Evaluating Tennessee's TANF Opportunity Act:

Data Collection in a State Learning Laboratory

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Submitted to:
Tennessee Department of Human Services
Under Contract Agency Tracking Number 34501-14222

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Tennessee Department of Human Services

Suggested citation: T. Schaefer, C. Morrison, A. Patnaik, M. Fishman, M. Abbott, G. Piña, & A. Burns (2025). Evaluating Tennessee's TANF Opportunity Act: Building a State Learning Laboratory. Tennessee Department of Human Services.

Acknowledgments

This study would not be possible without the generous commitment of time and input from staff at each of the seven Tennessee Opportunity Pilot Initiative programs. The authors thank program staff at each pilot for their valuable insights and willingness to collaborate closely with our team to plan and execute the study. This work would not be possible without staff from the following pilot programs:

Pilot	Lead (Backbone) Organization
A Father's Involvement Really Matters	Families Matter
Connecting Forward	Family and Children's Services
East Tennessee Collaborative	United Way of Greater Knoxville
Empower Upper Cumberland	Human Resources Agency of Upper Cumberland
Growing Relational and Occupational Wealth in West Tennessee Households	University of Memphis
Our ChanceTN	Martha O'Bryan Center
STRONG Families Northeast Tennessee	First Tennessee Development District Foundation

We are also grateful for the input, guidance, and feedback from the Tennessee Department of Human Services. We thank Urban Institute for their helpful feedback, and the team at MEF Associates and the Urban Institute who have worked tirelessly to design and implement the study. We also acknowledge the project's technical assistance provider, Public Consulting Group, for their valuable partnership.

—The Authors

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Study Background

The TANF[1] Opportunity Act was signed in to law in 2021 to invest in community initiatives like the Tennessee Opportunity Pilot Initiative described below, increase the TANF cash assistance monthly grant amount, create a TANF Advisory Board, and set up a demonstration to support families to navigate benefits cliffs.[2] As part of the Tennessee Opportunity Act, the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) launched the Tennessee Opportunity Pilot Initiative, awarding $25 million grants to seven community initiatives to support low-income families' economic mobility and well-being. The pilots provide families with direct services and connections to existing services within their communities. The service mix and structure of the pilots vary, but they include similar components such as care coordination and coaching, employment supports, financial supports, and family or other individual supports.

The TANF Opportunity Act also established a rigorous evaluation to inform future policy and programs. TDHS contracted MEF Associates, the Urban Institute, and East Tennessee State University to research and evaluate various TANF Opportunity Act components. The evaluation aims to create a state-level learning laboratory to produce evidence on program effectiveness and implementation, enabling Tennessee to enhance human services delivery. The study team seeks to understand approaches to providing coordinated services to low-income families, addressing benefit cliffs, and delivering services in rural areas.

Report Overview

In April 2024, MEF Associates published a report titled *Evaluating Tennessee's TANF Opportunity Act: Building a State Learning Laboratory*. This report discusses the overall research design, presents each pilot's program characteristics and impact evaluation design, summarizes the planned data sources and data collection methods, and describes the study participants' characteristics as of March 2024.

This report builds upon the information in the first report, details progress on the evaluation in 2024, and looks towards the upcoming evaluation work.

[1] TANF provides block grants to states for cash assistance and other programs. Tennessee accumulated over $700 million in unspent TANF funds by 2019. (*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 8, 2025, from https://comptroller.tn.gov/office-functions/research-and-education-accountability/publications/other-topics/tanf-inquiry.html)

[2] *TANF Opportunity Act*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 8, 2025, from https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/tanf-opportunity-act.html

Year In Summary

In 2024, the study team focused on data collection for the three major study components: the Impact study, Implementation Study, and Cost study. The Impact Study assesses the extent to which each pilot's services affect participants' economic security and well-being outcomes. The Implementation Study describes the program design and service delivery of the pilot interventions. It documents the local context, design, and operational structure of pilot programs, documents the fidelity of the services and how they may have changed over time, and identifies lessons learned. The Cost Study calculates the costs incurred by each pilot relative to the number of participants (per-participant costs) and separates these costs by activities. Progress on these components, along with upcoming activities, are outlined in detail later in this report.

