



National Council on Disability

An independent federal agency making recommendations to the President and Congress to enhance the quality of life for all Americans with disabilities and their families.

Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization

National Council on Disability
March 23, 2010

TOPICAL BRIEF: Performance Indicators

ISSUE 1: Reporting of employment outcomes of people with disabilities using One-Stop services

Recommendation:

Congress should require One-Stop Career Center partners to initiate collaborative data sharing and program evaluations to monitor, analyze, and annually report to Congress regarding client employment outcomes during the three years following One-Stop case closure.

Summary of Concern:

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) 911 data system does an excellent job of documenting the services provided to people with disabilities served through the federal/state vocational rehabilitation system, as well as the employment outcomes achieved by these individuals at the point of vocational rehabilitation closure. However, RSA does not systematically collect post-closure employment information that would enable Congress to judge the long term success of the program. Neither do any other workforce partner agencies. Utilization of earnings data, collected over a three-year period after One-Stop service provision has ended, would be a more accurate and valid measure of service efficacy than a current case closure rate. Administrative data sets maintained by the Department of Labor (DOL) or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) contain the long range employment outcome data necessary to perform an analysis of long-term employment outcomes. This would be especially important for transitioning youth who use VR funds for post secondary education to determine the increase in wages earned after graduation. Also, for people with disabilities who pursue self-employment through the use of VR or other One-Stop partner agency funding, having a three-year period to show increased earnings would allow for a more realistic period for business start-up.

ISSUE 2: Reporting outcomes and costs of VR services for individuals served multiple times over a period of time

Recommendation:

Congress should direct RSA to change its key performance indicator from the current *case or closure* model of outcome reporting to an individual *client* model of reporting that takes into account the amount and cost of *ALL* services provided to an individual client over his or her lifetime.

Summary of Concern:

The key performance indicator within the federal/state vocational rehabilitation system is the individual case closure. Outcomes and costs of service are evaluated at the individual **case** level, as opposed to the *client* level. As a result, the key performance measure for the program does not capture instances where an individual may be closed, or served multiple times, over a period of several years. Research exists to indicate that in many instances, the majority of services provided to individuals may be delivered *after the individual's initial closure* in the program. As a result, the overall amount and cost of services may be significantly underreported. For example, an individual receives \$2,500 in services during an initial period of service (closure) from the vocational rehabilitation system, however, this same individual may subsequently receive one or more additional periods of services over the next several years. In the current system, each of those periods of services would be counted as a new case, not an additional period of service for the same individual, thereby underreporting the amount and cost of service provided. The vocational rehabilitation program would be better served by using the individual, as opposed to the case, as the key performance indicator for the program. This would allow program administrators and Congress to obtain a more accurate view of the total outcomes and costs of services.

ISSUE 3: People with disabilities are underrepresented in One-Stop client data

Recommendation:

Congress should require the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to initiate data sharing agreements with the Social Security Administration (SSA) , Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and RSA to determine the extent to which One-Stop Center clients are accessing other federal benefit, health care, and employment services.

Summary of Concern:

People with disabilities are not required to disclose their disabilities to establish eligibility for One-Stop Career Center Services core services. Data reveal that these individuals continue to be underrepresented in the overall One-Stop service population, but there is no way of knowing the accuracy of data currently collected when individuals choose not to disclose their disabilities. In the absence of a valid and reliable self-reported disability variable, DOL should explore alternative ways to determine the number of people with disabilities accessing and benefiting from One-Stop Center services. One approach is to determine the extent to which individuals receiving services through the One-Stop Center are accessing other services that require documentation of a disability as a requirement for program eligibility.

The National Council on Disability wishes to express its appreciation to Dr. Beth Bader and Dr. John Kregel of Virginia Commonwealth University for their assistance in developing this brief.