rate for paid work experience wages and possibly enrolling underemployed youth.

The state also noted that several counties experienced difficulties adjusting their service models to the virtual environment. For example, several programs did not initially have laptops available for their staff, let alone technology to support their service population. One of the biggest challenges was engaging youth in virtual activities during the pandemic, as noted by county leaders:

"Engagement was tough online. We bought a bunch of laptops and we tried to coax our CCMEP customers with online schooling and if you finish, we pay this, this, and this but they were not really motivated by money. The bottom line is that it does not seem like money really motivates participants. They need to feel engaged and a part of something." (County Leadership)

"It was a time where we did not spend a lot of money because work experience, mentoring, and tutoring were not happening. People were not going to school. We were not really issuing supportive services, or we were doing things on a much smaller level...Trying to get stuff from kids when we were working remotely for a year was a challenge. We weren't doing anything near the volume that we would normally do." (County Leadership)

"We had no problems whatsoever spending funds pre-COVID. From 2020 to 2022, it was really tough getting participation up and getting individuals back to the normal way of doing things. I would say we're more on track now. I don't know that we spent the full pot of money in 2022, but I think 2023 is looking pretty good for us." (County Leadership)

The lingering effects of COVID may also be affecting participant follow-up. While changes in numbers and addresses are not uncommon with the population served, one county reported seeing "double, triple, or quadruple" the number of contact information changes for the participants served during COVID, making follow-up difficult.

With schools closed, workplaces shutdown, and a lack of in-person interactions in general, many participants were isolated, and counties reported seeing more mental health issues (as noted). The mental health issues, isolation, seeming lack of motivation, and apathy that participants experienced during COVID have continued to linger. As students who were freshmen in high school when COVID started begin graduating, counties expressed optimism that participation, engagement, and spending would begin to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Despite these challenges, some counties were able to innovate quickly and provide virtual meetings, programs, and activities for youth. One county leader noted, "COVID had its setbacks but there was more of a determination from the providers to look at things differently and still be successful delivering these services virtually." During COVID, regular meetings with career coaches, participants, and vendors were typically conducted through virtual platforms like Zoom or over the phone and some counties fought to maintain engagement with participants by opening other avenues of access such as establishing a 24/7 youth cell phone line or conducting off-site in-person visits.

"If we had somebody who had a face-to-face need that couldn't be handled through a virtual appointment, we carried chairs in the back of our cars and we would go sit in their yard or on their porch while they sat on the other side of the door and talk them through what needed to happen or what was going on." (Vendor).

In one county, staff wrote three different online virtual classes within two weeks that were offered daily for two to three hours. Other innovations included converting existing curricula to an online format, launching virtual internships, and offering virtual career development workshops that would not have been possible to provide in person. For example, participants were able to tour the Dallas Fort Worth Airport with the lead mechanic in air technology and follow a truck driver and a nurse through their day virtually. One factor that seemed to help or hinder counties in adapting quickly was how flexible and responsive their administrations were to approve new approaches.

The state provided guidance and increased policy flexibility such as extending the deadline for enrollment documentation from 30 to 60 days for non-OWF work eligibles,¹² extending certification periods for TANF participants, allowing verbal signatures, and providing technical assistance on serving participants virtually. Counties also had a waiver from DOL that provided an extra year for them to spend their WIOA funds.

CCMEP COVID-19 Spotlight

"We had a lot of our CCMEP programs that continued while everyone else was going home. We had workforce systems that were like "people need workforce help more than ever" and we are operating and wanting to keep doing things throughout COVID. The county JFS, who may not have been as heavily involved in the workforce world, saw more promise in how to do those kinds of things and have stepped up. And the workforce side has a much better understanding of TANF. We are in a good place now to reset and ask ourselves "What are we and what do we want to become? What works and what doesn't?" (County Leadership)

Some of the technologies and one-on-one activities introduced had mixed reviews.

During COVID, programs introduced more virtual and phone meetings with participants and vendors. OWD had adopted Microsoft Teams shortly before the pandemic, which made it possible for people to work from home. Many staff and vendors appreciated the convenience of online meetings and participants found it easier for scheduling. As one participant noted:

*"The whole shift to virtual made it easier [to meet with my career coach]. People are online all the time, so it just made it a lot more accessible from anywhere instead of trying to schedule meetings around certain dates and locations."
(Participant)*

Some staff found there was a learning curve with the virtual meeting platforms and new staff found the online format challenging for building relationships with participants and colleagues. Others prefer online and have found the transition back to in-person difficult;

¹² OWF work-eligible individuals are still beholden to the 30-day limit.

one vendor stated, “some customers got very comfortable having a conversation on the phone so reintroducing the program as an in-person program [was a challenge].” Even as counties move back to in-person meetings, they are retaining the flexibility to offer virtual meetings when needed. This practice aligns with best practices recommended by the state as hybrid programming alleviates transportation and childcare issues which can negatively affect participation.

Another operational shift during COVID to limit potential exposure to the virus was moving away from group activities and meetings to one-on-one meetings. While necessary during the height of COVID, group activities, including activities with participants and group meetings with county and vendor staff, have been slow to resume. One vendor explained:

“We do more one-on-one than in group settings now. We’ve found that since COVID, more individuals have anxiety about being together with peers and everyone wants to stay in their own bubble.”

Whereas there used to be large group meetings with staff and vendors, some counties noted that a lot of the communication is taking place virtually or one-on-one. State leadership expressed some concern that while they may see more attendance at meetings due to the virtual format, they are not seeing the same level of brainstorming and collaboration as before the pandemic:

“There used to be a lot more of that community of practice prior to the pandemic. And now people are so used to doing Teams or Zoom meetings [that it has just continued.] We have a workforce committee, with a lot of workforce administrators and some agency directors. Prior to the pandemic, attendance was not off the charts, but it was really a ‘How are you operationalizing this? Wow, that is a great idea’ or ‘Wow that is a great idea for recruitment.’ Those meetings are still virtual because people have expressed a desire to keep them that way because they are able to attend, but it is more one-way with less dialogue. I don’t know that that level of sharing is happening in large groups anymore. I think it is happening peer-to-peer and I think that the CCMEP team is helping connect individual counties, but I’m not aware of larger community sharing format happening right now.” (State Leadership)

Participants’ experiences during the pandemic varied widely and depended on their individual circumstance. Many participants who were in the program during COVID shared that they didn’t experience the program much differently, except that meetings and schools went virtual and more communication was conducted via email or text. A few noted that meetings slowed down or even that they were not in touch at all with the program during the pandemic. As with the staff, some participants were very comfortable with the technology and doing things virtually, while others really struggled:

"[During] COVID, it was a little rough because we could not meet face-to-face. We were trying virtual calls, but the app or website they were trying to video call me from would work for them but not me. With documents, it was not like you could go in and sign it. If you email it, do I need to print it out, sign it, and email it back? It really affected me when I started college because everything was online, so trying to communicate with my college and explain I was in this program...they didn't understand anything, and it was very hard." (Participant)

Participants' experiences seemed to depend on many things including what services they were involved in, what the virtual alternatives were, their coach, their comfort level with technology and their individual circumstances. Where some participants noted minimal impacts, others noted they dropped out of school once it became virtual or that their work experiences and job opportunities were not available during COVID.

Partnerships

Due to the unique funding formula of the CCMEP program, particularly WIOA Youth funding, "local areas are required to select or procure providers to deliver services to program participants."¹³ State administrators noted that the state recommends the use of a joint procurement between the local CDJFS and workforce board so that WIOA and TANF funds can be allocated together in the procurement of service providers and ensure that the regulations and statutes of both funding sources are followed. Small counties face challenges when procuring exclusively for their jurisdiction. The state hopes to address this by establishing a statewide approved list of contractors, aiming to ease the burden and limitations associated with county-specific procurement processes.

During our county and vendor interviews, we learned that many providers had been involved in delivering similar services prior to the creation of the CCMEP through WIOA Youth or by offering services that fall under one of the 14 core elements. One drawback of this is that counties sometimes encounter challenges with external service providers that do not want to modify their services for the CCMEP and would rather operate as they always have.

Local areas were slow to start using joint procurement methods, perhaps due to the newness of the working relationship between the two entities. In the years following CCMEP's start, the state continued to emphasize the use of joint procurement due to the collaborative nature of the program; however, uptake has been slow. A

Linking to CAAs

One county partnered with their CAA to expand the reach of the CAA's popular car buying program which, at the time, had run out of funding but was known in the community. The program helps teach participants financial literacy while working towards addressing transportation barriers.

¹³ [Ohio PYs 2020-2023](#)

member of state leadership noted in their interview that counties with strong programs more than likely have “a strong relationship between the workforce development boards and the CDJFS—there is a collaborative effort. When they procure for youth vendors it’s collaborative, they hold meetings together, and their vision and strategies are together.”

Counties can procure services using several different methods and can choose which services to keep in house and which to procure out. Procurement methods include a competitive sealed bidding process, procurement by competitive proposals, and by non-competitive proposals.¹⁴ All procurements are limited to two-year periods with the option to renew for an additional two years,¹⁵ which vendors appreciate due to the cumbersome nature of the proposal and bidding process. Some counties procure out the whole program to a provider, while others keep some elements in house and procure the rest. A staff member from a “split county,” with some services in and some procured out, noted there’s a perception that completely contracted out programs are “like individual little programs.” Staff of the fully contracted out programs at least tacitly agreed because they explained that participants often do not know they’re enrolled in CCMEP because they associate the program exclusively with the contracted provider. One county described their approach to contracting services as “buying off the shelf.” Specifically, they send out the elements to potential providers and ask for a fee schedule for the services which the provider would like to bid on. This approach allows providers to play to their strengths and not be forced to provide services which they are not equipped to.

County staff members were quick to recognize the importance of the partnerships they have with other community organizations that provide services they do not. In interviews, program participants noted they were connected to other community organizations such as food pantries and diaper banks and that their career coaches aided with applications for Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Affordable Connectivity Program. A participant noted that they probably would not have applied for SNAP and Medicaid if their career coach had not made them aware they were eligible. The referrals often go both ways, with public benefits offices and community organizations referring recipients to CCMEP and CCMEP career coaches referring participants to various public benefits and community organizations.

Counties, vendors, and participants all noted the benefits of the co-location of services, with some counties having workforce and public assistance all under the same roof. Several counties noted that they offered space within their offices to vendors and that vendors who are co-located with the lead agency tend to have better relationships and outcomes. Some counties choose to work collaboratively with OWF case managers, such as having joint case management meetings with participants who were also

¹⁴ [ODJFS eManuals > Workforce Development > Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act > WIOA Policy Letters > WIOAPL 17-03 \(Procurement of the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program Provider for WIOA Youth-Funded Activities and Services\) \(ohio.gov\)](#)

¹⁵ Article II, Section 22 of the Ohio Constitution

receiving cash assistance. It was noted that while co-locating is beneficial, staff required to work for multiple programs may find it difficult to fully understand the nuances of the CCMEP.

From the statewide survey, around 20% of survey respondents indicated they conducted joint activities with contracted service providers about once a week or more (n=33, 23%) or about twice a month (n=31, 22%). About 60% (n=84, 59%) participated at least once a month. All survey responses are shown in Table 21.

Table 21. Frequency of Activities with Contracted Service Providers

How often are joint activities with contracted service providers conducted?	Frequency (Percent)
About once a week or more	33 (23%)
About twice a month	20 (14%)
About once a month	31 (22%)
About once every other month	5 (3%)
About once a quarter	9 (6%)
About once a year	5 (3%)
Less frequently than once a year	11 (8%)
Not Applicable—my county does not work with contracted service providers	30 (21%)
Total	144 (100%)

CCMEP staff and vendors noted several pain points in their working relationship, most of which was related to finances and disconnects between the provider and the program. Both vendors and CCMEP staff noted issues with vendor cash flow. Vendor cash flow issues impact vendors' willingness to partner with CCMEP to provide goods and services due to the lengthy time it takes for reimbursement. Some vendors receive unit-based funding, which means they are only paid when a client is referred to them for their services. One vendor noted that this can cause additional issues, as the vendor may realize that a client could benefit from additional services, however, they are unable to provide them without having to go back to CCMEP staff and request that the client is referred to them for the additional services. Unit based funding can cause issues with cash flow as vendors will not receive funds if there are no clients that need the service which they are contracted to provide. This funding may work for a vendor with additional (i.e., not solely CCMEP) forms of income or funding, however, it is not a sustainable model for vendors who rely on the CCMEP funds to operate on a day-to-day basis. Vendors in two counties told us their counties made changes in processes in response to vendor feedback. One county now provides budget guidance in their RFQs so that the vendor can tailor their proposal and services to meet the budgetary constraints imposed by the funding sources. A different county transitioned away from unit-based funding.

Several counties noted that potential employers were often discouraged by the perceived and actual administrative burden associated with a formal partnership. To become an on-the-job (OJT) provider, the employer must complete an application process followed by a contract, which requires a significant amount of paperwork, some of which is redundant.

"[Employer partners] do not want to have to deal with all that extra stuff because they also have to keep track of the participant's hours and pay and get that to us in a timely manner so we can reimburse them for the wages." (County Staff)

Counties which had what they considered sub-par vendors noted how hard it is to find a new vendor and that the requirement to procure at least some of their services led to lower service quality. Some counties felt that they could do a better job providing the services themselves or that they were already assisting in service provision due to performance issues with the contracted providers. One case study county was in the process of documenting a failed partnership when we interviewed them as the county was unsatisfied with the performance of one of their providers. The state highlighted that counties face a higher rate of failed procurements when they procure independently, especially in smaller counties where they operate at the county level. To address this, they suggested procuring at the area level or collaborating with other counties to attract providers. Additionally, as noted, the state hopes to identify qualified providers that could generate interest among larger or regional providers. State associations can collaborate to introduce nationally recognized youth contractors, such as KRA or Equus, to Ohio's CCMEP and offer opportunities to join local procurement lists.

Perceived Program Outcomes

Approximately 90% of survey respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that CCMEP positively contributed to participants' ability to secure employment (n=128, 88%), increase earnings (n=125, 87%), and meet their training and educational goals (n=129, 90%). These results are strengthened by our interviews, during which most participants reported positive views of their outcomes and the program's ability to help them achieve their goals.