The end of 2024 marked the mid-point of the evaluation. By the end of the year, all pilots completed study enrollment and reached their enrollment goals. This year marked the completion of a major project deliverable, the Data Dashboard, by the Study Team. This dashboard provides context on the social and economic circumstances throughout the state during the pilot implementation period. Exhibit 1 highlights the major deliverables completed in 2024.

Exhibit 1. Major deliverables in 2024

Month	Deliverable
March 2024	*Literature Review on Capturing Capacity for Self-sufficiency*
March 2024	*TANF Opportunity Act Baseline Scan*
April 2024	*Building a State Learning Laboratory*
November 2024	Data Dashboard

I. Impact Study

The impact study examines the effectiveness of the pilot programs (or specific program components) in improving the economic security and well-being of families with low incomes. To measure impacts, the study team uses random assignment, a process where a computer system randomly places a participant into one or more service groups to identify impacts across service groups.

The study uses two types of Randomized Control Trial designs, depending on the pilot, to assess impacts:

- A differential design, where we compare distinct service mixes or components to one another, and
- A delayed intervention design, where we roll out access to the program over time to compare outcomes for families who receive program services with those who do not.

The study team leveraged four main data sources:

- a baseline survey of all study participants at program entry
- administrative records from state agencies available through the P20 Connect state longitudinal data system,
- follow-up surveys of participants[3], and
- Pilot management information system (MIS) records.

Below is a timeline of key dates for the impact study. Notably, in January 2024, we gained access to the P20 Connect state longitudinal data system and began collecting administrative data. Additionally, in July and August 2024, we began implementing the 12-month follow-up survey for the STRONG Families NETN pilot and the 18-month follow-up surveys for the Our ChanceTN and Empower UC pilots.

Exhibit 2. Impact study activities and milestones in 2024

Time Period	Impact study activities
January-December 2024	Sample build-up & random assignment monitoring
January-December 2024	MIS data collection from two pilots
January-December 2024	Administrative data collection in P20 Connect
January-December 2024	4-month[4] and 6-month[5] follow-up survey implementation

[3] We contact participants at five of the seven pilots to complete a follow-up survey. The follow-up survey timing and content varies by pilot, depending on the measures we plan to capture for each pilot. The follow-up survey procedures also vary by pilot due to the allocation of survey resources.

[4] We contact Connecting Forward participants about four months after random assignment to complete a short follow-up survey . The 4-month follow-up survey takes about five minutes to complete and collects information on customer satisfaction.

[5] We contact AFIRM participants about six months after random assignment to complete a short, optional follow-up survey. The 6-month follow-up survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete and collects information on their enrollment in training programs, their parenting knowledge and skills, and their relationship with their co-parent.

Time Period	Impact study activities
January-June 2024	12-month and 18-month follow-up survey instrument development[6]
July-December 2024	12-month follow-up survey implementation
August-December 2024	18-month follow-up survey implementation

Time Period	Impact study milestones
January 2024	Gained access to administrative data in P20 Connect
February 2024	Subcontracted with East Tennessee State University to field the 12 and 18-month surveys.
July 2024	12-month follow-up survey implementation began
August 2024	18-month follow-up survey implementation began
December 2024	All pilots reached study enrollment goals

[6] We contact STRONG Families NETN participants about 12 months after random assignment and Empower UC and Our ChanceTN participants about 18 months after random assignment to complete a follow-up survey. The survey takes about 30 minutes to complete and collects information on an extensive set of outcomes including service receipt, labor market outcomes such as employment and earnings, public assistance receipt, housing security, food security, and financial well-being.

Analysis plans

For each pilot, we developed unique research questions to align with program-specific outcomes. Over the past year, we finalized pre-specified analysis plans for each pilot, which we registered with the Open Science Framework in early 2025. The exhibit below notes each pilot's impact study design.

