

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
RSA-IM-02-26
DATE: September 4, 2002

TO : STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (GENERAL)
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (BLIND)
PROTECTION & ADVOCACY OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS PROGRAMS
CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
AMERICAN INDIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS
REGIONAL REHABILITATION CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS
RSA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
CONSUMER ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

SUBJECT: First Final Report of the Longitudinal Study of the Vocational
Rehabilitation Services (VR) Program: *How Consumer Characteristics
Affect Access to, Receipt of, and Outcomes of VR Services*

CONTENT: Below is a discussion of the first final report of the Longitudinal Study of
the VR Services Program: *How Consumer Characteristics Affect Access
to, Receipt of, and Outcomes of VR Services*. Research Triangle
International conducted the study. This study can be found at the
Rehabilitation Services Administration's website at:

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/RSA/Research/studies/index.html>.

The *Longitudinal Study* has followed over 8,000 VR consumers at 37 locations for at least three years for the purpose of identifying the types of individuals served, types of services provided, environments in which the services were provided and short-term and long-term economic and non-economic outcomes of the VR program. The first final report examines the extent to which demographic and other characteristics of individuals with disabilities affect their access to and receipt of VR services, as well as the outcomes of those services. RTI International is conducting the study. This study will produce three additional final reports that will focus on services and outcomes, the influence of local environments, and the overall impact of the State VR Services Program.

Below are selected study findings from the first final report.

Factors Associated With Access to VR Services

Individuals were more likely to be accepted for VR services if:

- their disability was significant or most significant;
- their disability was congenital rather than acquired;
- their disability was classified as either mental retardation or hearing impairment;
- they had higher self-esteem;
- if working at application, they were working at a job in clerical or sales occupations;
- if not working at application, they were a student, unpaid family worker, or volunteer.

Individuals were less likely to be accepted for VR services if:

- their disability was a nonorthopedic physical impairment;
- they were working at application in supported or extended employment;
- they were working at application at a job in a field other than clerical or sales occupations.

Factors Associated with Obtaining an Employment Outcome

Persons who received VR services were more likely to achieve an employment outcome if:

- their disability was a vision impairment, hearing impairment, mental retardation, or orthopedic impairment, as opposed to another type of disability;
- they had higher gross motor function;
- they had greater self-esteem;
- they were working at application for VR services;
- their desire to obtain assistive technology devices or services was a motive for applying for VR services;
- they had more dependents than did other consumers.

Persons who received VR services were less likely to achieve an employment outcome if:

- they were receiving SSI or SSDI;
- they were receiving other forms of financial assistance;
- their desire to obtain postsecondary education was a motive for applying for VR services;

- their race/ethnicity was other than white.

Factors Associated With Achievement of a Competitive Employment Outcome versus a non-competitive employment outcome

Persons who received VR services were more likely to achieve a competitive employment outcome if:

- they had higher gross motor function;
- they had higher cognitive function;
- they were working at application for VR services;
- they had higher earnings at their most recent job prior to VR application;
- they had greater knowledge of different jobs;
- they had greater knowledge of the nonmonetary benefits of jobs.

Persons who received VR services were less likely to achieve a competitive employment outcome if:

- their disability was vision impairment, mental illness, or mental retardation;
- their disability was significant or most significant;
- they were receiving SSI or SSDI;
- they were older.

If you have any questions concerning the Final Report, please call Dr. Harold Kay, Director of Evaluation, at 202-205-9883.

Joanne Wilson
Commissioner

CC: CSAVR
CANAR