



Research to Policy Roundtable

David Wittenburg

**Presented at the 2013 Annual Compendium on Disability
Statistics**

Washington, D.C.

December 11, 2013

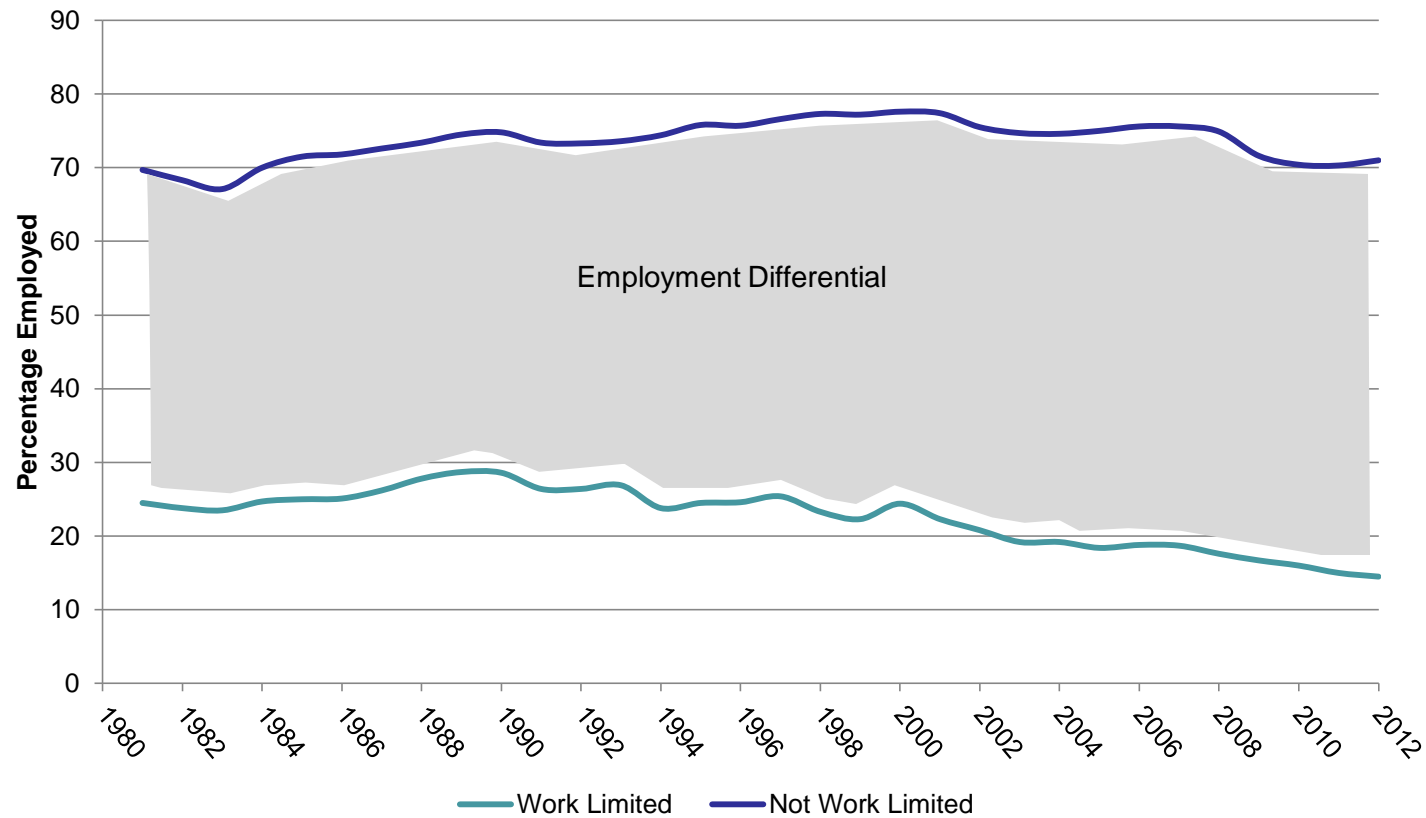


Objectives

- Employment trends and other related outcomes
- Policy challenges
- Lessons based on existing research
 - What we know
 - What we do not know



Gaps in Employment Rates Are Increasing



Source: [2012 Annual Statistics Compendium](#).



Poverty and Government Spending

- Poverty:
 - Relatively high for people with work limitations (31 percent)

Source: [2012 Annual Statistics Compendium](#).

- Federal expenditures
 - \$357 billion in 2008
 - 12.0 percent of all federal outlays, up from 11.3 percent just six years earlier

Source: Stapleton and Livermore (2011).