Exhibit 3. Overview of Pilot Impact Evaluation Designs, Outcomes, and Data Sources

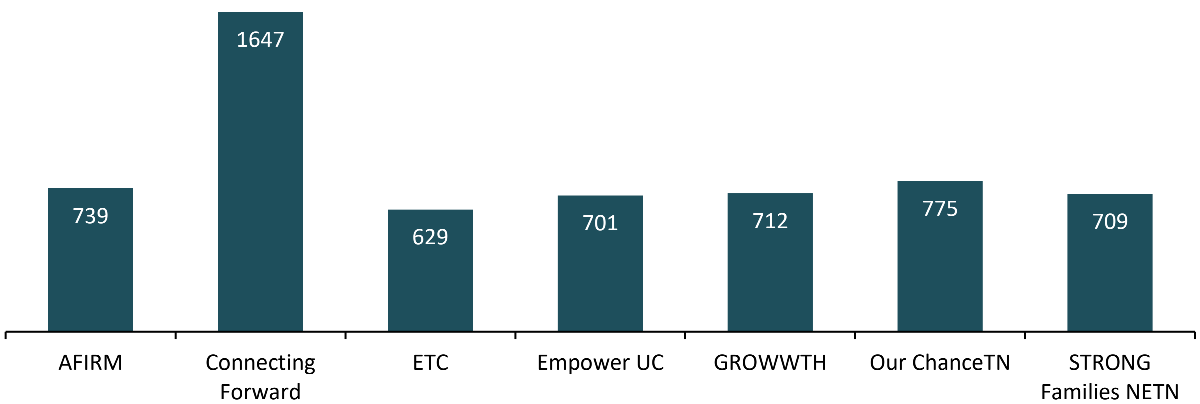
Pilot	Component tested	Pilot services provided to the treatment group	Pilot services provided to the comparison group	Outcomes (C = confirmatory, S = secondary, E = exploratory)	Data sources
Differential Designs					
AFIRM	Structured parenting curriculum	Care coordination and structured parenting services	Care coordination only	C: Parenting knowledge and skills S: Co-parenting knowledge and skills E: Training program enrollment, employment, earnings, child support order modifications	6-month follow-up survey, administrative data
Connecting Forward	Approach to care coordination	Care coordination with the use of a shared data system	Care coordination	C: Program retention, goal completion, customer satisfaction, number of referrals E: Employment, earnings, utilization of public benefits, education program enrollment, education credential attainment, time between referral and client contact	4-month follow-up survey, administrative data, MIS data
East Tennessee Collaborative	Milestone payments	Care coordination and milestone payments	Care coordination only	C: Program retention, Bridge scores S: Employment, earnings, utilization of public benefits, education program enrollment E: Education credential attainment, financial well-being	Administrative data, MIS data

Pilot	Component tested	Pilot services provided to the treatment group	Pilot services provided to the comparison group	Outcomes (C = confirmatory, S = secondary, E = exploratory)	Data sources
Our ChanceTN	Coaching intensity	High-intensity coaching with or without transitional benefits	Low-intensity coaching with transitional benefits	C: Employment, earnings, financial well-being S: SNAP utilization, housing subsidies utilization, Medicaid utilization, housing stability, food security, access to childcare E: Education program enrollment, education credential attainment, social capital, access to transportation	18-month follow-up survey, administrative data
	Transitional benefits	Transitional benefit with high or low-intensity coaching	No transitional benefit with high-intensity coaching		
Delayed Intervention Designs					
Empower UC	Overall service package	Care coordination with milestone payments	Milestone payments only	C: Employment, earnings, education program enrollment, training program enrollment, S: Financial well-being, financial literacy, social capital, mental health, utilization of public benefits E: Savings, education credential attainment, training credential attainment, children's literacy, and school achievement	18-month follow-up survey, administrative data
GROWWTH	Overall service package	Care coordination with milestone payments	Milestone payments only	C: Employment, earnings S: Utilization of public benefits, training program enrollment, training credential attainment	Administrative data
STRONG Families NETN	Overall service package	Care coordination	None	C: Employment, earnings, financial well-being S: Financial literacy, mental health, training program enrollment E: Utilization of public benefits, social capital, and savings behaviors	12-month follow-up survey, administrative data

Study sample

By the end of 2024, all pilots reached their study enrollment goals[7]. Within each pilot, participants enrolled in the study and were randomly assigned into either the treatment or comparison group (as described above) in a 1:1 ratio.[8] In total, 5,912 participants enrolled in the study between January 2023 and December 2024, with each pilot beginning and ending random assignment at different times. Exhibit 3 reports the final study sample size by pilot. Study sample sizes range from 630 at ETC to 1650 at Connecting Forward.

