



Research Brief:

Supported and Customized Employment

Outcomes: RSA 911 2017 - 2020

November 2022

Background

There are distinct service delivery differences between supported employment (SE) and customized employment (CE). Given these differences, a central question is whether SE and CE produce different employment outcomes for job seekers with disabilities. To answer this question, we examined FY17 -FY20 RSA 911 data. The following research questions guided the analysis:

1. *What occupations, according to the Standard Occupational Classification system, are individuals receiving SE and CE service obtaining after exiting the state vocational rehabilitation program?*
2. *Is there a difference in occupational types at exit for individuals who receive SE and CE services?*
3. *Is there a difference in hourly wages and hours worked at exit for individuals who receive SE and CE services?*

Method

We used data from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, RSA 911 FY17-FY20 database. Several variables were examined including, demographic, employment status, primary occupation at exit, and hourly wage and hours worked per week at exit. Demographic information included gender (male, female) and race (American Indian, Asian, Black, Hawaiian, White, Hispanic). Primary occupation at exit information included the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes that are entered into RSA 911 data. The SOC system is a federal statistical standard used to classify workers into occupational categories. The final sample size for analysis was 61,764 (SE = 61,101, CE = 663).

Results

Demographic information. Findings at exit for combined SE CE cases across years:

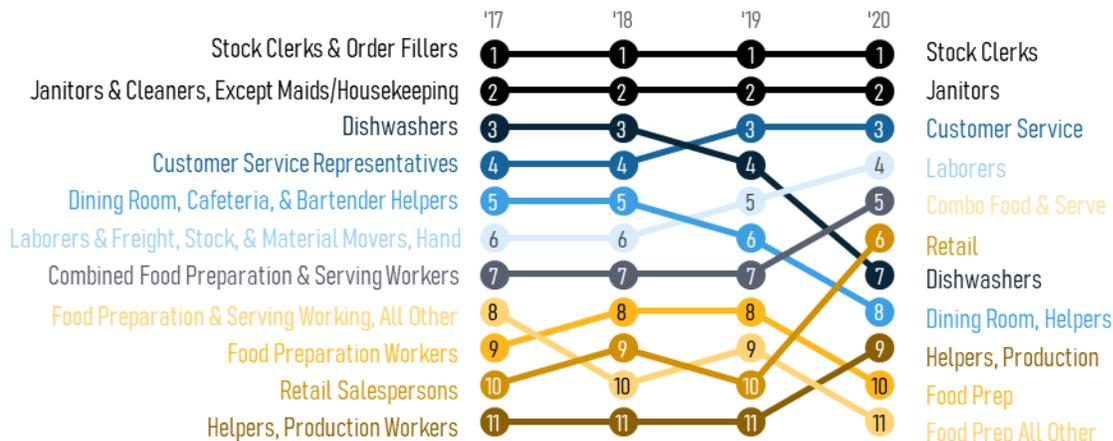
- Male = 62.6%
- Median age at exit = 27 years old
- Median wage = \$10.00 per hour
- Median hours worked per week = 20

Occupations after exit for SE and CE combined. Food preparation and serving related occupations was the largest proportion of exit occupations for combined SE and CE cases across years.