"My situation has improved dramatically." (Participant)

"My situation has improved tremendously. Compared to when I first started and how I am now, it's been a lot of improvement. I have accomplished a lot of things through the program. It's helped me significantly and been a huge help." (Participant)

"I think my life is really better. Ever since I got into this program, the program really helped me. My social life—I just don't get out much. Because of the program I was able [to] do that more and I'm more talkative and I've been able to work on my communication skills now. It's better." (Participant)

"I feel way better off now. I'm able to do more stuff that my old self wouldn't be able to do. We have 3 people at my school that went through the program in IT too, and they're doing way better too." (Participant)

"I really think the program is awesome, it helps a lot of people, it really does. A lot of people that I went to school with were all about it." (Participant)

Education and Employment

Participants discussed skills they developed, such as interviewing and customer service, which facilitated employment, and transferrable skills they learned that led to additional jobs since participating in the program. Others credited their career coaches with helping them directly with employment and earnings, such as becoming a manager, providing tools that helped them increase their earnings, helping them find a job where they earned higher wages over time, moving to full-time employment after participating in OJT through CCMEP, and becoming an IT specialist because CCMEP referred them to a technical school and paid to take the requisite course. Participants mentioned completing certifications or training for Google IT, phlebotomy, State Tested Nursing Aid (STNA), and dental hygiene. Others have completed a degree or are currently attending college.

County staff discussed how their CCMEP participants have achieved a variety of educational outcomes such as graduating high school, obtaining a high school equivalent, completing training, and obtaining certifications and driver's licenses. They also discussed how their clients translated their education and training into successful careers in the areas they studied—such as manufacturing, truck driving, and nursing. One vendor noted the popularity of STNA, daycare, dental hygiene, phlebotomy, landscaping, and outdoor work.

"It is fulfilling when they come back to us and say, 'I never knew I could get my GED—that something I never thought I could obtain.' Celebrating those little milestones and wins is huge because it might be a small barrier to us but it's huge for them." (County Staff)

"We've had great luck with our trainings. If they complete [the whole process] they tend to finish and they really do well... We paid \$14,000 for heavy equipment operation level 1 and level 2 and he just finished. It's amazing and something he could never have done on his own." (Vendor Leadership)

"[We've seen] customers use the program for what it's for—not just coming in, using 36 months of OWF, and not making any progress—we've seen them come in, get 5 months of training, gain employment, and maintain their employment. That's rewarding because I see what CCMEP is here for and that it's working." (Vendor)

State leadership and vendors amplified the successes that program participants have achieved.

"I believe the program makes a difference for the youth. I've watched outcomes, like completing training and receiving a credential, increase steadily over the years. [I believe] it's the mindset of moving from getting a job to developing a career. We're really focused on the steps for the career pathway. We're watching them move from being an STNA to getting an LVN [licensed vocational nurse] and getting to that self-sustaining career where they can support their family." (State Leadership)

When asked about traditional outcomes such as training, education, employment and earnings, participants underscored the importance of the guidance and connections their career coaches provided to them. Participants indicated the biggest challenges they face when looking to get jobs are a lack of work experience and not knowing where to start with career planning, both of which they received in CCMEP.

"If you are a kid and a beginner and you do not know where to start or where you want to go job wise, I highly recommend them to help you figure it out. Some kids do not have the connections in the community, and [CCMEP staff] do." (Participant)

"When I joined, I didn't really have a direction. Someone told me about the program and said it could help me financially and with my goals—that if I needed anything, they would help me find resources, so I decided to give it a go. It had been difficult to get guidance. I didn't know exactly what to do to get a job or training." (Participant)

"I decided to enroll because I still had a lot of growth to do professionally. At the time, I was struggling a lot with my personal confidence, I was growing personally but I needed to grow professionally since I was looking into going to college. They had a platform for me to network with adults that were working with [CCMEP]. I could tell them what my skills and interests were, and they could help point me to the proper resources." (Participant)

"I put myself through college and I would say participating in this program was a life saver because I did not know what I was doing, I knew nothing about college." (Participant)

Barriers and Facilitators to Outcomes

Relationships as Facilitator

The relationship between career coaches and participants is a critical component of success in the program. Career coach-participant relationships were mentioned by both staff and program participants as a key factor in driving engagement and participant success. The CCMEP's focus on the participant's needs rather than on compliance, particularly for the OWF population, was continuously cited as one of the program's biggest strengths. The intensive case management piece allows them to build connections and better assess the barriers impacting this population. These relationships are often reported to last beyond the time a participant is actively receiving services.

"I'm their person. We figure out how we can get them connected to resources to fix their struggles through our funding. They just need to know we're here for them." (County Staff)

"[Success in the program] all depends on how much willingness you put into it and your relationship with your career coach. That's the biggest thing." (Participant)

"The biggest thing that we emphasize is the relationship with the individual. All career coaches have cell phones and texting is the way to go. 'Hey how is it going today?' or 'Why don't you come see me for lunch and I will bring you a gas card and we can chat.' Just building that relationship and building that rapport so that they want to see you." (County Leadership)

One county that made it a point to build and sustain relationships with their participants found it had such a positive impact on connecting with the youth that they began sharing with their friends, which in turn helped grow their program. County leadership and front-line staff claimed that the support, constant contact, and strong relationships directly relate to participant successes. This was supported by most participants that not only mentioned their career coach as a strong motivator for engagement but credited that connection with their success. Several participants reported how important it was "just knowing someone else cared" and was there for them if they needed anything or "just to say hi." They noted that these relationships facilitated their engagement in the program and their comfort asking for assistance in a variety of areas.

"Our participants establish really good relationships with our career coaches, and we become like their families." (County Leadership)

"[The best part of the program is] my relationship with my career coach. She makes me comfortable with expressing how I feel and how I am asking for help." (Participant)

"When I was young, I was always scared to ask, 'What benefits do you have or what can you offer?' I never knew, and my family never knew either. I think a lot of people don't want to ask. So, when someone cares in that way—telling you these are the things we can offer for you—it creates that relationship and makes it easier for a young adult or growing adult." (Participant)

"The relationship was always important from the beginning because that kept me interested in the program and kept offering different services, support, or constant encouragement. For any young adult or kid growing up without that, it's very important." (Participant)

Counties cited staff responsiveness, active listening, and an individualized approach to service delivery as key factors in building strong relationships with participants. Active Ohio Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Statewide Evaluation Report

listening is key to identifying when circumstances have changed, or anticipating when they may change. When circumstances change, career coaches can work with participants to update their IOP's and provide new support. While some staff reflected that participants are more engaged when they are facing barriers and challenges, both staff and program participants reflected on sharing "positives" and sustained engagement when the relationship is strong.

"You have to be able to identify with them, feel what they are feeling and what they are going through; it is not a cookie cutter thing. Everybody is different. I have to have 10 different phases for each different client. I have to be tough and say, 'This is what you are going to do' or I have to pat them on the back and encourage them. There are just so many different faces you have to be using to stay in tune with the clients." (Vendor)

"One of my coaches rode the bus with a client last week because she's starting school here at Columbus State next week and her only form of transportation is the bus, so they figured out a route together and they rode it. So, we definitely put that personal contact into it to keep the kids going and make them successful." (Vendor Leadership)

"I feel like all the three career coaches [I've had] over the past 7-8 years truly cared. They would always check up regardless of what they're reaching out for, and we just talked about school or just talked about like everyday life, which I thought was nice because it felt like I had another friend in a different environment." (Participant)

"The program benefited me in a way that nothing else could have. I do not think I would be where I am as a person or have the knowledge I do and be able to do it all for my kids, if I'd never been to JFS. I was very faithful in showing up. They made it clear as to what was needed, and I did that. In me doing that, they were there for me. There was no question that if I needed something it would be there. I did not need mentorship because they were my mentors, my teachers, career coaches, everybody." (Participant)

"Me and my career coach have a really tight, close bond. I really trust her. I look at her more like a mother figure. I am like 'How can I do this?' and she is like 'Oh take your time.' She walks me through these steps as patiently and calmly as she can when I have a little problem and she will always check in on me and my son and ask how we are doing and if we need anything. That lady has been so phenomenal to me." (Participant)

"I'll reach out and say, 'I am just checking up with you to see how everything is going' and they'll send a message back saying, 'Everything is fine, I got a new job. Then I can ask where they're working and tell them what they can get; for

instance, what incentives may be involved. Somebody may want to go to school, and I will say, 'Hey, do you know we do funding for school, so when can we meet?'" (Career Coach)

"My career coach will text to see how college is going and if there's anything else I need, or if there was a curveball thrown at me. We are constantly texting." (Participant)

As a counter to these findings, a few program participants indicated they have had many different coaches over their time in the program which was challenging due to the need to redo paperwork and rebuild relationships. Participants indicated they would have benefited from more communication around career coach transitions with one noting that the abrupt transition caught them off guard. This feedback suggests that participants would benefit from advanced notice of career coach changes as well as an explanation and warm hand-off and introduction to a new career coach.

"[My career coach and I] were talking, and she says, 'Hey this is [NAME], she's going to be your new career coach.' It was a bad experience because that's not what I was expecting. No one told me anything prior." (Participant)

"I talked to my original career coach pretty frequently. But the new person... I don't know her as well. I don't know what I would call her about." (Participant)

Motivation as a Facilitator

Staff and participants agree that motivation and engagement are key factors for success. Individuals who take advantage of the CCMEP resources and apply themselves in the programs are more likely to report a successful outcome. Participants often contrasted their motivation and commitment to other program participants, noting that people can be successful in the program "as long as they take it seriously." One participant commented on how important it is to ask questions and several participants noted that success is related to how willing the person is to accept help. Staff indicated best practices include providing encouragement to participants and "letting them find themselves on their own." However, a few career coaches recognized that the barriers and trauma experienced by some participants hinder their involvement and ability to take advantage of what the program has to offer.

The state emphasized that everyone possesses motivation, although it can sometimes be challenging to pinpoint what they are motivated toward or to do. They suggest engaging in conversations about the results of the Stepping Stones assessment, particularly focusing on areas of need identified by participants, to uncover potential goals for change. They also advocate for prioritizing short-term life goals initially, before transitioning to longer-term career goals. This approach fosters confidence and strengthens the coach-participant relationship, aligning with the principles of the Stepping Stones assessment and Goal4 It!™ model.

Incentives as a Facilitator

Several counties mentioned that incentives are helpful for achieving successful outcomes. Counties provide incentives for performance-based metrics and activities like increasing test scores or completing an OJT to motivate participants to stay engaged and follow through on program activities; this has been especially true for mandated participants. Offering supportive services such as covering the cost of car insurance or a deposit on a car can feel like an incentive to a participant and further their motivation. The individuals who are mandated earn cash assistance and can have paid work experience at the same time, which allows them to earn extra money. This provides participants with time to become stable and self-sufficient, and ideally encourages them to stay in the workforce. One county stated that they made the biggest stride in their program after they incorporated incentives. They saw large gains in their data for getting youth engaged and credentialed. It also helped them be innovative in facilitating information gathering for their providers; specifically, they found that participants were more willing to provide necessary information when it was a requirement to receive their incentive check. The state recommended the counties consider updating their incentive policies to include significant post-exit education and employment related incentives.

Stigma and Misconceptions as Barriers

Participants and staff noted there is a stigma associated with being enrolled in, or even eligible for, CCMEP. There is a common misconception that CCMEP is only for supportive services, rather than being a coaching and goal-focused program that promotes career growth. This stigma affects participant enrollment and collaborations with employers, who often fear program participants will be poor performers at work. Smaller counties experience increased challenges with stigma due to small town dynamics, exacerbating the negative perception of individuals receiving public assistance with one staff member saying, "In a small county, if you mess up it could be really detrimental."

"I told a couple of my friends about it, but there are some people where you can tell them but they're not going to do anything about it... It's one of those things where most people have a stigma towards it, so they don't want to do it or feel like they don't qualify. But I feel like if they were to just say loud and clear, 'Hey anybody can do it,' it would be a lot better." (Participant)

"CCMEP is a big program. Having participants meet other participants is very important, not only for their personal growth, but so they know they're not alone in their situation. I've had some kids who think that only broken people are supposed to be in the program." (Vendor)

"Sometimes there is a stigma even though we are Ohio Means Jobs, and we are separate, sometimes they still think, 'That is welfare.' We try to break that with

*employers...‘Yes, we are connected but we are on the workforce side of things.’”
(County Staff)*

In some counties, this is further exacerbated by the program being known only by a vendor name. Rebranding and making the focus on employment clearer could help perspective participants and community partners better understand the CCMEP. One county staff person suggested rebranding CCMEP at the state level; however, others noted during the statewide survey that they do not want to rebrand since they have invested a lot in their county’s name. To mitigate misconceptions and increase program interest, several counties have already been making strides to rebrand, changing the name of their CCMEP. Of the 77 counties represented in the survey, 33% reported their county changed the program name. The renamed programs are presented in Table 22.

Table 22. What Counties Named CCMEP

County	New CCMEP Name
Franklin	AMP (Achieve More & Prosper)
Summit	BOSS (Building Opportunities for Sustained Success)
Warren	Career Connections*
Crawford; Wood	CREW (Career Ready and Engaged With)
Knox	DREAM (Dedication, Responsibility, Education and Achievement through Motivation)
Darke; Lorain; Morrow	EDGE
Fulton	Future of Fulton County
Huron	FYRE (Fueling Youth with Resources and Education)
Meigs	GLOW
Sandusky	HYPE (Helping Young People Excel)
Defiance; Paulding	Impact 419
Erie	LYFE (Leading Youth to Feel Empowered)
Noble	Noble LIFT (Life Improvements for Tomorrow)
Licking	NOW
Adams; Brown	PATH (Plan, Achieve, Thrive, Hired!)
Mercer	THRIVE
Shelby; Miami; Preble	xSAIL
Lucas	YES (Youth Enhancement Services)**
Ashtabula; Lawrence	Yo! (Youth Opportunities)

* WIOA portion only

** Changing the name to CCMEP soon

Staff have reported perceptions of less willingness to engage from participants who are required to enroll in CCMEP. When caseloads are primarily comprised of required participants, staff reported increased challenges with engagement. They note that this is due in part to misconceptions about the program stating, “the young people that are forced

to come in don't realize we are really there to help you, not to hurt you, not to sanction you." One staff member reflected that for the program to work as designed, participants should not be required to participate.

