



Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employment Policy and Measurement (EPM-RRTC)

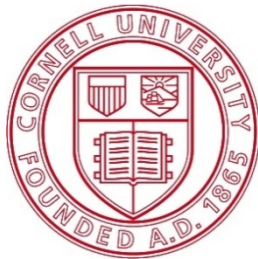
Andrew J. Houtenville, Ph.D.

David Wittenburg, Ph.D.





EPM-RRTC Team



Burton Blatt Institute
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY



Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.





Motivation for the Center

- Disparities: Despite advances in programs, policies, and technology, there are persistent and far-reaching employment gap between people with and without disabilities!
- Adverse Program Interactions: Disability policy is spread across multiple agencies and jurisdictions. There is a concern that the lack of a coordinated policies may mean the conflict
- Measurement: Current measures and statistics relating to of employment outcomes, accommodations, program participation, and services do not provide sufficient detail.



Why NIDRR?

- NIDRR is uniquely positioned:
 - It is the only government research institute that focuses on disability issues.
 - It holds to the social model of disability, which recognizes the non-medical elements of disability and social participation.
 - It does not provide direct services and therefore is not vested in any one program or services approach, which is crucial given the possibility of interactions.
 - It is positioned to facilitate multi-agency agreements and research related to multiple programs.



Competitive Priorities

- Impact of Policy: “Increased knowledge of government policies and programs that *affect* employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities”
- Measurement: “Improved capacity to *measure* the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities”
- Knowledge Translation: “Increased *incorporation* of research findings from the RRTC project into practice or policy”



Overview of Research Activities

- Policy issue briefs and forums
 - Pending fiscal crisis
 - Declining Employment
- Research Findings
 - Secondary data
 - Reviews of demonstrations
- Develop administrative capabilities for on-going research
 - Data use agreements

Selected Findings



Programs Influence Behavior

- Size of Program Overlaps
 - 65% of working-age people with disabilities participate in a safety-net program,
- Proposed Alternatives
 - DI trust fund projected to exhaust funds in 2016
 - Several proposals exist for alternatives to SSDI (e.g., experience rating, private disability)
 - Problem: No evidence of their effectiveness
 - Need: Additional testing/experimentation



Program Participant Subgroups are Important

- Previous demonstrations:
 - Targeted narrow groups
 - Younger and those with psychiatric and cognitive impairments had largest employment impacts
- Importance of tracking outcomes for subgroups
 - SSDI beneficiaries are more likely to hit employment milestones for certain subgroups
 - Younger, seeking employment services, those who were awarded at initial level



Selected Health and Education Findings

- Returns to Education
 - Similar returns for people with early-onset physical disabilities and people without disabilities
 - People with early-onset mental disabilities fare worse



Current Trend Findings

- Great Recession had large effect on people with disabilities
 - Substantial loss of blue-collar and goods-producing jobs.
 - Possible permanent gap in these jobs
- Measures influence outcome
 - New “Supplemental” poverty measure shows smaller gap in poverty relative to previous measure
 - Post tax is very important



Informing the Public

- Interactions with Congressional staffers on key issues
- Newspaper citations
- Testimonies to House Ways and Means Committee.
- Presentations to the Social Security Advisory Board.
- Presentations to state staff
- Journal articles and policy briefs



Next Steps

- Planned studies
 - Health and education
 - Program interactions (especially using VR, SSA benefit, and earnings data)
 - Continued focus on measurement
- Continued response to policy makers
 - We need your input