

Postsecondary Education and Employment Outcomes for Youth with Intellectual Disabilities

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Completion of postsecondary education is commonly associated with better employment outcomes for the general population. There is increasing interest in postsecondary education as an opportunity for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID). One role that vocational rehabilitation (VR) serves is to support postsecondary education in accordance with their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

This data note describes the employment outcomes of youth with ID who participated in postsecondary education as part of their IPE compared to youth with ID who did not participate in postsecondary education. In FY 2007, a total of 36,154 youth with ID who entered VR services between the ages of 16 and 26 exited the VR program. Of these individuals, 1,223 (3.4%) participated in postsecondary education and 537 (1.5%) successfully completed a non-degree postsecondary program, associate degree, vocational/technical certificate, bachelor's degree, or graduate degree.

Of those individuals who completed a postsecondary program and did not have a job at application, 312 (58%) exited VR services with a job in integrated employment, earning on average \$338 per week. As shown in the table below, attending postsecondary education yielded a 48% employment rate and \$316 weekly earnings. In contrast, only about 32% of youth who did not receive postsecondary education services exited the VR program with jobs and their average weekly income was only \$195.

These data show that youths with ID who participated in postsecondary education were 26% more likely to exit the VR program with employment and they earned a 73% higher weekly income. Despite positive employment outcomes for youths with ID who receive postsecondary education services, the percentage of youth who receive these services as part of their IPE is low. The data summarized for this data note suggest that further study of the role of postsecondary education in the career path of people with ID is appropriate, and that postsecondary education, as in the case of the general population, is a promising practice.

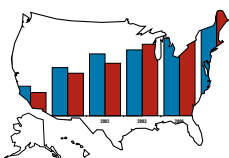
Table: VR Outcomes for Youths with Intellectual Disabilities

	Total	Closures into employment		Earnings
	#	#	%	\$
Youths with ID who did not receive PSE Services	34,931	11,261	32%	195
Youths with ID who received PSE services	1,223	589	48%	316
Youths with ID who, after PSE services, attained a higher level of education	537	312	58%	338

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