

**The National Survey of Community Rehabilitation Providers,
FY2004-2005 Report 2: Gender Differences in Individual Employment
Outcomes of People with Developmental Disabilities***Matthew Kusminsky, Heike Boeltzig, Jaime C. Timmons, and John Butterworth***Introduction**

Policy shifts over the last two decades have led to an increasing emphasis on providing support to people with disabilities entering integrated employment, and the federal government has set the tone for broad-based systems change (Silverstein et al., 2005; Rogan et al., 2002). Even with this clear policy intent, there remains a significant gap in employment rates between people with and without disabilities, especially those with developmental disabilities (DD). This brief presents employment outcomes of men and women with DD who recently entered individual employment with the support of a community rehabilitation provider (CRP). It is the second in a series of brief products that present findings from the FY2004-2005 *National Survey of Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs)—Individual Employment Outcomes Survey* funded by the U.S. Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

Background

Individuals with DD are supported primarily through CRPs, the major source of employment and day services. In the United States, more than 8,100 CRPs provide a broad range of services, programs, and supports to people with disabilities (Menz et al., 2003). Findings from ICI's *National Survey of CRPs—Individual Employment Outcomes Survey*, conducted between 2004 and 2005, show that the majority of individuals with DD work part-time predominantly in entry-level positions in the service industry; annual income remains low and individuals have limited access to employee benefits such as health care (Boeltzig et al., in press).

For women with disabilities, a double burden of discrimination in the workplace appears to exist (Randolph, 2005). Research suggests that wage discrimination is common among women with disabilities and discrimination occurs across personal and employment characteristics (O'Hara, 2004). Inequality in access to supports, services, and benefits through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has also been documented (Menz et al., 1989). Other disadvantages experienced by women with DD in supported employment settings include placement into jobs traditionally stereotyped by gender such as food service and clerical positions, providing less pay and fewer opportunities for advancement than jobs held by men with DD (Julius et al., 2003; Olsen et al., 2000).

Findings**Characteristics of CRP organizations surveyed (N=195)**

- 94% were private non-profit organizations, with the remaining six percent being private for-profit, public sponsored or other types of organizations.
- The majority of the organizations were either in metropolitan or suburban areas.
- Of the 184 organizations that provided information, 40% served between zero and 100 individuals, 25% served between 100 and 200 individuals, and 11% indicated serving between 200 and 300 individuals. 24% of the responding agencies reported serving more than 300 individuals a year.

Main survey findings

- On average, men worked only slightly more hours per week than women.
- While hourly work weeks were quite similar, on average, men earned more than women (\$170 versus \$152).*
- Findings showed that men earned more on average than women in almost all job types, except in assembly and manufacturing and clerical jobs.
- No significant gender differences were found in regard to client access to benefits.
- Women were more likely to work in the same type of job, whereas men were working in many different types of jobs.*

*The finding is statistically significant at the 5% level.

The survey collected data on 869 individuals who recently entered integrated employment with the support of a CRP. This section, however, presents findings on differences in employment outcomes between men and women with DD who only held individuals jobs (N=706). We used a 5% significance level for all statistical tests.

Characteristics of individuals with DD who had recently entered integrated employment (N=869)

- The majority was male (61%).
- 36% were age 22–30.
- A large majority of individuals (80.9% of men and 81.8% of women) held only individual jobs.
- 4% of all individuals were also supported in non-work settings.

Gender Differences in Individual Employment Outcomes

On average, men worked only slightly more hours per week than women. Both men and women had a median of 20 weekly working hours. Most men and women worked part-time: 79% of men and 85% of women were reported working less than 35 hours per week in individual employment (see Figure 1). Full-time employment was more likely for men in individual jobs than for women: 21% of men were reported working more than 36 hours per week, compared to 15% of women.

While hourly work weeks were quite similar, on average, men earned more than women (\$170 versus \$152).* The median weekly wage was \$152 for men and \$127 for women. Gender differences across wage ranges were

statistically significant, with a larger percentage of men at the higher wage ranges (\$151-200, \$201-250, and \$251-300) and a larger percentage of women at the lower wage ranges (\$51-100 and \$101-150) (see Figure 2).

Findings showed that men earned more on average than women in almost all jobs types, except in assembly and manufacturing and clerical jobs. For example, men working in maintenance and janitorial jobs earned on average \$17 more per week than their female co-workers. Women working in assembly and manufacturing jobs earned on average \$17 more than their male co-workers. The largest difference between male and female average weekly earnings was in the area of clerical work, with women earning on average \$48 more than their male counterparts.

