

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES AND OUTCOMES OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: 2013-2022

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This brief describes the characteristics, services received, and employment outcomes of adults with an intellectual disability (ID) who exited from the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program during fiscal years (FY) 2013 through 2022, in the 50 states and the District of Columbia (DC). For context, we compare the findings of adults with ID to the findings of people with other disabilities. All data are from the Rehabilitation Services Administration 911 (RSA-911) database unless otherwise specified. See the method section at the end of this brief for more details about the data and variable definitions.

When comparing outcomes from 2022 with outcomes from 2021, the key takeaways include:

- The number of people who exited the VR program increased by 9%
- The percentage of people who received services increased by 1%
- The rehabilitation rate increased by 4%
- Wages slightly increased after adjusting for inflation
- Weekly work hours were stable
- Time from application to exit with employment increased by 47 days
- The majority of people who exited VR are male, white, and transition-age

The Number of People with ID who Exited the VR Program Increased by 9%

In 2022, 36,789 people with ID exited the VR program (Table 1). This figure is greater than in 2021 (+9%), but still smaller than in 2020. The increase of closures in 2022 was likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic having fewer negative effects than in 2021. However, the number of closures is still lower than in the pre-pandemic years, when it was over 45,000 with a peak of 48,847 in 2013. Similarly, the total closures for people with other disabilities was 294,351 in 2022, a slight increase compared to 280,765 in 2021 (5%), but still less than the pre-pandemic period, which was 347,245 in 2020 and higher figures in the previous years.

Table 1. National Trends in Employment Outcomes¹

	Total closures		Received services		Rehabilitation rate		Hourly wage		Weekly hours		Got a job in <one year	
	ID	Other	ID	Other	ID	Other	ID	Other	ID	Other	ID	Other
2013	48,847	492,247	66%	62%	50%	51%	\$9.79	\$13.68	24	31	30%	34%
2014	45,443	495,293	67%	58%	56%	54%	\$9.75	\$13.57	23	31	30%	33%
2015	47,390	470,289	68%	62%	56%	57%	N/A	N/A	23	30	32%	35%
2016	47,595	459,141	70%	63%	55%	57%	N/A	N/A	23	30	33%	37%
2017*	38,642	361,601	72%	67%	47%	49%	N/A	N/A	23	30	33%	38%
2018	44,152	387,410	78%	72%	47%	48%	\$10.76	\$15.00	23	31	31%	37%
2019	45,108	374,479	77%	71%	46%	46%	\$10.87	\$14.93	22	30	27%	35%
2020	41,644	347,275	80%	74%	44%	44%	\$11.10	\$15.36	22	31	26%	36%
2021	33,663	280,765	83%	78%	40%	42%	\$11.53	\$16.10	24	31	20%	31%
2022	36,789	294,351	84%	79%	44%	45%	\$11.97	\$16.55	23	31	25%	35%

Note: ID = intellectual disabilities; Other = other disabilities. Hourly wages are in 2022 dollars.

*Includes only 9 months due to a change in the RSA-911 reporting protocol.

¹The years 2013-2016 refer to the period from October 1 to September 30. The year 2017 refers to the period from October 1 to June 30 (9 months only). The years 2018-2022 refer to the period from July 1 to June 30. Each year refers to the end date of the reported period. For example, the year 2022 refers to the period July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022.

The Percentage of People with ID who Received Services Increased by 1%

Receiving VR services is an important first step toward employment. In 2022, 84% of people with ID who exited the VR program received services. This figure is slightly greater than in 2021 (83%) and consistent with a long-term growth trend since the low of 66% reported in 2013. The corresponding figure for people with other disabilities was 79% in 2022, also confirming a long-term growth trend from a low of 58% in 2014 (Table 1).

A variety of reasons may cause job seekers to exit the VR program without receiving services. The most frequent reasons reported for people with ID in 2022 included:

- the person lost interest in receiving services (30%)
- the VR counselor was unable to locate or contact the individual (20%)
- other reasons, including:
 - » disability was too significant
 - » death
 - » job seeker moved away
 - » no disability-related need for services
 - » other non-specified reasons

People with other disabilities reported similar reasons for exiting the program without receiving services.

The Rehabilitation Rate Increased by 4%

The rehabilitation rate documents the proportion of job seekers who exited VR with employment that lasted at least 90 days out of those who received VR services. During the past 10 years, the rehabilitation rate of job seekers with ID has steadily declined from 56% in 2014 to 40% in 2021, although in 2022 it bounced back to 44%. The figure for people with other disabilities reflected a similar pattern, declining from 57% in 2015 to 42% in 2021 and then increasing to 45% in 2022. The rehabilitation rate tends to decrease as the percentage of job seekers who receive services increases.

