

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES AND OUTCOMES OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: 2015-2024

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This Data Note describes the characteristics, services received, and employment outcomes of adults with an intellectual disability (ID) who exited the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program in the 50 US states and the District of Columbia (DC) during fiscal years (FY) 2015 through 2024.

For context, we compare the findings of adults with ID to the findings of people with other disabilities. All data are from the Rehabilitation Services Administration 911 (RSA-911) database unless otherwise specified. See the Method section at the end of this brief for more details about the data and variable definitions.

Here are some key takeaways comparing data from 2024 with 2023:

- The number of people who exited the VR program decreased by 6%
- The percentage of people who received services decreased by 1%
- The rehabilitation rate decreased by 1%
- Hourly wages remained the same after adjusting for inflation
- Weekly work hours decreased by 1 hour
- Time from application to exit with employment decreased by 20 days
- The majority of people who exited VR were male, white, and transition-age
- Outcomes varied considerably across states

The Number of People with ID who Exited the VR Program Decreased by 6%

In 2024, 34,178 people with ID exited the VR program (Table 1). This figure decreased by 6% compared to 2023. This figure continues to be lower than in previous years, it peaked in 2016 with 47,595 people. In contrast, the number of people with other disabilities who exited VR in 2024 increased by 5% (307,377)

Table 1. National Trends in Employment Outcomes¹

	Total closures		Received services		Rehabilitation rate		Hourly wage		Weekly hours		Got a job in <one year	
	ID	Other	ID	Other	ID	Other	ID	Other	ID	Other	ID	Other
2015	47,390	470,289	68%	62%	56%	57%	n/a	n/a	23	30	32%	35%
2016	47,595	459,141	70%	63%	55%	57%	n/a	n/a	23	30	33%	37%
2017	38,642	361,601	72%	67%	47%	49%	n/a	n/a	23	30	33%	38%
2018	44,152	387,410	78%	72%	47%	48%	\$12.57	\$17.77	23	31	31%	37%
2019	45,108	374,479	77%	71%	46%	46%	\$12.72	\$17.82	22	30	27%	35%
2020	41,644	347,275	80%	74%	44%	44%	\$12.73	\$18.40	22	31	26%	36%
2021	33,663	280,765	83%	78%	40%	42%	\$12.99	\$18.82	24	31	20%	31%
2022	36,789	294,351	84%	79%	44%	45%	\$13.06	\$18.66	23	31	25%	35%
2023	36,319	292,303	83%	77%	43%	44%	\$13.79	\$19.46	22	31	26%	39%
2024	34,178	307,377	82%	74%	42%	44%	\$13.72	\$19.39	21	31	26%	42%

¹The years 2015–2016 refer to the period from October 1 to September 30. The year 2017 refers to the period from October 1 to June 30 (nine months only). The years 2018–2024 refer to the period from July 1 to June 30. Each year is labeled by the end date of the reported period. For example, the year 2024 refers to the period July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

Note: ID = intellectual disabilities; Other = other disabilities. Hourly wages are in 2024 dollars.

The Percentage of People with ID who Received Services Decreased by 1%

Receiving VR services is an important first step toward employment. In 2024, 82% of people with ID who exited the VR program received services. This figure is slightly lower than in 2023 (83%), but still higher than in previous years. The corresponding figure for people with other disabilities was 74% in 2024, slightly lower compared to 77% in 2023 (Table 1).

A variety of reasons may cause job seekers to exit the VR program without employment. The most frequent reasons reported for people with ID in 2024 included:

- the person lost interest in receiving services (31%)
- the VR counselor was unable to locate or contact the individual (21%)
- other reasons (13%), including:
 - » disability was too significant
 - » death
 - » job seeker moved away
 - » no disability-related need for services
 - » other non-specified reasons

People with other disabilities reported similar reasons for exiting the program without employment.

The Rehabilitation Rate Decreased by 1%

The rehabilitation rate is the percentage of people who exited VR with employment lasting at least 90 days, out of all those who received VR services. During the past 10 years, the rehabilitation rate of job seekers with ID has steadily declined from 56% in 2015 to 40% in 2021, although in 2022 it bounced back to 44% before dropping to 42% in 2024. The figure for people with other disabilities reflected a similar pattern, declining from 57% in 2015 to 42% in 2021 and then increasing to 45% in 2022 only to slightly decrease to 44% in 2024.