Exhibit 4. Study enrollment



Participant characteristics

In this section, we illustrate pilot participants using data collected through the baseline survey.[9] A total of 5,912 participants enrolled in the initiative overall. At the time of program entry, participants were, on average, in their mid-30s with two children in their households.

[7] Some pilots reduced their enrollment goals after the first interim report was published.

[8] The exception is Our ChanceTN where participants were randomly assigned in a 1/3:1/3:1/3 ratio due to the pilot's three-group design.

[9] The baseline survey is administered at program enrollment to the primary participant i.e., the adult family member who first enrolls in pilot services.

All Pilots

Participants

5,917

participants enrolled

Demographics

34 Average age

2 Average number of children

82% Female

54% Black

16% Married or living with a partner

13% had a disability

Education

85% had at least a high school diploma or GED

Employment

49% employed

$17 average hourly wages (among those employed)

Health

76% had good health status

Finances

64% had a checking account

29% had a savings account

5% had savings of $500 or more

Challenges

15% were evicted or forced to move in the past 12 months

49% were unable to pay bills in the past 12 months

46% were unable to pay for food in the past 12 months

We find significant variation in demographics across the pilots. This variation is expected given the differences between the pilots in program goals, services, and geography. Appendix A provides a breakdown of characteristics by pilot. Across pilots, some characteristics are fairly similar. One example is education, where 81 percent to 90 percent of participants have at least a high school degree or GED. There are greater differences in other areas such as Health characteristics, where 9 percent of participants are enrolled in Medicaid at AFIRM, versus 87 percent at Our ChanceTN. Other variances are expected, based on the pilot service design. AFIRM serves fathers, so their female enrollment is at 1 percent whereas the other pilots serve participants who are 92 to 97 percent female.

Upcoming impact study activities

In 2025, we will continue data collection and begin preparing for data analysis. We will continue fielding follow-up surveys, collecting MIS data, and collecting administrative data in P20 Connect. In 2026, we will use the baseline survey, follow-up survey, MIS records, and administrative records to conduct impact analyses and report findings.

Exhibit 5. Upcoming impact study milestones

Time period	Upcoming milestones
May 2025	4-month follow-up survey implementation ends
July 2025	6-month follow-up survey implementation ends
January 2026	12-month and 18-month follow-up survey implementation ends
December 2026	Final Report with impact analysis findings sent to TDHS[10]

[10] We may share initial impact analysis findings with TDHS as they become available in late 2025 and 2026. However, these findings will only be made public with the final report at the end of 2026.

II. Implementation Study

In 2024, the evaluation team created an analysis plan and began collecting data for the Implementation study. It complements the impact studies by contextualizing and expanding upon results.

The implementation study aims to accomplish three main goals:

- Document and describe the local context, pilot design, and operational structure of the pilots,
- Assess pilot service offerings and fidelity to the service plan, and
- Identify lessons learned and generate recommendations for future programs and policies .

The implementation team uses two main sources of data for the analysis:

- Like the impact study, the implementation team also leverages site-specific quantitative data from the MIS and Universal Assessment Tool (UAT) baseline data. The MIS data systems include information on participants' enrollment dates, randomized group, and participation activity.
- The Implementation study incorporates site-specific qualitative data, as detailed below.

Each pilot is assigned a site liaison team to monitor and document service delivery, challenges, and adjustments throughout the project. In addition, the implementation study team conducted three-day visits to each pilot site between July and September 2024 to collect data for the implementation study. The team collaborated closely with pilot staff to coordinate the visit. During the visit, the implementation team interviewed staff, key partners, and participants, observed initiative activities, and conducted focus groups to understand how the program operates from varying perspectives and identify key challenges, successes, and lessons learned.

