

SUMMARY OF STATEDATA: THE NATIONAL REPORT ON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND OUTCOMES THROUGH 2018

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Introduction

For over 30 years, the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) has been home to Access to Integrated Employment and StateData, a national data-collection project on day and employment outcomes funded by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Since 1988, this project has described the nature of day and employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), and has contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence employment outcomes at the individual, service-provider, and state-policy level. The current StateData Report highlights fiscal year 2018.

Economic Status of Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Overall, the findings suggest that across data sources, people with IDD experience greater levels of unemployment, underemployment, low wages, and poverty compared to those without disabilities. FY2018 data continue to highlight the economic disparities between people with and without IDD.

ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES HAVE DIFFERENT ECONOMIC OUTCOMES COMPARED TO ADULTS WITHOUT DISABILITIES

American Community Survey (ACS) data continue to show that people with disabilities are much less likely to work than their counterparts without disabilities, and illustrate the relationship between disability and poverty. People with any type of disability are less likely to work (37%) compared to people with no disability (76%), and people who have a cognitive disability are the least likely to work (28%).



This has a direct impact on whether an individual with a disability lives in poverty. People with disabilities who are employed are less likely to live in a household that is below the poverty line compared to people with disabilities who are not employed. Among working-age Americans, people with any disability (26%) and people with a cognitive disability (30.8%) are more likely to live in a household that is below the poverty line than people with no disability (10.9%).

Where the Data Comes From

Data from four sources is included:

1. The American Community Survey (ACS)

ACS is an initiative of the US Census, provides a population perspective on employment, including people who do not have a connection with funded services.

2. Social Security Administration

The SSA reports work-incentive participation and the number of individuals receiving SSI who are working.

3. State VR Agency Data (RSA-911)

RSA-911 is a public access database that captures individual characteristics, services provided, and employment outcomes at the point of closure from vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. Records are at the individual level.

4. ICI's National Survey of State Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Agencies' Employment and Day Services

This survey collects summary state level data on employment and day services distribution and funding from state intellectual and developmental disabilities agencies in the 50 states and DC.



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INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES HAVE POORER ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

People with a cognitive disability who are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) have the lowest employment rate of all people, only 8.2% are employed. Additionally people with a cognitive disability who are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are the most likely to live in a household that is below the poverty line. For individuals who are working 14.9% still live below the poverty line, and for those not working 40.2% live in poverty.



ECONOMIC OUTCOMES HOWEVER ARE SLOWLY CHANGING

ICI researchers hypothesize that SSI recipients with ID may have higher involvement with state agencies that encourage labor participation compared to individuals with other disabilities. In the IDD system, data collected through the National Survey of State Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Agencies' Employment and Day Services suggest that there has been modest growth in the number of individuals in integrated employment services since 1988. The estimated percentage of individuals receiving employment or day services from a state IDD agency and participating in integrated employment services was 21.1% in FY2018. FY2018 data do suggest slight year-over-year growth in the number of people in integrated employment services over the last five years. Multiple states continue to demonstrate increases in the number of individuals in integrated employment services, but there is large variation across states in participation in integrated employment ranging from 3% to 85% of adults receiving employment and day services.



STATE IDD AGENCIES EFFORTS TO PRIORITIZE EMPLOYMENT

Additional data from the ICI survey found that state IDD agency investment in supports continues to emphasize facility-based and non-work services, rather than integrated employment services. There is evidence that individual states are taking steps to reduce facility-based work, and the number and percent of individuals in facility-based work is declining, however there has not been a transition of individuals from facility based-work to integrated employment. For the past 10 years funding for integrated employment services has on average reflected about 12% of state IDD agencies' employment and day services budgets. Further despite the increases in the number of people served by state IDD agencies in integrated employment, there is long-term data to indicate that Medicaid Title XIX Waiver dollars have not transitioned away from facility-based and non-work services towards integrated employment.



EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH ID SERVED BY STATE VR AGENCIES

State VR programs offers valuable services including assessment, job search assistance, and counseling to help improve the employment outcomes of individuals with ID.

In the VR system, the rehabilitation rate, defined as the percent of people who entered employment out of those who completed an individual plan for employment (IPE), was 46% in program year 2019 for people with intellectual disabilities (ID). For 2019, 31% of VR closures with ID exited with a job within one year of when they applied for services. This is down from a peak of 36% of closures in 2008. While outcomes varied across states the majority of people with ID who exited VR with a job were male, white, and transition-age young adults. This suggests the need for a continued examination of the factors for why women, individuals who are not white, and individuals who are older than transition age are less likely to be employed after VR services. Additionally over time weekly wages for individuals with ID remained steady despite an increased in hourly wages earned. The lack of appreciable growth in weekly earnings is likely a result of the decrease in the average weekly hours worked. Individual and labor market factors should continue to be examined to understand the reasons for the lack of overall growth in earnings.



SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION RESOURCES TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

In more than 40 years, there has only been a 3.1% increase in the percentage of blind and disabled SSI recipients who are working. Data from the Social Security Administration (SSA) show that work incentive programs for SSI recipients with disabilities including the Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS), Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE), Blind Work Expenses (BWE), section 1619(a) benefits, and section 1619(b) benefits are underused. PASS, IRWE, and BWE allow individuals to set aside money, resources, and expenses to be excluded from total earned income calculations.



Historically work incentives have been underused and their current usage has declined significantly. The PASS incentive program has seen decreased participation in the last 17 years—a 59% decrease from 2000 to 2018 in the number of individuals who enrolled. Overall, BWE program enrollment declined 75% from 2000 to 2018, and IRWE enrollment declined by 69% in the same time span. This is particularly discouraging for SSI recipients with ID who work more than their counterparts with other types of disabilities, but participate in work incentive programs less frequently. Ensuring that explanations of incentives are provided in plain language and greater encouragement of participation in incentive programs by employment and disability services professionals could lead to higher rates of employment and better employment outcomes for individuals, including individuals with ID, receiving SSI.

Conclusion

Recent legislation and regulation governing Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), and settlement agreements between states and the U.S. Department of Justice clarify federal intent and pave the way for supporting opportunities for people with disabilities to have meaningful jobs in their communities. With an increasing emphasis on integrated employment and adoption of Employment First policy at the state level, the nation is poised for transformation that could put Americans with disabilities on a path out of poverty and toward self-sufficiency.

The shift toward Employment First policies and actions to implement federal policy from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, WIOA, and the Department of Justice can make an important contribution to raising expectations, improving outcomes, and increasing self-sufficiency for individuals with IDD in every state. However, data for FY2018 highlight the economic and employment disparities for individuals with IDD. While some data suggest progress, overall data demonstrate the continuing need to strengthen policies, practices, and initiatives that prioritize employment.

Suggested Citation

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