

Massachusetts Employment and Disability Report, 2000-2004

What is this report?

This is the first in an annual series of reports on the employment of people with disabilities in Massachusetts developed by the Medicaid Infrastructure and Comprehensive Employment Opportunities grant. This report is intended to supplement the Massachusetts Employment and Disability Snapshot Report by providing more detailed information on employment services and outcomes.

The report includes information on the employment of people with disabilities in Massachusetts as well as data on particular populations of people with disabilities: those on Supplemental Security Income; MassHealth (Medicaid) members; and people receiving services from the Department of Mental Retardation, the Department of Mental Health, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. Data are also provided on services available to people with disabilities through One-Stop Career Centers, which are part of the workforce development system available to the general population.

The information and data included in this report were chosen to provide a brief description of each agency's employment efforts. Since each agency is unique, *we did not attempt to develop a common format for the agency descriptions but rather tailored each agency's section to best reflect that agency's population, mission, and available data. As such, the agency descriptions should not be used to compare agencies to each other but rather to learn about each agency as a distinct entity.*

Why report these data?

As the data in this report show, the unemployment and underemployment of people with disabilities is a significant issue in Massachusetts, as it is throughout the United States. The employment rate of people with disabilities is less than half that of people without disabilities, despite the fact that many people with disabilities want to work.

Public support systems can play an important role in addressing these employment disparities. Disability agencies (such as the Department of Mental Health, Department of Mental Retardation, and state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies) can provide services and supports to encourage and enable people with disabilities to find and maintain employment. Workforce development services, such as those provided by One Stop Career Centers, can be an important source of employment-specific information and support. Income and health care supports (provided by Social Security and MassHealth) offer work incentives that can encourage employment and minimize the fear of losing benefits through gaining employment.

It is not clear, however, what the overall scope and role of such employment supports is in the state of Massachusetts. This report provides, for the first time in one place, a

summary of the various supports available, how many people utilize these supports, and how many people obtain employment through them.

How is employment defined in this report?

Employment can be defined generally as working at a job for pay, but for people with disabilities employment exists on a continuum from sheltered employment to competitive employment. In this report, we defined “competitive employment” as working for pay in an individual, community-based job where the individual is paid directly by the employer. By this definition, competitive employment does include employment with ongoing job supports, but does not include sheltered or group employment. Each agency has its own definition of employment, so the definition may vary slightly across data sets.

Massachusetts state agencies also support individuals in other employment arrangements including sheltered workshops and group supported employment settings such as enclaves or mobile work crews, where wages are often below minimum wage and paid by the agency, as well as non-work settings such as day habilitation. While such arrangements are not competitive employment, some data on these settings are included to provide a complete picture of the Commonwealth’s investment in employment and day supports for individuals with disabilities.

Where did these data come from?

This report was developed in consultation with state agency representatives who provided and/or verified all of the state-agency data included here. The background data on pages 3 and 4 were obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Census Bureau and the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center. Social Security data (pp. 5-6) were drawn from the annual “SSI Disabled Recipients Who Work” report of the Social Security Administration. The MassHealth data (pp. 7-8) were drawn from the 2003 MassHealth Employment and Disability Survey conducted by the Center for Health Policy Research at the UMass Medical School. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (pp. 9-10) and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (pp. 15-16) data were taken from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) 911 dataset. Data on the Department of Mental Health and Department of Mental Retardation (pp. 11-14) are from agency datasets obtained from our agency informants.

Background: Employment and the Economy

Massachusetts 2000-2004

This report covers the years 2000-2004, which were difficult years for the Massachusetts economy. The state and nation were in a recession during this time period, with the unemployment rate in Massachusetts, more than doubling (from 2.6% to 5.8%) from 2000-2003 before dropping to 5.1% in 2004.

