What Works for Youth? Tracking Vocational Rehabilitation Outcomes

Presenters
Todd Honeycutt, Mathematica Policy Research
Ellen Fabian, University of Maryland
Meg Grigal, Institute for Community Inclusion

Discussant
Andrea Guest, Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Washington, DC
April 27, 2017
Welcome

Moderator

Jody Schimmel Hyde
Mathematica Policy Research
Mathematica established the Center for Studying Disability Policy (CSDP) in 2007 to provide the nation’s leaders with the data they need to shape disability policy and programs to fully meet the needs of all Americans with disabilities.
Today’s Speakers

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Indicators of Success: Differences in the Long-Term Outcomes of Youth VR Applicants

Todd Honeycutt, Frank Martin, and Jeffrey Hemmeter

Center for Studying Disability Policy Forum Presentation

April 27, 2017
Research Funded Through NIDILRR

- Research funded through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Practices and Youth Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (http://vrpracticesandyouth.org/) of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)

- The Center conducts research and technical assistance to improve the delivery of VR agency services to youth

- The findings and conclusions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not represent the views of NIDILRR, the Social Security Administration (SSA), or any agency of the federal government
Research Goals

- Identify long-term outcomes for transition-age VR clients
- Examine how outcomes vary across initial educational attainment and employment status, as well as for other critical individual- and agency-level characteristics
- Inform VR policy and practice, particularly related to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
Analysis sample included 570,146 transition-age youth ages 14 to 24 who applied to and were found eligible for VR from 2004 through 2007

Data sources:
- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) data from fiscal years (FYs) 2004 through 2013
- SSA’s Disability Analysis File (DAF)
- Master Earnings File (MEF)
Key Variables

- **Independent variables**
  - Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) status at application
  - Education and employment status at application
  - VR closure status at exit

- **Outcome variables**
  - Earnings in the sixth calendar year after VR application
  - SSI and SSDI receipt within six years of VR application
  - SSA benefits forgone due to work within six years of VR application
## Outcomes Across SSA Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Youth without SSA benefits at application</th>
<th>Youth with SSI benefits at application</th>
<th>Youth with SSDI benefits at application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample size</strong></td>
<td>420,615</td>
<td>130,417</td>
<td>42,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Earnings outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnings above $1,200 in the 6th calendar year after VR application</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean earnings in the 6th calendar year after VR application</td>
<td>$10,864</td>
<td>$3,145</td>
<td>$3,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SSA outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of SSI within 6 years of VR application</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of SSDI within 6 years of VR application</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any benefits foregone due to work within 6 years of VR application</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of benefits foregone due to work within 6 years of VR application</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$2,349</td>
<td>$2,323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth Had Different Levels of Education and Employment Statuses at VR Application

Percentage of VR youth at application, by education and employment status

- Enrolled in high school, not working
- No high school diploma, working or in school, age 18 or younger
- No high school diploma, working or in school, age 19 or older
- No high school diploma, not working or in postsecondary school
- High school diploma, working
- High school diploma, in postsecondary school
- High school diploma, not working

Youth without SSA benefits at application

Note: Data from RSA-911, FYs 2004–2013, for VR applicants from 2004 to 2007, ages 14 to 24, eligible for services. N = 570,146.
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Education and Employment Status Varied Across States

Percentage of VR youth enrollees

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Note: Data from RSA-911, FYs 2004-2013, for VR applicants from 2004 to 2007, ages 14 to 24, eligible for services. N = 570,146.
Youth Working at Application Had Better Long-Term Outcomes

- Relative to high school enrolled youth:
  - Youth with at least a high school diploma and working at VR application consistently had the best long-term outcomes.
  - Youth enrolled in postsecondary school had somewhat better outcomes.
  - Youth without a high school diploma and neither working nor in school had consistently poor outcomes.
Non-SSA Youth Working or in Postsecondary School Had Highest Earnings Levels

Amount of earnings in the sixth calendar year after VR application, relative to non-SSA high school enrolled youth

- No high school diploma, working or in school, age 18 or younger: $1,903*
- No high school diploma, working or in school, age 19 or older: $820*
- No high school diploma, not working or in postsecondary school: $-1,800*
- High school diploma, working: $4,791*
- High school diploma, in postsecondary school: $2,491*
- High school diploma, not working: $-223*