Hourly Wages Remained the Same After Adjusting for Inflation

HOURLY EARNINGS

When adjusted for inflation, the hourly wages of workers with ID increased slightly every year from \$12.57 per hour in 2018 to \$13.72 per hour in 2024. A similar pattern emerged for people with other disabilities: from \$17.77 in 2018 to \$19.39 in 2024. Wage data were not available for the years 2015–2017.

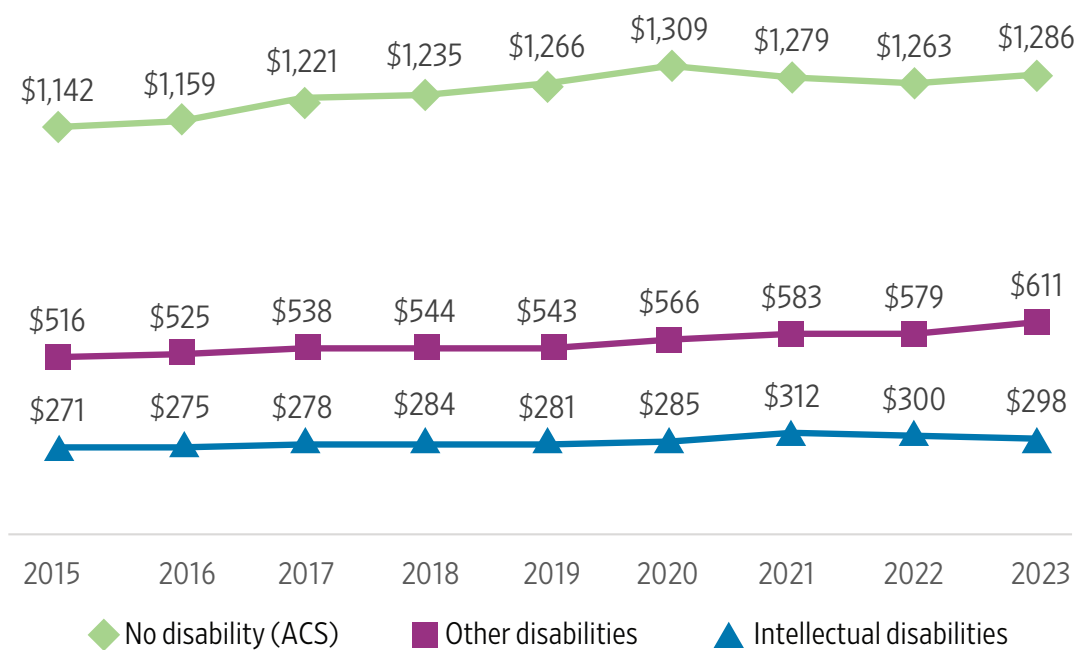
WEEKLY WAGES

Figure 1 compares trends in weekly wages for people with ID to people with other disabilities (RSA-911 data), and the general population without disabilities (American Community Survey data). All wage data is adjusted for inflation.

In 2023, the average weekly wages of people with ID decreased to \$298, down from \$300 in 2022. Since 2015, weekly wages for people with ID have increased by \$32 overall—an average growth of about 1% per year.

The weekly wages of people with other disabilities increased over time from \$516 in 2015 to \$611 in 2023 (+2% per year).

People with other disabilities earned almost four times as much as people with ID and their wages increased from \$1,142 in 2015 to \$1,286 in 2023 (+2% per year). Unlike the rest of this brief, Figure 1 shows data only through 2023 rather than 2024, because at the time of writing, 2024 wage data for people without disabilities was not yet available.

Figure 1. National Trends in Weekly Wages in Constant 2024 Dollars

A trend line chart shows three lines representing weekly earnings from 2015 to 2023. The bottom line represents the wages of people with intellectual disabilities, ranging from \$271 in 2015 to \$298 in 2023. The middle line shows the wages of people with other disabilities, ranging from \$516 in 2015 to \$611 in 2023. The top line represents the wages of people without disabilities, ranging from \$1,142 in 2015 to \$1,286 in 2023. Data for 2024 were not available at the time of writing.

Weekly Work Hours Decreased by 1 Hour

In 2024, people with ID who exited the VR program with employment worked an average of 21 hours per week, which is slightly lower compared to 22 hours per week in 2023, and the lowest in the previous 10 years. People with other disabilities reported 31 weekly work hours in 2024, the same as in previous years (Table 1).

Time from Application to Exit with Employment Decreased by 20 Days

In 2024, people with ID took an average of 828 days (approximately 2 years and 3 months) from application to exiting the VR program with a job. This is 20 days faster than in 2023, marking a reversal in the trend of recent years. However, it remains higher than the shortest average time of 684 days (about 1 year and 10 months) reported in 2018.