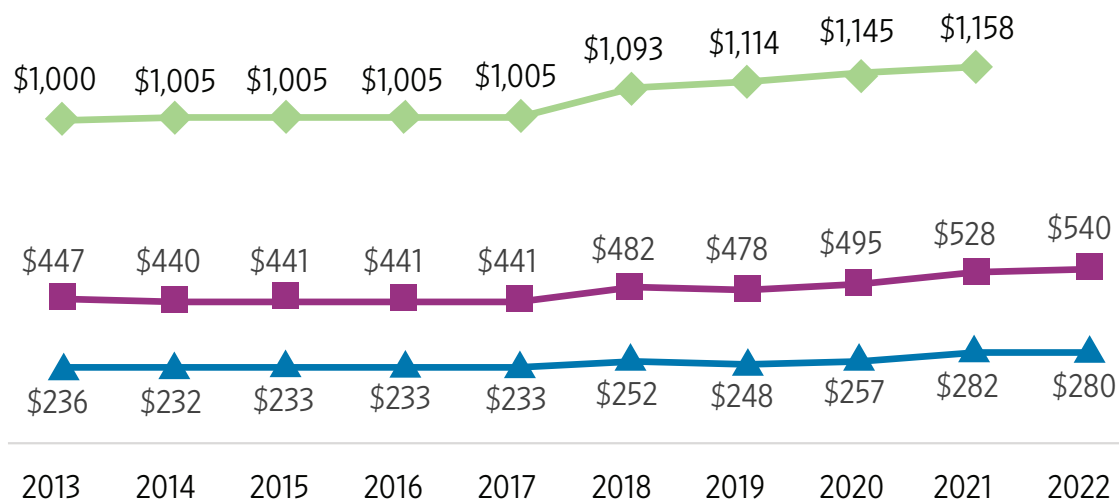
Wages Slightly Increased after Adjusting for Inflation

HOURLY EARNINGS

When adjusted for inflation, the hourly wages of workers with ID increased every year from \$9.79 per hour in 2013 to \$11.97 per hour in 2022. This increase corresponded to an increase of \$2.18 more per hour in 2022 compared to 2013 (+2.2% per year). A similar pattern emerged for people with other disabilities: from \$13.68 in 2013 to \$16.55 in 2022, corresponding to an increase of \$2.87 more per hour in 2022 compared to 2013 (+2.1% per year). Wage data were not available for the years 2015–2017.

WEEKLY WAGES

In addition to hourly earnings, it is important to examine weekly wages. Figure 1 compares trends in weekly wages for people with ID to people with other disabilities (RSA-911 data), and the general population without disabilities (American Community Survey data), adjusted for inflation. In 2022, the weekly wages of people with ID were slightly lower (\$280) compared to 2021 (\$282). However, overall, the weekly wages of people with ID increased by \$44 since 2013 (+1.9% per year). The weekly wages of people with other disabilities also increased over time from \$447 in 2013 to \$540 in 2022 (+2.1% per year). People with other disabilities earned almost twice as much as people with ID. Finally, the wages of people without disabilities increased from \$1,000 in 2013 to \$1,158 in 2021 (+1.6% per year). At the time of this writing, the 2022 wages for people without disabilities was not yet available.

Figure 1. National Trends in Weekly Wages in Constant 2022 Dollars

Note. Weekly wages of the general population were computed by dividing the annual wages of civilians, ages 16–64, by 52 weeks, using data from the American Community Survey. The annual wages of the general population for 2022 were not yet available at the time of writing.

Weekly Work Hours were Stable

In 2022, people with ID who exited the VR program with employment worked an average of 23 hours per week, which is slightly lower compared to 2021, but higher or the same as in the previous years. People with other disabilities reported 31 weekly work hours in 2022, up from 30 hours per week in 2019 but similar to the data reported since 2013 (Table 1).

Time from Application to Exit with Employment Increased by 47 Days

In 2022, it took people with ID an average of 835 days (2 years and 3 months) from application to exit the VR program with a job. This is an increase of 47 days compared to 2021 and continues a trend in additional time needed to exit VR with a job. People with other disabilities also reported a longer time frame from application to employment: 824 days (2 years and 3 months) in 2022 compared to 803 days in 2021 (+21 days). The shortest amount of time was 728 days in 2018 (about 2 years).

