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Data Note: The Engagement of Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities in Vocational Rehabilitation: 2010–2014 State Trends

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The Engagement of Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities in Vocational Rehabilitation: 2010–2014 State Trends

By Alberto Migliore, Jean Winsor, and Caro Narby

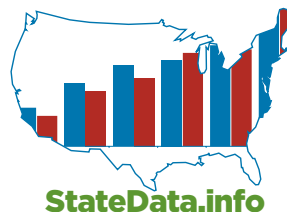
In this Data Note, we look at the average number of young adults with intellectual disabilities (ID) who between 2010 and 2014 exited vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. To account for the different population sizes of the states, we divided these average numbers by the population of young adults with disabilities in the corresponding states, and then multiplied the result by 1,000. We named these figures “VR engagement rates.”

In 2014, a total of 31,746 young adults with intellectual disabilities ages 16 to 30 exited the national VR program (13% of all case closures in this age range).

Figure 1 shows that VR engagement rates were very different across the country, ranging from 3 in Arizona to 30 in North Carolina. This means that if both states had 1,000 young adults with disabilities, 30 young adults with ID would engage with the North Carolina VR program, whereas only 3 young adults with ID would engage with the Arizona VR program.

Compared to an earlier Data Note that examined the years 2002–2011 (www.communityinclusion.org/pdf/DN45_F.pdf), five new states reported substantially higher engagement rates in the period 2010–2014: Indiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Vermont. Also, Alaska, Arkansas, and New Mexico exited the group of states that, during the years 2002–2011, reported substantially lower engagement rates.

As we interpret these findings, we should keep in mind that not all young adults who engage with a state VR program receive services or attain employment. Moreover, low VR engagement rates in some states could be explained in part by young adults receiving services from other programs. However, as emphasized by the recent passage of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, connecting with state VR programs remains an important first step toward increasing employment participation of young adults with disabilities, thus helping them to become financially self-sufficient.



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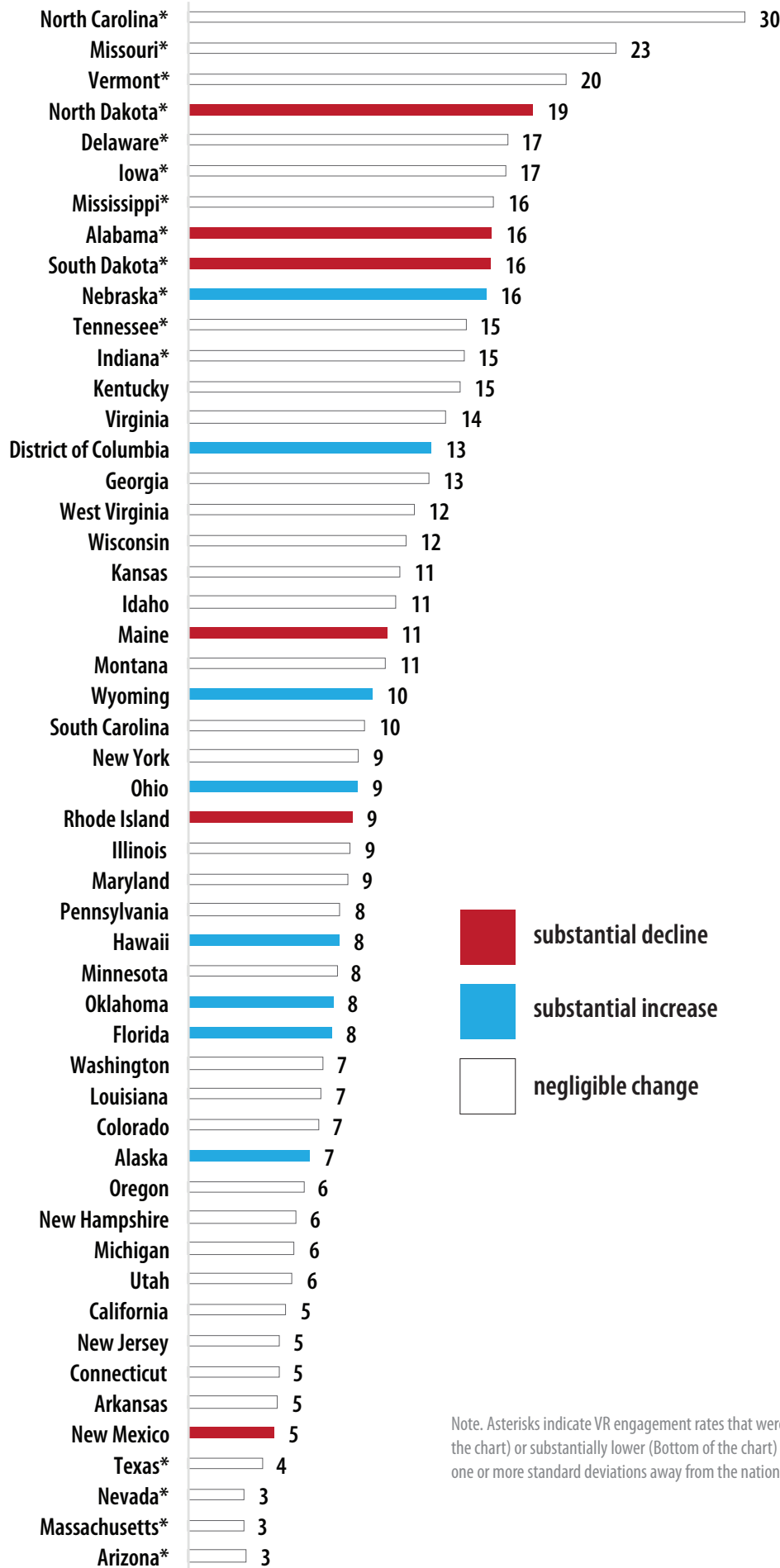
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Figure 1. States' Average VR Engagement Ratio for Young Adults with an Intellectual Disability: 2010-2014



Note. Asterisks indicate VR engagement rates that were substantially higher (Top of the chart) or substantially lower (Bottom of the chart) than the national average (i.e. one or more standard deviations away from the national average).