People with other disabilities also reported a shorter time from application to employment: 735 days (about 2 years) in 2024 compared to 801 days in 2023. The shortest amount of time from application to employment for people with other disabilities remains 728 days in 2018 (about 2 years).

Another way of looking at this metric is to examine the percentage of people who exited the VR program with employment within one year of application. In 2024, 26% of people with ID exited VR with a job within one year, the same percentage as in 2023, but lower than in 2016 and 2017 (both 33%).

For people with other disabilities, the figure was 42% in 2024. This figure is the highest over the 10 years examined.

A longer time from application to exit with employment is not necessarily a negative indicator. For example, someone may have obtained a job within one year of the date of application, but VR may have postponed closing the case to a later time to allow for continued services, such as job retention supports. In 2014, the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) extended the timeframe for the provision of supported employment services from 18 months to 24 months to better support these employment scenarios.

The Majority of People who Exited VR were Male, White, and Young

The majority of people with ID who exited VR programs in 2024 were male (58%). Similar figures were reported for people with other disabilities (55% male, Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics

	Gender				Race and ethnicity						Age	
	Male		Female		White		Black		Hispanic		26 or younger	
	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)
2015	57%	56%	43%	44%	56%	62%	33%	24%	9%	11%	58%	34%
2016	57%	56%	43%	44%	56%	62%	33%	24%	9%	12%	57%	35%
2017	58%	56%	42%	44%	55%	61%	33%	25%	9%	11%	57%	35%
2018	58%	56%	42%	44%	57%	61%	30%	23%	10%	13%	61%	40%
2019	58%	56%	42%	44%	56%	60%	30%	24%	11%	13%	62%	41%
2020	58%	56%	42%	44%	55%	59%	30%	24%	11%	13%	63%	42%
2021	58%	56%	42%	44%	64%	70%	30%	23%	11%	13%	64%	42%
2022	57%	56%	42%	44%	65%	71%	29%	23%	12%	14%	63%	43%
2023	57%	56%	42%	43%	64%	70%	28%	22%	12%	14%	62%	41%
2024	58%	55%	42%	43%	64%	69%	27%	21%	12%	14%	58%	38%

Most people with ID who exited VR in 2024 self-reported that they were white (64%) and Black people (27%). Similarly, people with other disabilities included a high proportion of white (69%) and Black people (21%). Some of the increase in the percentage of white people after 2020 might be due to a change in the definition of the race variable. See the Method section for more details.

Most people with ID who exited the VR program in 2024 were 26 years old or younger at application (58%), a slight decline from previous years (62% in 2023). In contrast, a smaller percentage of people with other disabilities who exited the program in 2024 were 26 years old or younger (38%). This figure was slightly lower than in previous years.

Outcomes Varied Considerably across States

As Table 3 shows, services and outcomes varied across states. The District of Columbia reported the highest percentage of people with ID receiving services (97%), while Louisiana reported the lowest (65%). For people with other disabilities, the percentage receiving services ranged from a high of 97% in Michigan to a low of 49% in North Carolina.

The rehabilitation rate is an indicator of how many people who received services exited the VR program with a job. Georgia reported the highest rehabilitation rate for people with ID (79%), compared to New York, which reported the lowest rehabilitation rate (21%). For people with other disabilities, the highest rehabilitation rate was reported again by Georgia (78%), and the lowest in New York (18%).

The hourly wage of people with ID varied from a low of \$10.88 in Mississippi to a high of \$17.32 in the District of Columbia. For people with other disabilities, hourly wages varied from \$14.00 in Georgia to \$23.09 in Michigan. The hourly wages are likely influenced by state minimum wage legislation and economic differences across states.

In 2024, weekly work hours varied greatly across states as well. People with ID in West Virginia and Mississippi worked the most hours per week (28 on average), whereas their peers in Rhode Island and Maine reported the fewest amount of work hours per week (13 on average). Among people with other disabilities, the highest weekly work hours were reported again in West Virginia and Mississippi (37 weekly work hours), and the lowest figures were reported in Minnesota, Washington, and Rhode Island (25 weekly work hours).

Kansas and Missouri reported the highest percentage of people with ID exiting VR with a job within one year from application (49%). Hawaii and New Hampshire reported the lowest percentage (0%). People with other disabilities were most likely to exit the VR program with a job within one year in Michigan (75%) and least likely in Oklahoma (11%).

