



# Try, Test and Learn Fund

## *Mentoring 2 Work*

Using insights from the Priority Investment Approach, the Try, Test and Learn Fund is trialling new and innovative approaches to assist groups of people at risk of long-term welfare dependence.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund will help achieve the objectives of welfare reform — that is, to develop a modern welfare system that increases the capacity of individuals, reduces the risk of welfare dependency and maintains a strong welfare safety net.

## What does the evidence tell us?

- 22 per cent of all current 17–19 year olds receiving student payments are expected to be on income support in 10 years.
- From 2003 to 2012, there were 7,160 vocational or university students who started receiving a student payment aged 17 to 19; then experienced more than 12 months on unemployment payments; and were receiving unemployment payments in 2015–16. On average, these former young students who transitioned directly to unemployment payments are likely to receive income support in 33 years of their future lifetimes.
- If nothing changes for these former young students, 39 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 10 years, and 30 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 20 years.

## What is *Mentoring 2 Work*?

Participants are paired with mature volunteer mentors with strong business and workplace connections.

The mentoring takes place through both group sessions and one-on-one mentoring over a six-month period. Each week focuses on different activities to prepare participants for employment. Mentors guide and support participants through the employment process.

## What are we trying to achieve?

Improvement in participants' job readiness and their chances of accessing and sustaining employment.

## Fast facts

**Priority group:** Unemployed former students

**Target participant number:** 275

**Location:** Perth

**Trial period:** 37 months

**Total funding:** \$2.62 million

**Co-designers:** Council on the Ageing Western Australia (COTA WA), AJ Grant Group, Anglicare WA, Australian Childcare Alliance WA, Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA, Department of Training and Workforce Development, MercyCare, ORS Group, United Way, Volunteering WA and Wanslea

**Service provider:** COTA WA

**Potential future saving:** The purpose of these initiatives is to test whether an intervention works to reduce long-term reliance on welfare. If around 9 per cent of participants (24) move off income support because of this project, the savings to the welfare system are likely to outweigh the costs of the project.

**Note:** Due to changes in circumstances, adjustments have been made to target participant numbers, trial period and total funding.

## How is this initiative new and innovative?

This initiative proposes a unique partnership model to create an ecosystem of support which assists participants to identify and address a diverse range of barriers and challenges in attaining and maintaining employment.