Using Administrative Data to Evaluate Veterans’ Participation in Workforce Services and Civilian Employment

Using Administrative Data for Program Evaluation and Research Conference
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Presentation Overview

• Describe use of administrative data in two veteran-focused studies for the U.S. Department of Labor
  – Veterans’ Supplemental Study of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs Gold Standard Evaluation
  – Evaluation of the Army UCX Claimants’ Initiative

• Provide lessons learned from using administrative data for these studies
Interest in Veterans’ Reemployment

• Concerns heightened as
  – Large number of service members were returning from Iraq and Afghanistan
  – Veteran unemployment rates were high

• Challenges to veterans’ reemployment in civilian workforce
  – Navigating civilian labor market
  – Translating military job skills to civilian jobs
  – Addressing disabled veterans’ employment barriers
Opportunities to Use Administrative Data

• Leveraging existing program data sets can be more cost effective than other data collection methods
  – However, might require complex process of collecting and linking across multiple data sets

• Programs explored with administrative data
  – Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult and Dislocated Worker programs
  – Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES)
  – Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)
  – Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members (UCX)
Veterans’ Supplemental Study
Motivation and Design

• Objective was to study veterans’ service receipt and employment experiences

• Examined 28 nationally representative Local Workforce Investment Areas participating in the evaluation

• Veteran study included
  – Qualitative analysis of site visit data
  – Descriptive and correlational analyses using administrative data from multiple sources
Benefits and Challenges of the Data Sets

States report a lot of data on characteristics, service use, and outcomes

Integrated data across workforce programs not reported for most local areas in the study

To collect WIA and ES data to link, we could have negotiated agreements with the 19 states included in the study

– Not an insurmountable effort, but time consuming and costly
– In some states, multiple agencies involved
Study's Administrative Data Sources

• For most states, data are available through two different DOL data sets
  – The Labor Exchange Reporting System (LERS) for ES and JVSG data
  – WIA Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) for the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs

• Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting (WISPR) System provides integrated data for two states
  – Pennsylvania and Texas
How Study Used Administrative Data

• For most Local Workforce Investment Areas in the study without integrated data, we
  – Reported separately the LERS and WIASRD data
  – Could not describe the full set of services each veteran received through the public workforce system

• Used integrated WISPR data to
  – Analyze the veterans who were customers of the American Job Centers, all the services they received, and their outcomes
  – Compare veterans and nonveteran customers and subgroups of veterans
  – Conduct correlations between all services received and outcomes
# Texas Veterans Received More Core Career Services than Nonveterans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of service received</th>
<th>Veteran customers (%)</th>
<th>Nonveteran customers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job search assistance</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce information services</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career guidance</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral to employment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive services</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIA-funded training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.
WISPR Data Enabled Correlational Analyses

Earnings positively correlated with:
- Receipt of WIA-funded training
- Referral to employment and referral to federal contractor jobs

Earnings negatively correlated with:
- Referral to federal government jobs and receipt of other staff-assisted core services (Pennsylvania)
- Supportive services including needs payments, job search assistance, and intensive services (Texas)
Evaluation of the Army UCX Claimants’ Initiative
Motivation and Design

• Objective was to study veterans’ service receipt and employment experiences

• Focused on four states participating in Army UCX Claimants’ Initiative
  – Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, and Texas
  – Initiative promoted collaboration and information sharing across partners to improve service delivery for UCX claimants

• Veteran study included
  – Qualitative analysis of interviews, grantee plans, and reports
  – Descriptive analysis using Georgia and Army administrative data
  – Lessons learned from sharing state and military data
Benefits of the Data Sets

- Army data contain detailed information about military experiences, military separation, and veterans’ characteristics
- State data report on veterans’ post-separation experiences in civilian employment and workforce services
- Linking Army and state data let us
  - Look at veterans with a military attachment to Georgia who stayed there
  - Analyze larger sample than public use or specific state data sets
  - Associate an individual’s civilian experiences with military characteristics
Challenges of the Data Sets

- Required sustained effort despite limited agency staff time
- Differing priorities of agencies involved in data sharing
- Confidentiality requirements
- Aligning multiple data sets
Study’s Administrative Data Sources

Georgia Department of Labor
Unemployment insurance claims, weeks compensated, wage records, ES service data

Georgia Department of Economic Development
WIASRD data

U.S. Military Academy Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis (OEMA)

Demographic data: gender, race, birth year, education

Military data:
Army separation date, Army branch, military occupational specialty code, AFQT score, addresses at entry and separation, date and reason for separation
How Study Used Administrative Data

• We linked state and military data sets to describe
  – Target population of the initiative
  – Time lag to registration for workforce services
  – UCX benefit duration
  – Likelihood of obtaining employment before benefits run out
  – Employment and earnings outcomes

• Described findings by demographic and military characteristics
Findings Leveraged State and Military Data

• Over 35,000 Army veterans separated with an attachment to Georgia
  – Almost 10 percent received UCX
  – Almost 8 percent received workforce services (without UCX)

• Veterans who received UCX and were still unemployed when benefits ran out tended to be male, under age 35, and deployed for 24 months or less

• Almost half found employment within four quarters of initiating UCX
  – Younger veterans and those with rank of Private/Private First Class tended to be employed, rather than not employed
  – No clear employment trends by total months deployed
Cross-Cutting Lessons Learned
Challenges and Opportunities

• Linked data facilitate richer analysis

• Challenges obtaining and linking veterans’ data
  – Data sharing and linking take a long time
  – Coordination across multiple agencies with different resources and priorities
  – Technical complexities of linking data sets

• Opportunities to mitigate challenges
  – Effective organization and management
  – Common data definitions across programs
  – Integrated data at source
For More Information

• Veterans’ Supplemental Study
  – Linda Rosenberg (LRosenberg@mathematica-mpr.com)
  – Providing Services to Veterans through the Public Workforce System: Descriptive Findings from the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation

• Evaluation of the Army Unemployment Compensation for Ex-service Members Claimants’ Initiative
  – Grace Roemer (GRoemer@mathematica-mpr.com)
  – The Army UCX Claimants’ Initiative: A Formative Case Study (forthcoming)