

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-2531

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

RSA-IM-99-02

DATE: October 15, 1998

TO : STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (GENERAL)
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (BLIND)
CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (CAP)
REGIONAL REHABILITATION CONTINUING EDUCATION
PROGRAMS (RRCEPS)
RSA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

SUBJECT : The Third Interim Report of the Longitudinal Study of the Vocational
Rehabilitation Services Program

CONTENT : The Longitudinal Study of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services
Program was authorized under Section 14(e) of the 1998 Rehabilitation
Act Amendments. Currently, baseline data collection has been completed
on all 8,500 consumers participating in the study at 37 Vocational
Rehabilitation (VR) district office sites; and the contractor, Research
Triangle Institute, is conducting quarterly and annual follow-ups of these
persons. These follow-ups will continue for five years with each
consumer. Data have been collected on consumers' demographic
characteristics, services received, functional limitations, employment
histories, receipt of public assistance, vocational interests, perspectives on
the VR program and their outcomes. Data on the characteristics and
organizational cultures of VR local offices participating in the study have
also been collected. Three Interim Reports have been completed. This
memorandum transmits the Third Interim Report.

The Third Interim Report focused on the characteristics and outcomes of former Vocational Rehabilitation consumers who had an employment outcome. Below are some selected nationally generalizable findings from the Third Interim Report.

- ? Individuals exiting the VR program who obtained competitive employment had a greater proportion of orthopedic impairments (28% versus 18%), hearing impairments (12% versus 5%), or learning disabilities (8% versus 2%), than individuals whose employment was noncompetitive (homemakers, unpaid family workers, etc.); persons

with noncompetitive employment had a greater proportion of mental retardation (22% versus 8% or visual impairments (27% versus 4%).

- ? The average age for individuals who achieved a competitive outcome was 39.6 years while the average age for individuals obtaining noncompetitive employment was 50.6 years; individuals with competitive outcomes had a median reading achievement level of 9.0 grades and a mathematics achievement level of 7.0 grades, while individuals with noncompetitive outcomes had a median reading level of 5.3 grades and a mathematics achievement level of 5.0 grades.
- ? For those individuals who completed VR services and who were competitively employed, 76.5% were classified either as severely disabled or most severely, disabled.
- ? Of individuals who were competitively employed at exit from the VR program, 36.9% were working at application.
- ? For those competitively employed at exit from VR services, 64.2% were still working one year later at a job obtained through VR and 20.8% were still working but at another job - a total of 85% still working one year post-services; this compares favorably with the 62% of the (primarily nondisabled) consumers served under the Job Training and Partnership Act still employed thirteen weeks after being placed in jobs.
- ? Competitively employed individuals worked an average of 34.9 hours per week and earned an average of \$7.35 per hour on exit from the VR program; one year later they worked an average of 35.7 hours per week and earned an average of \$7.94 per hour.
- ? At exit from the VR program, 23.6% of competitively employed VR consumers were employed in professional, managerial, and technical occupations; one year later, 30.5% were employed in professional, managerial, and technical occupations.
- ? Competitively employed VR consumers with reading achievement levels of fourth grade or less had average earnings of \$5.51 per hour, while those with reading levels twelfth grade or higher earned an average of \$7.52 per hour; individuals with mathematics achievement levels of fourth grade or less earned \$5.56 per hour while those with mathematics achievement levels twelfth grade or higher earned an average of \$8.54 per hour; there is a direct correlation between educational levels and earnings.

- ? 62.5% of competitively employed consumers at exit from the VR program earn less than \$7.00 per hour; the average reading achievement level of individuals competitively employed is 8.5 grades and their average mathematics achievement level is 7.8.
- ? The percentage of competitively employed VR consumers with health insurance through their jobs is directly related to earnings levels; only 13% of individuals earning \$5.00 per hour or less had medical benefits, 35% of those earning \$7.00 per hour or less had medical benefits while 65% of those earning \$11.00 per hour or more had medical benefits.
- ? Of individuals competitively employed one year after exit from the VR program, 13.3% were very satisfied with their employment, 54.3% were satisfied and 32.4% were not satisfied.

The Third Interim Report is attached to this Memorandum.

If you have any questions concerning the Interim Report, please call Dr. Harold Kay, Director of Evaluation, Rehabilitation Services Administration at (202) 205-9883.

Attachment

cc: National Council on Independent Living
Council of State Administrator of Vocational Rehabilitation
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems