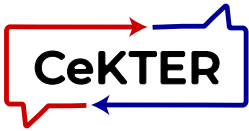


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Employment Outcomes among People with Disabilities: Work-Related Determinants

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Employment Outcomes among People with Disabilities: Work-Related Determinants

Selected Findings from NIDILRR-funded Disability Employment Research in the 21st Century

A systematic scoping review of research published between 2000 and 2020 on employment of people with disabilities, that was funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), was conducted by CeKTER researchers. All papers comparing people with disabilities to those without were excluded from the systematic scoping review. Among over 100 publications reviewed there was a wide and very disparate array of findings with numerous variables used and varying research questions. This result belies summative findings. There are numerous ways of organizing the disparate findings. This brief is part of a series of findings from CeKTER's systematic scoping review. In this brief we report on findings about a range of work-related determinants impacting the employment of people with disabilities, including work history, accommodations, workplace supports. Please note that all comparisons are always about corresponding peers with disabilities.

Having Prior Work Experience

- Having a paid work experience during high school had a positive impact on the future employment outcomes of youth with disabilities.¹⁻⁵
- Having a prior paid work experience had a positive impact on the weekly earnings of youth with disabilities.¹
- Individuals with visual impairments receiving Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services were more likely to obtain competitive employment if they had worked since the onset of their disability.⁶
- Youth with visual impairments were more likely to have a successful VR case closure if they had a job since the onset of their disability. In addition, youth with disabilities who had a higher number of jobs before applying for VR services were more likely to be employed at the time of their VR case closure.⁷
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries with psychiatric disabilities were more likely to become employed if they had a paid job in the two years prior to receiving Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services.⁸⁻⁹
- The length of separation from employment among people with disabilities receiving vocational rehabilitation services impacted their employment outcomes:
 - Those employed or self-employed at application for VR services had the highest rates of employment, followed by those who last worked within a year prior to application, those who last worked 1 to 5 years prior to application, and those who had last worked 5 or more years ago.¹⁰
 - Those employed or self-employed at application for VR services had the highest earnings, followed by those who last worked within a year prior to application, those who last worked 1 to 5 years prior to application, and those who had last worked 5 or more years ago.¹⁰

➤ Youth with disabilities who were working when they applied for VR services were more likely to receive services and to have a successful VR case closure when compared to their peers who were not working at the time of applying for VR services.¹¹

➤ Youth with disabilities who were working when applying for VR services had higher earnings when exiting VR services with employment compared to their peers who were not working at the time of applying for VR services.¹²

Facilitators of Employment

➤ People with disabilities who have employment goals were more likely to become employed.¹³⁻¹⁵

➤ People with disabilities receiving VR services, who felt that work was important for them, were more likely to have a successful VR case closure due to employment and to have higher earnings compared to their peers for whom work was less important.¹⁰

➤ Accommodations and use of assistive technology have a positive impact on the employment of individuals with visual impairments, including older adults with combined hearing and vision loss.^{7,16-17}

➤ Changing jobs or the kind of work they had been doing contributed to the employment of older adults with combined hearing and vision loss.¹⁷

➤ Individuals with visual impairments who were in a business enterprise program position were more likely to retain employment when compared to other people with vision loss.¹⁸

➤ Having a strong work ethic and support from employers contributed to the job tenure of individuals with visual impairments.¹⁶

➤ Individuals with psychiatric disabilities who were employed in fields outside of mental health were more likely to hold a job with a higher occupational rank.¹⁹

➤ Individuals with psychiatric disabilities who had jobs with higher occupational status, who were employed full-time and had longer job tenure were more likely to have higher annual earnings compared to other working individuals with psychiatric disabilities.¹⁹



- Part-time work may contribute to the employment of people with psychiatric disabilities because of being perceived as less demanding and allowing them to keep Social Security Disability Benefits.²⁰
- Individuals with psychiatric disabilities who had jobs with higher occupational status were more likely to exit the Social Security disability rolls and achieve financial self-sufficiency due to gainful employment.²¹
- Individuals with psychiatric disabilities who had workplace supports and job flexibility were more likely to sustain competitive employment for longer periods of time.²²
- Congruence between job preferences and actual employment contributed to the long-term employment of individuals with dual diagnosis of mental illness and substance use disorder.²³

Barriers to Employment

- Lack of workplace accessibility, lack of skills and difficulty finding a job represent barriers to the employment of people with disabilities applying for VR services.²⁴
- Workplace prejudice and discrimination and lack of accommodations are important barriers to the employment of people with visual impairments.²⁵

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