



Research Article:

Use of Customized Employment in State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs: A Retrospective Study 2017–2020

This summary is for general information and reference purposes for vocational rehabilitation counselors. Open access to the full article is available from Sage Publishing, Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin: [<https://doi.org/10.1177/00343552221140335>].

A Quick Look:

The purpose of this study was to examine the outcomes of customized employment (CE) using the Rehabilitation Services Administration Case Service Report (RSA-911) from 2017 through 2020. Several questions were explored during the analysis including; a). Who is receiving CE services, and b). What are their competitive integrated employment outcomes?

Key Findings:

- The study sample included 2,280 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) recipients who were served by state vocational rehabilitation agencies (SVRAs) and exited from FY 2017 through FY 2020. In addition, they were identified as receiving CE services through the agencies or by agency staff/providers.
- Of this number, 57.9% ($n = 1,321$) were male and 42.1% ($n = 959$) were female with a mean / average age of 32.69 years.
- Seventy-seven percent of these VR recipients ($n = 1,756$) identified themselves as White, followed by 14.3% identifying as Black or African American ($n = 325$). The remaining recipients included 60 (2.6%) Asian, 56 (2.5%) multiracial, 23 (1.0%) American Indian, and 10 (0.4%) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Fifty participants (2.2%) did not identify their race/ethnicity.
- The primary disability in this sample was intellectual disability ($n = 482$, 21.1%).
- In this sample, 1,865 (81.8%) individuals were reported as significantly disabled.
- During this time period, the 2,280 clients with disabilities exiting SVRA services after receiving CE under an Individual Plan for Employment represented a very limited number of all persons served.
- Less than half of the 2,280 clients exited services into competitive integrated employment ($n = 692$; 30.4%) after receiving CE services.

Putting It into Practice

CE has not been fully realized as an intervention for increasing the CIE outcomes of individuals with significant disabilities. In the current study, the capacity of SVRAs to implement CE or community-based providers' preparedness to provide CE services consistent with SVRA policies may have affected the utilization of CE. CE

also may have been viewed as less of a priority among the range of options that SVRAs have when increasing participation of persons with disabilities in services. Agencies need to consider increasing their capacity to conceptualize, develop, implement, and evaluate CE as an intervention.

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