N = 420,615. Regression-adjusted results. Reference group regression-adjusted mean: $13,314. * p < 0.05.
SSI Youth Working Had Higher Earnings and SSI Reductions

Amount of Earnings and Benefits Foregone Due to Work for SSI Youth, Relative to SSI High School Enrolled Youth

- No high school diploma, working or in school, age 18 or younger: $627*
- No high school diploma, working or in school, age 19 or older: $182*
- No high school diploma, not working or in postsecondary school: $420
- High school diploma, working: $1,794*
- High school diploma, not working or in postsecondary school: $948*
- High school diploma, working: $449*
- High school diploma, not working: $224
- Amount of earnings in the sixth calendar year after VR application
- Amount of benefits foregone due to work

N = 130,417. Regression-adjusted results. Reference group regression-adjusted means: $2,934 (earnings in sixth calendar year) and $4 (benefits foregone due to work). * p < 0.05.
Exiting from VR with Employment Correlated with Better Outcomes

- Compared with youth who exited from VR after receiving services but without employment:
  - Youth who exited with employment had consistently better long-term outcomes
  - Youth who exited before receiving services had somewhat better outcomes

- Consistent findings across SSA groups
  - But youth with SSI or SSDI benefits more frequently exit without employment
Limitations

- **Selection issues**
  - Results are not causal
  - Individuals self-select to apply for VR services
- **Limited measures available in administrative data**
  - No school enrollment measure separate from employment measure
- **Youth received VR services for varying durations**
Considerations for Providing VR Service

- Successful VR exit associated with long-term earnings and SSA outcomes, no matter the youth’s SSA status
- High school dropouts not working typically had among the poorest outcomes
- Youth already working had relatively better outcomes
- We can identify outcomes for different types of youth, but still have little information on what specific VR services and programs might result in better outcomes
Implications for WIOA

- Some VR agencies could be better prepared to deliver pre-employment transition services
  - They already work with large proportions of high school youth
- Targeting in-school youth risks crowding out services to other types of youth (or adults)
- Providing more services to in-school or out-of-school youth could result in different short- and long-term outcomes overall for the agency
Contact Information

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What Works in Youth Transition: Evaluation of a Model Program

Richard Luecking, UMD
Ellen Fabian, UMD
Kara Contreary, Mathematica
Purpose of the Study

• To determine whether a career-oriented transition program for students with disabilities improved VR services and outcomes for participants
The Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (MSTC) incorporated five best or empirically supported practices drawn from transition research:

- Work-based learning experiences (both paid and nonpaid) aligned with students’ career goals
- At least one paid employment experience before school exit, aligned with students’ career goals
- Student Referral to VR two years before school exit
- System linkages and collaboration operationalized via a local LEA inter-agency team (included: VR, LEA, adult service providers, and postsecondary education staff)
- Ensuring each student linked to job, postsecondary education, and/or adult services at school exit
MSTC Services Flow Chart

10th grade (or 3 years before exit)
- Discovery (continues throughout)
- Work-based experiences
- Coordinate with LEA (throughout)

11th grade (or 2 years before exit)
- VR opens case

12th grade (or 1 year before exit)
- Paid Employment
- Linkages to postsecondary supports, including CRPs and/or PSE disability supports

Post-school completion (2 years beyond high school)
- Employment and Postsecondary Education
- Follow up supports as needed by adult system

Interagency transition councils
Implementation of MSTC MODEL

• Led by Maryland Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) (2007–2012) in conjunction with TransCen, Inc.
• Implemented via a competitive proposal process in 11 county LEAs
• Students with individualized education programs/eligible for DORS were enrolled at each of the 11 sites
• Fidelity across implementation sites provided by technical assistance and monitoring by TransCen, in conjunction with DORS
Study Methods

• MSTSC was implemented as a demonstration project – all students who consented were enrolled in the treatment condition

• To conduct an evaluation study, we used a statistical method to generate a comparison group of non-MSTC students over the same time period in the same LEA districts who were eligible for and received VR services

• Used propensity-score analyses to generate a comparison sample

• Retrieved data from DORS AWARE case management system for both MSTC and comparison group of non-MSTC students
MSTC Participants (n = 377 across 11 sites)

