Perceptions on the Availability & Outcomes of Employment Services for Individuals with Disabilities in Wisconsin

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, or Department of Public Instruction.

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Executive Summary

Disability and rehabilitation professionals were invited to participate in an anonymous national survey designed to gather perspectives regarding the availability and outcomes of employment services for individuals with disabilities. The survey included questions specific to participants’ professional role, consumer groups most likely to be referred for employment-related services, the services perceived as most helpful in assisting consumers achieve employment outcomes, service capacity issues, overall satisfaction with service provision, employment-focused services professionals are most likely to refer for, and whether professionals think the services provided lead to integrated, community-based employment outcomes. Participant comments were encouraged throughout the survey and provide further insight into professionals’ perceptions in this area of study. A total of 729 responses were received nationally, including 331 responses from Wisconsin.

This report provides an overview of the 218 responses from professionals employed through the four primary system stakeholder groups in Wisconsin. The results presented are descriptive in nature and are intended to provide relevant parties with data to help inform program and policy development.

The Wisconsin professional role categories (system stakeholders) represented in this report include:

- Care or Case Managers and Employment Specialists (Medicaid-Funded Long-Term Support System)
- Self-Directed Supports Consultants
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (State-Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Program)
- Teachers and Transition Specialists
Methodology

Researchers developed the survey with input from rehabilitation practitioners and policy makers. A preliminary draft of the survey was sent to subject matter experts who were asked to review the instrument and suggest possible modifications.

The final survey form was submitted to the University of Wisconsin-Stout’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review and assurance that the appropriate human subject protections and precautions were in place. Once IRB approval was procured, the survey was uploaded into an online format using a commercially available survey software package. The University of Wisconsin-Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) disseminated the electronic survey nationally to professionals and practitioner contacts in an established and protected database. Individuals were invited to participate in the online survey, which took an estimated 10 minutes to complete.

The survey was not initially designed to target or elicit responses from one specific group of professionals over another. However, representatives from Wisconsin’s long-term care system endorsed participation, which may account for a higher representation of responses from Case or Care Managers and Self-Directed Supports Consultants.

Survey topics included:

- Professional roles
- Primary disability groups most likely to be referred for employment-related services
- Services perceived to be the most helpful in achieving employment outcomes, including service delivery capacity issues
- Professionals’ perceptions regarding whether services provided lead to integrated, community-based employment outcomes
- Overall satisfaction with service provision
- Employment-focused services professionals’ are most likely to refer for, and primary reasons for referrals
- Employment service needs identified by professionals
- Participant comments
Survey Results

Professional Role Categories

The 218 survey responses are categorized by professional role and presented across the four primary system stakeholder groups in Wisconsin as follows:

- Case or Care Managers and Employment Specialists: 59% (128 responses) (Medicaid-Funded Long-Term Support System)
- Self-Directed Supports Consultants: 18% (39 responses)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors: 16% (35 responses) (State-Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Program)
- Teachers and Transition Specialists: 7% (16 responses)

Wisconsin Survey Respondents by Professional Role
Primary Disability Groups Most Likely to Be Referred for Employment Services

Participants were asked to respond to the question, “I am most likely to refer individuals with the following primary disabilities for employment services” and indicate up to three disability categories. Responses varied across the four professional system stakeholder groups with Care Managers and Employment Specialists indicating individuals representing the primary disability groups referred as Cognitive (81%), Physical (66%), and Learning Disability (52%). Self-Directed Supports Consultants indicated individuals representing the primary disability groups referred as Cognitive (82%), Physical (74%) and Learning Disability (51%). Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors indicated individuals representing the primary disability groups referred as Mental Illness or Psychiatric (89%), followed by Cognitive (83%) and Physical (69%). Teachers and Transition Specialists indicated Cognitive (69%) and Learning Disability (69%) followed by Mental Illness or Psychiatric (63%).

Employment Services Referrals by System Stakeholder Group in Wisconsin

Services Most Useful in Achieving Employment

Participants were asked to rate, “The services most useful in assisting my consumers achieve their employment outcomes are…” based on a scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The following charts represent the combined percentage of Agree and Strongly Agree responses specific to professional role. Responses specific to the employment-related services are presented here across the four primary system stakeholder groups: (a) Care Managers and Employment Specialists; (b) Self-Directed Supports Consultants; (c) DVR Counselors; and (d) Teachers and Transition Specialists.
Wisconsin Care Managers and Employment Specialists affiliated with Medicaid-funded long-term care programs (n=128) indicated **On-the-Job Supports** (95%), **Job Development and Placement** (92%), and **Transportation** (91%) to be the three most useful services in helping consumers achieve their employment outcomes. However, only 47% of Care Managers and Employment Specialists reported feeling that sufficient capacity is available for On-the-Job Supports, 28% reported sufficient Job Development and Placement services, and 20% reported sufficient Transportation options.

It is also important to note that 89% of Care Managers and Employment Specialists indicated that **Work Experiences** are very useful in assisting consumers achieve employment outcomes as are **Situational Employment Assessments** (82%) and **Supported Employment Evaluations** (80%). Consistent with earlier responses, these professionals also reported lower capacity for service delivery in these areas with respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing sufficient service capacity to provide Work Experiences at only 24%, Situational Employment Assessments service delivery capacity at 29%, and Supported Employment Evaluation service capacity at 40%.

