

**QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY**

Deena Schwartz (she/her) is an expert in workforce development and equitable evaluation, with over 15 years of experience leading and contributing to high-impact research and evaluation projects that advance economic opportunity. She brings deep expertise in sectoral employment strategies, career pathways, and the integration of employment services with behavioral health and other supportive services. Deena is known for her strategic leadership, methodological rigor, and commitment to equity—demonstrated through her role as Equity Solutions Strategist at Abt, where she guided the implementation of culturally responsive and equity-centered evaluation approaches across diverse portfolios.

Her work has shaped federal policy and practice through evaluations commissioned by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services, including studies on employment coaching, racial bias in hiring, and the effectiveness of career pathways programs. Deena excels in mixed-methods research, stakeholder engagement—including lived experience experts—and translating complex findings into actionable insights. She is a trusted project director and collaborator, with a proven track record of managing multi-year, multi-site studies that inform systems change and improve outcomes for underserved populations.

EDUCATION	RELEVANT SKILLS/EXPERTISE
MPA, Public Policy Analysis; Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University	• Equitable evaluation • Incorporating lived experience expertise • Project management • Research design
BA, Psychology; Connecticut College	• Mixed-methods research • Dissemination

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Associate. Abt Global (2022–Present). New York, NY

Associate. Abt Associates (2016–2022). New York, NY

Senior Analyst. Abt Associates (2012–2016). New York, NY

Project Director, Sectoral Strategies and Employer Engagement Portfolio Services (SSEEP), DOL, Chief Evaluation Office, (2023-2025). SSEEP aimed to generate evidence on effective employer-engaged, worker-centered workforce strategies that can be scaled across the workforce system to create strong talent pipelines to support regional growth of high-demand industries, while creating access to high quality career paths for all workers, particularly those from underserved populations. As Project Director, Ms. Schwartz was responsible for overall project management, including the coordination of multiple studies and synthesis of lessons across studies.

Co-Principal Investigator, Employment Processes as Barriers to Employment in the Low-wage Labor Market, ACF, Office of Policy Research and Evaluation, (2021- 2024). This project systematically reviewed what is known about how employment processes can present barriers for workers of color, and explored and identified potentially promising strategies to address biases in the low-wage labor market. Ms. Schwartz led the project’s collaborator engagement, identification of sites for further study and authored a brief on understanding structural barriers in employment and training research. The project included the engagement of



lived experience experts, in addition to research and practice experts. Ms. Schwartz oversaw the recruitment and onboarding of the project's experts and worked closely with the project's lived experience engagement liaison to tailor requests and act on the experts' feedback. Ms. Schwartz also developed the project's data collection framework, which included interviewing program staff, employers and workers associated with four sites to identify questions for further research and methodological approaches for addressing those questions.

Site Lead, Support to Communities Grant Program, DOL, Chief Evaluation Office (2020–Present). The 2018 SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act directed the U.S. Department of Labor to develop a pilot grant program to address the economic and workforce impacts associated with the high rates of opioid use disorder or substance abuse disorder: the Support to Communities: Fostering Opioid Recovery through Workforce Development. Ms. Schwartz is leading data collection and analysis for the State of Maryland.

Project Director, Descriptive and Analytical Career Pathways Project, DOL, Chief Evaluation Office (2018–2021). This three-year project enabled the U.S. Department of Labor to advance the career pathways evidence base by analyzing existing data in new ways. The project's three sub-studies explored career trajectories & occupational transitions in the labor market, included a meta-analysis of characteristics associated with career pathways program impacts, and explored the use of machine learning applications in career pathways research. Ms. Schwartz was responsible for overall project management, including oversight of the three sub-studies. Ms. Schwartz was also the lead author of the final report for the career trajectories and occupational transitions study, and coauthor paper on disparities in wage growth and the final report for the meta-analysis.

Community Research and Data Collection Lead, Qualitative Study to Enhance the NYCgov Poverty Measure, NYC Opportunity (2018 – 2020)

Abt Associates partnered with the New York City Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) to conduct a qualitative study on poverty in the Bronx. This project sought to better understand New Yorkers' experiences living in poverty. Ms. Schwartz contributed to the research design which included the recruitment and involvement of a team of six community researchers. She oversaw the work of community researchers, led data collection efforts, and coauthored the final report.

