

Employment Goals and Settings: Effects of Individual and Systemic Factors

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A quick look: ■

High rates of unemployment remain an issue for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Studies have revealed that people with more significant I/DD in all settings were more likely to experience unemployment than those without I/DD. Employment goals have been cited as an important tool for people with I/DD to gain and maintain employment. This is specifically true in a community setting. The authors of this paper dive into the policy and practice implications that could improve the system that assists and supports people with I/DD in employment. Through their findings, they looked to provide better understanding of goals and employment settings for people with I/DD.

Key Findings: ■

The study analyzed data from 26 states using the 2012-2013 National Core Indicator (NCI) Adult Consumer Survey, which is a voluntary state project of the Human Services Research Institute and National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services. There were an average of 506 people in each state reviewed who received I/DD services. These are some of the findings:

- ▶ Every increased level of I/DD reduces the odds of individuals having an employment goal by an average of 41%.
- ▶ People with the most significant levels of I/DD had almost a 0% chance of having an employment goal.
- ▶ People with I/DD who can verbally communicate without assistance had 387% and 222% higher chance of having an employment goal.
- ▶ People with higher levels of I/DD, who have less ability to communicate and less mobility, had the strongest negative impact for people with I/DD to be employed in individual community settings. In these community settings, people are employed by a business and earn at least minimum wage.
- ▶ People with I/DD who had an employment goal were also 11 times more likely to be employed in an individual community setting and over 6 times more likely in a group community setting, which is where a group of people with I/DD are supported by a staff member while they work and are paid by the employer or support provider.

Putting It into Practice: ■

This study evaluated the services received by adults with I/DD who receive services from state I/DD agencies. With the results, the authors had suggestions to enhance the practices of these services for people with I/DD.

- ▶ Services should aim to have more impartial access to individual community employment for all people.
- ▶ Research unveiled a common desire to work in the community from people with I/DD, similar to the general population.
- ▶ A crucial step in the employment process for people with I/DD is to establish an employment goal in their service plans.
- ▶ Guardians actually act as a systematic barrier and decrease the odds that a person with I/DD will have an employment goal, but it does not have a significant effect on employment itself.
- ▶ Individuals under guardianship possibly lack the authority and the opportunity to determine their own life goals, but more research is needed in this area.

More about this Article (Where to go from here?) ■

- ▶ Of the 11,370 individuals reviewed only 22.2% had an employment goal.
- ▶ Out of 11,790 individuals reviewed 65.6% had no paid employment.
- ▶ Employment First legislation redefines the relationship between people with disabilities and publicly funded services and supports, lifting systematic barriers to individual employment in the community.
- ▶ Seventeen states have passed Employment First legislation and 16 other states have administrative directives or executive orders propelling Employment First.

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