

Employment Outcomes among People with Disabilities: Vocational Services-Related Determinants

Selected Findings from NIDILRR-funded Disability Employment Research in the 21st Century

A systematic scoping review of research published between 2000 and 2020 on employment of people with disabilities, that was funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), was conducted by CeKTER researchers at Boston University. All papers comparing people with disabilities to those without were excluded from the systematic scoping review. Among over 100 publications reviewed there was a wide and very disparate array of findings with numerous variables used and varying research questions. This result belies summative findings. There are numerous ways of organizing the disparate findings. This brief is part of a series of findings from CeKTER's systematic scoping review. In this brief we report on findings revealing how determinants representing different aspects of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services may impact their utilization and outcomes. Please note that all comparisons are always about corresponding peers with disabilities.

Employment Outcomes among Individuals with Disabilities Receiving VR Services

- Individuals with disabilities who received counseling services through the VR system were more likely to become employed than their peers who did not.¹
- Individuals with disabilities who received medical services through the VR system were less likely to become employed than peers who did not receive medical services.¹
- Individuals with disabilities who missed VR appointments were more likely to have unsuccessful VR case closure.²
- Individuals with disabilities who did not receive additional services through the VR system were more likely to have unsuccessful VR case closure.²
- Youth with disabilities who applied to agencies that were either in order of selection (OOS), had higher proportions of youth applicants, or had higher costs of purchased services (proved by external vendors) were more likely to have a successful VR case closure³



- Individuals with visual impairments who had a higher quality relationship with their VR counselor were more likely to obtain competitive employment.⁴
- VR professionals' use of practices consistent with the Business Relations Model (BRM) and blindness specific techniques when interacting with employers had a positive impact on the hiring of individuals with visual impairment.⁵
- Individuals with visual impairments who had a previous unsuccessful VR case closure were more likely to lose their jobs.⁶
- Individuals with combined traumatic brain injury and visual impairment were more likely to become employed if they worked with VR counselors who had training in TBI or dual TBI and visual impairment.⁷
- Youth with TBI receiving a greater number of VR services at higher expenditure levels were more likely to have successful VR case closure.⁸
- Youth with traumatic brain injuries who received VR services over shorter periods of time were more likely to have successful VR case closure.⁸

VR Services Utilization Outcomes

- Individuals with disabilities who had a problematic relationship with their VR counselor were more likely to be dissatisfied with the services they received.^{9,10}
- Individuals with disabilities who had a problematic relationship with their VR counselor were more likely to have premature exit from VR services.^{9,10,11}
- Individuals with disabilities who were dissatisfied with the services they were receiving, including thinking that their VR process was slow or taking too long were more likely to have a premature exit from VR services.^{9,10}
- African American youth who had a stronger working alliance with their VR counselor were more likely to be engaged in VR services when compared to their African American peers.¹²
- Youth with disabilities who applied to agencies that were in order of selection (OOS) were less likely to receive VR services compared to those who applied to agencies that were not in OOS.³
- Youth with disabilities were less likely to receive purchased VR services if their cost was higher.³
- Longer time between application for VR services and eligibility determination decreased the chances of youth with disabilities to start receiving services.³
- Longer time between determination of eligibility for VR services and the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) increased the chances of youth with disabilities exiting from VR before receiving a signed IPE despite being eligible for services.³
- Individuals with physical or sensory disabilities who had a stronger working alliance with their VR counselor were more likely to be engaged in VR services.¹³



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