Project Director, Career Pathways Design Study, DOL, Chief Evaluation Office (2016–2018). Abt Associates developed evaluation design options on career pathways programs. The options address critical gaps in knowledge related to program design, implementation and overall success, particularly in healthcare and in early care and education. The project included a knowledge development effort that produced reports on (1) research and evaluation relevant to career pathways approaches, (2) the implementation of existing career pathways initiatives, and (3) the potential for career pathways approaches in early care and education. Ms. Schwartz was responsible for overall project management, co-led the knowledge development task, organized the TWG meeting, and was part of the team identifying priority research questions and options for addressing those questions.

Site Lead and Deputy Project Director, Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation. DHHS, Administration for Children and Families (2014–Present). The Job Search Assistance (JSA) Strategies Evaluation, was a high priority ACF-sponsored study that aimed to determine which JSA strategies are most effective in transitioning TANF applicants and recipients into employment. As site lead for New York City, Ms. Schwartz worked closely with the NYC Human Resources Administration to implement study procedures and monitor progress. She also



conducted site visits and qualitative data collection, including group interviews. Ms. Schwartz also coauthored the final report for the New York City site and coauthored a brief about results across JSA study sites.

Deputy Project Director, National Implementation Evaluation of the Health Profession Opportunity Grants to Serve TANF Recipients and Other Low-Income Individuals, DHHS, Administration for Children and Families (2012–2018). Abt Global and its partner conducted an implementation evaluation of the HPOG grantees. The evaluation assessed program implementation, systems change, and program outcomes. Data was collected through surveys of grantees, management and staff, stakeholders and other partners, and employers. Participant data was also analyzed. Ms. Schwartz participated in overall project management, including overseeing the project's budget and timeline, and worked on the study's measurement plan, survey development and testing, analysis plan and the project's reports.

RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

Schwartz, Deena, Simonne Vincent, Marissa Cuellar, Angelique Crutchfield, Andrea Anderson, and Andrew Clarkwest. (2024). *Conceptualizing Structural Barriers in Employment Processes: Implications for Evaluations of Employment and Training Programs*. OPRE Report 2024-296. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Betesh, Hannah, **Deena Schwartz**, Shelley Rappaport, and Karin Martinson. (2022). *Integrating Employment Services with Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery: The Experiences of Five Programs*. OPRE Report 2022-154. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Schwartz, Deena, Andrew Clarkwest, Marissa Hashizume, Tresa Kappil, and Julie Strawn. (2021). *Building Better Pathways: An Analysis of Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions*. Report prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office. Rockville, MD: Abt Associates.

Clarkwest, Andrew, Tresa Kappil, **Deena Schwartz**, Marissa Hashizume, and Karin Martinson. (2021). *Wage Growth Disparities by Gender and Race/Ethnicity Among Entrants to Mid-Level Occupations in the United States Findings from the Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions Study*. Report prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office. Rockville, MD: Abt Associates.

Peck, Laura R., **Deena Schwartz**, Julie Strawn, Christopher C. Weiss, Randall Juras, Siobhan Mills de la Rosa, Nathan Greenstein, Tori Morris, Gabriel Durham, and Charlotte Lloyd. (2021). *A Meta-Analysis of 46 Career Pathways Impact Evaluations*. Report prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office. Rockville, MD: Abt Associates.

Strawn, Julie, Laura R. Peck & **Deena Schwartz** (2021). *New Insights on Career Pathways: Evidence from a Meta-Analysis*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office.

Schwartz, Deena, Karen Gardiner, Kristen Joyce, Sheena McConnell, and Correne Saunders (2020). *Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS): Implementation Findings from the Evaluation of Employment Coaching*. OPRE Report 2020-177. Washington, DC: Office of



Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Martinson, Karin, Eleanor Harvill, and **Deena Schwartz** (2020). The Effectiveness of Different Approaches for Moving Cash Assistance Recipients to Work: Findings from the Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation, Washington, DC: Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Peck, Laura, Matthew Zeidenberg, Sung-Woo Cho, Daniel Litwok, Julie Strawn, Maureen Sarna, Karin Martinson, and **Deena Schwartz**. (2018). Evaluation Design Options Report: Career Pathways Design Study. U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office.

Schwartz, Deena, Robin Koralek, Alan Werner and Pamela Loprest. (2018). Improving Economic Opportunity through Healthcare Training: Highlights from the National Implementation Evaluation of the First Round of the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG 1.0), OPRE Report #2018-40, Washington, DC: Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Maguire, Sheila, Joshua Freely, Carol Clymer, Maureen Conway and **Deena Schwartz**. (2010). Tuning In to Local Labor Markets: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study. Public/Private Ventures.