State VR agencies vary widely in the proportion of people with ID in their caseload. In FY 2024, 10% of all closures nationally were people with ID, a slight decline from 11% in 2023. This percentage ranged from 5% in Massachusetts, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and Vermont to 24% in Indiana. This figure is influenced by various factors, including the state service system's structure and interagency roles in the employment process.

Table 3. State Outcomes in 2024

	Total Closures		Received Services		Rehabilitation Rate		Hourly Wage		Weekly Hours		Got Job in <1 year	
	ID	Other	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID (%)	Other (%)	ID	Other	ID	Other	ID (%)	Other (%)
Alabama	1,184	7,231	92%	82%	53%	57%	12.09	15.86	27	33	35%	38%
Alaska	60	802	78%	72%	53%	51%	14.68	20.88	22	32	24%	41%
Arizona	446	4,168	86%	80%	30%	32%	15.19	18.33	23	30	29%	24%
Arkansas	286	3,491	84%	84%	29%	33%	12.39	17.85	23	34	42%	37%
California	1,800	27,282	85%	74%	36%	35%	16.94	22.66	25	33	30%	41%
Colorado	582	4,635	81%	71%	48%	49%	15.95	20.62	19	30	24%	50%
Connecticut	123	1,731	85%	89%	39%	56%	15.65	na	23	32	7%	54%
Delaware	202	1,501	89%	86%	44%	47%	13.99	17.91	24	32	24%	46%
DC	162	1,088	97%	92%	49%	41%	17.32	20.75	23	32	19%	35%
Florida	1,433	11,984	80%	81%	44%	44%	13.01	17.49	22	30	12%	31%
Georgia	490	2,018	77%	73%	79%	78%	11.60	14	24	29	20%	26%
Hawaii	23	153	91%	75%	33%	20%	15.20	19.7	24	29	0%	22%
Idaho	284	2,878	73%	59%	35%	37%	12.78	19.29	18	30	19%	42%
Illinois	1,136	10,309	90%	80%	42%	46%	14.57	17.06	19	28	34%	33%
Indiana	1,197	3,790	84%	71%	43%	38%	11.73	16.76	19	27	12%	12%
Iowa	724	3,608	93%	87%	46%	47%	12.62	17.31	18	30	8%	13%
Kansas	350	1,772	81%	75%	53%	36%	11.40	15.25	18	28	49%	37%
Kentucky	584	9,250	82%	84%	36%	62%	12.55	23.68	21	34	26%	64%
Louisiana	201	3,192	65%	69%	38%	52%	11.43	18.01	22	34	12%	37%
Maine	319	1,940	85%	77%	26%	22%	15.04	20.67	13	28	11%	26%
Maryland	686	4,519	78%	62%	28%	31%	15.52	17.87	23	27	9%	21%
Massachusetts	386	7,996	77%	78%	50%	45%	16.81	20.53	21	28	38%	29%
Michigan	1,135	12,055	77%	79%	38%	62%	13.34	23.9	24	34	33%	75%
Minnesota	833	4,933	90%	80%	50%	40%	14.28	17.29	18	25	35%	35%
Mississippi	258	4,490	75%	88%	34%	77%	10.88	20.41	28	37	6%	66%
Missouri	1,074	9,763	69%	70%	55%	50%	13.94	17.31	24	30	49%	55%
Montana	100	1,276	86%	78%	40%	27%	14.34	19.41	15	28	18%	14%
Nebraska	453	1,617	87%	74%	59%	48%	12.22	18.51	14	30	20%	42%
Nevada	231	1,838	79%	67%	33%	34%	13.68	18.51	25	33	26%	29%
New Hampshire	88	1,174	84%	66%	35%	32%	14.09	19.37	17	27	0%	17%
New Jersey	501	5,115	80%	81%	35%	43%	15.41	18.75	22	28	17%	23%
New Mexico	325	2,500	75%	72%	28%	26%	13.23	18.54	20	31	19%	38%
New York	1,468	19,721	66%	73%	21%	18%	15.55	21.13	22	31	16%	13%
North Carolina	1,607	10,344	83%	49%	41%	40%	12.39	14.99	24	29	28%	28%
North Dakota	166	1,927	89%	76%	50%	49%	13.51	19.7	20	34	29%	56%
Ohio	2,771	13,645	83%	74%	40%	42%	12.59	17.23	21	29	40%	57%
Oklahoma	570	3,553	77%	69%	29%	37%	12.04	17.53	26	34	5%	11%
Oregon	755	4,149	82%	71%	49%	52%	15.60	20.07	18	27	25%	42%
Pennsylvania	1,848	19,940	74%	53%	37%	52%	13.10	18.98	21	32	16%	33%
Rhode Island	126	558	96%	86%	41%	37%	na	na	13	25	18%	33%
South Carolina	450	8,535	87%	79%	44%	57%	13.11	17.86	27	35	25%	61%
South Dakota	247	1,475	86%	64%	46%	43%	13.22	15.82	17	27	31%	32%
Tennessee	720	4,105	84%	80%	49%	44%	12.71	15.69	24	31	28%	35%
Texas	1,456	26,565	90%	73%	38%	50%	13.03	19.31	25	34	21%	43%
Utah	540	6,163	84%	62%	46%	47%	12.75	17.23	19	31	9%	31%
Vermont	113	2,026	91%	79%	35%	32%	14.96	22.06	18	30	25%	40%
Virginia	1,307	6,618	87%	82%	46%	42%	14.04	16.27	23	29	24%	35%
Washington	662	3,634	81%	66%	57%	46%	16.57	21.87	14	25	33%	32%
West Virginia	378	3,948	79%	82%	23%	49%	13.65	20.79	28	37	20%	61%
Wisconsin	1,239	9,203	82%	70%	46%	40%	12.77	16.75	17	26	18%	30%
Wyoming	97	1,169	87%	78%	42%	41%	na	na	15	32	17%	28%
US	34,178	307,377	82%	73%	42%	44%	\$13.72	\$19.39	21	31	26%	42%
Minimum	23	153	65%	49%	21%	18%	\$10.88	\$14.00	13	25	0%	11%
Maximum	2,771	27,282	97%	92%	79%	78%	\$17.32	\$23.90	28	37	49%	75%

