



# OSERS TRANSITION DATA FACT SHEET

SEPTEMBER 2015

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) administers programs that assist in educating children and youth with disabilities and provides funding for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services for youth and adults with disabilities. OSERS established the Transition Steering Committee to focus specifically on the services, needs, and outcomes of youth with disabilities who may benefit from the work conducted and services authorized by its program component offices. This committee, also known as “Transition Tigers,” includes staff members from both OSERS program component offices—the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)—as well as staff from the Office of the Assistant Secretary (OAS), and the Office of Policy and Planning (OPP).

OSERS provides funds to support transition services, transition programs, technical assistance projects, and research projects related to youth with disabilities. However, the committee found that program-specific data about OSERS transition work are not frequently summarized and not readily available to OSERS staff across its component offices and the general public, especially members of the transition community. To address this need, the committee developed the *Transition Data Fact Sheet* as a quick reference to inform OSERS staff and the transition community about critical data areas related to the transition of youth with disabilities from school activities to post-school activities. For the purposes of this document, “transition” is defined as the passage from secondary education to participating in postsecondary education, training or both, engaging in meaningful employment, living within one’s community, exercising self-determination, and contributing to society as productive citizens.

The data in this fact sheet are presented for OSERS staff and others to use in their work and to draw their own conclusions from the data provided. The *Transition Data Fact Sheet* is intended to be a reference tool and should not be treated as a comprehensive document. It is organized into three areas of emphasis: 1) transition services; 2) post-school outcomes; and 3) OSERS investments in transition-related research, special education and VR services. It is important to note that most of the data and information presented are primarily specific to youth with disabilities between the ages of 14 and 24.

## TRANSITION SERVICES

---

### *THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)*

#### Secondary Transition Services

- ▶ The 2013 Child Count data reported by States under *IDEA*, Sec. 618 shows that 2,767,296 children (ages 12–17) and 356,228 children (ages 18–21) are served under *IDEA* Part B in the U.S., outlying areas, and freely associated states.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)<sup>2</sup> data shows that for students enrolled in secondary school during the 2001–02 school year, transition planning activities were conducted for 75 percent of students age 14, 84 percent of students age 15, 91 percent of students age 16, 96 percent of students age 17, and 96 percent of students age 18, according to school staff completing the survey. Additional data from this survey and school year indicated:
  - The most frequently identified transition planning contacts were made on behalf of students with disabilities to VR agencies (38 percent) followed by colleges (24 percent), postsecondary vocational schools (24 percent), and job placement agencies (24 percent). The fewest contacts (11 percent) were made to mental health agencies.
  - Fifty-three percent of students received transition planning activities focused on securing competitive employment. Eight percent of students had a goal of supported employment and 5 percent had the goal of sheltered employment.
  - Other common post-high school goals were to: secure independent living (50 percent), attend a two-or four-year college (47 percent), attend a postsecondary vocational training program (40 percent), enhance social and interpersonal relationships (25 percent), and maximize functional independence (20 percent).

(Cameto, Levine and Wagner, 2004)

---

<sup>1</sup> 2013 Part B Child Count—

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/part-b-data/child-count-and-educational-environments/bchildcountandedenvironments2013.csv>

<sup>2</sup> The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), funded by the Department of Education's Institute of Educational Sciences, is a 10-year study that documents the characteristics, experiences and outcomes of a nationally representative sample of 11,000 students with disabilities who were between the ages of 13 and 16 and receiving special education services in the seventh grade or higher in 2001.

## Secondary School Programs

- ▶ High school students with disabilities earned, on average, 22.7 credits during their time in high school.<sup>3</sup> Of those courses:
  - Academic courses accounted for an average of 12.7 credits, more than half of the total credits earned in high school. In contrast, vocational courses accounted for an average of 4.4 credits.
    - Courses that were neither academic nor vocational, such as physical education and life skills, accounted for an average of 5.6 credits.
    - Students with disabilities earned fewer overall credits, on average, than did their peers in the general population (22.7 vs. 24.2). The coursework of students in the general population was focused more heavily on academic courses, compared with that of students with disabilities. Students in the general population accrued, on average, 3.4 more academic credits during their time in high school than did students with disabilities (16.1 vs. 12.7).
    - In contrast, students with disabilities earned more vocational and nonacademic, non-vocational credits than did students in the general population (4.4 vs. 3.1 and 5.6 vs. 4.9, respectively).
  - Vocational course enrollment included prevocational courses (e.g., career exploration), occupation-specific courses (e.g., agriculture, alternate business occupations), and work study or cooperative education. Nearly all students with disabilities (96 percent) enrolled in some type of vocational course during high school with those courses accounting for 19 percent of the total high school credits earned.
    - On average, 0.6 credit was earned for prevocational courses, 3.3 credits were earned in occupation-specific courses, and 0.5 credit was earned in work study or cooperative education.
    - A breakdown of occupation-specific courses ranged from 0.1 credit for health, home economics, and marketing to 1.2 credits for trade and industry occupations.
  - The proportion of overall, academic, vocational, and nonacademic, non-vocational credits earned in general education settings as compared with special education settings did not differ significantly by high school completion status.