Figure 1: Average number of hours worked per week by men and women with DD in individual employment (N=704)

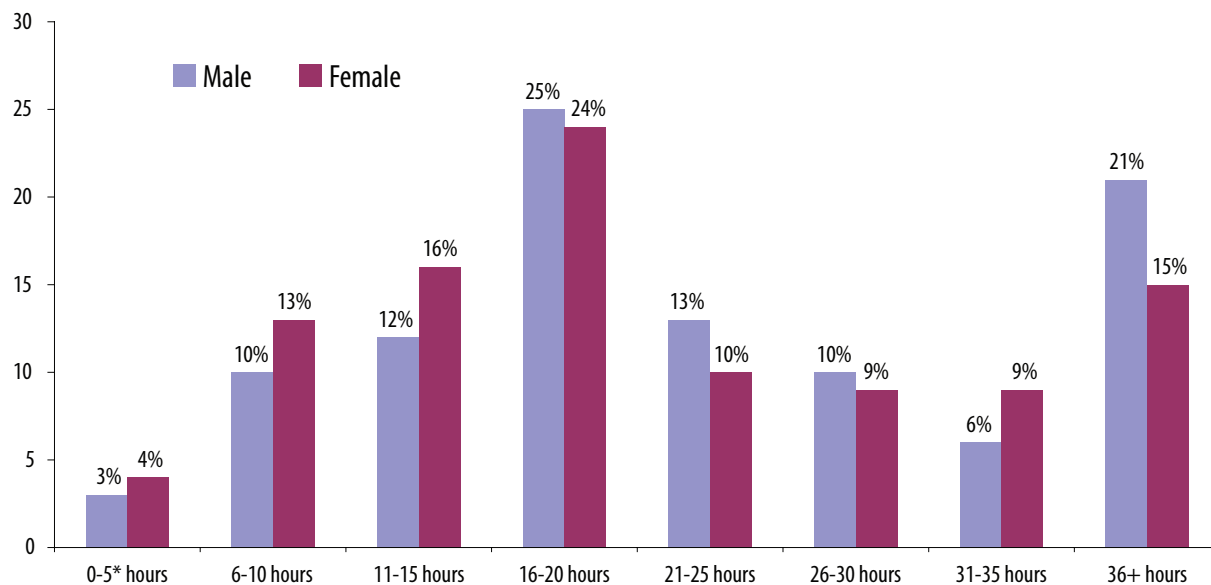
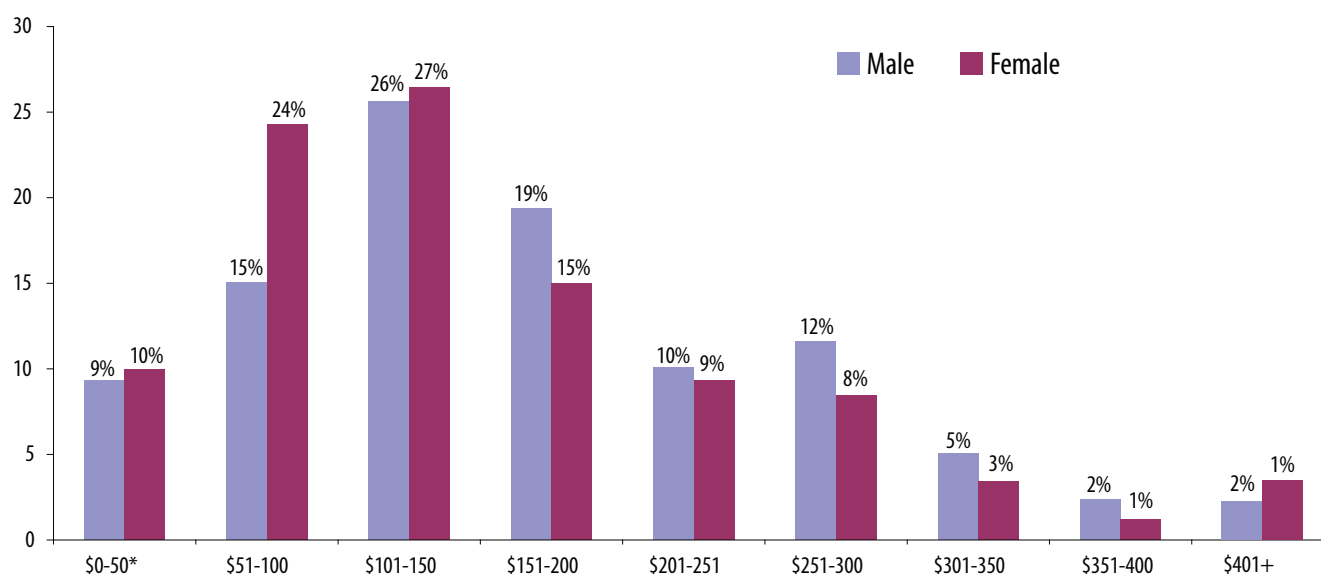


Figure 2: Average weekly earnings of men and women with DD in individual employment (N=698)



*Note. Because an individual might not have worked in the week chosen for reporting, "zero hours" was a legitimate response. One man and one woman reported zero working hours.

No significant gender differences were found in regard to client access to benefits. Slightly more men than women with individual jobs received paid time off such as sick leave and vacation (see Table 1). A similar picture emerged when looking at access to health care coverage through employers. Only a third of all men and women in individual employment had access to their employer's health plan, a situation that may be linked to the high percentage of part-time employment.