Exhibit 6. Activities and Milestones in 2024

Month	Implementation Study Activities
April 2024	IR evaluation plan submitted to TDHS
July-September 2024	IR site visits

Upcoming implementation study activities

In 2025, the team will code the qualitative data from the site visits and collect and clean quantitative data from each pilot's MIS data systems. The team will produce seven site-specific briefs addressing the research questions for each of the case study programs individually. These briefs will be available in late summer 2025. The team will also prepare a cross-site analysis summary for the final report. This information will be presented in the Final Report published in late 2026.

Exhibit 7. Upcoming Implementation study activities

Month	Implementation Study Activities
January 2025	Gain access to pilot MIS data
January-June 2025	Qualitative Coding & Quantitative Analysis
Late Summer 2025	Pilot-specific IR reports
December 2026	Cross-pilot IR Analysis Findings presented to TDHS

III. Cost Study Purpose and Key Design Features

In 2024, the evaluation team created the Cost Study plan and began collecting data. The goal of the cost analysis is to provide information about the costs incurred by each pilot relative to the number of participants (per-participant costs) as well as separated by service. This data is intended to inform cost decisions for future programs in the state.

For each pilot program, the study team is currently estimating:

- Unit cost per participant during steady state program operations, separated by services provided.
- Net cost analysis, measuring the cost of services per participant compared to the costs of other services accessed by control or comparison group members.
- Cost-PSA analysis for pilots where we find significant impacts in outcomes measured in the impact analysis.

The cost study will rely on the following data sources to calculate the total and per-participant costs of grantees and their partners:

- *General Ledgers*. MEF will utilize pilots' general ledgers submitted to the state (and invoices, if needed) to assess program service expenditures (staff salaries and fringe benefits, overhead, client supports, and other direct and indirect costs). MEF began requesting and collecting general ledgers early in 2025.
- *Participation Data*. Each of the seven program organizations has its own MIS that tracks participation. MEF will be collecting data on services received and, where possible, the time of exit and type of service received, to compute the number of participants per month per service and/or participants per month per randomized contrast.
- *12-and 18-Month Follow-Up Participant Survey*. For three pilots (Empower UC, STRONG Families, and Our ChanceTN), the research team is deploying follow-up participant surveys. These follow-up surveys will provide information on the receipt of services that program participants received outside of the pilot program.
- *Program Staff Time Study*. The pilot invoices and general ledgers do not include information about expenditures by activity or randomized contrast. The cost team therefore designed a two-week program staff labor time study to gather estimates of how much time pilots' staff spend on different activities to allocate labor expenditures across program activities and randomized contrasts. Beginning in November 2024, the cost study team began collecting this data from all seven pilots. The time study data collection period continued through January 2025 to best accommodate the pilots' schedule.

Exhibit 8. 2024 Cost study activities

Month	Cost Study Activities
September 2024	Cost analysis plan submitted to TDHS and beginning of cost meetings with pilots' leadership
November 2024 – February 2025	Staff timesheet surveys

Upcoming cost study activities

In 2025, the Cost study team will collect and organize the pilots' and their partners' general ledgers and organize the participation data from all seven pilots' MIS systems. The team will then use this data to calculate costs incurred by each pilot relative to the number of participants (per-participant costs) and separated by activities (e.g., coaching and employment supports). When the impact study is completed in 2026, the cost study team will calculate the costs relative to the impact on specific outcomes for those outcomes found to be statistically significant.

Exhibit 9. Upcoming Cost study activities

Month	Cost Study Activities
February 2025	General Ledger collection
February 20025-Summer 2025	Staff timesheet survey coding and analysis
Fall 2026	Cost study and Impact Study Findings assessed

IV. Data Dashboard Purpose and Key Design Features

MEF's partner, the Urban Institute, has developed an interactive data dashboard that highlights information about the circumstances of Tennessee families and children both prior to and throughout the evaluation period. The dashboard will serve as a resource for state staff, the state legislature, the Families First Community Advisory Board, and others involved in activities related to the TANF Opportunity Act.

The dashboard is a point-and-click interface that will allow users to view summary-level data on the demographics, income measures and poverty rates, employment and education data, health outcomes, and safety net program caseloads of Tennessee families. The study team will present state, grand division, or county level data in the dashboard primarily in visual formats. Urban staff will regularly update the data to allow users to track changes in the state throughout the pilots' implementation period. The data included in the dashboard does not track the outcomes of pilot participants, but rather capture summary economic, demographic, and public-benefit program participation information across the state.