Massachusetts Unemployment Rate:

2000	3%
2001	4%
2002	5%
2003	6%
2004	5%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The national unemployment rate also increased during this same time period, although not as drastically (from 4% in 2000 to 5.5% in 2004)

National Unemployment Rate:

2000	4%
2001	5%
2002	6%
2003	6%
2004	6%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The employment rate (% of people employed) in Massachusetts correspondingly declined in the early 2000s. From 2000-2003, the percentage of working-age adults employed dropped from 77% to 73%; in 2004 the percentage rose to 74%, still considerably lower than in 2000.

Because the unemployment rate only includes people working or actively seeking employment (in the labor force), the employment rate provides a more accurate sense of how much of the entire adult population is employed.

Employment Rate:

2000	77%
2001	76%
2002	74%
2003	73%
2004	74%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

The early 2000s were also a time of decreasing tax revenues in Massachusetts, due to a combination of the weakened economy and the effects of tax cuts. The decrease in

revenues forced budget cuts that affected the disability and employment programs described in the following pages.

Massachusetts tax revenues (in billions of FY04 dollars):

FY2001	\$18
FY2002	\$15
FY2003	\$15
FY2004	\$15

Source: Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center

Employment Participation of People with Disabilities

The employment rate for people with disabilities is considerably lower than that for the general population. In 2004, 35% of people with disabilities in Massachusetts were employed, compared to 74% of all working-age adults. Moreover, “employment” in the Census refers to working for pay in any capacity, so the figure for people with disabilities may include non-competitive employment settings. It is particularly important to consider employment rate (rather than the unemployment rate) for people with disabilities, because many people with disabilities are “out of the workforce” and therefore not included in the calculation of unemployment.

Year, Employment rate for all working-age adults, employment rate for working-age adults with disabilities

2000	77%	50%
2001	76%	46%
2002	74%	44%
2003 *	73%	36%
2004	74	35%

Note: Part of the drop in employment rate of people with disabilities from 2002-2003 was due to a change in survey wording. The 2003 version of the survey is considered more accurate; employment participation may have been overestimated in 2000-2002.

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

People with disabilities were also more likely to be living in poverty; in 2004, 23% of working age adults with disabilities had incomes at or below poverty level, compared to 7% of working-age adults without disabilities.

Year, percent below poverty level (All working-age adults), percent below poverty level (Working-age adults with disabilities)

2000	8%	20%
2001	8%	21%
2002	8%	18%
2003	8%	23%
2004	7%	23%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

The employment rate differed by type of disability as well. Adults with physical or mental disabilities had lower employment rates than those with sensory disabilities. Those with disabilities affecting their ability to go outside the home or with employment disabilities had the lowest employment rates at 20% and below.

Type of disability, 2004 employment rate

Sensory Disability	43%
Physical Disability	31%
Mental Disability	27%
Go-Outside-Home Disability	17%
Employment Disability	18%
Any Disability	35%
All Working-Age Adults	78%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 Census

Social Security

www.ssa.gov

The Social Security Administration operates two cash assistance programs for people with disabilities. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) is an insurance program that pays benefits to workers with disabilities who have paid Social Security taxes. Eligibility is based on having a disability and having worked long enough (and recently enough) and paid enough into the system to be considered eligible for Social Security payments. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is available to adults and children with disabilities and is paid from general funds, so no payment into the Social Security system is required. To be eligible for SSI, an individual must fall within certain income and asset limits in addition to having a disability.

The data presented here focus primarily on SSI recipients, since the Social Security Administration collects less data on work habits and work incentive use among SSDI recipients than among SSI recipients.

In 2004, 7.5% of SSI recipients in Massachusetts were working, continuing the trend of very low work participation among SSI recipients. Since 2000, the percentage of SSI recipients working has dropped from 9.2% to 7.5%. Like the Census data, Social Security data do not distinguish among types of employment, so some of the people in that 7.5% may be in sheltered or group settings.

Year, employment rate of SSI recipients in Massachusetts

FY2000	9.2%
FY2001	8.8%
FY2002	8.4%
FY2003	7.7%
FY2004	7.5%

Source: Social Security Administration

Several work incentive provisions are in place to encourage employment of SSI recipients. These work incentives allow individuals to continue to receive cash benefits and/or Medicaid even if their earned income exceeds the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level. Without these work incentives, anyone with earnings exceeding SGA would be ineligible for SSI.

Under Section 1619(a) of the Social Security Act, individuals with disabilities whose earnings exceed Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) can retain their eligibility for SSI as long as they continue to have a disability and meet other eligibility requirements. Section 1619(b) allows individuals who no longer receive cash benefits due to earnings to continue receiving Medicaid if their earnings do not exceed a certain threshold (the threshold was \$30,452 for Massachusetts residents in 2004).

In Massachusetts the number of SSI recipients qualifying for benefits under the 1619(a) and (b) provisions has dropped over the past four years. 1619(a) recipients have decreased from over 1000 to 582, while 1619(b) recipients have dropped from about 3500 to 3000.

Average monthly earnings for these populations have remained steady at about \$1,000 for 1619(a) recipients and \$1,200 for 1619(b) recipients.

Year, Number of 1619(a) users, Number of 1619(b) users

FY2000	1019	3534
FY2001	838	3313
FY2002	673	3348
FY2003	618	2876
FY2004	582	2979

Source: Social Security Administration

Year, Average monthly earnings of 1619(a) users, average monthly earnings of 1619(b) users

FY2000	\$963	\$1159
FY2001	\$1021	\$1156
FY2002	\$1066	\$1194
FY2003	\$1054	\$1171
FY2004	\$1082	\$1200

Source: Social Security Administration

A PASS (Plan for Achieving Self Support) allows an individual with a disability to set aside income or resources to get a specific type of job or to start a business. The income and resources that are set aside are not counted under the SSI income and resource tests. The cost of certain impairment-related services or items needed to earn that income can also be excluded as IRWE (Impairment Related Work Expenses) or BWE (Blind Work Expenses).

Use of PASS and IRWE is very low, with only a few hundred people each year utilizing these options. While remaining low (below 100 people), the use of PASS has grown somewhat over the past four years, while use of IRWE and BWE has decreased.

Year, Number using PASS, number using IRWE, number using BWE

FY2000	62	270	290
FY2002	70	232	269
FY2003	86	210	260
FY2004	87	184	244

Source: Social Security Administration

MassHealth and CommonHealth

www.mass.gov/masshealth

MassHealth, the Massachusetts Medicaid Program, offers a broad range of health care services by paying for all or part of MassHealth members' health insurance or paying medical providers for services given to MassHealth members. MassHealth is available to Massachusetts residents who qualify based on income; many MassHealth members are individuals with disabilities.

In 2003, approximately 17% of MassHealth members with disabilities were employed. Since the survey from which these data were taken did not distinguish among types of employment, it is unknown what proportion of these individuals was in competitive (rather than sheltered or group-based) employment. Even among those MassHealth members who were working, the majority worked part time and earned less than \$20,000 per year.

Hours worked per week (MassHealth members, 2003)

Not working	62%
10 hours or less	6%
11-20 hours	14%
21-30 hours	6%
31+ hours	12%

Source: Center for Health Policy Research

Yearly earnings from work (MassHealth members, 2003)

\$10,000 or less	59%
\$10,001-20,000	21%
\$20,001-30,000	12%
\$30,001-40,000	4%
Over \$40,000	4%

Source: Center for Health Policy Research

Consistent with the Census data on the overall population of people with disabilities, MassHealth members with sensory disabilities had a higher employment rate than those with physical or mental disabilities. People with developmental disabilities had one of the highest employment rates, but that is probably due to the large number of people with developmental disabilities in sheltered or group employment settings.

Type of disability, employment rate

Sensory Disorder	29%
Developmental Disability	27%
Mental/Emotional Problems	14%
Physical Disability	11%
Long-Term Illness	11%
Head Injury	11%

Source: Center for Health Policy Research

Since 1988, the MassHealth CommonHealth program has provided comprehensive health insurance for working adults with disabilities who are ineligible for other MassHealth coverage due to income. Individuals in the CommonHealth “working” program are working at least 10 hours per week or 40 hours per month and pay a premium based on earnings. The MassHealth CommonHealth program ensures that individuals with disabilities can retain their MassHealth coverage when they return to work.