Table 1: Access to benefits of men and women with DD in individual employment (N=706)

Benefit type	Male (N=431)		Female (N=275)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Paid time off				
Yes	190	44	103	38
No	241	56	172	62
Access to employer's health plan				
Yes	130	30	76	28
No	301	70	199	72

Women were working in fewer types of jobs, whereas men were working in many different types of jobs (see Table 2).^{*} Men were most likely to work in the maintenance and janitorial sector (31%), food services (23%), and sales (17%). Thirteen percent of men in individual employment held other jobs in areas such as service provision and coordination, adult/special education, or transportation services. In comparison, women with individual jobs mainly worked in food services (34%), maintenance and janitorial positions (22%), and sales (18%). Thirteen percent of women were reported to hold other jobs such as service provision and coordination as well as self-employment.

^{*}The finding is statistically significant at the 5% level.

Table 2: Types of jobs held by men and women with DD in individual employment (N=706)

Job type	Male (N=431)		Female (N=275)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Food service	98	23	92	34
Maintenance/janitorial	134	31	60	22
Assembly/manufacturing/packaging	30	7	6	2
Materials handling/mail distribution	23	5	6	2
Sales clerk/stock person	73	17	48	17
General clerical	9	2	28	10
Technical	9	2	0	0
Other	55	13	35	13

Discussion and Implications

Findings from this research show that both CRP and individual characteristics mirror those in the larger population. The profile of the CRPs is comparable to those in other surveys, suggesting that they are representative of the larger universe of CRPs (Metzel et al., 2007). Furthermore, women were underrepresented in integrated jobs, consistent with previous studies (Olson et al., 2000). In comparison to other findings related to demographic characteristics of the individuals with DD, there were no significant differences in the distribution of men and women across age.

In addition to individual characteristics, outcome findings also suggest consistency with previous research. While men and women with DD are earning meaningful wages, the findings suggest that women with DD are working fewer hours in low wage jobs and earn less money, although only the latter was found to be statistically significant. Significant gender differences were found, however, with respect to the types of jobs men and women with DD held in individual employment. More women than men worked in food services and clerical services. In contrast, more men than women worked in the maintenance and janitorial sector: assembly, manufacturing, and packaging; and materials handling and mail distribution. Similar findings were obtained by the Olson et al. (2000) study.

Differences in the types of jobs that men and women with DD held reflect gender differences between men and women with other disabilities and the larger society. Fronczek and Johnson (2003) found differences in the type of jobs men and women without disabilities held. For example, 36.7% of women but only 17.9% of men held jobs in sales and office occupations. A similar situation existed in service occupations, where 18.0% of employees in the study were women and 12.1% were men. In contrast, 17.1% of men and only 0.7% of women worked in construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations; 20.5% of men and 8.0% of women worked in production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

This study did not intend to go beyond identifying and describing gender differences in individual employment outcomes for individuals with DD and investigating the sources of those differences. However, future research should seek to identify the interrelationships among the roles of family, gender, disability, and employment outcomes (Levy et al., 1994). A number of studies have investigated gender bias within the public VR system (e.g., Jans & Stoddard, 1999; Wilson et al., 2001), which may also be relevant to CRPs.

Data Collection and Methods

The Institute for Community Inclusion has conducted a series of national studies, funded by the U.S. Administration on Developmental Disabilities, that focus on employment and non-work service for providers and people with developmental disabilities. The *National Survey of Community Rehabilitation Providers—Individuals Employment Outcomes Survey* covered

the FY2004-2005 period and collected information from randomly chosen CRPs that provide employment services to individuals with disabilities. The survey methodology used a one-week, point-in-time snapshot of activities, wages, payroll status, and access to benefits. Each respondent was asked to report employment outcomes for five individuals with DD who had entered an integrated job (either individual or group) with the support of the organization within the last two years (2003-2005), and who had been employed in the job for at least 90 days.

The sample of providers was initially developed at the Research and Training Center on Community Rehabilitation Programs at the University of Wisconsin-Stout with input from project staff, and was cross-referenced with lists from other sources including Goodwill, The Arc, United Cerebral Palsy, and CARE. From this sampling frame, researchers randomly drew a sub-sample of 400 CRP addresses for questionnaire mailing. Of the 362 that were valid sample members, 195 returned the survey, yielding a 54% response rate. The 195 CRPs reported on 869 individuals who had recently entered integrated employment with the support of a CRP.

Survey Definitions

Developmental disabilities include, but are not limited to, mental retardation, sensory (e.g., visual and hearing) impairments, neurological disabilities (e.g., autism, epilepsy, spina bifida, traumatic brain injury), and physical disabilities (e.g., cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis) that were acquired prior to age 22.

Integrated Employment

Individual Job: An individual with a disability works in a site where most people do not have disabilities, and receives either on-going job related supports (individual supported employment) or time-limited job-related supports (competitive employment).

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Related Publications

This project has produced one related Research to Practice brief for the 2004-2005 iteration of the national survey. Report 1 provides a current snapshot of employment outcomes for recently employed individuals with DD. It can be found online at www.communityinclusion.org.

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