(Newman, Wagner, Huang, Shaver, Knokey, Yu, Contreras, Ferguson, Greene, Nagle, and Cameto, 2011).

---

<sup>3</sup> This NLTS2 report describes course taking primarily through the lens of course credits earned by students with disabilities who had attended a typical high school at some point from 2001 through 2009. To progress toward graduation, students need not only take a particular distribution of courses but also meet the performance standards for those courses, resulting in earned credits. Students who attended non-typical schools (e.g., schools serving only students with disabilities, hospital-based schools, home schools) are not included in these analyses.

- ▶ Student involvement in transition planning affects employment outcomes. Among students with traumatic brain injury who participated in the NLTS2, improved post-school employment outcomes were associated with: active student involvement in transition planning, having goals to attend postsecondary or vocational training after high school, planning to live independently, and having general education teachers involved in transition planning.

(Wehman, Chen, West, & Cifu, in press).

## ***THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973, AS AMENDED (THE REHABILITATION ACT)***

### **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services**

All data reported in this section are from the fiscal year (FY) 2014 RSA-911 report.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Youth with Disabilities Referred and Served**

- ▶ Of all the individuals whose service records (548,368) were closed by State VR agencies, 192,718 (35.1 percent) were youth with disabilities when they applied for VR services. Of the 192,718 youth with disabilities who applied for services, 98,366 youth with disabilities (51.0 percent) were referred to VR from elementary and secondary schools. In addition, 7,238 youth with disabilities (3.8 percent) were referred to VR agencies from postsecondary schools. Not everyone who applies for VR services initiates services or completes their plan for services.
- ▶ The total number of youth with disabilities whose service records were closed after receiving services from the 80 State VR agencies was 117,776, which represented 36.4 percent of the total number of individuals whose service records were closed that year after receiving services (323,398).

#### **VR Transition Service Delivery**

- ▶ Reported below are the percentages and numbers of youth with disabilities whose service records were closed after receiving services and the type of services received by the VR agencies in FY 2014:
  - *Assessment and Diagnostic Services:*  
59.1 percent of youth with disabilities (69,662) received assessment services, and 27.3 percent (32,158) received diagnosis and treatment services.

---

<sup>4</sup> The Case Service Report (RSA-911) includes information collected on individuals whose service records have been closed in a given fiscal year. RSA requires all 80 State VR agencies to submit the RSA-911 by December 31 of each year. The data reported here are for transition-age youth who applied for VR services between the ages of 14 and 24 and whose service records were closed after they received VR services under an individualized plan for employment.

## OSERS TRANSITION STEERING COMMITTEE DATA FACT SHEET

- *Training:*  
13.2 percent of youth with disabilities (15,601) received occupational or vocational training, 20.3 percent (23,869) received college or university training, and 18.3 percent (21,564) received job readiness training.
  - *Employment:*  
28.1 percent of youth with disabilities (33,096) received job search assistance, 28.8 percent (33,888) received job placement services, and 20.0 percent (23,463) received on-the-job supports.
  - *Other:*  
Other related transition services provided by VR agencies: 52.3 percent (61,570) of youth with disabilities received vocational guidance and counseling services and 27.1 percent (31,931) of youth with disabilities received transportation services.
- ▶ Reported below are other relevant service delivery data points regarding youth with disabilities served by the VR agency:
- The number of youth with disabilities who received college or university training services decreased from 25,385 in FY 2008 to 23,869 in FY 2014.
  - Of all eligible individuals, including youth, whose service records were closed after receiving VR services and who received college or university training, 53.6 percent were youth with disabilities.
  - The total number of youth with disabilities who were served by the VR agencies and received Social Security Income (SSI) benefits at the time of closure was 23,722, which represents 20.1 percent of the total number of youth with disabilities whose service records were closed after receiving services.

## POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES

---

### Secondary Education

#### Graduation and Dropout percentages

- ▶ Of the 396,292 students with disabilities, ages 14–21, in the U.S., outlying areas, and freely associated states who left school during the 2012-13 school year, 258,028 (65.1 percent) exited high school with a regular high school diploma, and 74,575 (18.8 percent) dropped out of school. The remaining 63,689 students with disabilities (16.1 percent), ages 14–21, who left school during the 2012-13 school year, were reported as having received a certificate, reached maximum age, or died.<sup>5</sup>

### Postsecondary Education

- ▶ The NLTS2 Wave 5 report describes key postsecondary outcomes (i.e., postsecondary enrollment rates) for the subset of young adults with disabilities who were out of secondary school up to 8 years and 21 to 25 years old.
  - Sixty percent reported having continued on to postsecondary school since leaving high school.
    - They were less likely to enroll in postsecondary school than were their same-age peers in the general population (60 percent vs. 67 percent).
    - They were less likely to have been enrolled in any postsecondary school in the past 2 years than their same-age peers in the general population (34 percent vs. 51 percent).
    - They were less likely to have been enrolled in any postsecondary school at the time of the interview than their same-age peers in the general population (15 percent vs. 28 percent).
  - Young adults with disabilities were more likely to have ever been enrolled in 2-year or community colleges (44 percent) than in vocational, business, or technical schools (32 percent) or 4-year colleges or universities (19 percent), and of those options, were least likely to have ever been enrolled in 4-year colleges.
  - Young adults in the general population were more likely to have ever been enrolled in a 4-year college (40 percent) than were young adults with disabilities (19 percent). Conversely, young adults with disabilities were more likely to have ever been enrolled in a 2-year or community college (44 percent) or vocational

---

<sup>5</sup> 2012-2013 IDEA Part B Exiting— <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/part-b-data/exiting/bexiting2012-13.csv>

school (32 percent) than were young adults in the general population (20 percent and 20 percent, respectively).

- The rate of enrollment of young adults with disabilities in 2-year or community colleges or vocational schools at the time of the interview (9 percent and 2 percent, respectively) did not differ significantly from that of their peers in the general population (6 percent and 4 percent, respectively).
- The enrollment rate of young adults with disabilities in 2-year or community colleges or vocational schools stands in contrast to differences in enrollment rates at 4-year colleges. Similar-age young adults in the general population were about three times as likely as young adults with disabilities to be taking courses at a 4-year college at the time of the interview (16 percent vs. 5 percent).

(Newman, Wagner, Knokey, et al., 2011)

### **Employment**

- ▶ The NLTS2 Wave 5 report describes key postsecondary outcomes (e.g., employment rates) for the subset of young adults with disabilities who were out of secondary school up to 8 years and 21 to 25 years old.
  - Sixty percent of these young adults were reported to have a paid job at the time of the interview other than work around the house. They were as likely to have a paid job at the time of the interview as were their same age peers in the general population, of whom 66 percent reported currently having a paid job.
  - High school completers with disabilities of these young adults were more likely to have been reported to be employed at the time of the interview than were their peers who did not complete high school (54 percent vs. 38 percent).
  - Forty-nine percent of these young adults, who were out of school less than 3 years reported being employed at the time of interview; 65 percent out of school three to five years; and 59 percent out of school more than five years.
  - The hourly wages of young adults with disabilities who were out of secondary school at the time of the interview varied with the mean hourly wage reported to be \$9.40. They earned less than their same-age peers in the general population, who earned a mean hourly wage of \$13.20.

(Newman, Wagner, Knokey, et al., 2011)

- ▶ NLTS2 data on employment collected in 2005 from parents or youth, ages 17–21 and out of high school indicated:
  - About 19 percent of working youth reportedly had employers who were aware of their disability, and 3 percent reported receiving some kind of accommodation on

## OSERS TRANSITION STEERING COMMITTEE DATA FACT SHEET

the job. Job accommodations included a range of individual adaptations involving materials or technology used on the job (e.g., Braille, TTY) (14 percent), scheduling accommodations (30 percent), human aides (41 percent), and adaptations to assignments or supervision (56 percent).