- Male = 70%
- Average age = 17.6 years
- Non-Hispanic white = 61%; Non-Hispanic black = 36%
- 23% receive SSI at VR application
- Disability:
  - Intellectual = 14%
  - Psychiatric/behavioral = 14%
  - Specific learning disability = 20%
  - Autism = 18%
  - Other = 34%
Research Question 1

• How did MSTC students compare with non-MSTC students on VR service use and service cost?
VR Service Use for MSTC and Non-MSTC Students

Graph represents inverse propensity-score weighted means (scale = 0 – 1.0).
Results: Key Findings for RQ 1

Compared with matched comparison group of other VR service recipients in the same counties, MSTC participants were significantly likely to:

• Receive more job training, job search assistance, and on-the-job support services \((p < .001)\)

• Receive less assessment and diagnosis or treatment services \((p < .001)\)

• Have lower overall VR service costs \($2,728 \text{ versus } $3,925\)
Research Question 2

• How did MSTC students compare with non-MSTC students on VR closure outcomes?
Results: Key VR Outcome Findings

Compared with matched comparison group of VR service recipients in the same counties, **MSTC participants**

- Were significantly *more* likely to be closed in VR with employment (42 versus 23%)
- Were significantly *less* likely to be closed in VR as “other” (35 versus 49%)
- Earned slightly *less* per hour—$8.07 versus $8.60 (for those employed at closure)
Discussion

• The MSTC model incorporated 5 empirically supported practices in youth transition and demonstrated better VR outcomes for less service cost.
• Several elements of the MTSC model are now embedded in the pre-employment transition practices (pre-ETS) authorized under WIOA of 2014.
• Service system collaboration between VR & LEA on pre-ETS now required under WIOA.
Implications and Next Steps

• State and local VR offices can implement MSTC model components executing memorandums of understanding with LEAs and CRPs to authorize pre-ETS services for students who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR

• State and local VR offices can collaborate with LEAs, CRPs, and other adult service providers to establish interagency transition councils to monitor pre-ETS implementation and progress

• Maryland DORS received a 5-year RSA grant to conduct a randomized controlled trial or a career-focused transition model based on MSTC components
More Background on MSTC


The Role and Impact of Vocational Rehabilitation in Inclusive Higher Education for Students with Intellectual Disability and Autism

Meg Grigal    Frank Smith    John Shepard
Institute for Community Inclusion
University of Massachusetts Boston
Higher Education Programs Enrolling Students with Intellectual Disability in the United States

Source: Think College Program Database http://programs.thinkcollege.net.
Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA)
Provisions Related to Students with Intellectual Disability (ID)

- **Model demonstration programs**: Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSIDs) authorized to enable institutions of higher education (IHEs) to create or expand high quality inclusive programs for students with ID

- **National Coordinating Center (NCC)**: Authorized to provide technical assistance, coordination between and evaluation of TPSID projects, and create recommended model standards for programs through an accreditation work group

- **Federal student aid**: Eligibility for Pell grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and work-study jobs
National Coordinating Center TPSID Data

The NCC collected data in 2010–2015 from 57 IHEs hosting TPSIDs serving 2,245 students.

Data included course enrollment, credentials attainment, and employment during and after participation.
Phase I: Secondary Analysis Year 5 TPSID Data

- RQ1 - What is the frequency of interaction and role of VR agencies partnering with TPSIDs serving students with intellectual disability and autism (ID/A) and do these differ based on the characteristics of the IHE or program?

- RQ 2 – Did partnership status between TPSID programs and VR agencies affect students’ outcomes?
Partnership Status and Role
Frequency of Interaction of VR Agencies Partnering with IHEs to Serve Students with ID/A

- Annually: 42.5%
- Biannually: 7.5%
- Quarterly: 7.5%
- Monthly: 7.5%
- Weekly: 2.5%
- Annually: 40.0%
Role of VR Agencies Partnering with IHEs Serving Students with ID/A

- Direct service to students: 67.5%
- Career Development/Employment Opportunities: 45.0%
- Project advisory committee: 42.5%
- Consultant: 35.0%
- Team/Consortia member: 32.5%
- Participates in Person Centered Planning: 30.0%
- Training to students: 27.5%
- Recruitment/Outreach: 25.0%
- Provides training to TPSID staff: 5.0%
- Transportation for students: 5.0%
- Other: 5.0%
Student Differences in VR Partnered Programs

