



# Nudging Increases Take-Up of Employment Services: Evidence from a Large Field Experiment

## Background

- Employment services have historically experienced low participation, despite their potential to improve job prospects, due to administrative burdens and other challenges with program implementation and awareness.

## Study Overview

- This study conducted a large-scale field experiment in British Columbia, Canada, testing a behavioral nudge intervention aimed at increasing enrollment in employment services. Researchers designed and tested two types of motivational messages, one emphasizing social norms and the other using checklist framing, to evaluate their impact on engagement and participation.

### Learn More

- Hopkins, V. and Dorion, J..(2024), Nudging Increases Take-Up of Employment Services: Evidence from a Large Field Experiment. *J. Pol. Anal. Manage.*.. doi:10.1002/pam.22617
- <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22617>

## Key Takeaways

- The authors found that the nudge intervention tripled enrollment in the program within the first 30 days, with participation rates 2 to 3 times higher among those who received a nudge compared to the control group.
- The checklist email led to higher engagement, including a 4.1 percentage point increase in email openings, a 2.5 percentage point increase in click-throughs, and a 2 percentage point increase in form submissions compared to the social norms email.
- While both nudges increased enrollment, the checklist nudge resulted in a slightly higher enrollment rate (0.56 percentage points above control) compared to the social norms nudge (0.33 percentage points above control), though this difference was not statistically significant.
- Interviews with jobseekers and staff highlighted that complex application processes and lack of awareness were major deterrents to program participation, underscoring the role of administrative burdens in limiting access to employment services.
- The findings of this study demonstrate that simple, low-cost behavioral interventions can significantly improve labor market policy implementation by reducing enrollment barriers. However, further research is needed to optimize messaging strategies for different populations.