As might be expected, the employment rate of CommonHealth members was far greater than that of MassHealth members; 88% of CommonHealth members were employed in 2003, compared to 17% of MassHealth members.

The proportion of working-age members enrolled in CommonHealth Working is an indicator of employment among MassHealth members. The percentage in CommonHealth Working has grown rapidly in recent years but is still small. There were 6,615 adults enrolled in the CommonHealth Working program during FY2003.

Year, Percent of MassHealth members in CommonHealth Working program

FY2000	2.3%
FY2001	2.9%
FY2002	3.4%
FY2003	3.7%

Source: Center for Health Policy Research

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

www.mass.gov/mrc

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) promotes equality, empowerment and productive independence of individuals with disabilities. MRC provides comprehensive services to people with disabilities that will maximize their quality of life and economic self-sufficiency in the community.

MRC has two program areas providing employment services: the public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program (which is partly federally-funded and includes both placement assistance and some federally-funded supported employment) and Statewide Employment Services (which are state-funded and include ongoing supports, some sheltered and group-based employment, and the Project IMPACT benefits planning assistance project). All of MRC's programs serve people with severe disabilities.

Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program

In fiscal year 2004, approximately 3000 people with severe disabilities entered competitive employment and stayed employed for a minimum of 90 days ("successful rehabilitation") after receiving services from the MRC under the Public VR Program, which provides training and placement to enable people with disabilities to obtain competitive employment in the community.

Year, number entering competitive employment

FY2001	4603
FY2002	3215
FY2003	2618
FY2004	2986

Source: Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

The rehabilitation rate for VR agencies is the percent of individuals receiving services who achieve a successful rehabilitation. It is calculated as the number of successful rehabilitations divided by that number plus the number of unsuccessful rehabilitations of people with an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). Successful closures include competitive employment (including supported employment), self-employment, state agency managed business enterprise, homemaker, and unpaid family worker. MRC's rehabilitation rate in FY2004 was 61%, down from 70% in FY2000.

Source: RSA 911 database

Year, number rehabilitated, number not rehabilitated, rehabilitation rate

FY2000	4294	2104	70%
FY2001	4768	2218	68%
FY2002	3353	2515	57%
FY2003	2710	2490	52%
FY2004	3093	1992	61%

Source: RSA 911 database

On average, people who obtained competitive employment with Public VR assistance in 2004 worked 29 hours per week and earned \$336 per week. Hours worked remained fairly steady from 2000-2004, while earnings peaked in FY02 and then fell somewhat in FY03 and FY04.

Year, hours per week, weekly earnings

FY2000, 30, \$294

FY2001, 30, 317

FY2002, 31, 408

FY2003, 29, 340

FY2004, 29, 336

Source: RSA 911 database

As in the Census and MassHealth figures, people with sensory (hearing) impairments fared better with MRC services in FY04, having both a higher rehabilitation rate and higher hours and earnings than people with physical or mental disabilities. People with sensory impairments were, however, a small proportion of successful closures; the highest numbers of closures were for people with mental health, orthopedic, and learning disabilities. People with visual impairments are not included in these figures as they are primarily served by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB).

Disability Type, Number of closures into competitive employment, Rehabilitation Rate, Hours per Week, Weekly Earnings

Hearing, 253, 76%, 32, \$383

Orthopedic, 523, 59%, 30, \$375

Mental Retardation, 244, 71%, 23, \$197

Substance Abuse, 350, 55%, 33, \$428

Mental Health, 751, 55%, 26, \$290

Learning Disability, 436, 70%, 32, \$353

Traumatic Brain Injury, 57, 61%, 23, \$262

Other, 298, 57%, 27, \$309

Total, 2912, 61%, 29, \$333

Source: RSA 911 database

Statewide Employment Services

Statewide Employment Services (MRC's state-funded services) include the Extended Employment Program (EEP), Community Based Employment Services (CBES), and Project Impact.