"I don't know if people who are forced to do something are as open to receiving your help as people who come to you for it. I don't think they are really listening." (County Leadership)

To facilitate this process, the state intends to create positive messaging videos about the program and will design a separate positive message specifically for OWF required participants. Feedback from some counties indicates that a more positive emphasis, with less focus on the "required" aspect, tends to increase youth engagement. The aim is for these videos to be used by all counties.

Some counties are reluctant to serve mandated participants with substantial barriers to employment with WIOA Youth funding due to concerns about negative impacts on their performance metrics and overall funding. During our interviews, staff at various levels expressed fear of enrolling OWF work eligibles in CCMEP through WIOA youth funding. While there is some reason for concern, the actual impact on a county's performance metrics may be less significant than counties perceived because Ohio has implemented DOL's statistical adjustment model for WIOA Local Workforce Areas. The aim of the DOL statistical adjustment model is to objectively quantify the impact of factors such as participant characteristics and economic conditions on performance outcomes. Economic conditions encompass variations in unemployment rates and industry-specific job losses or gains. Participant characteristics include work history, lack of experience, education or skill deficiencies, displacement from high-wage jobs, low literacy or English proficiency, disability, homelessness, ex-offender status, and reliance on welfare. When counties assist participants facing obstacles, adjustments are made to lower the overall performance standard, with consideration given to both the number of TANF participants served and the identified barriers for each participant. Thus, while serving high-barriered individuals, in most instances, lowers the performance standard level, the state has observed continued under-enrollment of OWF work eligible participants.

Outcomes Study Findings

In this section, we discuss the findings from the Outcomes study. These findings focus on the statistical analyses conducted on the administrative data from PY2017 through PY2021. It is important to note that this study is descriptive and observational, focusing on outlining and summarizing the characteristics of the CCMEP. Given the nature and constraints of the data, our statistical analyses refrain from establishing cause-and-effect relationships. Consequently, the findings presented aim to shed light on the nuances of variables within the CCMEP, facilitating the identification and comprehension of patterns, trends, and associations. However, it is important to recognize that these insights do not imply causation but rather offer valuable perspectives on the dynamics within this population.

Ohio Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Statewide Evaluation Report

Additionally, the findings presented here focus on a specific set of variables identified as of interest by ODJFS and OWA (e.g., services provided, barriers, and CCMEP sub-populations). A separate technical appendix has been developed to provide the full set of findings with more detailed technical information.

Program Operations

Services Provided

To address research questions related to services provided to meet participant needs, Table 23 shows the number and proportion of participants who had ever used each of the 14 services included in the administrative data. The table is presented in descending order; as shown, the most used service was work experience opportunities, followed closely by supportive services. The least-used services were youth follow-up services, entrepreneurial skills training, and ITA.

Table 23. Percent of Participants Who Used CCMEP Services

Service	Percent (of 53,436)	Number who Used Service at least Once
Work Experience Opportunities	64%	34,306
Supportive Services	61%	32,738
Services that Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) and Employment Information	48%	25,813
Leadership Development Opportunities	41%	22,147
Comprehensive Guidance/ Counseling Services	31%	16,386
Alternative Secondary School Services	28%	14,742
Financial Literacy Services	25%	13,582
Tutoring, Study Skills, or Drop-Out Prevention Services	21%	11,376
Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation	20%	10,472
Occupational Skills Training (OST)	15%	8,010
Individualized Training Account (ITA)*	4%	2,330
Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities	15%	8,138
Adult Mentoring Services	12%	6,552
Youth Follow-up Services	7%	3,860
Entrepreneurial Skills Training	7%	3,777

*In the PIRL, the element for OST depends upon the training service's program type being classified as "Youth Occupational Skills Training" or "Other Occupational Skills Training." ITA was defined by whether the services were purchased using WIOA Title I funds.

Next, we determined the service use rate for different subgroups. These bivariate (two variable) analyses did not control or weight for other factors which may be related to differences in service utilization rates.

Looking at the relationship between services used and county size, participants in rural counties used ITAs, alternative school services, and supportive services at higher rates than

urban counties. Comparatively, participants in urban counties used leadership development opportunities, labor market information, and postsecondary preparation at higher rates than participants in rural counties.

Service utilization varied across different Workforce Development Areas (WDAs). For instance, less than half of participants in WDAs 13 (Cincinnati–Hamilton County) and 18 (Trumbull County) received supportive services, in contrast to 90% in other WDAs. WDA 14 (Athens, Perry, and Meigs counties) had the highest proportion of participants utilizing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) compared to other WDAs, although their participation rate was not considerably higher than the overall utilization rate.

People with and without disabilities showed similar service usage patterns, except for labor market information services, which had a notable difference. Among those with disabilities, 55% utilized these services compared to 47% without disabilities. Pregnant or parenting participants were less likely to receive work experience opportunities but showed higher utilization rates for education services alongside workforce preparation. Justice-involved youth received services comparable to those not involved in the justice system.

In this section, we highlight relationships between select service use and participant race/ethnicity¹⁶, gender, and age. Regarding participant race/ethnicity, non-Hispanic Black participants had the highest usage of leadership development services (48%), contrasting with White participants at 33%, while 40% of Hispanic participants utilized this service. White participants had higher usage of supportive services (70%) compared to Black participants (55%). The usage of labor market information services was consistent among Black, White, and Hispanic participants (48% vs 49% vs 48%). Individual training account (ITA) usage was 2% for Black participants, 3% for Hispanic participants, and 7% for White participants. Work experience opportunities were utilized by 68% of Black participants, 61% of Hispanic participants, and 59% of White participants.

Female participants exhibited higher rates of LMI use (51% vs 44%), postsecondary preparation (17% vs 11%), and education offered concurrently with workforce preparation (22% vs 15%), but lower rates of work experience opportunities (61% vs 70%). Additionally, ITA usage was 3% for males and 5% for females.

Across different age categories (13–15, 16–18, 19–20, 21–22, 23–24), patterns of service utilization varied. Supportive Services remained consistent, with utilization rates ranging between 60% and 65% across all age groups. However, LMI was less common among 13–15-year-olds (34%) and 16–18-year-olds (43%) compared to those aged 19 and above, where rates ranged from 56% to 59%. Regarding ITA usage, it was 7% for 21–22 and 23–24-year-olds, 6% for 19–20-year-olds, and 3% for 16–18-year-olds (with 0% for 13–15-year-olds).

¹⁶ Race/ethnicity took the values: non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic Asian, non-Hispanic African American, non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian, non-Hispanic White, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic two or more races.

In this section, we explore the connections between services utilized and participants' education status at entry. Education at entry is categorized as follows: 1 for those attending any secondary school, 2 for participants in alternative secondary school, 3 for those with a high school diploma/equivalent attending postsecondary education, 4 for adults without a high school diploma/equivalent, 5 for individuals with a high school diploma/equivalent not enrolled in postsecondary education, and 6 for participants within the compulsory school attendance age range but who have dropped out of high school. Regarding Individual Training Account (ITA) usage, it was 1% for individuals still attending secondary school or who dropped out, 1% for adults without a high school diploma/equivalent, 10% for those enrolled in postsecondary education, and 10% for high school graduates or an equivalent not enrolled in postsecondary education at entry. Labor market information utilization was highest for high school graduates or those with equivalents not currently enrolled in postsecondary education (58%) and lowest for those still enrolled in secondary school (38%). Supportive services showed less variation by education at entry compared to other services, with utilization rates ranging between 59% and 64% across all categories.

Program Context of Operations

As with the section above, this section presents findings and offers insight into the context of which the program operates. We first provide a description of CCMEP participants and then we present tables showing the makeup of CCMEP participants by county size (rural, suburban, or urban). As shown in Table 24, the largest proportion of participants in CCMEP from 2017–2021 identified as Black or African American (48%) followed by about one-third (35%) who identified as White.

Table 24. Race and Ethnicity of All CCMEP Participants

Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Frequency
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%	101
Asian	1%	323
Black/African American	48%	25,611
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	41
White	35%	18,861
Hispanic	5%	2,902
Two or More Races	3%	1,349
Missing	8%	4,248
Total	100%	53,436

At the time of entry, the largest proportion of respondents (38%) were between 16 and 18 years of age; approximately equal proportions were 13–15, 19–20, 21–22, and 23–24. This distribution is shown in Table 25.

Table 25. Age at Entry of All CCMEP Participants

Age Category	Percent	Frequency
13–15	14%	7,217
16–18	38%	20,286
19–20	17%	9,092
21–22	16%	8,600
23–24	15%	8,199
25+	<1%	42
Total	100%	53,436

As seen in Table 26, about two thirds of CCMEP participants were female and a third were male during the study period.

Table 26. Sex of All CCMEP Participants¹⁷

Sex	Percent	Frequency
Male	35%	18,517
Female	65%	34,497
Did not answer	1%	412
Total	100%	53,426

As seen in Table 27, 42% of participants were currently in secondary school when they entered CCMEP and about one-third (34%) had a high school diploma or equivalent and were not attending any post-secondary education.

¹⁷ The “Did not answer” category was not further analyzed due to low frequency.

Table 27. Education Level at Entry of All CCMEP Participants

Education Level	Percent	Frequency
Attending Secondary School	42%	22,493
Attending an alternative secondary school	2%	989
Attending Post-Secondary School or Program	3%	1,795
No High School Diploma or Equivalent, not in School	17%	8,978
High School Diploma or Equivalent, not in School	34%	18,008
In age of compulsory school attendance, not attended school for most of the past year	2%	1,145
Total	100%	53,408

Analyses by County Size

As shown in Table 28, Urban counties have a higher concentration of Black participants (70%) compared to suburban (43%) and rural (8%) counties; this trend is the reverse of what is seen for White participants. County size was not related to the proportion of participants who were Hispanic or two or more races. In these and subsequent analyses, we have included racial/ethnic groups with 1% or more participants, which excluded participants who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Hawaiian. Participants with missing values were also omitted from analyses.

Table 28. Race and Ethnicity of All CCMEP Participants by County Size

County Size	Black / African American		Hispanic		White		2+ Races	
	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N
Rural	8%	931	6%	689	74%	8,869	3%	367
Suburban	43%	6,624	6%	945	40%	6,243	2%	385
Urban	70%	18,051	5%	1,266	14%	3,735	2%	597

As seen in Table 29, rural counties were slightly more likely to have enrolled younger participants in CCMEP compared to suburban and urban counties. The largest proportion of participants across the county types were still enrolled between 16 and 18 years of age.

Table 29. Age at Entry of All CCMEP Participants by County Size

County Size	13-15		16-18		19-20		21-22		23-24	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Rural	17%	2,058	44%	5,339	16%	1,887	12%	1,458	11%	1,270
Suburban	12%	1,929	38%	5,944	17%	2,641	16%	2,516	15%	2,414
Urban	12%	3,228	35%	8,991	18%	4,560	18%	4,624	17%	4,510

As seen in Table 30, rural counties enrolled a larger proportion of males (44%) compared to suburban and urban counties (35% and 31%, respectively); across all counties, most CCMEP participants were female.

Table 30. Sex of All CCMEP Participants by County Size

County Size	Males		Females	
	%	N	%	N
Rural	44%	5,278	56%	6,598
Suburban	35%	5,330	65%	9,971
Urban	31%	7,904	69%	17,907

As seen in Table 31, all county types had the highest rate of participants attending secondary school when they entered CCMEP, followed by participants with a high school diploma or equivalent, and those without a high school diploma/equivalent and were not enrolled in school.

Table 31. Education Level at Entry of All CCMEP Participants by County Size

County Size	Attending Secondary School		Adult with No High School Diploma/Equivalent, not in School		High School Diploma or Equivalent	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Rural	51%	6,136	13%	1,550	29%	3,517
Suburban	39%	6,100	17%	2,637	35%	5,384
Urban	40%	10,247	18%	4,788	35%	9,096

Participant Barriers

Table 32 shows the number and proportion of participants over the 5 years of data with each listed barrier. While some barriers are documented at program entry, others may arise during program participation, so we captured if a participant had ever been recorded as having each barrier. Table 32 is presented in descending order. Almost all CCMEP participants were recorded as having low-income status at program entry; this was followed by 63% who were recorded as needing additional assistance¹⁸. Around half of CCMEP participants in the study period were basic skills deficient or had low levels of literacy at program entry or were receiving TANF in the past 6 months. Since participants could have more than one barrier, a total percentage is not provided.

¹⁸ Note this "needs additional assistance" barrier should be mutually exclusive and should be selected as a barrier only as a last resort. This high percentage is a reflection of misunderstanding and indicates that more training needs to be provided. Ohio Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Statewide Evaluation Report

Table 32. CCMEP Participant Barriers

Barrier	Percent (of 53,436)	Number who Ever Had Barrier
Low Income Status at Program Entry	93%	49,826
Youth Who Needs Additional Assistance	63%	33,762
Basic Skills Deficient/Low Levels of Literacy at Program Entry	53%	28,398
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	52%	27,788
Pregnant or Parenting Youth	39%	20,671
Individual with a Disability	33%	17,231
Single Parent at Program Entry	29%	15,535
Ex-Offender Status at Program Entry	22%	11,831
Foster Care Youth Status at Program Entry	7%	3,913
Homeless participant, Homeless Children and Youths, or Runaway Youth at Program Entry	7%	3,884
English Language Learner at Program Entry	3%	1,787
Cultural Barriers at Program Entry	1%	681

As seen in Table 33, the proportion of participants with a disability decreases from a high of 41% in rural counties to 36% in suburban and 28% in urban counties. The same trend, but smaller incremental declines are seen in the proportion of participants who are justice-involved. Conversely, the proportion of participants who were pregnant or parenting steadily increases from rural (29%) to suburban (39%) to urban (43%) counties.

Table 33. Participant Barriers by County Size

County Size	Participants with a Disability		Participants who are Justice-Involved		Participants who are Pregnant or Parenting	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Rural	41%	4,900	26%	3,075	29%	3,519
Suburban	36%	5,336	23%	3,621	39%	6,010
Urban	28%	6,985	20%	5,129	43%	11,131

As seen in Table 34, the proportion of participants with a disability, who are justice-involved, or who are pregnant or parenting are not related to the county's lead agency type.