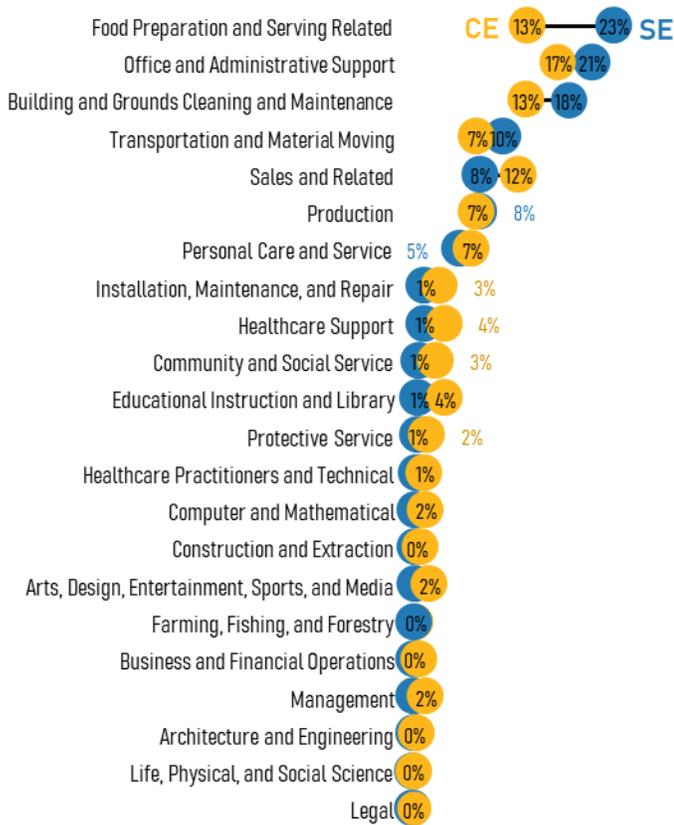
Types of occupations at exit ^a

| | 2017 | | 2018 | | 2019 | | 2020 | |
|---|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|
| Food Prep & Serving Related | 4,116 | (23.37%) | 4,085 | (23.90%) | 3,623 | (23.75%) | 2,351 | (19.92%) |
| Office & Admin. Support | 3,771 | (21.41%) | 3,629 | (21.23%) | 3,495 | (22.91%) | 1,796 | (15.21%) |
| Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance | 3,202 | (18.18%) | 3,040 | (17.79%) | 2,597 | (17.02%) | 2,154 | (18.25%) |
| Transportation & Material Moving | 1,455 | (8.26%) | 1,449 | (8.48%) | 1,328 | (8.71%) | 2,137 | (18.10%) |
| Sales & Related | 1,365 | (7.75%) | 1,295 | (7.58%) | 1,127 | (7.39%) | 1,053 | (8.92%) |
| Production | 1,301 | (7.39%) | 1,317 | (7.70%) | 1,168 | (7.66%) | 915 | (7.75%) |
| Personal Care & Service | 1,050 | (5.96%) | 1,007 | (5.89%) | 804 | (5.27%) | 536 | (4.54%) |
| All Others | 1,351 | (7.67%) | 1,271 | (7.44%) | 1,113 | (7.30%) | 862 | (7.31%) |

Inspection of the rank order of detailed occupation codes revealed that **stock clerk and order filler**, and **janitor and cleaners, except maids/housekeeping** were the top two most common positions from 2017-2021 for combined SE and CE cases at exit. Rank order changes in detailed occupation across years can be reviewed below ^b



Occupational differences between SE and CE groups. A chi-square test revealed statistically significant differences between those who had received SE services only and those who had received CE services only ($\chi^2(11, N = 61,764) = 333.30, p < .001$), however a Cramer's V test of strength of association indicated the relationship was below the suggested .20 cut-off for a "weak" relationship (Cramer's V = .073). To probe differences further, group differences in the proportional distribution of major occupational categories were visually inspected. ^c



Wages and hours per week at exit. Results of a Welch's t-test indicated that there were significant differences in hourly wages ($M_{SE} = \$10.39, SD_{SE} = 5.56$) ($M_{CE} = \$14.16, SD_{CE} = 6.01$) $t(674.33) = 16.05, p < .001$; but not in hours worked ($M_{SE} = 21.94, SD_{SE} = 10.13$) ($M_{CE} = 22.36, SD_{CE} = 12.39$), $t(671.63) = .878, p = .190$. Regression analyses revealed wage differences persisted after controlling for age, gender, and race. ^d

On average **CE** compared to **SE** had higher hourly wages but similar weekly hours.



Conclusions

Our findings show that most individuals receiving SE and CE services exit into three broad SOC categories:

1. **Food preparation and servicing related,**
2. **Office and administrative support, and**
3. **Building grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations.**

The proportional differences illustrated in the adjacent figure shows 72% of individuals receiving SE obtained job positions in four broad occupation clusters while only 50% or individuals receiving CE obtained job positions in these same occupation clusters. Proportional differences seem to suggest individuals receiving CE are obtaining a wider range of occupations.

The average wages for SE and CE services recipients are low compared to national averages. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) national average hourly wage estimate for *food Preparation and service-related occupations* is \$14.16, *office and administrative support occupations* is \$20.88, *building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations* is \$16.23, and *transportation and material moving occupations* is \$19.88. This finding raises some concern about pay equity for individuals with disabilities in supported and customized jobs.

Finally, an ancillary finding from the RSA outcome data indicated that **31.0%** of SE and **58.8%** of CE cases **did not** exit into competitive integrated employment. The numbers of individuals receiving CE services who do not exit into competitive integrated employment is concerning and researchers and policy makers should examine why more than half CE service recipients and nearly a third of SE recipients do not obtain a competitive integrated employment outcome.

Notes.

- a. Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding
- b. In 2020 Stock Clerks (43-5081) and Order Fillers (53-7065) were combined; Fast Food and Counter Workers (35-3020) and Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers (35-3021) were combined.
- c. Includes 2017-2020 combined. Yellow = CE, Blue = SE. Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.
- d. Additional information on results of regression analyses is available upon request: Tim.Riesen@usu.edu

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