

Employing the Talents of Americans with disAbilities:

*Results from
Business-Vocational Rehabilitation
Partnerships*



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Employing the Talents of Americans with disabilities: Facts, Figures, and Results

“People with disabilities want to be employed, educated, and participating citizens living in the community. In today’s global new economy, America must be able to draw on the talents and creativity of all its citizens.”

--President Bush: “Fulfilling America’s Promise to Americans with Disabilities”

FACTS

Americans with Disabilities

People with disabilities have multiple barriers to living independently in our communities and being gainfully employed in careers. Barriers often exist in relationship to communication, transportation, access, housing, skill assessment, career planning, training and a variety of health issues, including mental health supports.

- There are an estimated 54 million individuals with disabilities in the U.S., roughly 20 percent of the population. Nearly half of these individuals have a significant or multiple disabilities.
- A majority of people acquire or develop disabilities later in life. As people survive medical traumas, illness or accidents and the population ages, disability is impacting an increasing number of Americans and their families. This growing population includes veterans with disabilities. Disability crosses all ethnic and cultural communities in our country.
- One out of five adults with disabilities has not graduated from high school, compared to less than one of ten adults without disabilities.
- Americans with disabilities are poorer and more likely to be unemployed than those without disabilities.
- Unemployment rate for working-age adults with disabilities has remained near 70 percent for several years.

Supporting the Careers and Lifelong Learning of Individuals with Disabilities

Vocational Rehabilitation is not duplicative of any other program. Though they partner with the One-Stops throughout the country, that collaboration occurs after the VR program has prepared the person for the workplace.

- One-stops offer support in connecting to job openings, much of the focus is on high demand jobs.
- The VR system focuses on career development:
 - A comprehensive and holistic yet individualized planning process...
 - understanding that the barriers presented by a disabling condition vary from person to person and often require multiple services prior to a person entering the workforce;
 - individually tailored services to support the success of both the employee and the employer long after hire;
 - a successful, comprehensive approach unique to the VR system
 - There is a customized approach to matching qualified VR consumers with employers.



FIGURES

Outcomes and Use of Resources:

- 213,432 individuals with disabilities who sought the dignity of a career and economic independence were employed through the VR system in 2004.
- 85.7% of the financial resources of the VR program were spent directly on consumers with disabilities for counseling, guidance, employment services and other purchased services.

2004 RSA 2 and 113 Data

Return on Investment

- Over 14 million individuals with disabilities have acquired and maintained competitive employment.
- In 2003, employed individuals earned approximately \$3.5 billion in wages during their first years of work. During that year, these new wage earners paid approximately:
 - \$320 MILLION in Federal taxes;
 - \$95 MILLION in State income tax;
 - \$520 MILLION in Social Security Administration and Medicare
- These same, employed individuals pay back the cost of their rehabilitation in 2-4 years.
- For individuals served by VR who are Social Security recipients, there is a \$6 return for every VR dollar invested. This equated to a \$470.3 million savings to the Social Security Trust Fund in FY2004.

CSAVR National Data

Employment Services Based on Networks and Qualified Staff

- A national network of rehabilitation programs exists in every State and Territory; there are 80 VR programs.
- Qualified staff have unique expertise and provide valued resources to both individuals and to business.
- Customized services for business provided by the vocational rehabilitation network have increased employment opportunities while meeting local business needs in areas beyond recruiting and hiring.
- Long-term partnerships with business customers exist across the country. They generate an impressive Return on Investment. An example from one state agency in FY'04:
 - 865 active employer accounts providing > 5,500 services to these businesses in FY'04
 - More than 7,700 individuals with disabilities hired by those employers in FY'04
 - For every VR dollar invested in the consumers rehabilitated & employed, \$21 is the ROI.

Source: Al.Dept.of Rehab.Services Data Files FY'04



RESULTS

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

Businesses value the long-term partnerships that have been developed with public Vocational Rehabilitation programs throughout the country. At the 2004 National Employment Conference in Washington, D.C., thirty-two businesses sponsored representatives from their companies to participate in strategy sessions designed to improve the employment of people with disabilities. Those companies included the following VR business partners:

AirTran Airways	National Bank of Commerce
American Red Cross	Oklahoma One-Call System, Inc.
Bridges, Inc.	On Our Own
Cellular One / Western Wireless	Principal Financial Group
CVS/Pharmacy	Raytheon Company
GEICO	Safeway, Inc.
General Motors, Inc.	Social Security Administration
InfoUSA	SouthTrust Bank
Intel	Starbucks Coffee Company
The Kennedy Center	State of Delaware
Lenske's Clamping Tools, Inc.	SunTrust Bank
Manpower, Inc.	United States Army
Marriott, Inc.	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Motor World	University of Alabama at Birmingham
Miami University	Washington Mutual
Microsoft Corp.	West Corporation

Some of their comments about the business-VR partnership follow:

Beth Butler, SouthTrust/Wachovia Bank

"We have budget restraints... and bottom lines to talk about...and when you're in business it's all about the bottom line. The services and resources that cost us nothing that VR provides to us are so valuable to our company in achieving this bottom line."

Bob Foley, Raytheon Company

"The impact Vocational Rehabilitation has had not only on the defense and aerospace industry, but also in partnerships with Raytheon, has been mutually beneficial. We have had numerous employees who have come on board who have provided a wealth of knowledge and skills that we would not have had access to through career fairs or opportunities on the web."

Vicki Winn, Cellular One/Western Wireless

"Through our partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation, we're ensured that the people we hire meet our needs as a business. VR makes it a point to understand our business and our culture. They understand what we're looking for and they stand by us when they make a placement."

Debra Russell, Starbucks

"The most important thing for Starbucks is a relationship. That's what Vocational Rehabilitation has built with us. It was a new opportunity for us to bring in individuals with challenges, both physically and cognitively, and we were unsure as to how to proceed. That's where the relationship with VR helped."

Calvin Lyons, Washington Mutual Bank, Inc.

"We firmly believe that a company's strength lies in its ability to mirror the community that it serves. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation helps us achieve this goal by providing well qualified employees."