EEP, which includes sheltered and group employment, served 817 individuals in FY04. CBES, which provides assessment, placement, and support services for community employment, served 623 individuals in FY04, of whom 185 were placed in community employment. Another 190 individuals received long-term employment supports under CBES.

Individuals placed through the CBES worked an average of 25 hours per week, and earned \$8.35 per hour, at the time of placement; those receiving extended supports had slightly lower hours per week and earnings per hour.

Hours per week (FY2004), Placements 25, Extended supports 22

Hourly earnings (FY2004, Placements \$8.35, Extended supports 8.03

Source: Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Department of Mental Health

www.mass.gov/dmh

The Department of Mental Health (DMH), as the State Mental Health Authority, assures and provides access to services and supports to meet the mental health needs of individuals of all ages, enabling them to live, work and participate in their communities. DMH establishes standards to ensure effective and culturally competent care to promote recovery. DMH sets policy, promotes self-determination, protects human rights and supports mental health training and research.

The two major Department of Mental Health (DMH) initiatives related to employment are the Clubhouse program and SEE (Services for Education & Employment). Both the Clubhouse and SEE programs include a variety of services of which employment services are a part.

Clubhouses supported about 3,000 people in Massachusetts in FY04 by providing peer supports, housing assistance, recreational, social, education, and employment services. Approximately 1,800 of the 3,000 Clubhouse members across the state worked in competitive employment.

SEE provided services, including vocational assessments, placement assistance, and long-term supports, to 2,474 people pursuing educational and employment goals in FY04; 875 of those 2,474 worked in competitive employment.

While the SEE and Clubhouse programs are not the only DMH employment services available, they are two of the largest sources of employment support and are the most well-documented. Consequently, this report focuses primarily on these two programs.

A large number of people receiving DMH-funded employment services are Clubhouse members. Since 2000, the total number of people employed who receive Clubhouse services has remained fairly steady, ranging from a low of 1,718 people in 2003 to a high of 1,831 people in 2001.

The Clubhouses provide three options for competitive employment depending on the supports needed. All three options involve community jobs paid by the employer at the prevailing wage. Transitional Employment is part-time, temporary, entry level, employment, where the clubhouse guarantees 100% job coverage to the employer. Supported Employment is ongoing employment with supports from the Clubhouse. Independent Employment services help members secure and keep their own independent job but do not include ongoing support.

Transitional Employment is included here as a type of competitive employment because it meets our definition of employment for this report (see p. 2), but stricter definitions used in research on evidence-based employment practices require that the job not be set aside specifically for a person with a disability.* By this stricter definition, Transitional Employment would not be considered competitive employment.

Year, number in Transitional Employment, number in Supported Employment, number in Independent Employment, Total

FY2000	816	639	736	1789
FY2001	740	575	801	1831

FY2002	666	616	853	1789
FY2003	609	611	796	1718
FY2004	675	661	978	1768

Source: Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition

In FY2004, average wages of people receiving employment services from Clubhouses were between \$7.24 (for people in Transitional Employment) and \$8.56 (for those in Independent Employment). People in the SEE program earned an average of \$7.41 per hour.

Hourly wages, FY2000, FY2001, FY2002, FY2003, FY2004

Clubhouses:

Transitional Employment, 6.42, 6.81, 7.01, 7.14, 7.24

Supported Employment, 6.97, 7.44, 7.42, 7.70, 7.65

Independent Employment, 7.43, 8.17, 8.28, 8.48, 8.56

SEE, Data not available FY2000-FY2003, 7.41 in FY2004

Source: Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition, DMH

*Source for stricter definition of employment: * Cook, J.A., Leff, H.S., Blyler, C.R., Gold, P.B., Goldberg, R.W., Mueser, K.T., Toprac, M.G., McFarlane, W.R., Shafer, M.S., Blankertz, L.E., Dudek, K., Razzano, L.A., Grey, D.D., and Burke-Miller, J. (2005). Results of a Multi-site Randomized Trial of Supported Employment Interventions for Individuals With Severe Mental Illness. *Archives of General Psychiatry* 62, pp. 505-512.