Policy Challenges



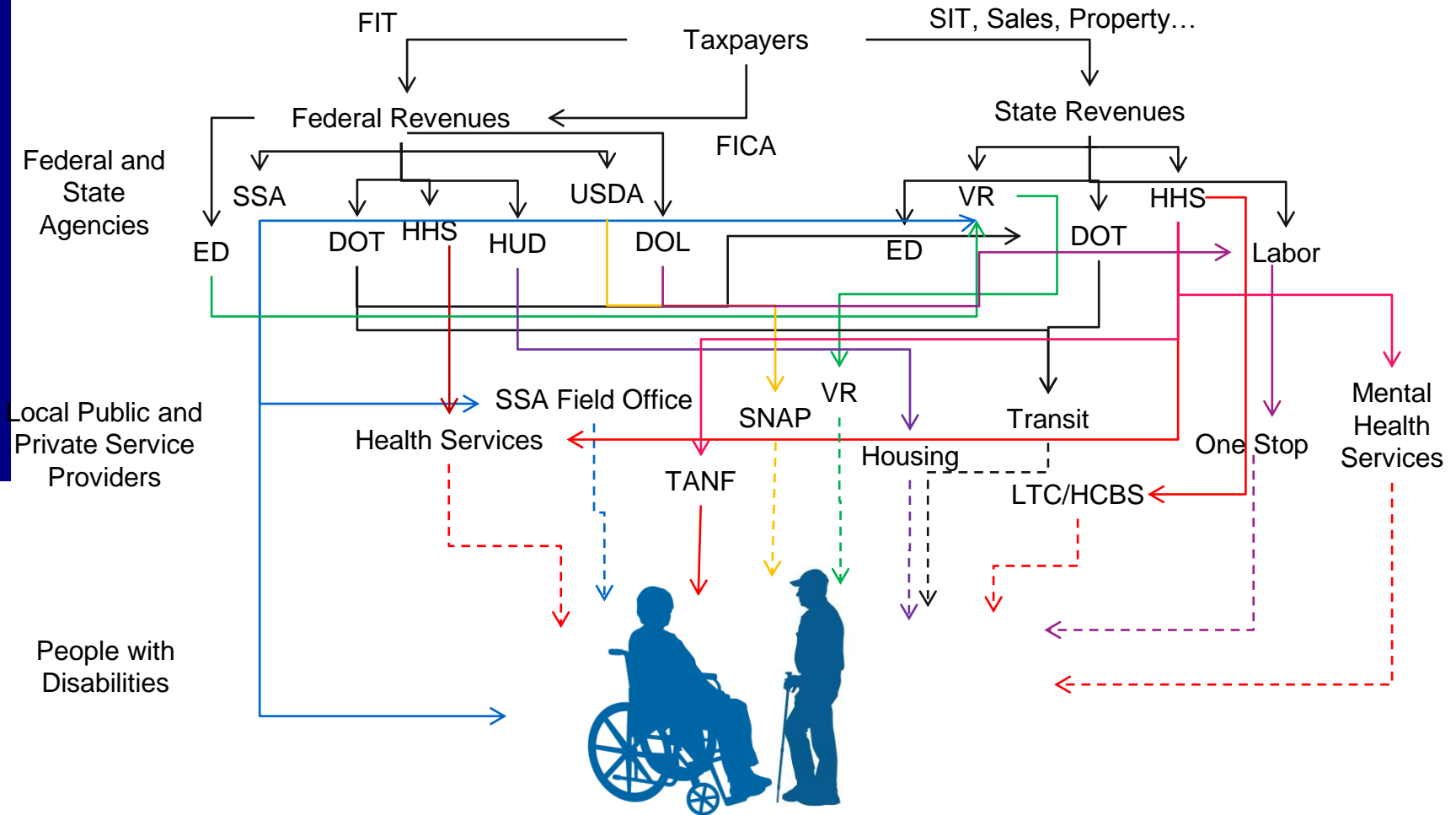
Characteristics Related to Employment

- Relative to those without disabilities, people with disabilities are
 - Older
 - Have less education
 - Less likely to be married
- Large differences in relative employment rates at older ages and for less educated groups
- Implications
 - Return-to-work policies have to address multiple potential barriers

Source: Sevak 2013.



The Fragmented Disability System





Work Disincentives and Lack of Timely Supports

- Limited spending on employment supports relative to other supports
- Eligibility criteria for major programs focus on inability to work



What Do We Know About Effective Employment Strategies?

- **Intervention**
 - Piloting before going to scale
 - Customization and intensity of service delivery matters
- **Target population**
 - Larger employment outcomes in younger populations
- **Intervention goals**
 - Have to be clearly understood by service providers and target population

Source: Wittenburg et al. 2013.



What Don't We Know About Effective Employment Strategies?

- Lack of evidence on the potential of coordinated and early intervention approaches
 - Few incentives for agencies to jointly pursue early interventions
 - Target populations are hard to identify
- Lack of testing of systemic changes



Summary

- Employment trends
 - Downward trends indicate continued policy problem
- Multiple potential challenges to promoting employment
 - Diverse population with multiple at-risk characteristics
 - Fragmented support system
 - Large work disincentives and lack of coordination
- Evidence suggests some potential to address challenges
 - Customized supports to well-targeted supports with clear emphasis on employment are promising
- Challenge for agency leaders
 - Tradeoffs of developing incremental policies (single agency) versus systematic changes (cross-system)



References

- Institute on Disability, University of New Hampshire. [“2012 Annual Statistics Compendium.”](http://www.disabilitycompendium.org/archives/2012-compendium-statistics/) Available at [\http://www.disabilitycompendium.org/archives/2012-compendium-statistics/]. Accessed December 5, 2013.
- Stapleton, David, and Gina Livermore . “Costs, Cuts, and Consequences: Charting a New Course for Working-Age People with Disabilities.” Report no. 11-03. Washington, DC: Mathematic Policy Research Center for Studying Disability Policy, 2011.
- Sevak, Purvi. “Individual Characteristics and Employment Outcomes Among Individuals with Disabilities.” Personal communication, add date, 2013.
- Wittenburg, David, David R. Mann, and Allison Thompkins. “The Disability System and Programs to Promote Employment for People with Disabilities.” *IZA Journal of Labor Policy*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2013, pp. 1–25.