Another way of looking at this metric is to examine the percentage of people with disabilities who exited the VR program with employment within one year of application. In 2022, 25% of people with ID exited VR with a job within one year, which is higher than in 2021 (20%), but lower than in 2016 and 2017 (both 33%). For people with other disabilities, the figure was 35% in 2022. This figure is higher than in 2021 (31%), but lower than in 2017 (38%).

A longer time from application to exit with employment is not necessarily a negative indicator. For example, someone may have obtained a job within one year of the date of application, but VR may have postponed closing the case to a later time to allow for continued services, in case the person needed job retention supports. In 2014, the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) extended the time frame for the provision of supported employment services from 18 months to 24 months to better support these employment scenarios.

The Majority of People who Exited VR are Male, White, and Transition-age

The majority of people with ID who exited VR programs in 2022 were male (57%) with the remaining self-reporting female (42%) or not self-reporting their gender (0.4%). Similar figures were reported for people with other disabilities (56% male, 44% female, and 0.6% not self-reporting their gender; Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics

	Gender				Race and ethnicity						Age	
	Male		Female		White		Black		Hispanic		26 or younger	
	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)
2013	58%	56%	42%	44%	54%	63%	35%	24%	8%	10%	63%	36%
2014	57%	56%	43%	44%	56%	63%	33%	24%	9%	11%	62%	36%
2015	57%	56%	43%	44%	56%	62%	33%	24%	9%	11%	58%	34%
2016	57%	56%	43%	44%	56%	62%	33%	24%	9%	12%	57%	35%
2017	58%	56%	42%	44%	55%	61%	33%	25%	9%	11%	57%	35%
2018	58%	56%	42%	44%	57%	61%	30%	23%	10%	13%	61%	40%
2019	58%	56%	42%	44%	56%	60%	30%	24%	11%	13%	62%	41%
2020	58%	56%	42%	44%	55%	59%	30%	24%	11%	13%	63%	42%
2021	58%	56%	42%	44%	64%	70%	30%	23%	11%	13%	64%	42%
2022	57%	56%	42%	44%	65%	71%	29%	23%	12%	14%	63%	43%

The majority of people with ID who exited VR in 2022 self-reported that they were white (65%), followed by Black (29%), and people who reported two or more races (3.4%). Similarly, people with other disabilities included a high proportion of white people (71%), followed by Black people (23%), and people who reported two or more races (3.9%). The increase in the percentage of white people is due to a change in the definition of the race variable. See the method section for more details.

Most people with ID who exited the VR program in 2022 were 26 years old or younger at application (63%). This percentage continues a 10-year trend. In contrast, a smaller percentage of people with other disabilities who exited the program in 2022 were 26 years old or younger (43%). This figure was similar to previous years, after increasing from 34% in 2015.

Outcomes Varied Considerably across States

As Table 3 shows, services and outcomes varied widely across states. Rhode Island reported that 96% of people with ID received services, the highest percentage across states, compared to Arkansas and West Virginia, which both reported that 73% of people with ID received services, the lowest percentage across states. In the case of people with other disabilities, the percentage of people receiving services ranged from a high of 95% in DC to a low of 42% in Nebraska.

The rehabilitation rate is a key indicator of how many people who received services exited the VR program with a job. North Dakota reported the highest rehabilitation rate for people with ID (64%), compared to Mississippi, which reported the lowest rehabilitation rate (20%). For people with other disabilities, the highest rehabilitation rate was reported in Arkansas (66%), and the lowest in Georgia (21%).

The hourly wage of people with ID varied from \$9.89 in Mississippi to \$17.41 in Kentucky. For people with other disabilities, hourly wages varied from \$12.88 in Kansas to \$27.03 in Connecticut. These figures are likely influenced by local level minimum wage legislation and other economic differences across states.

In 2022, weekly work hours varied greatly across states as well. People with ID in Mississippi and South Carolina worked the most hours per week (30 on average), whereas their peers in Maine and Washington reported the lowest amount of work hours per week (15 on average). Among people with other disabilities, the highest work hours were reported in Mississippi (37 weekly work hours), and the lowest work hours were reported in Washington (25 weekly work hours).

South Dakota reported the highest percentage of people with ID exiting VR with a job within one year from application (48%). New Hampshire and Montana reported the lowest percentage (2%). People with other disabilities were most likely to exit the VR program with a job within one year in Michigan (63%) and least likely in Montana (3%).

State VR agencies vary widely in the emphasis on individuals with ID in their caseload. In FY 2022, 11% of all closures nationally were people with ID. This percentage ranged from 5% in Massachusetts and New York to 24% in Indiana. This figure is influenced by a variety of factors, including the structure of the state service system and interagency roles in the employment process.