Department of Mental Retardation

www.mass.gov/dmr

The Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) works closely with individuals, families, provider agencies, and advocacy organizations to provide quality support services to people with mental retardation. It provides an array of services for adults to promote their personal skill development, productivity, and community participation. DMR also provides a range of individualized, comprehensive and long-term employment and related support services. DMR provides assistance in job placement, transportation, housing, or intense levels of treatment, monitoring and care.

DMR supports several types of employment, including competitive employment, sheltered, and group-based programs. Individual supported employment is competitive employment in the community with ongoing supports from a provider or agency. Group supported employment involves a small group of individuals (typically 2 to 8) working in the community under the supervision of a DMR provider agency and most often paid by that agency. Facility-based employment is in settings such as sheltered workshops in which there is little or no contact with other workers without disabilities.

As of April 2004, approximately 5,574 individuals were receiving DMR employment services. Of those 5,574 individuals, 1,654 were in competitive (individual integrated) employment; 1,459 were in group supported employment; and 3,047 were in facility-based (sheltered workshop) employment. * In addition, 2,218 individuals were in volunteer work or other non-paid day activities and 508 received school-to-work transition services.

*Percentages do not add up to 100% because some individuals were in more than one setting.

FY 2004

Number in Individual Supported Employment	1,526
Number in Group Supported Employment	1,459
Number in Facility Based Employment	2,822
Number in Volunteer or Non-Paid Day Services	2,218
Number in Transition	508

Source: DMR

Hourly wages have increased over time for people in individual supported (competitive) employment, but have remained steady or decreased in group and facility-based employment. People in individual supported (competitive) employment earned over twice as much as those in group supported employment and 4 times as much as those in facility-based employment. Consequently, only those in individual supported employment had average wages above the minimum wage.

Year, Hourly wages (individual supported employment), hourly wages (group supported employment), hourly wages (facility based employment)

FY2002	6.50	3.50	1.47
FY2003	7.16	3.82	1.53
FY 2004	7.25	1.26	0.93

Source: DMR

The number of hours worked per month has decreased over the past three years in all employment settings. Most employment was clearly part-time, with average monthly hours ranging between 43 (in group supported employment) and 53 (in individual supported employment) in FY2004.

Year, Hours per week (individual supported employment), Hours per week (group supported employment), Hours per week (facility based employment)

FY2002	58	47	49
FY2003	55	41	47
FY 2004	53	43	47

Source: DMR

Commission for the Blind

www.mass.gov/mcb

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) works in partnership with legally blind individuals to provide an array of specialized services to help consumers reach their goals of independence and full community participation. MCB administers Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Services for elders and children, and a state Medical Assistance program. MCB assesses each consumer to determine their functional impact of vision loss and designs an individualized program of rehabilitation services to restore skills and confidence.

The MCB provides public vocational rehabilitation services to people who are legally blind, supported employment services, and operates the Ferguson Industries for the Blind, a sheltered workshop.

MCB placed 91 individuals in community jobs in FY04. Competitive employment closures fluctuated between 80 and 120 between 2000 and 2004.

Year, number of competitive Employment Closures

FY2000	97
FY2001	120
FY2002	80
FY2003	104
FY2004	91

Source: RSA 911 database

Like MRC's, the Commission for the Blind rehabilitation rate is calculated as the number of successful closures divided by that number plus the number of unsuccessful closures among people for whom an Individualized Plan for Employment was written. MCB's rehabilitation rate in FY2003 was 82%. While this was an increase from the 2000 rate of 69%, the rehabilitation rate fluctuated during the four years.

Year	# Rehabilitated	# Not rehabilitated	Rehabilitation Rate*
FY2000	186	85	69%
FY2001	222	68	77%
FY2002	185	64	74%
FY2003	190	41	82%
FY2004	193	66	75%

Source: RSA 911 database

On average, people who obtained competitive employment with MCB assistance in 2004 worked 30 hours per week and earned \$515 per week. Both hours worked and earnings increased considerably from 2000 to 2004.

