

Long-term inclusion in the open labour market, state-wide

USA (Vermont) / Department of Disabilities, Ageing and Independent Living (DAIL)

By offering a broad spectrum of support that ranges from full job-site support to the occasional follow-up with more independent workers, Vermont's Supported Employment Programme facilitates the shift from sheltered employment settings to more inclusive employment for people with developmental disabilities. In 2015 almost half of all individuals in Vermont receiving developmental disabilities services were employed.

IN BRIEF

Vermont's Supported Employment Programme of 1983 is providing state-wide a full range of services that enable people with developmental disabilities to access and succeed in integrated competitive employment, including person-centred planning, meaningful job matches, full inclusion in the workforce, and creative strategies that broaden employment opportunities. By 2002, Vermont had closed all sheltered workshops. Today, 48 per cent of Vermonters receiving developmental disabilities services are employed in the regular workforce, all of whom are paid at Vermont minimum wage or higher.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Begun in 1983, the programme is in effect in all 13 regions of the state.
- In 2013 the employment rate for people with intellectual disabilities grew to a record 47.8 per cent.
- In 2015, 1,213 individuals received employment support to work; 19 were on a waiting list.
- In 2015, 194 people per 100,000 received supported employment in Vermont, the highest of all U.S. states (U.S. average: 35).

INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

Believing all people can work

The programme provides individually tailored support and thoughtful job matches by which people with intellectual disabilities can contribute like others to the regular workforce.

Overcoming fear and conflicts

As the first U.S. state to close workshops, Vermont had to overcome significant issues that emerged in the conversion process. Embracing this change was not easy for families.

Contributing to self-advocacy

In 1994 a statewide self-advocacy network – Green Mountain Self-Advocates – was formed. Run by people with developmental disabilities, it hosts an annual conference and has developed a training on converting sheltered workshops.

CONTEXT

Approximately 75 per cent (420,000) of Americans with developmental disabilities are in sheltered work- shop settings or in non-work programmes, where as only 25 per cent are in community-based supported employment. Following a state/federal-funded pilot, Supported Employment became an authorized statewide funded programme in 1983, per a new service category developed by the U.S. Centres for Medicare and Medicaid Services and reflected in Vermont’s State System of Care Plan. This was further strengthened by Vermont’s Developmental Disability Act of 1996. In 2002, Vermont closed its last sheltered workshop; and in 2008 it clearly prescribed that Medicaid may fund neither workshops nor congregate work.

QUOTE

“Employment in Vermont is the cornerstone for enabling individuals with disabilities to be included in the full fabric of living and participating in one’s community”. - William Ashe, E.D., Upper Valley Services, Inc.

KEY FEATURES

Vermont’s Supported Employment Programme of 1983 is overseen by DAIL’s Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and is implemented by 16 non-pro t agencies. The programme provides a full range of community-based services that enable people with developmental disabilities to secure paid employment in regular settings. New funding for the programme focuses on transition-aged youth (up to 26 years). Services are specified in an individualized plan, e.g., person-centred planning, job search, accommodation, on-the-job training, follow-up services, and career enhancement. Equipment and transportation may also be provided. Highly independent workers often work 26–63 hours per week, and workers requiring staffed support may receive up to 25 hours per week of job-site support. Appeals related to service provision are made to the Human Services Board. The annual budget is provided by DDSD (US\$9–10 million) and by DVR (US\$1.3 million).

OUTCOME, IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS

- In 2015 the employment rate for Vermonters who receive developmental disabilities services was 48 per cent (U.S. average: 19 per cent).

- A 2015 survey indicated that 90 per cent of these workers enjoyed their current job and 52 per cent felt they were able to work sufficient hours.
- In 2015, Vermont was featured in the Minneapolis Star Tribune's highly acclaimed civil rights series; and the National State Employment Leadership Network featured Vermont in a White Paper on promising employment practices.

TRANSFERABILITY, SCALABILITY AND COST-EFFICIENCY

According to research, the cumulative costs of supported employment are dramatically less than sheltered workshops (US\$6,618 compared to US\$19,388 per person per year). Staff members from Canada, China, Ireland, Italy, Singapore, and the United Kingdom have visited Vermont to study its programme. In 2012 the National Council on Disability included Vermont in its recommendations to U.S. President Barack Obama.

CONTACT

Mr. Roy GERSTENBERGER

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, Vermont, 05671-2030, USA

Phone: 1-802-241- 0295

Roy.Gerstenberger@vermont.gov

Ms. Jennie MASTERSON

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, 1 Scale Ave. Suite 109, Rutland, Vermont 07501, USA

Phone: 1-802-786-2571

Jennie.Masterson@vermont.gov

<http://ddas.vermont.gov/ddas-programs>

Dr. Bryan DAGUE

University of Vermont Center on Disability & Community Inclusion, 208 Colchester Ave., Burlington, Vermont, USA

Phone: 1-802-656-1345

Bryan.Dague@uvm.edu

POLICY

Supported Employment Programme of 1983

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, Agency of Human Services, Vermont, USA

SOURCES

DAIL, Website of Supported Employment Programme: <http://bit.ly/2eR7HWr> ; <http://bit.ly/2f6LQhh>
Vermont, Developmental Disabilities Act: <http://bit.ly/2dI4Phe> ; DAIL, Regulations 2011:
<http://bit.ly/2ffddVT>; Annual Report 2015: <http://bit.ly/2eagYYi>; DVR Manual: <http://bit.ly/2dW5f1X>