- Younger students
- Dually enrolled students
- Racially diverse students
VR Financial Support
VR Financial Support for Students

- **VR-Partnered Program**
  - Used VR Funds to Pay for Tuition: 24.1%
  - Used VR Funds to Pay Other Expenses: 31.2%

- **Non-Partnered Program**
  - Used VR Funds to Pay for Tuition: 6.3%
  - Used VR Funds to Pay Other Expenses: 7.8%
It’s Not Just About the $$

- Engagement and connection with student
- Engagement with program, IHE staff, and peers
- Understanding of course impact on career choice and path
- Use of campus or program resources to support employment
Inclusive Course Access
Inclusive Course Access Based on VR Partnership Status

Partnered with VR

- 41% Inclusive
- 59% Specialized
Inclusive Course Access Based on VR Partnership Status

- Did not partner with VR

- 59% Inclusive
- 41% Specialized
“VR’s more interested in paying for specialized courses at this point, and we’re more interested in not having any.”

TPSID Program Staff
The Friction Between

Specialized courses

- Pre-existing
- Focuses on job skills
- Segregates students

Inclusive course work

- Relates to person-centered plan and course of study
- Indirectly relates to job skills
- Provides opportunity for inclusive learning
“You know a fast closure isn’t necessarily the best use of this college experience. It really does take more flexibility and time for a better employment outcome.”

TPSID Program Staff
Career Development and Employment
Student Career Development and Employment, by VR Partnership Status While Enrolled

- Partnered with VR
  - 13.4% Paid job only
  - 25.4% Both paid job and unpaid career development
  - 34.2% Unpaid Career Development but not paid job
  - 27.1% Neither paid job and unpaid career development

- Did not partner with VR
  - 14.1% Paid job only
  - 17.2% Both paid job and unpaid career development
  - 19.5% Unpaid Career Development but not paid job
  - 49.2% Neither paid job and unpaid career development
Student Employment Outcomes, by VR Partnership Status Within 90 Days of Exit

- Partnered with VR:
  - Neither paid job and unpaid career development: 19.9%
  - Unpaid career development but not paid job: 42.0%
  - Both paid job and unpaid CDE: 23.4%
  - Paid job only: 14.7%

- Did not partner with VR:
  - Neither paid job and unpaid career development: 51.0%
  - Unpaid career development but not paid job: 24.5%
  - Both paid job and unpaid CDE: 20.4%
  - Paid job only: 4.1%
Credential Attainment, by VR Partnership Status

- Earned at least one credential before exiting: 81% VR-partnered programs, 80% Non-partnered programs
- Certificate for TPSID students granted by TPSID: 45% VR-partnered programs, 53% Non-partnered programs
- Certificate for TPSID students granted by IHE: 8% VR-partnered programs, 8% Non-partnered programs
- Certificate available to all IHE students: 10% VR-partnered programs, 29% Non-partnered programs
- Certificate for TPSID students issued by LEA: 11% VR-partnered programs, 2% Non-partnered programs

VR-partnered programs (n = 231 students)
Non-partnered programs (n = 49 students)
Primary Findings Summary

- Partnership status significantly affected the use of VR funds to pay for tuition and nontuition expenses for enrolled youth
- Programs that partnered with VR were more likely to have students enrolled in segregated classes
- Partnership status affected career development and employment at exit and type of credential attained
Implications of IHE/VR Partnerships in TPSIDs

- Impact on inclusive course access
- Employment outcomes
- Inconsistent guidance on funding between states, and, in some cases, counselors
- Engagement with dually enrolled students and pre-ETS
Phase II: Digging Deeper

- Case studies
- Effective IHE/VR partnerships
- 4 states
- IHE faculty and staff, VR professionals, and students and families
- Site visits (summer and fall 2017)
Want to learn more?
www.thinkcollege.net

Need Advice? Think College can help...
thinkcollegeTA@gmail.com

thank you!
Discussant

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Audience Q&A

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Save the Date

A webinar on identifying and evaluating investments to strengthen disability employment services

June 22, 2017

More information coming soon on Mathematica’s website!

www.mathematica-mpr.com
Contact Information

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