Table 3. State Outcomes in 2022

	Total Closures		Received Services		Rehabilitation Rate		Hourly Wage		Weekly Hours		Got Job in <1 year	
	ID	Other	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID	Other	ID	Other	ID (%)	Other (%)
Alabama	1,182	7,173	90%	81%	55%	60%	10.44	14.34	28	33	32%	40%
Alaska	55	675	95%	76%	50%	50%	12.98	18.13	20	32	42%	33%
Arizona	508	5,194	87%	84%	34%	34%	13.49	15.78	27	30	17%	23%
Arkansas	243	3,283	73%	80%	55%	66%	11.84	16.29	25	35	34%	30%
California	2,041	22,524	90%	81%	42%	39%	15.31	19.57	27	32	28%	30%
Colorado	627	4,202	80%	75%	51%	51%	13.84	18.12	18	30	25%	40%
Connecticut	141	1,727	93%	92%	41%	62%	13.04	27.03	22	32	9%	49%
Delaware	185	1,512	91%	90%	49%	52%	11.87	14.71	26	32	13%	33%
DC	189	1,498	93%	95%	46%	40%	14.88	18.08	27	32	22%	31%
Florida	1,957	17,137	87%	85%	41%	41%	10.84	14.59	22	31	10%	27%
Georgia	1,124	5,428	89%	86%	26%	21%	10.52	13.51	27	30	8%	14%
Hawaii	23	166	83%	64%	37%	35%	13.29	19.06	24	26	14%	11%
Idaho	292	2,473	83%	72%	38%	40%	10.36	16.59	18	31	9%	31%
Illinois	1,228	11,077	90%	83%	44%	46%	12.71	15.44	20	28	37%	30%
Indiana	1,212	3,813	84%	73%	42%	41%	10.08	14.51	20	27	6%	7%
Iowa	787	3,787	91%	87%	52%	50%	11.43	15.26	20	31	9%	12%
Kansas	403	1,834	82%	82%	53%	38%	10.11	12.88	21	29	39%	38%
Kentucky	504	6,014	77%	84%	38%	58%	17.41	19.57	24	35	28%	53%
Louisiana	310	3,674	76%	79%	30%	42%	10.08	14.41	23	34	20%	45%
Maine	362	2,186	84%	77%	23%	28%	13.55	18.45	15	28	17%	27%
Maryland	626	3,913	82%	73%	33%	28%	13.38	15.72	23	28	17%	20%
Massachusetts	351	6,729	90%	90%	53%	50%	15.00	18.09	22	28	23%	24%
Michigan	1,128	10,799	80%	83%	46%	60%	11.96	20.01	23	33	40%	63%
Minnesota	863	5,360	89%	82%	48%	37%	12.58	15.79	21	27	31%	27%
Mississippi	388	5,065	82%	88%	20%	54%	9.89	16.26	30	37	5%	51%
Missouri	1,066	8,108	81%	78%	61%	55%	12.19	15.24	24	30	47%	52%
Montana	135	1,004	87%	56%	43%	27%	11.57	15.18	18	26	2%	3%
Nebraska	469	2,302	74%	42%	56%	52%	10.90	16.45	16	29	21%	35%
Nevada	206	1,810	85%	83%	35%	32%	12.54	16.17	26	33	31%	31%
New Hampshire	119	1,141	88%	75%	45%	33%	11.46	15.79	18	27	2%	14%
New Jersey	516	5,559	84%	88%	46%	45%	13.40	16.83	24	29	23%	25%
New Mexico	241	2,302	77%	66%	29%	27%	11.90	16.05	20	31	9%	12%
New York	1,215	22,899	76%	81%	27%	26%	14.26	17.68	23	31	19%	14%
North Carolina	2,615	9,698	82%	70%	44%	40%	10.40	13.93	25	29	29%	27%
North Dakota	138	1,196	82%	75%	64%	53%	11.73	16.06	21	32	22%	45%
Ohio	2,974	12,444	84%	77%	47%	46%	11.00	14.7	22	29	44%	49%
Oklahoma	430	3,159	75%	70%	39%	47%	10.51	15.21	26	34	11%	18%
Oregon	790	3,681	83%	78%	55%	58%	13.62	17.33	18	27	26%	41%
Pennsylvania	1,575	11,875	78%	73%	43%	56%	12.24	16.21	22	32	7%	19%
Rhode Island	142	646	96%	92%	35%	34%	13.00	16.26	19	26	13%	19%
South Carolina	497	8,404	88%	82%	51%	57%	10.34	16.46	30	35	21%	50%
South Dakota	259	1,342	89%	78%	55%	45%	11.23	13.54	18	29	48%	37%
Tennessee	595	2,702	86%	77%	60%	53%	10.64	13.29	24	31	28%	37%
Texas	1,965	28,797	92%	75%	37%	48%	11.84	17.11	27	34	19%	46%
Utah	457	5,657	83%	65%	45%	50%	10.79	15.03	22	32	9%	24%
Vermont	125	1,695	87%	82%	28%	30%	13.59	20.48	16	30	19%	35%
Virginia	1,123	5,377	87%	86%	44%	45%	11.94	14.29	24	29	24%	27%
Washington	801	3,835	78%	57%	59%	45%	14.70	17.27	15	25	24%	18%
West Virginia	211	1,891	73%	81%	34%	56%	10.86	16.72	27	36	21%	45%
Wisconsin	1,305	8,578	80%	76%	51%	45%	11.03	14.85	19	26	16%	25%
Wyoming	91	1,006	80%	78%	58%	49%	10.34	15.6	18	32	40%	33%
US	36,789	294,351	84%	79%	44%	45%	11.97	16.55	23	31	25%	35%