Table 34. Participant Barriers by County Lead Agency Type

Lead Agency	Participants with a Disability		Participants who are Justice-Involved		Participants who are Pregnant or Parenting	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Workforce Agency	34%	12,954	22%	8,844	38%	15,076
CDJFS	32%	4,277	22%	2,987	41%	5,595

As seen in Table 35, there are many differences in the proportion of CCMEP participants with a disability, who were justice-involved, or who were pregnant or parenting across the Ohio Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Statewide Evaluation Report

different WDAs. For example, WDA 17 (Mahoning and Columbiana) had the highest proportion of participants with a disability at 55% and WDA 11 (Columbus–Franklin) had the lowest at 20%. WDA 19 (Ashtabula, Geauga, and Portage Counties) had the highest proportion of participants who were justice involved at 14% and WDA 1 (Adams, Brown, Pike, and Scioto Counties) had the lowest at 2%. WDA 5 (Lake County) had the highest rate of participants who were pregnant or parenting (74%) and WDA 15 (Morgan, Noble, Monroe, and Washington Counties) had the lowest with 15%.

Table 35. Participant Barriers by Workforce Development Area

Workforce Area	Participants with a Disability		Participants who are Justice-Involved		Participants who are Pregnant or Parenting	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1	24%	378	2%	31	17%	277
2	33%	659	6%	121	33%	645
3	27%	1,740	6%	426	30%	2,235
4	35%	330	5%	48	42%	403
5	48%	160	12%	41	74%	247
6	45%	1,247	8%	225	55%	1,514
7	35%	4,274	8%	1,004	35%	4,347
8	42%	248	4%	25	23%	137
9	29%	1,181	4%	182	40%	1,623
10	47%	459	8%	75	40%	389
11	20%	1,040	10%	573	30%	1,647
12	48%	634	6%	81	34%	459
13	30%	1,541	8%	398	66%	3,417
14	42%	368	7%	63	45%	406
15	33%	236	6%	48	15%	120
16	31%	370	3%	39	29%	339
17	55%	674	9%	104	58%	705
18	34%	345	3%	33	60%	617
19	47%	842	13%	236	26%	482
20	47%	495	12%	127	62%	651

Partnerships

The CFIS data was used to delve deeper into partnerships and assess potential disparities across Counties/Workforce Areas by vendor/service provider. ICF analyzed the CFIS data to calculate total expenditure, average expenditure per participant, and average expenditure per participant on various services (Table 36). Notably, work experience services, summer employment, and supportive services emerged as the categories with the highest expenditures overall, while work experience and internships proved to be the costliest expenditure per participant. It's worth mentioning that participation in the CFIS was voluntary for counties, resulting in missing data from several counties in the chart.

Additionally, certain service types such as adult mentoring, alternative secondary school offerings, and financial literacy education are not included in the available data.

Table 36. Services and Expenditures for Participants Served

CFIS Service Name	Total Amount Spent on Service	Participants Served	Average Spent Per Participant
Internship or Work Experience: Job Shadowing (Youth Service)	\$385,675	307	\$1,256
Internship or Work Experience: OJT (Youth Service)	\$867,030	457	\$1,897
Internship or Work Experience: Other Work Experience Activities (Youth Service)	\$23,432,071	7617	\$3,076
Internship or Work Experience: Pre-Apprenticeship Programs (Youth Service)	\$140,955	50	\$2,819
Internship or Work Experience: Summer employment/internship (Youth Service)	\$17,724,485	6782	\$2,613
Occupational Skills Training (Youth Service)	\$4,055,139	1238	\$3,276
Other Occupational Skills Training (Youth Service)	\$4,858,576	1363	\$3,565
Supportive Services (Youth Service)	\$17,541,327	16930	\$1,036
Work Experience/Internships	\$3,920,058	793	\$4,943
WP*-- Work Experience	\$2,248	1	\$2,248
WP*-Incentives - In-Demand \$500	\$20,761	33	\$629
WP*- Incentives -Progression \$500	\$13,014	21	\$620
WP*-Incentives-Retention \$250	\$113,264	127	\$892

*WP stands for the Wage Pathway program

Program Outcomes

In this section, we initially offer an overview of CCMEP program outcomes to illustrate how program participation relates to enhanced education and employment outcomes. Subsequently, we present tables illustrating the discrepancies in outcomes across participant sub-populations and demographic characteristics.

Table 37 illustrates variances in participants' employment and in-school status between baseline and two and four quarters after exit. Comparing the percentage of individuals employed or in school at program entry to that at two quarters post-exit, we observe a significant increase from 55% to 68%, at both two and four quarters after exit.

Table 37. Differences in Employment/Education Status between Baseline and Exit

Outcome	Difference	N	SD	t	P
Difference employed/in school 2 quarters after exit and baseline	13%	38,712	.663	37.52	.000
Difference employed/in school 4 quarters after exit and baseline	13%	35,230	.651	37.16	.000

Table 38 illustrates the variances among participants who had dropped out or disengaged from school and subsequently attained a high school diploma/equivalent. For instance, among those who received alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery, 54% earned a diploma/equivalent by program exit. In contrast, for disengaged youth who received alternative secondary school services, the rate of high school diploma/equivalent attainment rose to 76%.

Table 38. Participants that received a Diploma

Population	Percent Received Diploma/Equivalent	N	N Total
All participants received alternative secondary school services	54%	5,524	10,183
Adults without a high school diploma/equivalent at entry and received alternative secondary school services	29%	1,215	4,179
Participants in secondary school and received alternative secondary school services	76%	3,652	4,814
Disengaged youth and received alternative secondary school services	55%	651	1,180

Table 39 provides a breakdown of participant MSGs. For instance, while only 3% of participants possessed a postsecondary transcript, 18% of participants demonstrated skills progression. The fourth MSG “Training Milestone” is based on the participant’s receipt of a satisfactory or better progress report towards established milestones from an employer/training provider offering training. However, entries in this category may be attributed to data entry errors, particularly as training milestones are not applicable to youth, possibly resulting from mistakes or mis-categorizations.

Table 39. Participant Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs)

Outcome	%	N with MSG	N total
Educational Functioning Level	7%	3,935	53,436
Postsecondary Transcript	3%	1,530	53,436
Secondary Report Card	20%	10,707	53,436
Training Milestone	7%	3,722	53,436

Skills Progression	18%	9,838	53,436
--------------------	-----	-------	--------

Table 40 offers a breakdown of the credentials earned by participants. The largest portion of participants, comprising 72%, did not receive a credential. This is followed by 18% who obtained a high school diploma/equivalent, and 7% who earned an occupational certificate.

Table 40. Participant Credentials Earned

Credential Type	%	N with credential type	N Total
High School Diploma/Equivalent	18%	9,043	48,956
Associate degree	<1%	189	48,956
Bachelor's degree	<1%	114	48,956
Occupational Licensure	2%	802	48,956
Occupational Certificate	7%	3,373	48,956
Occupational Certification	<1%	12	48,956
Other Recognized Degree	<1%	247	48,956
No Credential*	72%	35,170	48,956

*This includes participants not enrolled in secondary or post-secondary schools.

Table 41 provides a brief overview of participant average and median quarterly wages two and four quarters after exiting the program, spanning the five years of program data. The wage data include any reported wages for full- or part-time employment.

Table 41. Participant Wages

Period	Average wage	Median wage	N
2 quarters	\$4,079	\$3,242	23,965
4 quarters	\$4,272	\$3,406	22,533

Analyses by sub-populations

To assess program outcomes and investigate differences across communities, ICF conducted an analysis focusing on various sub-populations served by CCMEP. Specifically, attention was directed towards participants with disabilities, pregnant or parenting individuals, and justice-involved youth. Additional analyses are provided in the Supplemental Technical Appendices.

Post-program outcomes were consistently lower for participants with disabilities compared to those without disabilities, as shown in Table 42. Two and four quarters after exit, a lower percentage of participants with disabilities were employed or in school, with rates of 63% and 62% respectively, compared to 70% for individuals without disabilities. Similarly, median quarterly wages for participants with disabilities were notably lower at both two- and four-quarters after exit, at \$3,061 and \$3,214 respectively, compared to \$3,418 and \$3,584 for those without disabilities. While measurable skill gains were similar between the two groups, participants with disabilities achieved high school diplomas/equivalents and other credentials at a lower rate of 37% compared to 30% for individuals without disabilities. Notably, among adults without a diploma, 23% of those with a disability earned a high school diploma/equivalent within a year of program exit, compared to 27% of those without

a disability. For youth still in school, 67% of those with a disability earned a diploma compared to 69% of those without, and for participants not in school, but within the age of compulsory school attendance (disengaged youth), the rates were 45% and 53%, respectively. These findings suggest that participants with disabilities might face additional challenges when achieving educational and employment goals compared to participants without disabilities.

Table 42. Program Outcomes for Participants with a Disability

Outcome	Participants with Disability		Participants without Disability	
		N		N
Employed/in school 2 quarters after exit	63%	12,413	70%	24,436
Employed/in school 4 quarters after exit	62%	11,188	70%	22,191
Median Wage 2 quarters after exit	\$3,061	7,390	\$3,418	15,639
Median Wage 4 quarters after exit	\$3,214	6,639	\$3,584	14,695
Any credential*	30%	13,969	37%	25,239
High School Diploma/equivalent, adult without degree at entry	23%	3,120	27%	4,517
High School Diploma/equivalent, in school at entry	67%	3,601	69%	8,301
High School Diploma/equivalent, disengaged youth at entry	45%	635	53%	979

*This includes participants not enrolled in secondary or post-secondary schools.

Table 43 displays the outcomes for pregnant or parenting participants compared to their non-pregnant or non-parenting counterparts. Two quarters after exit, 66% of pregnant or parenting participants were employed or in school, slightly lower than the 69% of other participants. Similarly, four quarters post-exit, 64% of pregnant or parenting participants were employed or in school, while 70% of non-parenting/pregnant participants were. Median quarterly wages were higher for pregnant and parenting youth, with \$3,461 compared to \$3,114 for other participants two quarters after exit, and \$3,566 compared to \$3,319 four quarters post-exit. Most Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs) were similar between the two groups, except for meeting academic standards on a secondary transcript/report card, where pregnant/parenting participants exhibited a lower rate of 3% compared to 30% for others. This discrepancy is likely due to the majority of pregnant/parenting participants being older than 18. Additionally, pregnant or parenting participants had a lower rate of earning high school diplomas/equivalents and other credentials at 18% compared to 50% for others. This difference may be attributed to age, as most pregnant/parenting participants were not in secondary school at entry, with this population having the highest graduation rate. Specifically, among pregnant/parenting participants who were adults without a high school diploma/equivalent at entry, 21% earned a high school diploma/equivalent compared to 40% of non-pregnant/parenting participants. For disengaged participants younger than

19, 33% of those who were pregnant/parenting earned a high school diploma/equivalent compared to 57% of non-pregnant/parenting participants. Moreover, pregnant/parenting participants who were still in secondary school had a lower graduation rate of 65% compared to 70% for others. These findings underscore the unique challenges faced by pregnant or parenting participants in achieving educational milestones post-program.

Table 43. Program Outcomes for Pregnant or Parenting Participants

Outcome	Pregnant/Parenting		Not Pregnant/Parenting	
		N		N
Employed/in school 2 quarters after exit	66%	15,358	69%	23,364
Employed/in school 4 quarters after exit	64%	14,140	70%	21,101
Median Wage 2 quarters after exit	\$3,461	10,004	\$3,114	13,958
Median Wage 4 quarters after exit	\$3,566	8,982	\$3,319	13,549
Any credential*	18%	19,024	50%	20,779
High School Diploma/equivalent, adult without degree at entry	21%	5,826	40%	1,869
High School Diploma/equivalent, in school at entry	65%	743	70%	11,769
High School Diploma/equivalent, disengaged youth at entry	33%	483	57%	1,137

*This includes all participants, including those not enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education.

Post-program outcomes were also consistently lower for justice-involved youth (i.e., ex-offenders upon program entry) compared to other participants (Table 44). Two quarters after exit, 62% of justice-involved youth were employed or in school, lower than the 69% of other participants, and this trend persisted four quarters post-exit, with rates of 61% and 70%, respectively. Median quarterly wages for justice-involved youth were also lower, at \$2,846 and \$2,994 two and four quarters after exit, compared to \$3,350 and \$3,505 for other participants. Most MSGs were similar between the two groups, except for meeting academic standards on a secondary transcript/report card, where justice-involved youth exhibited a lower rate of 13% compared to 22% for others. This disparity is likely due to justice-involved youth being disproportionately older than 18. Moreover, justice-involved youth had a lower rate of earning high school diplomas/equivalents and other credentials, at 25% compared to 37% for others. Specifically, among justice-involved participants who were adults without a high school diploma/equivalent at entry, 21% earned a diploma compared to 29% of other participants. For disengaged participants younger than 19, 44% of those who were justice-involved earned a diploma compared to 53% of others. Additionally, justice-involved participants still in secondary school had a lower graduation rate of 65% compared to 70% for others.

Table 44. Program Outcomes for Justice-Involved Youth

Outcome	Justice-Involved Youth		Not Justice-Involved Youth	
		N		N
Employed/in school 2 quarters after exit	62%	9,179	69%	29,548
Employed/in school 4 quarters after exit	61%	8,501	70%	26,745
Median Wage 2 quarters after exit	\$2,846	5,448	\$3,350	18,517
Median Wage 4 quarters after exit	\$2,994	4,993	\$3,505	17,540
Any credential*	25%	9,814	38%	29,994
High School Diploma/equivalent, adult without degree at entry	21%	3,003	28%	4,693
High School Diploma/equivalent, in school at entry	65%	1,513	70%	10,999
High School Diploma/equivalent, disengaged youth at entry	44%	614	53%	1,006

*This includes all participants, including those not enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education.