- On average, the jobs held by youth with disabilities were of shorter duration (10 months) than those of youth in the general population (15 months).

(Newman et al., 2009)

► VR agencies assisted 65,462 youth with disabilities ages 14–24 (55.6 percent of the total 117,776 youth whose service records were closed after receiving services) to achieve employment outcomes in FY 2014. Of the total youth with disabilities served who achieved employment outcomes, 96.7 percent (63,279) of youth achieved competitive employment and 13.2 percent (8,634) of these youth achieved supported employment.

- The overall average wage for these youth with disabilities increased from \$9.37 per hour in FY 2008 to \$9.85 per hour in FY 2014.
- The overall average hours worked for these youth with disabilities decreased from 31.6 in FY 2008 to 29.20 in FY 2014.
- The rehabilitation rate<sup>6</sup> for these youth with disabilities decreased from 55.8 percent in FY 2008 to 55.6 percent in FY 2014.

(RSA-911 report)

---

<sup>6</sup> Rehabilitation rate is the total number of transition-age youth whose service records were closed with employment outcomes divided by the sum of a) the total number of transition-age youth whose service records were closed with employment outcomes, and b) the total number of transition-age youth whose service records were closed without employment outcomes after receiving VR services.



## OSERS INVESTMENTS IN TRANSITION-RELATED SPECIAL EDUCATION AND VR SERVICES

---

- ▶ The Grants to States program, which is authorized under *IDEA*, allocates formula grants that help States pay the additional costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 years. The program spending level for FY 2014 was \$11.4 billion, making the federal contribution toward meeting the excess cost of special education about 16 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure. The FY 2014 spending level provided a per-child average of \$1,743 for an estimated 6.6 million children with disabilities.<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ In FY 2014, the total cost of purchased services for youth with disabilities, ages 14-24, whose VR service records were closed was \$598,398,025; the average cost of purchased services per youth in FY 2014 was \$5,081.
- ▶ The total cost of employment outcomes of purchased services for youth with disabilities, ages 14–24, who were assisted in obtaining employment by VR agencies in FY 2014 was \$433,121,857; the average cost per employment outcome for youth with disabilities in FY 2014 was \$6,616. (RSA-911 report)

---

<sup>7</sup> For a summary of the Grants to States program, see "Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Summary, Section II C. Special Education and Rehabilitative Services" (retrieved June 5, 2015 , from [www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget15/summary/15summary.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget15/summary/15summary.pdf))

## REFERENCES

---

- Newman, L., Wagner, M., Cameto, R. and Knokey, A. M. (2009). The Post-High School Outcomes of Youths with Disabilities up to 4 Years After High School. A Report From the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) (NCSE 2009-3017). Menlo Park, Calif.: SRI International. Available at [www.nlts2.org/reports/2009\\_04/nlts2\\_report\\_2009\\_04\\_complete.pdf](http://www.nlts2.org/reports/2009_04/nlts2_report_2009_04_complete.pdf).
- Newman, L., Wagner, M., Huang, T., Shaver, D., Knokey, A.-M., Yu, J., Contreras, E., Ferguson, K., Greene, S., Nagle, K., and Cameto, R. (2011). *Secondary School Programs and Performance of Students With Disabilities. A Special Topic Report of Findings From the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)* (NCSE 2012-3000). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Special Education Research. Available at [http://www.nlts2.org/reports/2011\\_11/nlts2\\_report\\_2011\\_11\\_complete\\_rev30113.pdf](http://www.nlts2.org/reports/2011_11/nlts2_report_2011_11_complete_rev30113.pdf)
- Newman, L., Wagner, M., Knokey, A.-M., Marder, C., Nagle, K., Shaver, D., Wei, X., with Cameto, R., Contreras, E., Ferguson, K., Greene, S., and Schwarting, M. (2011). *The Post-High School Outcomes of Young Adults With Disabilities up to 8 Years After High School. A Report From the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)* (NCSE 2011-3005). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International. Available at [http://www.nlts2.org/reports/2011\\_09\\_02/nlts2\\_report\\_2011\\_09\\_02\\_complete.pdf](http://www.nlts2.org/reports/2011_09_02/nlts2_report_2011_09_02_complete.pdf)
- Wehman, P., Chen, C., West, M., and Cifu, G. (in press). Transitioning planning for youth with traumatic brain injury: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Survey-2. *NeuroRehabilitation*.