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Job Seekers with Disabilities at One-Stop Career Centers: An Examination of Registration for Wagner-Peyser Funded Employment Services from 2002 to 2007

By David Hoff and Frank A. Smith

The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 established a nationwide system of public employment services, known as the Employment Service. Wagner-Peyser funds are a primary source of funding for the services of One-Stop Career Centers that provide employment services available to all people, including people with disabilities. This data note examines trends on a national and state-by-state basis in the number and percentage of job seekers who self-identified as having disabilities who register for Wagner-Peyser Employment Services. Readers should note that because disability status in this data source is self-identified, it is likely disability among job seekers who register for Wagner-Peyser services is underreported and the actual numbers of people with disabilities who register for services are higher.

As detailed in Table 1, the percentage of all individuals nationally who identified they have a disability showed a steady increase from 2002 when it stood at 2.3%, to 3.1% in 2005, before decreasing slightly to 2.8% in 2007. The number of individuals with disabilities served nationally has increased significantly, from approximately 340,000 in 2002 to 499,000 in 2007, concurrent with an overall increase in use of Wagner-Peyser services. On a state-to-state basis, there is extensive variability in terms of the percentage of individuals identifying as having a disability. Looking at table 2 we see that in 2007 North Carolina had the highest percentage at 11.0%, followed by Wisconsin at 7.7% and Maine at 7.5%. On the other end, less than 1% of the registered job seekers in Georgia and Mississippi were individuals identifying themselves as having a disability.

Looking at trends over time, most states have maintained a fairly consistent percentage of individuals identifying as having a disability, whether that percentage is above or below the national average. Among the consistent high performers have been Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin, all consistently above 5%. A few states have shown increases in the percentage of individuals served over time. The most noteworthy is North Carolina, which increased from 3.5% in 2002, to 11.0%. Other states showing significant and steady increases over the same period include Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, Oklahoma, and the District of Columbia.

Table 1. National Summary of Wagner-Peyser Employment Services Participants

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total # of Participants	14,948,985	15,154,824	14,149,380	13,308,625	14,674,883	17,791,960
# of People with Disabilities	340,090	358,055	373,157	416,188	418,583	499,147
% of People with Disabilities	2.3%	2.4%	2.6%	3.1%	2.9%	2.8%

A limitation of this data is that it only looks at the percentage of individuals with disabilities accessing Wagner-Peyser funded services, and does not look at placement or retention outcomes (placement data is available for the general customer base). The availability of outcome data for people with disabilities would strengthen the ability to examine the performance of the generic workforce system in meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

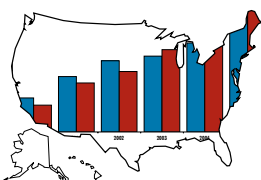


Table 2. Percentage of Persons registered for Wagner-Peyser funded employment services that were people with disabilities by state and year.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
National	2.3%	2.4%	2.6%	3.1%	2.9%	2.8%
Alabama	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%
Alaska	3.1%	3.0%	2.8%	4.1%	4.7%	4.1%
Arizona	1.9%	1.9%	2.1%	3.0%	2.6%	3.4%
Arkansas	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	2.0%	2.1%	2.0%
California	3.4%	3.2%	3.3%	3.2%	3.1%	2.8%
Colorado	3.2%	3.8%	4.4%	4.8%	5.1%	5.6%
Connecticut	2.1%	2.2%	1.9%	1.1%	1.2%	1.4%
Delaware	3.9%	7.9%	8.3%	8.3%	8.2%	6.5%
DC	1.3%	2.5%	2.6%	1.8%	4.7%	3.7%
Florida	2.2%	2.5%	2.6%	2.7%	2.8%	2.8%
Georgia	0.5%	0.7%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%
Hawaii	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.7%	2.3%	2.7%
Idaho	3.3%	3.8%	4.0%	7.0%	5.7%	5.3%
Illinois	2.5%	2.6%	2.8%	3.1%	3.0%	3.0%
Indiana	3.7%	3.7%	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%	3.6%
Iowa	1.6%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%	1.8%	1.7%
Kansas	1.4%	2.7%	3.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.8%
Kentucky	2.2%	2.1%	3.0%	2.4%	1.6%	1.7%
Louisiana	2.2%	2.3%	3.0%	2.9%	2.5%	2.5%
Maine	6.2%	6.4%	6.6%	7.3%	6.1%	7.5%
Maryland	5.9%	6.4%	7.3%	7.0%	6.1%	6.5%
Massachusetts	5.1%	5.4%	5.2%	5.7%	5.8%	5.4%
Michigan	0.5%	1.9%	2.9%	3.4%	3.4%	3.8%
Minnesota	4.5%	3.0%	3.4%	3.9%	3.5%	2.8%
Mississippi	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%
Missouri	1.1%	1.1%	1.4%	1.8%	2.0%	2.1%
Montana	4.5%	4.7%	2.6%	1.4%	1.3%	1.0%
Nebraska	4.0%	3.9%	3.6%	3.0%	3.2%	3.1%
Nevada	2.7%	2.7%	2.6%	3.0%	3.2%	2.9%
New Hampshire	3.5%	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%	4.1%	4.2%
New Jersey	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%
New Mexico	1.3%	1.9%	2.2%	2.4%	2.3%	2.4%
New York	2.9%	3.1%	3.6%	4.6%	4.7%	4.4%
North Carolina	3.5%	4.2%	5.3%	7.6%	9.0%	11.0%
North Dakota	4.4%	3.4%	3.6%	4.4%	4.9%	3.9%
Ohio	1.5%	1.9%	2.5%	1.8%	1.3%	1.1%
Oklahoma	0.1%	2.5%	3.1%	4.0%	3.9%	4.2%
Oregon	2.3%	2.5%	3.2%	3.6%	3.5%	3.4%
Pennsylvania	1.0%	1.0%	0.7%	0.7%	N/A	N/A
Puerto Rico	2.4%	2.4%	2.6%	2.9%	3.1%	2.9%
Rhode Island	4.0%	4.3%	3.5%	3.1%	3.0%	3.5%
South Carolina	3.2%	3.7%	4.1%	4.2%	4.6%	4.1%
South Dakota	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%	3.1%	2.7%
Tennessee	1.1%	1.4%	1.9%	2.0%	2.1%	1.9%
Texas	0.7%	0.7%	1.1%	1.4%	N/A	N/A
Utah	3.6%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.4%	3.7%
Vermont	3.7%	3.4%	4.3%	4.8%	4.7%	4.8%
Virginia	3.0%	3.4%	3.4%	3.7%	3.6%	3.6%
Washington	0.6%	3.1%	3.3%	3.4%	2.8%	2.5%
West Virginia	3.5%	3.9%	3.4%	3.1%	3.2%	3.3%
Wisconsin	5.4%	5.9%	6.3%	7.0%	7.1%	7.7%
Wyoming	3.6%	4.4%	4.5%	4.5%	4.1%	3.7%