Analyses by Demographic Characteristics

Race/Ethnicity

While disparities existed among Black, Hispanic, and White participants, the most notable differences were observed between White and Black participants. Two and four quarters after exit, the percentage of participants employed or in school was nearly 70% across all racial groups. However, analysis from (Table 45) reveals that median quarterly wages two and four quarters after exit were approximately \$1,000 lower for Black participants than for White participants, and \$300 lower for Hispanic participants compared to White participants. The percentage of Black participants meeting the Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) for academic standards on a secondary transcript/report card was 15%, compared to 22% for Hispanic participants and 26% for White participants. Other MSGs were consistent across racial groups. Notably, the percentage of White participants earning high school diplomas/equivalents and other credentials was highest at 33%, followed closely by Hispanic participants at 31%. However, Black participants had a lower rate at 29%. Among adults without a high school diploma/equivalent at entry, 23% of Black participants earned a diploma, compared to 29% of White participants and 25% of Hispanic participants. In terms of youth still in school, Black participants had the highest diploma attainment rate at 71%, followed by 68% for White participants and 64% for Hispanic participants. Conversely, for disengaged youth, 45% of Black participants earned a diploma compared to 52% of White and Hispanic participants. These findings highlight nuanced differences in outcomes across racial groups within the program.

Table 45. Outcomes by Race/Ethnicity

Outcome	Black / African American		Hispanic / Latino		White		2+ Races	
		N		N		N		N
Employed/in school 2 quarters after exit	68%	18,727	67%	1,987	67%	13,583	70	919
Employed/in school 4 quarters after exit	69%	17,154	66%	1,767	67%	12,246	65%	812
Median Wage 2 quarters after exit	\$2,824	11,574	\$3,544	1,255	\$3,806	8,487	\$3,219	590
Median Wage 4 quarters after exit	\$2,995	11,153	\$3,684	1,104	\$4,028	7,721	\$3,437	498
Any credential*	29%	21,152	31%	2,341	33%	16,541	29%	1,123
High School Diploma/equivalent, adult without degree at entry	23%	3,687	25%	370	29%	2,808	24%	186
High School Diploma/equivalent, in school at entry	71%	5,621	64%	686	68%	4,768	63%	297
High School Diploma/equivalent, disengaged youth at entry	45%	662	52%	82	52%	716	56%	52

*This includes all participants, including those not enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education.

Sex

At both two and four quarters after exit, 68% of female participants were employed or in school, surpassing the 66% of male participants (Table 46). However, median quarterly wages were approximately \$150 higher for male participants than female participants at both time points after exit. Male participants also exhibited higher rates of meeting the Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) for meeting academic standards on a secondary transcript/report card, with 27% compared to 16% for female participants. Conversely, the other MSGs showed similar rates between genders. Additionally, male participants had a higher rate of earning high school diplomas/equivalents and other credentials at 36%, compared to 28% for female participants. Among participants who were adults without a high school diploma/equivalent at entry, 23% of females earned a diploma, contrasting with 34% of males. However, among participants still in school at entry, females achieved a diploma at a rate of 71%, slightly higher than the 68% among males. Conversely, for disengaged youth, 51% of males and 48% of females attained a diploma at comparable levels.

Table 46. Outcomes by Sex

Outcome	Male		Female	
		N		N
Employed/in school 2 quarters after exit	66%	13,593	66%	24,858
Employed/in school 4 quarters after exit	68%	12,343	68%	22,664
Median Wage 2 quarters after exit	\$3,359	7,841	\$3,174	15,957
Median Wage 4 quarters after exit	\$3,517	7,503	\$3,346	14,878
Any credential*	36%	14,987	28%	29,773
High School Diploma/equivalent, adult without degree at entry	34%	1,665	23%	5,985
High School Diploma/equivalent, in school at entry	68%	5,921	71%	6,493
High School Diploma/equivalent, disengaged youth at entry	51%	726	48%	874

*This includes all participants, including those not enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education.

Age

Outcomes post-program exit exhibit variations based on the age group at program entry (Table 47 and 48). Notably, the 13–15-year-old cohort demonstrates the lowest employment or in-school rate at both two and four quarters after exit. It's important to recognize that data on in-school status post-exit are obtained from follow-up surveys with participants, thus non-responses to the survey may bias the estimate downward. Conversely, employment outcome data are sourced from state administrative records, which are less prone to missing data. Given the likelihood that the youngest cohort has a higher probability of being in school after exit, the observed difference could be attributed to missing education data. Among other participants, 16–18-year-olds exhibit the highest rate of employment or in-school engagement at 71% and 72% two and four quarters after exit, respectively. Additionally, quarterly wages generally increase as age advances post-exit. Notably, nearly half of 16–18-year-olds earn high school diplomas/equivalents and other credentials, followed by 32% of 13–15-year-olds, 23% of 19–20-year-olds, 20% of 21–22-year-olds, and 17% of 23–24-year-olds. This disparity in attainment rates may be driven by the primary focus of youth goals, which are likely centered around achieving a high school diploma/equivalent.

Table 47. Outcomes by Age

Outcome	13-15		16-18		19-20	
		N		N		N
Employed/in school 2 quarters after exit	53%	4,051	71%	15,180	69%	6,798
Employed/in school 4 quarters after exit	60%	3,530	72%	13,772	68%	6,218
Median Wage 2 quarters after exit	\$2,226	1,570	\$2,826	9,389	\$3,596	4,605
Median Wage 4 quarters after exit	\$1,984	1,778	\$3,174	9,087	\$3,879	4,139
Any credential*	32%	3,732	45%	17,023	23%	8,511

*This includes all participants, including those not enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education.

Table 48. Outcomes by Age

Outcome	21-22		23-24	
		N		N
Employed/in school 2 quarters after exit	67%	6,403	67%	6,269
Employed/in school 4 quarters after exit	66%	5,893	64%	5,814
Median Wage 2 quarters after exit	\$3,917	4,247	\$4,026	4,138
Median Wage 4 quarters after exit	\$4,023	3,826	\$4,145	3,693
Any credential*	20%	8,079	17%	7,727

*This includes all participants, including those not enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education.

Education

The education status upon entry was also related to post-participation outcomes (Table 49 and 50). Participants enrolled in post-secondary programs at entry exhibited the highest percentage employed or in-school, with rates of 79% and 76% at two and four quarters after exit respectively, followed by participants with a high school diploma/equivalent but not enrolled in a post-secondary program. These two groups also boasted the highest quarterly wages after exit. Conversely, participants enrolled in school at program entry demonstrated higher rates of employment or in-school engagement compared to disengaged youth and adults without a high school diploma/equivalent. However, quarterly wages were lower for participants who were in school compared to disengaged youth and adults without a high school diploma/equivalent.

Table 49. Outcomes by Education Status at Program Enrollment

Outcome	In school, secondary school or less		In school, alternative school		In-school, postsecondary	
		N		N		N
Employed/in school 2 quarters after exit	67%	15,617	61%	680	79%	1,345
Employed/in school 4 quarters after exit	70%	14,077	63%	603	76%	1,242
Median Wage 2 quarters after exit	\$2,562	8,589	\$2,500	390	\$4,516	1,008
Median Wage 4 quarters after exit	\$2,793	8,791	\$2,663	352	\$4,916	912

Table 50. Outcomes by Education Status at Program Enrollment

Outcome	Not in school, secondary school dropout		Not in school, secondary school graduate		Not in school, age of compulsory school	
		N		N		N
Employed/in school 2 quarters after exit	60%	6,834	71%	13,431	60%	796
Employed/in school 4 quarters after exit	59%	6,287	69%	12,292	60%	720
Median Wage 2 quarters after exit	\$2,708	4,055	\$4,276	9,451	\$2,749	462
Median Wage 4 quarters after exit	\$2,912	3,647	\$4,473	8,408	\$2,902	416

Discussion and Recommendations

In this section, we discuss the overarching findings from the implementation and outcomes evaluation and offer some recommendations for consideration.

Implementation Analysis

The implementation evaluation covered several aspects of program operations and provides a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of the CCMEP. The findings reveal insights into the operations, challenges, and successes of the program. Effective outreach strategies, including presence in schools and community events, are pivotal for enrollment success, yet many participants perceive CCMEP as unfamiliar in their communities. Eligibility determination remains a persistent struggle, with simplified information proving instrumental in encouraging enrollment. While supportive services and career counseling are widely available, transportation, childcare, and housing assistance pose significant challenges. The transition from a summer program to a year-round CCMEP faced resistance in some counties due to increased complexity and outcome reporting requirements, but others welcomed the change. Open and frequent communication, along with flexible

engagement methods, are crucial for participant involvement. Staff training varies across counties, with efforts underway to improve consistency and quality. Implementation is hindered by the complexity of eligibility criteria, funding streams, and reporting, as well as staffing issues and data system challenges. Despite these obstacles, CCMEP is perceived as positively contributing to participants' employment, earnings, and educational goals. Building strong relationships between staff and participants, addressing motivation, incentives, and tackling stigma are identified as facilitators for program success. Moreover, partnerships with other agencies and adaptation to align with state changes are deemed promising practices for program implementation.

Outcomes Analysis

The outcomes evaluation findings delve into the statistical analyses conducted on administrative data from PY2017 through PY2021, aiming to outline and summarize the characteristics of the CCMEP. It's important to remember that this study is descriptive and observational, meaning it does not establish cause-and-effect relationships but rather highlights patterns, trends, and associations within the program. The analysis focused on services provided, barriers, and sub-populations of CCMEP participants, shedding light on disparities and trends across demographics and program elements. Notable findings included variations in service utilization based on county size, demographic characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, and age, as well as education status at entry. Additionally, the study explored outcomes for specific sub-populations such as participants with disabilities, pregnant or parenting individuals, and justice-involved youth, revealing some disparities in post-program outcomes. These findings underscore the complexities and challenges faced by different groups within the CCMEP and can provide valuable insights for program improvement and policymaking.

Recommendations

County programs operate differently, and interviewees often had county-specific recommendations for CCMEP while some had recommendations that could operate across the state. We leverage the lessons learned to provide future recommendations for the CCMEP including potential changes to structure, policy, and design. We have not included general recommendations for more funds or more staff, although county leadership and staff certainly made those requests. Likewise, we have not included recommendations or requests that would require changes to Federal regulations.

Maintain Momentum

Reflections across interviews have uncovered several things CCMEP is doing well. Moving forward, the program should maintain focus on relationship building, continue sharing best practices between programs, continue looking for innovative ways to provide meaningful work experiences for youth, and expand the use of incentives to encourage participant engagement.

Improve Program Awareness

Participants and staff agreed that the program was not well known. In addition to rebranding efforts, participants suggested a variety of strategies including billboards, YouTube ads, emails, flyers (e.g., at libraries), and social media to advertise the program and increase awareness. Local partnerships, such as those with local chambers, would expand opportunities for advertising the CCMEP. Efforts to get the word out should be creative with messaging and branding to reduce stigmas associated with the program and be clear on program eligibility factors.

Focus on Mental Health

One of the lessons learned in speaking with counties is the critical importance of providing mental health support for both staff and participants. Moving forward, the program would benefit from ensuring that all CCMEP staff participate in trainings related to trauma informed care, mental health first aid, compassion fatigue, and peer recovery. Interviews indicated that additional mental health services and supports are needed to help participants maintain gainful employment.

Reevaluate the Exiting Process

Staff reported that requiring 5 documented attempts before exiting a participant is cumbersome, pulls their focus from incoming participants, and, because it is a recommendation by the state, they feel it does not allow them the flexibility to run their program in a way that works best at the local level.

Diversify Training and Increase Support

To increase staff support and capacity building, the state is considering implementing standardized onboarding requirements and opportunities for continuing education. Standardizing training requirements would help ensure a similar programmatic understanding across the 88 counties and their vendors. Staff indicated they would benefit from more tailored training in a variety of areas including staff onboarding, vendor grant support, and data systems. Both county and state representatives indicated they would like to see more robust and more frequent in-person support. One suggestion was to create a forum to connect counties with similar regional and demographic make-up to share experiences. The perception from the counties is that at the state level, they need more staff to better support the local programs. At the local level, it may be beneficial for programs to develop local resource guides for their career coaches and managers. Feedback from local staff in counties where a local resource guide is available has been positive. Additionally, the state would like to see increased hiring at the local level to alleviate some of the burden of running such a complex program.

Case Management and Coaching Model

Several staff in leadership and frontline positions have recognized the challenge of large caseload sizes and its impact on providing comprehensive case management through the

coaching model. While it would be difficult for the state to mandate a caseload size due to varying county needs, coming up with maximum caseload size guidelines could prove helpful. Additionally, working across various programs (e.g., CCMEP, OWF, SNAP, WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker) increases the burden on staff. One way to mitigate this, and increase program understanding, is by having staff solely dedicated to CCMEP.

Utilize Program Funding for Staffing

State representatives noted that numerous local areas and lead agencies aren't maximizing their TANF and/or WIOA Youth allocations, suggesting they could utilize surplus funds to hire additional staff. To ease caseload burdens and mitigate burnout, local leaders should contemplate allocating more program funds towards increasing compensation for skilled workers and expanding staff dedicated to CCMEP.

Programmatic Clarifications

While many CCMEP elements are driven by federal rule, counties are given authority to operate programs in their own jurisdictions. Programs indicated they would benefit from additional clarifications on which aspects of CCMEP are federally, state, or county required. Additional clarity is needed around what, ideally, should be done and what is mandated—and at which level—as well as guidance on what to do if a county expects something different from state expectations.

Business Operations

County staff and participants noted a few areas where supportive services and reimbursements could be accelerated. Participants, while understanding that everything takes time, noted they can wait two or three months for something. Participants noted that by the time supports came through, they were not as effective as they would have been if delivered earlier. Staff requested a simpler vendor/voucher process, an agency credit card, and online fillable forms. The state noted that for counties that do not opt to or cannot use credit cards, delays may be due in part to issues with fiscal and auditing procedures at the local level.

Expand Opportunities for Participants

Program participants desired expanded opportunities for networking and connecting with peers. Providing ways for CCMEP participants to meet each other could help reduce the stigma of participating in CCMEP, spread awareness of program services they may be unaware of, and perhaps encourage them to come to educational trainings or career fairs. Additionally, youth would benefit from expanded opportunities to explore in-demand fields such as IT. Feedback from participants underscored the importance of meaningful workplace experiences including job shadowing opportunities for those who are still skill-building for the positions they are interested in. The state is working on a work experience pilot which could result in an add on to their coaching model to assist with adding these expectations to work site experiences moving forward. To improve work experiences and

increase understanding of on-the-job expectations prior to work placements (e.g., cell phone use policies, and dress codes) local programs can connect with their local chambers of commerce.