Year, Weekly earnings

FY2000	\$241
FY2001	\$251
FY2002	\$527

FY2003 \$622
FY2004 \$515
Source: RSA 911 database

Year, hours per week
FY2000 18.82
FY2001 21.19
FY2002 30.89
FY2003 30.88
FY2004 30.42
Source: RSA 911 database

One Stop Career Centers

www.mass.gov/dwd

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is responsible for overseeing the Commonwealth's workforce development system, for protecting the health and safety of Massachusetts workers, for ensuring the efficient delivery of workers compensation services, for supervision of the unemployment insurance program, and for providing dispute resolution services in various arenas.

Most of the direct employment services provided by DWD are delivered through the One Stop Career Center system, which provides employment placement assistance to people with and without disabilities. While One Stop Career Centers are not disability-specific, all services provided by Career Centers are open to people with disabilities. One-Stop Career Centers reported serving about 9,300 people with disabilities in FY05, about 5% of all One Stop customers. This figure includes only those who self-reported a disability, so the actual number may be higher.

Year Customers self-reporting a disability, Customers with no reported disability

FY2004 8,942 149,199

FY2005 9,339 165,560

Source: DWD, FY05 OSCCAR Report

The “entered employment rate” (the percent earning wages within one quarter of exiting the One Stop system) was comparable for people with and without disabilities - about 16% of One Stop customers with and without disabilities entered employment.

Year Percent entering employment (Customers with disabilities) Percent entering employment (All customers)

FY2004 15.5% 16.2%

FY2005 16.0% 15.8%

Source: DWD, FY05 OSCCAR Report

In addition to providing generic services accessible to all, DWD has two disability grants (the Disability Program Navigator grant and the Youth with Disabilities grant) from the United States Department of Labor. The Disability Navigators work at One Stop Career Centers and help people with disabilities “navigate” the workforce and disability systems as they make decisions about and plans for employment. The Disability Program Navigator grant funds 16 Disability Program Navigators in One Stop Career Centers across the state. The Youth with Disabilities grant is a larger grant of which subgrants went to four local Career Centers to enhance their work with students with disabilities.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The overall employment rate for people with disabilities is far lower than for people without disabilities, both in Massachusetts and across the nation. Increasing employment of people with disabilities is a goal for the state and a range of services and supports are provided by Massachusetts state agencies to assist people with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. The Massachusetts Employment and Disability Report provides a brief description of each state agency's efforts in this area, and is intended to serve as a basis for discussion of employment services, supports, and outcomes for people with disabilities in the Commonwealth.

One challenge in developing a report of this scope is handling the inconsistencies across state agencies in the definition of competitive employment and the types of information collected on employment services and outcomes. A task force from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, with support from the Massachusetts Medicaid Infrastructure and Comprehensive Employment Opportunities grant, is working to develop common definitions for employment services and outcomes, which will help to provide more precise and comparable data in future Employment and Disability Reports.

What is the Massachusetts Medicaid Infrastructure and Comprehensive Employment Opportunities (MICEO) grant?

The Massachusetts Medicaid Infrastructure and Comprehensive Employment Opportunities Grant (MICEO) is a collaborative effort between the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston, and the Center for Health Policy and Research at UMass Medical School, aimed at improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. The grant is funded by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CFDA #93-768). One of the goals of the project is to increase the availability of useful information to policymakers, advocates, and anyone interested in working to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities in Massachusetts.

About this report

This report was developed by the Institute for Community Inclusion with input from the Center for Health Policy and Research; an ad hoc advisory group of consumer advocates chaired by Charlie Carr, executive director of the Northeast Independent Living Program; and the MICEO leadership team.

For more information, contact:

John Butterworth, Ph.D.
(617) 287-4357
john.butterworth@umb.edu

Jennifer Sullivan Sulewski
(617) 287-4356
jennifer.sulewski@umb.edu