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Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
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Abstract

Closures Are the Tip of the Iceberg: Exploring the Variation in State Vocational Rehabilitation Program Exits After Service Receipt

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ABSTRACT

State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies play an important role in promoting employment for people with disabilities. However, little information has been available about how many people with disabilities exit after VR service receipt and how exits vary with individual characteristics and across states compared to the general population with disabilities. We used RSA administrative data from fiscal year 2007 and public use files from the American Community Survey to calculate the ratio of the number of individuals completing VR services to the estimated number of working-age people with disabilities in 2007 at the national and state-levels and for demographic, educational, and disability subgroups. Overall, our results show that 1.3 of every 100 working-age adults with a disability living in the community exited a VR agency after receiving services, with state variation ranging from 0.6 percent in Washington and Puerto Rico to 4.0 percent in Vermont. We also found large differences in these numbers across sex, age, racial, ethnic, and educational groups—differences that are much larger in some states than in others. These observed disparities raise questions about why some groups are more likely to complete VR services than others and whether VR agencies should be systematically targeting more resources to certain groups. Further research and additional data collection strategies are needed to better understand how well people with disabilities complete VR agency services.



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