Appendix A. Consent Form and Data Collection Instruments

CCEMP Interview Consent Form

Below is an example of the consent language used for all interview and focus group participants. The wording was modified slightly to tailor the language for each group of interviewees.

Good [morning/afternoon]. I am [Interviewer name] from the ICF evaluation team, assessing the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) on behalf of the Ohio Workforce Association (OWA). OWA has asked for an evaluation of the CCMEP focused on improving the program and services provided to program participants. A key part of our evaluation is collecting and analyzing data that describes how this program is operating. This will help OWA and its partners learn the best ways to improve CCMEP service delivery and address current program and implementation challenges.

I am joined by my colleague [Notetaker name]. To help us understand how the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (or CCMEP) is supporting program participants, we would like to conduct an interview with you. We anticipate the interview will take approximately 45–60 minutes. We will ask about your experiences with the CCEMP, including your job duties, program planning and implementation, vendor/service provider relations, the use of Goal4 It!™, the program's strengths, and challenges you have encountered, including those posed by COVID-19.

****Before you consent to participate, I'm going to read some information on our procedures and your participation. Your participation is important because it will help improve the CCMEP program. If you consent, I will be asking you some questions and [name] will be taking notes.**

Privacy/Confidentiality

Your participation is not required – it is voluntary and confidential. You may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. We will not report your name, or the names of anyone you mention, in our reports. We may include quotes or summaries of what we've learned, but nothing will be associated with your name. While we will do our best to protect your privacy, we do not have control over every situation that might occur. For example, it is possible that someone reading the report would be able to identify an anonymous quote or observation because of their familiarity with your opinions and/or specific work-related events.

To protect your privacy, we will keep our notes in files that only the ICF evaluation team will have access to. They will not be accessible to CCMEP team members, including state staff. Your name or other personal information will not be attached to my notes about our interview.

Procedures

- ☐ This will be a video interview that will last approximately [45 – 60] minutes.
- ☐ We are recording this interview, with your consent.
- ☐ We will take notes on what we discuss.
- ☐ We are not providing an incentive for your participation.

Voluntary Participation

- ☐ Your participation today is completely voluntary.
- ☐ You may choose not to answer questions that you do not want to answer.
- ☐ You can end the interview at any time for any reason, without penalty or loss of benefits.

Benefits and Risks

If you choose to participate, your data will help provide insights into how the CCMEP program is being implemented, the ways it is supporting program participants, how best to scale and replicate program successes, and how to address program challenges including those posed by COVID-19. Agreeing to participate will not result in preferential treatment or additional program benefits. Refusing to participate won't affect your employment in any way. As mentioned, the primary risk to participating in this evaluation is a breach of confidentiality because we are interviewing a limited number of staff. We'd like to encourage you to give candid responses to help improve the CCMEP, regardless of if these responses are positive or negative.

Additionally, we recognize that time is valuable and thank you for taking this time with us today.

For More Information

If you have any concerns or questions about your participation, please contact Dr. Shelley Osborn at shelley.osborn@icf.com.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you can contact Dr. Christine Walrath. Dr. Walrath is the chair of ICF's Institutional Review Board, or IRB. The IRB is responsible for approving and monitoring research studies at ICF that include human subjects. You can email her at irb@icf.com or call 703.934.3000.

Do you agree to participate in this interview? Saying "yes" means that the researchers have answered your questions and you consent to participate in this study.

- ☐ Participant consents to the interview and recording.
- ☐ Participant consents to interview only.
- ☐ Participant does not consent to the interview.

OWA and ODJFS Interview Guide

Introduction

1. What is your level of familiarity with the CCMEP?
2. How long have you been involved with the CCMEP?
3. Please describe your initial involvement with the program.
 - How has that changed over time?
 - What role did you have in the creation/development of the CCMEP?
4. What is your current role in relation to the CCMEP?

Program Development and Structure

1. Please describe the history and background of the CCMEP.
 - What was the purpose of creating the program?
 - To what extent was OWA/ODJFS involved in the CCMEP development?
 - i. In what capacity?
2. What were the vision and goals that guided the creation of the program?
 - What trends were you seeing that you wanted to address or were used to inform some of the decisions when creating the CCMEP?
3. What is the structure of the CCMEP?
 - Why was it designed this way?
 - Has the structure changed over time?
4. What unique ways have you found counties integrating the CCMEP?
5. What is the purpose of incorporating the Goal4 It!™ model and tools into the program?
 - How are they used currently?

Program Operations and Funding

1. How was the funding structure factored into the CCMEP development?
 - Has the funding structure changed since the program's development?
2. Does the funding work the same for all counties?
3. What is the role of lead agencies in the CCMEP?
4. What should ideal staffing look like at the county level?
5. What data systems, tools, and/or resources are provided to counties to help operate the program?

Program Implementation

1. What is your, or your agencies, level of involvement in CCMEP program implementation?
2. How has this involvement changed or evolved over the years?
3. What were the biggest challenges counties encountered when initially implementing this program?

- What did CCCMEP leadership do to resolve these issues?
 - Are there aspects of program implementation or operation that they are still struggling with?
4. From your point of view, how did the COVID-19 pandemic affect program operations?
 - What were the challenges presented by the pandemic?
 - What support did your organization provide to assist counties in overcoming these challenges (e.g., additional guidance, funding)?

Program Outcomes

1. Have there been any changes in the intended outcomes since the launch of the program? If so, what have the changes been?
2. To what extent do you think the program is meeting its goals?
 - What have been some barriers to meeting the program goals? How were they addressed?
3. What opportunities does the program provide to increase equity?
 - How well do you think they are working?
4. What are some promising practices of the CCMEP program?
 - What promising practices were most effective for vulnerable and/or diverse communities and participants?
5. What do you think are the biggest strengths of the program?
6. What have been the biggest challenges to overcome?
7. What recommendations, if any, do you have for improving the CCMEP (e.g., structure, policy and/or design)?

County Leadership Interview Guide (CJFS or WDA)

Introduction and Program Development

1. What is your current role in relation to the CCMEP?
 - Do you work with a county Job and Family Services (CJFS) or a Workforce Development Agency (WDA)?
 - Are you currently managing more than just the CCMEP?
 - What is your experience? Do you have a workforce or public assistance background?
2. Please describe your initial involvement with the program.
 - How has that changed over time?
 - What role, if any, did you have in the creation/development of the CCMEP?
 - What is your involvement with program implementation?

County Program Implementation and Support

1. How frequently do you attend available CCMEP program trainings?
 - What feedback do you have on these trainings?
2. Does your county have contracted youth providers?
 - If yes, are they responsible for case management?
 - For intake?
 - For eligibility?
3. What does your county call the CCMEP?
4. Does your county use the Goal4 It!™ model?
 - If yes,
 - What is your impression of these tools?
 - What are the benefits of this model?
 - What are the challenges with this model?
 - What additional feedback do you have on Goal4 It!™?
 - If the county is not using Goal4 It!
 - Do they know about it?
 - Would they be interested in the Goal4 It!™?
 - Would they be interested in case management model support?
5. How is programmatic responsibility shared with county staff or contracted providers?
 - How often do you meet with county staff or contracted providers?
 - What is your communication with them like?
 - What kind of oversight do you provide?
 - What are the strengths and challenges of that approach?
 - How much guidance do you provide to counties or contracted providers on running their program?
 - What does the guidance consist of? (format and content)

- What additional support or guidance did you provide throughout the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What are some of the pain points amongst county staff or contracted providers?
- 6. What qualifications do you or your contracted provider use for hiring your county's CCMEP staff?
- 7. To what extent and how has staff turnover impacted the CCMEP in your county?
 - What role did COVID-19 play in staff turnover?

Program Operation and Funding

1. What are your program onboarding requirements?
 - Orientation?
 - Meeting cadence or other methods of connecting?
 - Number of screening instruments?
2. What basic skills assessment does your county use? Does your county use previously taken assessments when available?
 - If using TABE, how are you administering it given the length? (e.g., breaking it up, other best practices)
3. How is your county conducting outreach?
 - Who are you outreaching to? (e.g., TANF & WIOA participants, diversity, neighborhood, lower income, pregnant moms, etc.)
 - What are you doing above and beyond TANF work requirement referrals to engage more diverse participants in the CCMEP?
 - What messaging does your county provide to cash assistance participants about CCMEP?
4. What is your county doing for continued engagement with the youth and populations that you serve?
 - Does your county engage in any innovative practices to expose kids to different careers (touring workplaces, bringing in speakers, etc.)
5. Do you serve or exempt pregnant participants?
 - If serve, what services do you provide?
 - What is your county doing to reengage new moms after birth?
6. How does your county take advantage of work participation flexibility under CCMEP for cash assistance participants?
7. What is the availability of services like transportation and childcare in your county?
8. Does your county limit how much money can be provided to participants for transportation?
 - If yes, what is the rationale?
9. How is the CCMEP money in your county spent (direct service compared to pooled costs)?
 - E.g., Overall spending, transportation, work experiences, wages, staffing for CCMEP participants, etc.
10. How are you braiding TANF and WIOA funding together?

- If not braiding funds, why?
 - Has your county experienced any barriers to spending or braiding funds?
11. Does your county utilize the TANF Summer Employment Program, which is separate from CCMEP, or do you solely offer summer work experiences through CCMEP?
 - If TANF, how does enrollment in the TANF Summer Employment Program impact enrollment for the CCMEP?
 - If not TANF, do you encounter any challenges offering only CCMEP summer program experiences vs the TANF program?
 - When do you begin recruiting for summer employment opportunities?
 - Is there anything delaying this effort?

Program Successes and Challenges

1. How do you feel the CCMEP program has been working?
 - What are the challenges you or your agency have encountered?
 - What do you think is going well?
2. Do you think the CCMEP is meeting its intended goals?
 - What are some of the benefits to program participants that you have seen?
 - To your knowledge are program participants happy with this program?
3. Have county staff or contracted providers been able to operate the program to reach its full potential?
 - Why or why not?
4. What additional challenges were posed by the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - How did programs mitigate these challenges?
 - What was your role in this mitigation?
5. What recommendations for changes, if any, do you have for the CCMEP moving forward?
6. As you may know, we are conducting a survey of all county staff and contracted providers across the state. What questions or topics (e.g., strengths, challenges, recommendations, partnerships, participants, etc.) about the CCMEP do you think are most important to include?

Case Study County Staff and Case Manager Interview Guide

Introduction

1. What is your current role and how long have you worked in this position?
 - How long have you been involved with the CCMEP?
 - What is your involvement? Has that changed over time?
2. What is your employment background? (i.e., workforce vs public assistance)

Program Operation

1. Please describe your typical CCMEP participant (e.g., gender, age, race, ethnicity, education).
2. How does your county facilitate outreach to potential participants?
 - How do you target specific populations (e.g., out of school youth) to include more participants beyond just TANF work requirement or OWF work eligible referrals?
 - i. Do you leverage community partnerships to support that effort?
 - ii. Do you have difficulty targeting any particular population?
 - What messaging is given to cash assistance customers about CCMEP?
 - i. Do you believe there are differences in the messaging about CCMEP provided to OWF work-eligible participants versus CCMEP participants who enter the program voluntarily?
 - ii. If yes, what differences have you observed?
3. Can you describe the enrollment and onboarding process for participants?
 - How do you determine that an applicant is eligible for services?
 - What is involved in enrollment? (e.g., assessments, forms, etc.)
 - What activities do you provide for onboarding? (e.g., orientation)
 - i. Does this process vary for participants on cash assistance?
4. What programs and activities does your county offer through the CCMEP?
 - Who provides these services? (e.g., county directly, contracted service providers/community partner organizations)
5. What community partner organizations/contracted service providers do you work with?
 - What is your county's procurement or joint-procurement process?
 - i. How do you set expectations?
 - ii. Are there any pain points?
 1. Mitigation strategies?
 - How do you collaborate with partner organizations, vendors, and service providers to provide support to CCMEP participants?
 - How many partners do you work with?
6. Does your county implement the Goal4 It!™ model?
 - If yes, how are the Goal4 It!™ tools currently used within your service delivery?

- What is your impression of the Goal4 It!™ Model?
 - i. What are its strengths?
 - ii. What are the challenges?
- 7. What communication methods do you use with your clients? (e.g., text message, email, letters, social media, etc.)
- 8. How often do you meet with participants and engage them in services?
- 9. What strategies do you use for continued engagement with your participants?
 - Any innovative practices?
 - Do these strategies vary by the youth populations that you serve (e.g., pregnant moms, justice involved youth, disabled, etc.)?
- 10. How do you feel about helping youth transition into career roles and higher paying jobs? Any barriers? Pain points? Reservations?

Program Context of Operation

1. How does your county spend their CCMEP funds? (e.g., overall spending, work experiences, transportation, childcare services, etc.)
 - Does your county braid TANF and WIOA funds?
 - Are there any barriers to spending?
 - Does your county utilize program funding to support specific subpopulations? If so, how?
2. How does your county take advantage of work participation flexibility under CCMEP for cash assistance participants?
3. What opportunities does the program provide to increase equity?
 - How well do you think they are working?
 - Does the CCMEP allow you to serve more vulnerable and/or diverse communities and participants (e.g., Latino enrollments, pregnant women, justice involved youth, homeless, disability, and foster youth) in your county? If so, how?
 - Does your county have difficulty serving any population in particular? And if so, what makes serving that population challenging?
 - If you are successful in serving various populations, what helps you to be successful? (e.g., specific training for staff?)
4. From your point of view, how did the COVID-19 pandemic affect program operations?
 - What were the challenges presented by the pandemic?
 - i. How did you mitigate these challenges? Did the state provide any additional support?
 - What support did your county provide to assist participants in overcoming these challenges (e.g., additional guidance, funding)?
5. We are interviewing small, mid-size, and metro area counties. As a [county category] what differences do you feel may exist in the way you implement your program versus [other categories]?

