

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-23-104830](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act supports coordination among various federally funded workforce development programs. It seeks to help job seekers find work and employers find qualified employees. It also envisions aligned and coordinated service delivery across programs and prescribes common indicators of program performance. GAO was asked to review how information on program participants and performance is collected, and how DOL and Education use this information to assess program performance.

This report examines (1) what is known about DOL and Education efforts to collect required information on the Act's core program participation and performance outcomes, and (2) the extent to which DOL and Education have established performance targets and assessed core programs against them.

GAO reviewed guidance, the Act and its relevant regulations, other relevant department and state-submitted documents, and program-level information for July 2020 through June 2021. GAO also interviewed DOL and Education officials. Finally, GAO interviewed stakeholders from 10 organizations selected for their multi-state perspectives or other expertise on the Act's performance information.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making two recommendations that DOL and Education each work together to better collect complete information on co-enrollment. Both departments agreed with these recommendations.

View [GAO-23-104830](#). For more information, contact Dawn G. Locke at (202) 512-7215 or locked@gao.gov.

November 2022

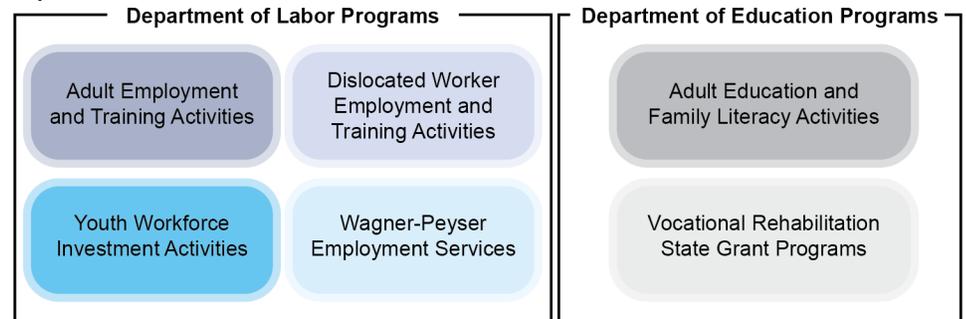
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Additional Steps Needed to Help States Collect Complete Enrollment Information

What GAO Found

The U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education have created a common data structure that standardizes the information states are required to collect on the participants and performance of the six programs the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (the Act) identifies as core.

The Six Core Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Programs Overseen by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education



Source: GAO analysis of information from the Congressional Research Service. | GAO-23-104830

According to officials from both departments and stakeholder groups GAO interviewed, it can be challenging for the six core programs to collect data on participants' employment and education outcomes. Reasons they cited for these challenges included decentralized data and the need to protect the confidentiality of program participant information. The departments have provided guidance and technical assistance to address such challenges, including data sharing strategies to obtain this information from outside agencies in ways that help protect confidentiality.

However, GAO found both departments lack complete information on participants enrolled in multiple programs. This is known as co-enrollment and is one strategy for achieving coordinated service delivery, according to DOL. For example, DOL program data did not include co-enrollment information for up to 67 percent of participants who may have also been enrolled in Education's programs. Officials said that reliance on participant self-reported information and limited data sharing across programs contributed to incomplete co-enrollment information. More complete co-enrollment information would help the departments better identify whether participants receive services from multiple programs and if doing so results in positive employment outcomes. It would also help evaluate whether the Act is achieving its vision of aligned and coordinated service delivery.

Both departments have made progress implementing the Act's performance assessment process. They have negotiated interim performance targets with the core programs they oversee and DOL assessed the performance of the core programs it oversees against two final employment outcome targets. Both departments plan to fully implement the performance assessment process in the future.