

# Employees with Disabilities Achieving Long-Term Employment Success

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## ■ A QUICK LOOK:

Success in employment is something that most people who enter the workforce strive to achieve. Whether it's a promotion, a raise, or continued employment, many people look to advance themselves. This is no different for employees with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Policymakers, researchers, and state vocational rehabilitation administrators have a common goal for the individuals taking part in the public state vocational rehabilitation (VR) program: success. But how can they measure success? What research has been done in the areas of job retention and support practices for people with disabilities? The answer is limited research. Therefore the authors of this paper focused on beginning some of that research.

## ■ KEY FINDINGS:

The authors conducted a review of 139 records of individuals with ASD between October 1, 2009 and December 31, 2017 who were referred to support organizations. The organizations assist people with ASD in competitive integrated employment. Here are some of their findings:

- Compared to high national unemployment rates for individuals with ASD, 104 people who were referred for CIE obtained employment in 126 different jobs.
- After 18 months of employment most participants were able to move from moderate/intensive levels of support to minimal support.
- Initial job retention ranged from 100% at 3 months of employment to 74.3% at 18 months.
- Employment retention ranged from 100% at 3 months to 87.1% at 18 months.
- Most of the employees reviewed achieved stabilization by week 9, which required 20% or less intervention time to maintain employment.

## ■ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE:

- The findings of the authors shows that individuals with ASD are able to obtain and maintain employment.
- The long-term support provided to the individuals reviewed indicates that supported employment and intervention support from employment specialists is an important part of job retention and advancement.
- Employees with ASD benefit from the ongoing assessment feature that happens during long-term support.
- At the 6 month employment mark the findings indicated a need for increased support including job training, social skills and behavioral supports.
- Varying levels of support are still needed for different clients with ASD.
- Requirements for more long-term support for people with ASD can be something policy makers reevaluate given the effectiveness in both cost and results.

## ■ MORE ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

- Several large companies have employment incentives for the hiring of individuals with ASD including Microsoft, Salesforce, Cable Labs, Hewlett Packard, CollabNet, Best Buy, Ford Motor and Deloitte.
- Individuals with ASD who achieve CIE exhibit higher levels of independence than their peers with ASD who don't obtain CIE.
- When individuals with ASD are employed in CIE, they make wages consistent with their peers without a disability in similar jobs.

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