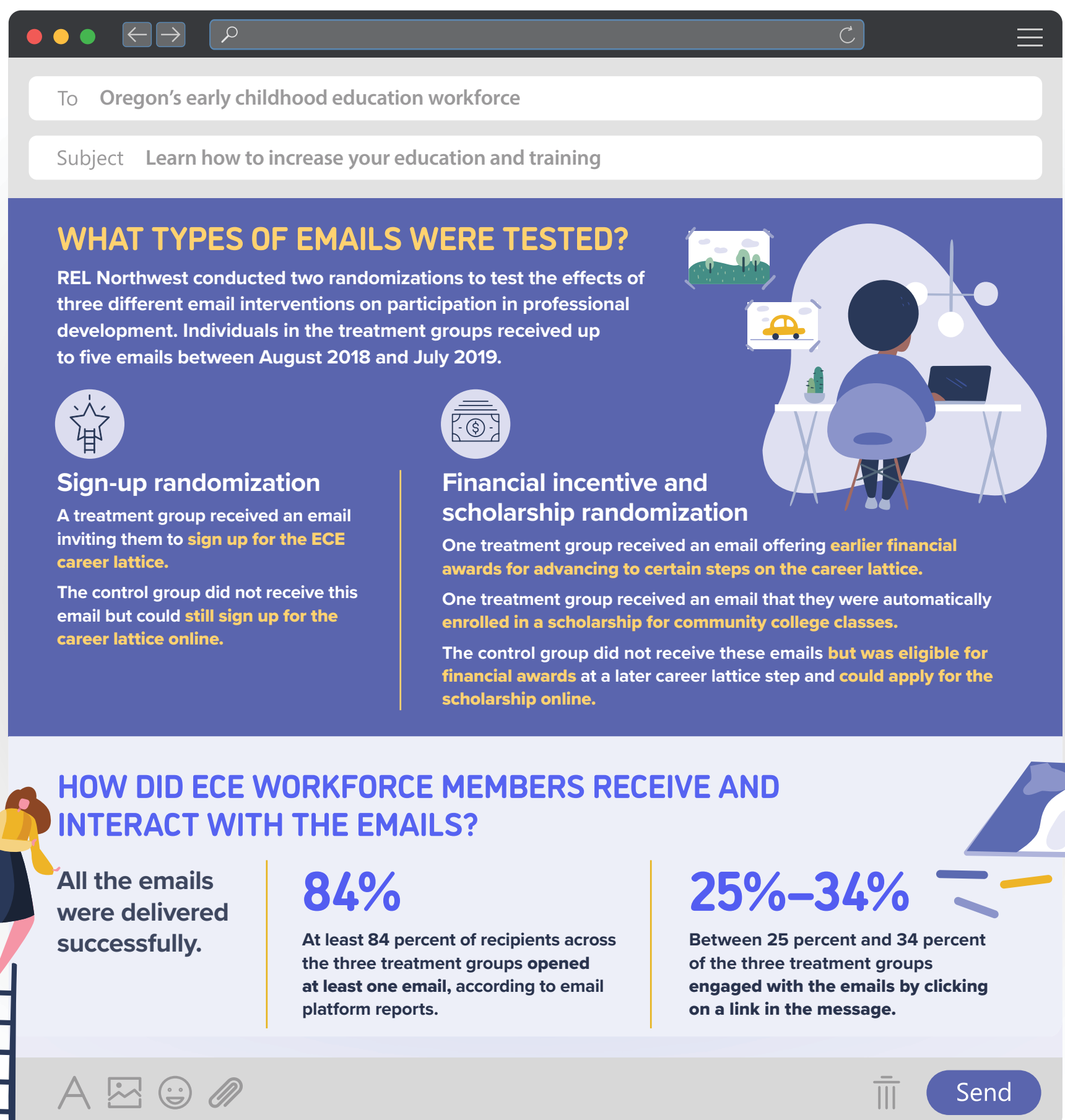


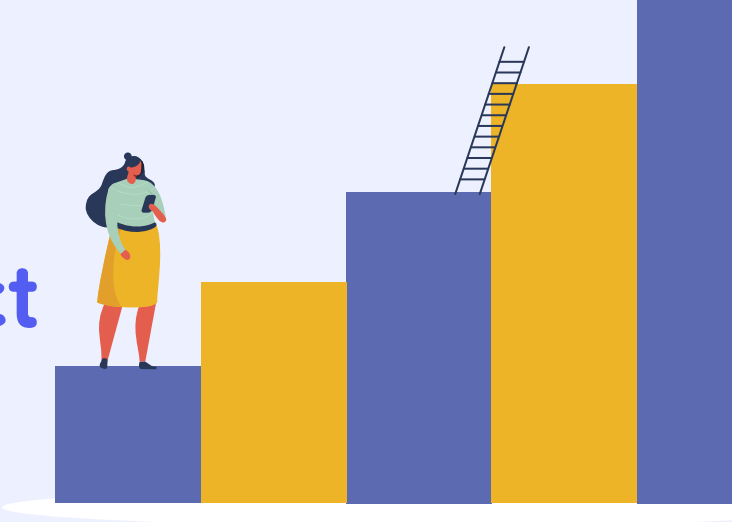
# Can emails and financial incentives increase early childhood education workforce members' participation in professional development?

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northwest conducted a **study of emails and differing financial incentives** designed to encourage early childhood education (ECE) workforce members to participate in Oregon's ECE career lattice—a system that promotes continued professional development. Little existing research documents the most effective ways to encourage ECE workforce members to participate in a career lattice system and increase their education and training.

This infographic presents information on the different types of emails and incentives tested through the randomized trials used in the study. It also shows the potential impact of the incentives on Oregon ECE workforce members' career lattice sign-ups and movement, college credits earned, professional development training hours, scholarship use, retention at the same workplace, motivation to take college coursework or complete an educational degree in the future, and self-identification as early learning professionals.



# How did the interventions impact ECE workforce members?<sup>1</sup>



## Sign-up randomization



**Sending up to five emails to encourage career lattice sign-ups did not appear to impact the percentage of ECE workforce members who signed up or remained at the same workplace.** It also did not appear to impact ECE workforce members’ self-identification as early learning professionals.

## Financial incentive randomization



**ECE workforce members who received an email offering financial awards for reaching certain career lattice steps completed more community-based training hours on average (42.5 hours) than ECE workforce members who were not offered the incentive (32.2 hours).**



**The financial incentive intervention did not have a detectable impact** on career lattice movement, college credit hours earned, retention at the same workplace, motivation to take college coursework or complete a degree, or self-identification as early learning professionals.