Some information in the dashboard uses aggregated and de-identified data from Tennessee's P20 Administrative database. The dashboard will be publicly released in 2025. From that point forward, the Urban Institute will provide updates to data in the dashboard through the end of the project in 2026.

V. Conclusion

This section describes the challenges the evaluation team faced and the solutions we implemented . It also discusses upcoming work through the completion of the project.

Challenges and Solutions

In 2024, the evaluation team encountered and successfully navigated several challenges that affected study enrollment and data collection. By implementing adaptive strategies, we ensured the integrity of the impact study while remaining responsive to programmatic needs and external events.

Study enrollment goals and timelines. Each pilot had a specific study enrollment goal, established in partnership with the pilots in late 2022, with plans to reach these goals by June 2024. However, several pilots faced difficulties meeting their enrollment goals by June due to factors such as staffing constraints, pauses for training, slower-than-expected kickoffs, and lower enrollment during school and holiday breaks. As the pilot staff worked to build outreach and recruitment strategies to meet enrollment goals, the study team extended enrollment periods for three pilots and adjusted their follow-up period for outcomes from 18 months to 12 months.[11] In one case, where a pilot needed to conclude sample enrollment by June to allow for outcome data collection over 18 months, we lowered the sample enrollment goal while maintaining sufficient statistical power for the impact study.[12] Our tailored solutions ensured sample enrollment remained aligned with both programmatic realities and evaluation objectives.

[11] We adjusted the follow-up periods from 18 to 12 months for AFIRM, Connecting Forward, and ETC.

[12] We lowered the sample enrollment goal for Our ChanceTN.

Follow-up survey response rates. Additionally, the response rates for the follow-up surveys were lower than expected, despite generous gift card incentives[13]. We made several changes to our survey procedures to improve response rates.

- For AFIRM, the follow-up survey is a key data source for the impact study. For Connecting Forward, the follow-up survey data complements MIS data for the impact study. To improve response rates for the 4-month Connecting Forward and the 6-month AFIRM follow-up surveys, we implemented several changes, including reframing the language in the survey communications, using text messages for survey invitations and reminders, and conducting outreach via emails and text messages to update contact information. We also added reminder phone calls, flyers for coaches to distribute to participants, and pre-incentives for AFIRM. As a result, response rates improved from about 26 percent to 35 percent for Connecting Forward and from 34 percent to 48 percent for AFIRM. These improved response rates exceed the typical text-to-web and online survey response rates seen in research (11 percent[14] and 44 percent[15], respectively). Additionally, we will assess potential nonresponse bias by comparing respondent characteristics with non-respondents and adjust for likely nonresponse bias by applying weights.
- For Empower UC, Our ChanceTN, and STRONG Families NETN, the survey is a key data source for the impact study, allowing us to measure outcomes not captured in administrative data. To improve response rates, we partnered with our survey firm to make changes like refining the language in the survey communications and adding reminder text messages. These efforts improved response rates from 62 percent to 71 percent for STRONG Families NETN. Response rates for Empower UC stayed steady at about 60 percent. The Our ChanceTN response rate of 50 percent remains well below our goal of 70 percent, but we anticipate gains with later participant cohorts, where participants from all three research groups were likely to have stronger program connections as the program became more established and participant engagement deepened. We will also assess potential nonresponse bias for these surveys and apply weights if needed.

Hurricane Helene's impacts. In late September 2024, Hurricane Helene caused widespread catastrophic damage across the Southeastern United States, with East Tennessee particularly hit hard. In response, we paused survey operations for two weeks, concluding the September cohort's activities in mid-October and launching the October cohort in late October. We also revised our participant communications to acknowledge the hurricane's impact and express our support during this challenging time. To better understand the hurricane's effects, we added a survey question asking participants about its impact on various aspects of their lives, such as employment, housing, and food security.

Administrative data availability. Although we secured access to administrative records in the P20 Connect state longitudinal data system in 2024, data availability continues to be a challenge. Key databases within the system, including those reporting SNAP, TANF, and workforce training program participation, have not been updated since early 2024, limiting our ability to construct and analyze timely and comprehensive outcome measures. This lag in data delays evaluation work since this

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[13] All survey incentives are funded via MEF and not using TDHS dollars.

