

Stimulating Occupational Mobility among Unemployed Job Seekers

Abstract

We study the impact of online information provision to job seekers who are looking for work in occupations with relatively poor labor market prospects. The information is provided through a personalized email containing suggestions about suitable alternative occupations and how the prospects of these alternatives compare to the job seekers' current occupation of interest. We additionally include a link to a motivational video for parts of the treatment group. We evaluate the interventions using a randomized field experiment covering all registered job seekers in the target occupations, where two thirds are treated. Our email is opened by the vast majority of job seekers, revealing the alternative suggestions. The motivational video link is rarely used. Effects on unemployed job seekers in structurally poor labor markets are large: their employment, hours of work and labor income all improve by 4% to 5%, with persistent impact over 1.5 years. There is little impact on job seekers in “Covid” occupations which did well prior to and after the lockdowns.

This paper is joint work with Michèle Belot, Bart K. de Koning, Didier Fourage, Paul Müller, and Sandra Phlippen

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