Program Successes and Challenges

1. What barriers and challenges have you encountered implementing the program (i.e., providing services, building partnerships, doing outreach, etc.)?
 - How did you address these?
2. What are the strengths of the program?
 - What do you think is going well?
 - i. Any specific area where your county excels? (outreach, intake, retention, differentiation of services, etc.)
 - ii. Any best practices?
3. What additional resources or approaches would make the program more successful?
4. What changes to the CCMEP, if any, would you suggest moving forward?

Participant Interview Guide

Introduction

1. Are you a current or former CCMEP/youth employment program participant?
2. How long did you participate in/have you been participating in [county's] CCMEP?
3. What made you decide to enroll in CCMEP/youth employment program?
4. What challenges did you, or your peers, face when trying to get a job or get training when you first joined [county's] CCMEP?
 - What was most helpful in addressing those challenges?
 - What could have been more helpful?

Program Operation

1. What information were you provided about the CCMEP prior to enrolling?
2. What was your onboarding/enrollment process like? (e.g., Orientation, skills assessment, enrollment forms, etc.)
3. What services have you been provided with through [county's] CCMEP?
4. Which services helped you reach your employment and training goals best? Why?
5. Which services are/were least helpful? Why?
6. What additional services or resources would you find helpful? Why?
7. Do you have any goals or needs that have not been addressed participating in [county's] CCMEP?
8. How would you describe your relationship with your career coach?
 - What do/did you like or not like?
9. How often do/did you meet with your career coach? Was this in person or virtually or a mix?
 - What role, if any, did COVID play in the frequency and type of encounters you had with your career coach?
10. Did you ever meet in a group with other young adults in CCMEP? Did you find it helpful?
11. What methods of communication does/did your career coach use? (e.g., email, text, social media, etc.)
 - What is your preferred method of communication? Why?

Program Outcomes

1. How often did/do you participate in employment, education, or training support?
2. Have you started or completed any education or training since participating in [county's] CCMEP?
3. Have you gotten a job since participating in [county's] CCMEP?
4. Have your earnings increased since participating in [county's] CCMEP?
5. Has your situation improved since participating in the CCMEP?

- Would you say you are better off, no different, or worse off since participating in the services offered?

Partnerships

1. Have any outside organizations, like non-profits or other community organizations, worked with you through [county's] CCMEP?
 - If yes,
 - i. How do you feel about the quality of their services?
 - ii. Which services were most helpful to you?
2. How has [county's] CCMEP program, or its partners, provided you support with things like housing, transportation, medical, or other basic needs that may impact your employment?
 - Did you receive this support through CCMEP or through a partner?

Program Context of Operation

1. How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your experience with [county's] CCMEP?
 - Did you experience any change in the quality or types of services you received throughout the pandemic?
2. In your experience, what are the program's biggest successes?
3. In your experience, what are the biggest challenges?
4. Do you have any recommendations to improve the CCMEP?
5. What additional thoughts would you like to share about your experience?

Case Study Vendor/Service Provider Focus Group Guide

1. Could each person please introduce themselves, including their name, organization, and role?
2. What qualifications does your agency use to select CCMEP case managers?
3. Please describe your relationship with the CCMEP? Was a procurement or joint procurement established?
 - How did you hear about the CCMEP?
 - Who initially reached out?
 - What challenges, if any, did you experience, in becoming a community partner/contracted provider?
4. What are your strategies for improving performance?
 - How do you develop work experiences and find job placement opportunities?
5. Were you involved with the CCMEP during the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - If yes, how did your collaboration with the CCMEP change during COVID-19?
 - i. Any particular challenges that your organization encountered?
 - ii. Did you uncover any innovative strategies to overcome these challenges?
 - iii. How did the team work together to support participants and mitigate challenges during the pandemic?
6. What are the next steps for your organization's involvement with the CCMEP? Where do you plan to go from here?
7. How does your organization collaborate with the CCMEP to increase equity?
 - What practices have you found most effective when serving vulnerable and/or diverse communities and participants?
8. How familiar are you with the Goal4 It!™ model?
 - How much, if any, Goal4 It! training have you participated in?
 - What feedback do you have?
 - i. Pain points?
 - ii. Successes?
 - iii. Suggestions how it could be improved?
9. Have there been any pain points since working with the CCMEP?
10. From your perspective, what have been some of the CCMEP's successes?
11. What recommendations do you have (e.g., changes, additional resources, or different approaches) that would make the CCMEP program more successful?

Appendix B. Thematic Codebook

Ohio CCMEP Implementation Evaluation Codebook

1. ***Recommendations:** Anything that answers the question, “What’s missing.” What recommendations do participants, staff, and providers have, what changes do they want to see happen, what resources would improve the program? From participants, what services or resources would have been or would they now find helpful? What goals or needs have not been addressed? What would staff and providers like to see happen—if they had a magic wand, what would they change about CCMEP? *Use this one in addition to another to ensure the recommendation is captured.*
2. ***Awesome quotes:** Use to flag a quote that is particularly on point, illustrative, eloquent, concise, or would otherwise be awesome in our report to illustrate a theme. *Use this one in addition to another so we capture these.*
3. ***Participants – Populations or Subpopulations:** Who they serve, what special needs individuals have based on their characteristics or experiences (e.g., pregnant, English–language learner or limited English proficiency,, justice-involved, foster youth, IS or OOS youth, etc.) *Use this one alone or in addition to another so we capture these.*
4. **Achievements & Strengths:** Anything that answers the question, “What’s working.” What is going or has gone well with CCMEP implementation? What successes have been achieved related to how the program functions? What strengths exist in CCMEP? In what areas are counties, providers, and/or leadership excelling at CCMEP? What do participants like about CCMEP? Also include general lessons learned and creative solutions that enhance(d) CCMEP. *Use this code only if there isn’t another code that covers the achievement/strength. If someone is talking about employment, education, or training outcomes, please use the “Participants – Outcomes” code.*
5. **Challenges:** Anything that answers the question, “What’s not working.” What challenges has the CCMEP encountered? Where are the pain points or struggles? Include challenges that were overcome (how they are addressing or did address) and challenges that remain. *Use this code only if there isn’t another code that covers the challenge. For instance, if ARIES is a challenge use “Data Systems.” If being a small or large county is a challenge, use “Context.”*
6. **Context:** How is CCMEP different based on county size (small, mid-size, metro), who they serve, who their lead agency is, the political environment, where they’re located in relation to other public or workforce agencies, or other factors? *If the context is funding related, use the “Funding” code.*
7. **COVID:** Anything related to COVID. Use this to code positive aspects/results (e.g., ability to pivot, move to remote service delivery) and negative (e.g., delays, mental health concerns, shutdowns, etc.)
8. **Data Systems:** Use of ARIES for case management and reporting and any other data systems used.
9. **Funding:** What is the funding structure and how if at all has it changed over time. Does funding work the same for all counties and all populations? How does funding affect program operations or emphases? Include if or how TANF and WIOA funds are braided, how funds are used, and barriers to spending.
10. **Goal4 It!:** What was the impetus for Goal4 It? How are counties using it? Include if they are using Goal4 It! in conjunction with other (e.g., previous, existing, older) resources, tools, or models. Also include Goal4 It! trainings here—not in #22 under staff trainings.

11. **Lead Agency/State Role or Support:** What role do they play and what resources do they provide. How involved are they, and has their involvement changed over time.
12. **Participants – Outreach:** How counties conduct outreach. Use this for all outreach regardless of the “door” through which they entered (e.g., volunteers or work-required). I’m also using this for how participants found out about it (e.g., from HS teacher, guidance counselor, relative, friend, whoever else).
13. **Participants – Intake & Onboarding:** What information is provided to potential CCMEP participants (e.g., orientation, pamphlets) and what is required from them (e.g., skills assessment testing, enrollment forms, documentation to verify eligibility or self-attestation)? Also include who does it (county staff or provider).
14. **Participants – Communication & Engagement:** Communication frequency and methods (text, email, social media, virtual, in-person, 1:1, group), engagement strategies [see #16].
15. **Participants – Outcomes:** Reflections on if/how CCMEP is meeting its intended goal of helping young adults find employment and increase their earnings. Did participants get a job through CCMEP, increase their earnings, and/or improve their situation? Also include if they struggled with education, training, employment *before* joining CCMEP.
16. **Participants – Relationship with Case Managers:** How they got or get along, feelings about their coaches/case managers.
17. **Providers – Onboarding:** The initial processes or steps to get agencies, organizations, CBOs signed up as partners for CCMEP. Include how partners heard about CCMEP, the procurement process, MOUs, etc.
18. **Providers – Relationships:** How are things going between providers and CCMEP? Between providers and participants? How are they collaborating with counties to support participants? What steps are or have been taken to help partnerships run smoothly (e.g., joint meetings, DSAs)? What are the pain points in the partner relationship? Where do they plan to go from here—what are the next steps?
19. **Services Provided – by Contracted Providers or Partners:** Details about the direct (e.g., work experience) or supportive (transportation, childcare, tools, clothing) services partners provide to participants, including perceptions of quality, quantity, availability, comprehensiveness, and impact. Include how helpful, or not, the services were.
20. **Services Provided – by Counties:** Details about the direct (case management) or supportive (transportation, childcare, tools, clothing) services counties provide to participants, including perceptions of quality, quantity, availability, comprehensiveness, and impact. Include how helpful, or not, the services were. *Do not include county intake or eligibility—that goes in Participants – Intake & Onboarding.*
21. **Services Provided – Other or can’t tell:** Use this code when you can’t tell who provided a direct or supportive service, but you want to capture the quality, quantity, availability, comprehensiveness, helpfulness, and impact of that service. This will likely come up the most in the participant interviews in which many were not certain who provided what. *Intake or eligibility go in Participant Intake & Onboarding.*
22. **Staff – Qualifications/Training:** Include staff qualifications, trainings, and feedback on those trainings (except for Goal4 It!) offered by the state. Also, what the “ideal” staff structure looks like at the county level including the “ideal” case load. What do hiring managers look for? What makes a good coach or case manager? Also include providers’ staff qualifications (e.g., what the providers look for when they hire people that will work with CCMEP).
23. **Staff – Turnover:** Discussions of staff turnover at the state, county, or contracted service provider level. Include if participants mention turnover (i.e., they had more than one case manager/coach).

- 24. Staff – Job Satisfaction:** Include thoughts about job satisfaction—what they like or don't like about working in their county. Include discussions of pay, stress, trauma, workloads, and the specific question we asked about how they feel helping participants find jobs that often pay more than they make.
- 25. Summer Employment Program:** Staff discussions of the TANF Summer Employment Program and the summer work experience through CCMEP. Do they do one or both? How do they recruit and what happens after?

Appendix C. Case Study County Profiles

This appendix provides descriptive data for the nine counties featured in our case study. The initial tables present comparisons of the overall population, median household income, total individuals, and youth living in poverty across the nine counties. Subsequent pages offer county profiles, featuring concise descriptions and snapshots of essential demographic indicators in each county in comparison to Ohio and the United States as a whole.

Population of Case Study Counties

Minimum	12,800
Paulding County	18,757
Meigs County	21,969
First Quartile	36,980
Defiance County	38,187
Median	58,552
Mahoning County	100,511
Allen County	101,115
Third Quartile	126,764
Portage County	161,745
Licking County	181,359
Columbiana County	225,636
Lorain County	316,286
Hamilton County	825,037
Maximum (Franklin County)	1,321,820

Median Household Income of Case Study Counties

Minimum	\$43,266
Meigs County	\$44,113
Columbiana County	\$50,750
Mahoning County	\$51,664
First Quartile	\$52,082
Allen County	\$55,114
Median	\$58,169
Paulding County	\$59,987
Lorain County	\$62,390
Hamilton County	\$63,080
Portage County	\$64,163
Third Quartile	\$64,800
Defiance County	\$65,779
Franklin County	\$65,999
Licking County	\$72,771
Maximum	\$116,284

Persons in Poverty of Case Study Counties

Minimum	4.1%
First Quartile (Defiance County)	10.1%
Paulding County	10.3%
Licking County	11%
Portage County	12.4%
Median (Lorain County)	12.8%
Allen County	15.3%
Hamilton County	15.6%
Third Quartile	15.9%
Mahoning County	16.7%
Columbiana County	19.3%
Meigs County	21.1%
Maximum	23.9%

Youth in Poverty of Case Study Counties

Minimum	4%
First Quartile	13.1%
Licking County	15.5%
Defiance County	15.6%
Portage County	15.7%
Median	17%
Lorain County	19.9%
Franklin County	19.9%
Allen County	20.1%
Hamilton County	22.1%
Third Quartile	22.3%
Mahoning County	24.3%
Columbiana County	28.5%
Meigs County	29.3%
Maximum	32.2%

Allen County – [Allen County, Ohio – Census Bureau Profile](#)

Allen County is comprised of 407 square miles of land area and has an estimated population of 101,115 and administers the CCMEP through the Allen County Office of Jobs and Family Services.

Allen County has a similar racial makeup to the state, with 79% of the population identifying as white (77% statewide), followed by 12.3% identifying as Black or African American (12.5% statewide).

The median household income in Allen County is \$55,114, and 15.3% of the population is in poverty which is higher than the statewide and countrywide median and rate. Of people aged 0-17 in Allen County, 20.1% are in poverty.

Allen County has a slightly higher rate of disconnected youth (7.46%) when compared to the state (6.04%) and country wide rates (6.85%).

	Allen County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	101,115	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017–2021	\$55,114	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	15.3%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0–17 in Poverty	20.1%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients	13.48%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Count and Rate (July 2023)	3.7%	3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	7.46%	6.04%	6.85%

	Allen County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	101,115	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	79.0%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	12.3%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.3%	.3%	1.1%
Asian	0.8%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	1.4%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	6.1%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	3.2%	4.4%	18.7%

Defiance and Paulding Counties – [Defiance County, Ohio – Census Bureau Profile](#) and [United States – Census Bureau Profiles Results](#)

The CCMEP Program in Defiance and Paulding Counties is administrated jointly by the county Offices of Jobs and Family Services. Defiance County consists of 414 square miles of land area and an estimated population of 38,187. Paulding County borders Defiance County to the south and has a similar land area of 419 square miles, however, it is less densely populated with an estimated population of 18,757.

Both Defiance and Paulding Counties are predominately White counties with 92.4% and 91.8% of their population identifying as White, respectively.