## Scholarship randomization



**Emails notifying ECE workforce members of automatic scholarship enrollment did not have a detectable impact** on scholarship use, progress on the career lattice, college credit hours earned, retention at the same workplace, or self-identification as early learning professionals.



**The automatic scholarship enrollment intervention positively impacted ECE workforce members’ motivation** to take a college course in the next year and to take a college course or earn a degree in the next five years.<sup>2</sup>

# What do the findings tell us?

Study findings suggest the need to improve how information is provided to ECE workforce members about the workforce registry, career lattice, and available financial incentives and scholarships. Future email campaigns targeting the ECE workforce might increase engagement through the use of simplified and personalized messages, trusted organization logos and names, and content in multiple languages.

Additional supports such as release time may reduce barriers to participation in professional development, as a small number of study participants reported lacking time to take coursework.

A longer study time period and further research on barriers to participation, ECE workforce members’ motivation to progress through the career lattice, and different incentives may inform adjustments to the career lattice system.

# References

<sup>1</sup> A state policy change reduced the study period from 16 to 12 months. This may have prevented the study team from detecting changes in longer-term outcomes such as progress in the career lattice.

<sup>2</sup> High rates of survey nonresponse for motivation outcomes mean these results should be interpreted with caution.

**Read the report:** Pierson, A., Cannon, J., Perera, R., Mihaly, K., & LeMahieu, R. (2021). *Professional development incentives for Oregon’s early childhood education workforce: A randomized study.* (REL 2021–111). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.