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Do Public or Private Providers of Employment Services Matter for Employment? Evidence from a Randomized Experiment

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Abstract

This paper compares the job finding rates of unemployed exposed to either public or private providers of employment services. Reporting from a randomized field experiment conducted in Denmark we assess empirically the case for contracting out employment services for a well-defined group of highly educated job-seekers (unemployed holding a university degree). Our findings suggest, first, that private providers deliver more intense, employment-oriented, and earlier services at a higher cost. Second, job finding rates do not differ between unemployed subjected to public or private provision of employment services. All in all, the findings suggest that private providers offer more intense and costly services with no significant influence on subsequent employment rates.

JEL Classification: J64, J68, H41, H43, H44, L33

Keywords: Active Labour Market Policies, Job-search Assistance, Private Provision of Employment Services, Contracting Out, Treatment Effect Evaluation, Randomized Trial, Cost-analysis

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