The median household income in Defiance County is \$65,779 which is slightly more than the statewide median household income of \$61,938 and Paulding County's median household income of \$59,987. Despite having a median household income that is 8.8% less than Defiance County, only 10.3% of Paulding County citizens are in poverty, compared to 10.1% of the citizens in Defiance (a 1.94% difference). Of the counties included in the case study, Defiance County has the lowest rate of poverty both overall and among persons aged 0-17. There is a higher rate of people aged 0-17 in poverty in Paulding County (15.6%) than in Defiance (13.6%), however the rate of poverty and the rate of poverty among persons aged 0-17 is lower in both counties when compared to the state and the nation.

Defiance County has a notably low rate of disconnected youth (0.19%) when compared to Paulding (5.27%), the state (6.04%) and country (6.85%). Disconnected youth are youth between the ages of 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and are unemployed or not in the labor force, and therefore are potential CCMEP participants.

	Paulding County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	18,757	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021	\$59,987	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	10.3%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0-17 in Poverty	15.6%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients	9.86%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Count and Rate (July 2023)	3.2%	3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	5.27%	6.04%	6.85%

	Paulding County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	18,757	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	91.8%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	0.8%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.5%	.3%	1.1%
Asian	0.2%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	2.0%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	4.8%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	5.4%	4.4%	18.7%

	Defiance County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	38,187	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017–2021	\$65,779	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	10.1%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0–17 in Poverty	13.6%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients	9.53%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Count and Rate (July 2023)	3.7%	3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	0.19%	6.04%	6.85%

	Defiance County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	38,187	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	92.4%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	2.1%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.3%	.3%	1.1%
Asian	0.3%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	0.6%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	4.2%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	1.7%	4.4%	18.7%

Franklin County – [Franklin County, Ohio – Census Bureau Profile](#)

Franklin County covers a total area of 544 square miles and is the largest county by population in the state of Ohio with an estimated population of 1,321,820. The median household income in Franklin County is \$65,999, which is slightly higher than the statewide median household income of \$61,938.

Franklin County has slightly higher rates of people (14.3%) and youth (19.9%) in poverty compared to the statewide (18.2%) and countrywide rates (16.9%). However, Franklin County has a slightly lower rate of disconnected youth (5.86%) compared to the statewide (6.04%) and countrywide (6.85%) rates.

Franklin County has a slightly different racial makeup compared to the state, with 60.6% of the population identifying as white (77% statewide), followed by 22.6% identifying as Black or African American (12.5% statewide) and 5.6% identifying as Asian (2.5% statewide).

	Franklin County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	1,321,820	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017–2021	\$65,999	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	14.3%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0–17 in Poverty	19.9%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients (2020)	12.93%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Rate (July 2023)	3.1%	3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	5.86%	6.04%	6.85%

	Franklin County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	1,321,820	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	60.6%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	22.6%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.3%	0.3%	1.1%
Asian	5.6%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	3.7%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	7.0%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	6.9%	4.4%	18.7%

Hamilton County – [Hamilton County, Ohio – Census Bureau Profile](#)

Hamilton County is comprised of 413 square miles of land area which includes the city of Cincinnati and has an estimated population of 825,037. Hamilton County's CCMEP program is run through the Hamilton County Office of Jobs and Family Services.

Hamilton County has a median household income of \$63,080 which is more than the statewide median household income. Despite having a median household income that is larger than the statewide median household income, 15.7% of the population in Hamilton County is in poverty and 22.1% of the population age 0–17 is in poverty, both of which are higher than the statewide and national rates.

Hamilton County is the most diverse county in the case study with a notable Black or African American population (25.2% of the population identifies as such), which is double the proportion seen in statewide (12.5%) and national (12.4%) racial demographics.

	Hamilton County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	825,037	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017–2021	\$63,080	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	15.7%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0–17 in Poverty	22.1%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients	14.08%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Count and Rate (July 2023)	3.3%	3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	7.52%	6.04%	6.85%

	Hamilton County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	825,037	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	63.3%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	25.2%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.3%	.3%	1.1%
Asian	3.0%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	2.4%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	5.7%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	4.4%	4.4%	18.7%

Licking County - [Licking County, Ohio – Census Bureau Profile](#)

Licking County consists of 687 square miles of land area and has an estimated population of 181,359. The CCMEP is administrated by the Licking County Office of Jobs and Family Services.

Licking County is a predominantly White county, with 86.3% of the population identifying as White, followed by 5.5% of the population identifying as two or more races and 4% identifying as Black or African American.

The median household income in Licking County is \$72,771 which is the highest median household income among the counties in our case study and is higher than the statewide and country median household incomes. As expected, Licking County has lower rates of poverty overall (11%) and poverty among persons aged 0-17 (15.5%), however, it does not have the lowest rates of poverty among the case study counties.

5.99% of youth aged 16 to 19 in Licking County are considered disconnected, which means that they are not enrolled in school, and are unemployed or not part of the labor force which is similar to the statewide and countrywide rates of 6.04% and 6.85%, respectively.

	Licking County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	181,359	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021	\$72,771	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	11%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0-17 in Poverty	15.5%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients	9.93%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Count and Rate (July 2023)	3.1%	3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	5.99%	6.04%	6.85%

	Licking County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	181,359	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	86.3%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	4.0%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.3%	.3%	1.1%
Asian	2.8%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	1.1%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	5.5%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	2.2%	4.4%	18.7%

Lorain County – [Lorain County, Ohio – Census Bureau Profile](#)

Lorain County is comprised of 923 square miles of land area (47% of which is water) and has an estimated population of 316,268. Lorain County is one of the two counties in the case study which administrates the CCMEP through the county workforce development agency.

Lorain County has the largest Hispanic or Latino population among the case study counties, with 10.5% of the county identifying as Hispanic or Latino which is also more than double the statewide proportion (4.4%). 79% of Lorain County identifies as White, followed by 8.3% as multiracial and 7.9% as Black or African American.

The median household income in Lorain County is \$62,390, which is slightly more than the state median. Despite having a lower percentage of persons in poverty (12.8%) compared to the state (13.3%), Lorain County has a higher percentage of people aged 0-17 in poverty (19.9%) than the state (18.2%).

Lorain County has a similar rate of disconnected youth (6.75%) when compared to the state (6.04%) and country (6.85%) wide rates.

	Lorain County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	316,268	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021	\$62,390	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	12.8%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0-17 in Poverty	19.9%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients	11.66%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Count and Rate (July 2023)	3.7%	3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	6.75%	6.04%	6.85%

	Lorain County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	316,268	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	79.0%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	7.9%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.3%	.3%	1.1%
Asian	1.2%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	3.3%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	8.3%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	10.5%	4.4%	18.7%

Mahoning and Columbiana Counties – [Mahoning County, Ohio – Census Bureau Profile](#) and [Columbiana County, Ohio – Census Bureau Profile](#)

Columbiana County consists of 535 square miles of land area and has an estimated population of 100,511. Mahoning County borders Columbiana County to the North and is more densely populated with an estimated population of 225,636 and a land area of 425 square miles. The CCMEP Program in Mahoning and Columbiana Counties is administrated jointly by the Mahoning and Columbiana Training Association.

Households in both counties have an average income of \$51,000, which is about \$11,000 less than the average household income in the state. Mahoning County has a slightly higher rate of persons in poverty (19.3%) than Columbiana County (16.7%), and both are higher than the state (13.3%) and national (12.8%) average. Columbiana County has the highest rate of persons aged 0-17 in poverty (24.3%) among the counties included in the case study.

Mahoning County is significantly more diverse than Columbiana County, where 75.6% of the population identifies as White compared to 92.4% in Columbiana.

	Columbiana County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	100,511	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021	\$51,664	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	16.7%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0-17 in Poverty	24.3%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients	14.31%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Count and Rate (July 2023)	4.0%	3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	6.72%	6.04%	6.85%

	Columbiana County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	100,511	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	92.4%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	2.1%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.3%	.3%	1.1%
Asian	0.3%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	0.6%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	4.2%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	1.7%	4.4%	18.7%

	Mahoning County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	225,636	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021	\$50,750	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	19.3%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0-17 in Poverty	28.5%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients	21.02%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Count and Rate (July 2023)	4.3%	3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	7.23%	6.04%	6.85%

	Mahoning County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	225,636	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	75.6%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	15.2%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.2%	.3%	1.1%
Asian	0.9%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	2.2%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	5.9%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	6.2%	4.4%	18.7%

Meigs County – [Meigs County, Ohio – Census Bureau Profile](#)

Meigs County consists of 430.1 square miles of land area and has an estimated population of 21,969, making it the smallest county in our case study that administrates the CCMEP program independently. In Meigs County, CCMEP is administrated by the Meigs County Department of Jobs and Family Services.

Meigs County is a predominantly White county, with 95.7% of the population identifying as White, with 2.9% of the population identifying as two or more races. This is less diverse than both the state and the nation where 77% and 61.6% of the population identifies as White, respectively.

The median household income in Meigs (\$44,113) is notably lower when compared to the state of Ohio (\$61,938) as a whole and the United States (\$69,021), which is the lowest among the counties included in the case study. Unsurprisingly, 21.1% of Meigs County citizens live in poverty, which includes 29.3% of those between the ages of 0 and 17, both of which are the highest rates of counties included in the case study. Citizens in Meigs County utilize Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in similar rates to the percentage of poverty in the county (21.49%).

Meigs County has a notably low rate of disconnected youth (1.91%) when compared to the state (6.04%) and country (6.85%). Disconnected youth are youth between the ages of 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and are unemployed or not in the labor force, and therefore are potential CCMEP participants.

	Meigs County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	21,969	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021	\$44,113	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	21.1%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0-17 in Poverty	29.3%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients	21.49%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Count Rate (July 2023)	5.1%	3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	1.91%	6.04%	6.85%

	Meigs County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	21,969	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	95.7%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	0.7%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.2%	.3%	1.1%
Asian	0.1%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	0.4%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	2.9%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	0.8%	4.4%	18.7%

Portage County – [Portage County, Ohio – Census Bureau Profile](#)

Portage County is comprised of 504 square miles of land area and has an estimated population of 161,745. The Portage County Office of Jobs and Family Services is the lead agency for the CCMEP program in the county.

Portage County has a median household income of \$64,163 which is slightly larger than the statewide median household income. Portage has a slightly lower rate of poverty (12.4%) than the state (13.3%) and nation (12.8%).

	Portage County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	161,745	11,756,058	333,287,557
Median Household Income (in 2021 dollars), 2017–2021	\$64,163	\$61,938	\$69,021
Persons in Poverty (percent)	12.4%	13.3%	12.8%
Estimate of People Aged 0–17 in Poverty	15.7%	18.2%	16.9%
SNAP Benefits Recipients	8.62%	12.78%	12.70%
Unemployment Count and Rate (July 2023)		3.3%	3.5%
Disconnected Youth	1.69%	6.04%	6.85%

	Portage County	Ohio	United States
Population Estimate (July 2022)	161,745	11,756,058	333,287,557
White	86.4%	77.0%	61.6%
Black or African American	5.0%	12.5%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.3%	1.1%
Asian	2.1%	2.5%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Some Other Race	0.8%	1.9%	8.4%
Two or More Races	5.5%	5.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino	2.2%	4.4%	18.7%

Appendix C Sources

Persons in Poverty (Percent): [Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates \(SAIPE\) Program \(census.gov\)](#)

Unemployment Rate: [Federal Reserve Economic Data | FRED | St. Louis Fed \(stlouisfed.org\)](#)

Population Estimate and Median Household Income: [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States](#)

Disconnect Youth (Ohio): Calculated using data from [Table B14005 – Census Reporter](#)

Disconnected Youth (United States): Calculated using data from [Table B14005 – Census Reporter](#)

SNAP Recipients (Ohio): Calculated using data from: [SNAP Number of Persons Participating \(azureedge.us\)](#)

SNAP Recipients (United States): Calculated using June 2022 data from [SNAP: Monthly Participation, Households, Benefits \(azureedge.us\)](#)

SNAP Recipients (Counties): Calculated using data from [Federal Reserve Economic Data | FRED | St. Louis Fed \(stlouisfed.org\)](#) and the [2020 Decennial Census](#)

Race and Ethnicity Data Retrieved from: [Census Bureau Tables](#)

References

- Bobbitt, Z. (2021, February 27). *What is inter-rater reliability? (definition & example)*. Statology. <https://www.statology.org/inter-rater-reliability/#:~:text=The%20higher%20the%20inter%2Drater,test%20to%20be%20considered%20reliable.>
- Lou, T., Hawley, J., and Munn, S. (2020). Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program Impact Study – Cuyahoga County Report. Ohio Education Research Center, Ohio State University. <https://oerc.osu.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Cuyahoga-Report-2020-Final.pdf>
- McHugh M. L. (2012). Interrater reliability: the kappa statistic. *Biochemia medica*, 22(3), 276–282. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3900052/>
- Northeast Ohio Consortium Council of Governments Area 19 Workforce Development Board. (2018). *WIOA Policy B-02*. <https://noccog-area19.com/wp-content/uploads/B-02-CCMEP-Program-Services.pdf>
- ODJFS. (2018). *Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Fact Sheet*. <https://jfs.ohio.gov/static/factsheets/CCMEP-fact-sheet.pdf>
- ODJFS. (2020). *WIOA State Plan Program Years 2020–2023*. <https://jfs.ohio.gov/static/owd/Initiatives/Docs/WIOAPublishedOhioPYs2020-2023StatePlan.pdf>
- ODJFS. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Policy Letter No. 17-03, Procurement of the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program Provider for WIOA Youth-Funded Activities and Services, (November 8, 2017). <https://emanuals.jfs.ohio.gov/Workforce/WIOA/WIOAPL/WIOAPL-17-03.stm>
- Ohio Admin. Code 5101:10-3-01, Workforce innovation and opportunity act youth program: eligibility requirements, (March 25, 2019). <https://emanuals.jfs.ohio.gov/Workforce/WIOA/Rules/5101-10-3-01.stm>
- Ohio Constitution, Article II, Section 22.
- U.S. Department of Education, EDFacts Data Warehouse (EDW), 2014–15. LEA File C141, LEP Enrolled. Extracted March 31, 2017. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey Data," 2014–15. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/el-characteristics/index.html#four>