Note. ID = intellectual disabilities; Other = other disabilities.

Method

WHERE ARE THE DATA FROM?

Unless otherwise specified, the data described in this report are from the Rehabilitation Services Administration 911 (RSA-911) dataset, a public access database that captures individual characteristics, services provided, and employment outcomes at the point of closure (exit) from the VR program.

WHAT DOES “INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY (ID)” MEAN IN THIS REPORT?

A person is considered to have an intellectual disability (ID) if the RSA-911 dataset lists code 25 (Intellectual Disability) as the primary or secondary cause of impairment to employment.

WHAT IS A VR CLOSURE?

A VR closure refers to exiting the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program. The main types of closures include:

- Closure with an employment outcome (formerly Status 26): The person held a job for at least 90 days. This includes competitive integrated employment, supported employment, or self-employment.
- Closure without an employment outcome after receiving services (formerly Status 28).
- Closure after eligibility but before development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) (formerly Status 30): The person was determined eligible for VR services but exited the program without receiving any services.
- All other reasons for exiting the VR program that do not fall into the categories mentioned here.

HOW WERE THE WAGES OF THE GENERAL POPULATION COMPUTED?

Weekly wages of the general population (no disability) were calculated by dividing the annual wages of civilians aged 16–64 by 52 weeks, using data from the American Community Survey.

WHAT IS THE REHABILITATION RATE?

The rehabilitation rate is the percentage of people who exited VR with employment out of the total number of people who received VR services. Rehabilitation rate is calculated as:

$$\frac{\text{closures with an employment outcome}}{\text{closures with an employment outcome} + \text{closures without an employment outcome after receiving services}}$$

HOW IS RACE DEFINED IN THIS REPORT?

For years prior to 2021, individuals were counted once for each race they self-reported. As a result, people who identified with more than one race were included in multiple racial categories.

Beginning in 2021, individuals are counted in a single category. Those who report only one race are included in that corresponding category, while those who report more than one race are grouped under a separate “Two or More Races” category. Ethnicity is reported separately and categorized as either Hispanic or non-Hispanic, regardless of race.

HOW ARE REPORTING PERIODS DEFINED IN THIS REPORT?

The years 2018–2024 refer to the period from July 1 to June 30 and are identified by the year of the last month of that period (June). For example, the year 2023 refers to July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. This is different from the years before 2017, when the period examined spanned from October 1 to September 30. The year was identified by the last month of that period (September). The change took place in 2017 when RSA changed from reporting for the federal fiscal year (October 1 to September 30) to reporting for a program year (July 1 to June 30). The year 2017 was a transition year and refers to only nine months from October 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017.



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Data Source

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911, FY2015-2024) and Census Bureau (FY 2015-2024).

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