Note. ID = intellectual disabilities; Other = other disabilities.

Method

WHERE IS THE DATA FROM?

Unless otherwise specified, the data described in this report are from the Rehabilitation Services Administration 911 (RSA-911) dataset, a public access database that captures individual characteristics, services provided, and employment outcomes at the point of closure (exit) from the VR program. Records are at the individual level, covering about 360,000 case closures in Fiscal Year 2022 (Program Year 2021).

WHAT DOES “INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY (ID)” MEAN IN THIS REPORT?

For the purposes of this report, a person is considered to have an intellectual disability (ID) if code 25 (Intellectual Disability) was reported as the cause of either a primary or secondary impairment to employment.

WHAT IS A VR CLOSURE?

A VR case is considered “closed” when a person no longer needs services. This is also called “exiting services”. There are several reasons for closing a VR case. The VR closure categories in this brief include:

- Closure with an employment outcome after receiving services (formerly Status 26): This means a person stopped receiving VR services because they got a job. Closure with an employment outcome includes competitive integrated employment, including supported employment and self-employment.
- Closure without an employment outcome after receiving services (formerly Status 28): This means a person stopped receiving VR services, even though they did not get a job.
- Closure after eligibility but before an individual plan for employment is developed (formerly status 30): This means a person was eligible to receive VR services but did not move forward with services.

WHAT IS THE REHABILITATION RATE?

The rehabilitation rate is the percentage of people who exited VR with employment out of the total number of people who received VR services. Rehabilitation rate is calculated as:

$$\text{rehabilitation rate} = \frac{\text{closures with an employment outcome}}{\text{closures with an employment outcome} + \text{closures without an employment outcome after receiving services}}$$

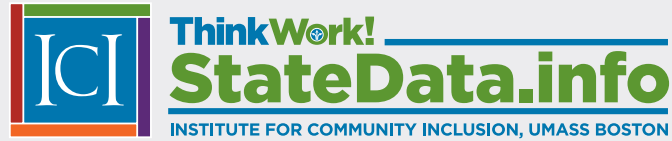
HOW IS RACE DEFINED IN THIS REPORT?

For the years up to 2020, a person’s race was defined by each of the self-reported races, excluding Hispanic. For example, a person was counted as white if they reported to be white and non-Hispanic. The same person was also counted as Asian if they identified also as Asian and non-Hispanic. Therefore, the race variable counted a single person multiple times whenever a person self-reported more than one race.

Starting with the 2021 data, this brief defined race as a mutually exclusive variable and disentangled the race from the ethnicity variable. For example, starting in 2021, a person was counted as white only if this was the only race that they reported, regardless of ethnicity. People self-identifying with more than one race are reported as a separate group. This change in the definition of the race variable better aligns with the “Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity”, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Civil Rights.

HOW ARE REPORTING PERIODS DEFINED IN THIS REPORT?

Finally, in 2017, RSA changed from reporting for the federal fiscal year (October 1 to September 30) to reporting for a program year (July 1 to June 30). Therefore, each year before 2017 in this brief refers to the period from October 1 to September 30 and it is identified by the year of the month of September. In contrast, the years after 2017 refer to the period from July 1 to June 30 and are identified by the year of the month of July. The year 2017 was a transition year and refers to only 9 months from October 1 to June 30.



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Data Source

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911, FY2013-2022) and Census Bureau (FY 2013-2022).

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