[14] Marlar, J. (2025, April 4). *Using text messaging to reach survey respondents*. Gallup.com. https://news.gallup.com/opinion/methodology/221159/using-text-messaging-reach-survey-respondents.aspx

[15] Wu, M. J., Zhao, K., & Fils-Aime, F. (2022). Response rates of online surveys in published research: A meta-analysis. *Computers in human behavior reports*, *7*, 100206. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2451958822000409

information is vital to understanding program impacts on participant outcomes. The evaluation team needs to have administrative data through December 2025 and will need this data no later than June 2025, given that the project wraps up in December 2026. If we don't receive this data in time, we will not be able to examine key outcomes (such as TANF and SNAP benefit receipt and amounts, training program participation, and training credential attainment) for all the participants.

Issues with the cross-pilot intake data system. All pilots use a shared data system, the Universal Assessment Tool (UAT), for program intake and regular assessments, including the baseline assessment. The system was custom developed for the pilot initiative,[16] and the evaluation team relies on it for baseline data collection. In late 2023 and early 2024, several issues arose with the tool, requiring additional time and effort from both the study team and the pilot staff to troubleshoot and resolve.

- One major issue was a system error that allowed partial four-digit SSNs to be entered instead of full nine-digit SSNs. Once identified, pilot staff had to recontact nearly 300 participants to collect and re-enter their full SSNs in the UAT. However, some participants could not be reached, and for those with incomplete SSNs[17], accurately linking them to administrative data in P-20 Connect may not be possible.[18] As a result, these individuals may be excluded from the analytical sample for impact analyses examining outcomes using administrative data.
- Another issue was a system error that allowed participants who left a program to re-enroll and be randomly assigned again. As a result, some participants were reassigned to a different group than their original placement, creating inconsistencies in treatment exposure. This complicates impact analyses, as these individuals received services from multiple groups, making it more difficult to isolate the effects of the original assignment. As of Q1 2025, we identified eight such cases. The UAT development team is actively working to resolve this issue and prevent it from escalating into a larger problem.
- Due to delays in the rollout of the enrollment status change feature in the UAT, pilot staff could not record enrollment status changes and dates for many participants who exited the program before the rollout. As a result, the evaluation team had to collect this data directly from the pilots to track program exits and measure time spent in the program.
- As the year went on, the system ran more smoothly. We have received extracts from the baseline survey for the full sample and random assignment has been effectively turned off for five of the seven pilots. The remaining two pilots chose to continue random assignment, though enrollment in the study is now optional.[19]

Next Steps

Looking forward to the study conclusion in December 2026, the evaluation team will complete data collection, and shift towards data analysis, and synthesis on the impact, implementation, and cost studies. The team will also update the data dashboard, publish a brief blog post highlighting the

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[16] The Universal Assessment Tool was developed by Public Consulting Group under a separate TANF Opportunity Act contract.

[17] A little over three percent of the 5,912 individuals in the study have an incomplete SSN.

[18] We can link about 85 percent of individuals with partial SSNs to administrative records using other identifiers such as first name, last name, middle initial, and date of birth. However, data entry errors and inconsistencies such as common names, minor errors in spelling names, variations in name formatting (e.g., nicknames, missing middle initials), and typos in dates of birth can increase the risk of false matches, especially without a full SSN to confirm identity.

[19] The evaluation team plans to explore ways to use the extended sample in the study.

development of the data dashboard, and present a report including social and economic data available in the last year of the project period.

In addition, the study team will prepare several briefs on various topics relevant to the study, including:

- A brief on Tennessee's grant benefit increase,
- A brief on the Benefits Cliff, and
- A brief on Public Support Dependency.

Throughout this period, meetings with pilots, TDHS, and PCG will continue to inform the study. Findings from the entire study will be shared in the final report with TDHS in December 2026, and publicly thereafter. The final report will summarize findings from various program models and enhancements to generate evidence to inform future policy and programmatic decisions. It is our goal that insight gleaned from the various studies inform policy and program decisions to empower families and strengthen communities.