**Other Services**

Services receiving fewer Agree or Strongly Agree responses by Care Managers and Employment Specialists in assisting long-term care members achieve their employment outcomes were **Financial Literacy and Asset Development Options** (45%), **Employment Services for Youth in Transition** (54%), and **Vocational Evaluation** (56%).
Self-Directed Supports Consultants

Services Reported As Most Useful
Self-Directed Supports Consultants in Wisconsin (n=39) indicated On-the-Job Supports (97%), Job Development and Placement (92%), Transportation (89%), and Customized Employment/Discovery Process (89%) as the four most useful services in helping consumers achieve their employment outcomes. However, only 46% reported sufficient service capacity for On-the-Job Supports, 23% reported there are sufficient Job Development and Placement services available, 23% reported sufficient Transportation services capacity, and 26% indicated sufficient service availability for Customized Employment/Discovery Process.

Self-Directed Supports (SDS) Consultants also reported Work Incentives Benefits Counseling (83%), Work Experiences (81%), and Vocational Futures Planning and Support (VFPS) services (81%) as important in helping consumers achieve employment outcomes. SDS Consultants reported low current capacity for these services in the field with Work Incentives Benefits Counseling service capacity at 46%, Work Experiences capacity at 17%, and VFPS capacity at 26%.

Other Services
Services receiving fewer Agree or Strongly Agree responses by Self-Directed Supports Consultants in assisting long-term care participants’ opting to self-direct their care needs and achieve their employment outcomes were Vocational Evaluation (54%), Financial Literacy and Asset Development Options (56%), and Supported Employment Evaluations (71%).
DVR Counselors

Services Reported As Most Useful
Wisconsin DVR Counselors (n=35) indicated On-the-Job Supports (100%), Job Development and Placement (97%), and Work Experiences (97%) as the three most useful services in helping consumers achieve their employment outcomes. In terms of perceived service capacity for these services, 55% reported they feel that sufficient capacity is available for On-the-Job Supports, 58% feel that available Job Development and Placement services are sufficient, and 70% reported sufficient Work Experience options.

DVR Counselors also reported Situational Employment Assessment (85%), Transportation (80%), Supported Employment Evaluation (79%), and Work Incentives Benefits Counseling (79%) as important in helping consumers achieve employment outcomes. DVR Counselors reported low perceived capacity for these services in the field with Situational Employment Assessment capacity at 55%, Transportation at 27%, and Supported Employment Evaluation at 52%. DVR Counselors also indicated relative sufficient service capacity in regard to Work Incentives Benefits Counseling at 72%.

Other Services
Services receiving fewer Agree or Strongly Agree by DVR counselors in assisting DVR consumers achieve their employment outcomes were Financial Literacy and Asset Development Options (24%), Vocational Futures Planning and Support (VFPS) (27%), and Customized Employment and Discovery Process (53%).
Teachers and Transition Specialists in Wisconsin (n=16) indicated **On-the-Job Supports** (93%), **Job Development and Placement** (93%), **Assistive Technology** (87%), **Vocational Evaluation** (87%), and **Situational Employment Assessment** (87%) as the most useful services in helping consumers/students achieve their employment outcomes. 69% of respondents reported they feel that there is sufficient capacity available for On-the-Job Supports, 54% feel there are sufficient Job Development and Placement services available, 69% reported sufficient Situational Employment Assessment services capacity, 71% reported sufficient service availability for Assistive Technology, and 64% reported sufficient service capacity for Vocational Evaluation.

Teachers and Transition Specialists also reported **Employment Services for Youth in Transition** (73%) and **Work Experiences** (71%) as important in helping consumers/students achieve employment outcomes.

**Other Services**

Services receiving fewer Agree or Strongly Agree responses by Teachers and Transition Specialists in assisting consumers/students achieve their employment outcomes were **Transportation** (53%), and **Customized Employment/Discovery Process** (53%).
Services Most Useful Across Professional Groups

When averaging the agree and strongly agree responses across the four primary system stakeholder groups, the five services reported as the most useful in assisting individuals with disabilities achieve their employment outcomes are On-the-Job Supports (96%), Job Development and Placement (94%), Work Experiences (84%), Situational Employment Assessments (82%), and Transportation (78%).

The services receiving the fewest Agree and Strongly Agree responses, when averaged across the four professional groups, are Financial Literacy and Asset Development Options (46%), Vocational Futures Planning and Support (59%), and Vocational Evaluation (63%). DVR counselors were approximately fifty percent less likely than the other professionals to Agree or Strongly Agree with Financial Literacy and Asset Development Options and Vocational Futures Planning and Support as key services. Self-Directed Supports consultants were more likely than the other professionals to Agree or Strongly Agree that Vocational Futures Planning and Support is a useful service. Interestingly, teachers and transition specialists were more likely to Agree or Strongly Agree that Vocational Evaluation is one of the most useful services in helping students achieve their employment outcomes.
Integrated, Community-Based Employment Outcomes

Participants were asked to respond to the statement “Services provided to people with disabilities in my local area lead to integrated, community-based employment outcomes” based on a scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Thirty percent (30%) of Care Managers and Employment Specialists and 26% of Self-Directed Supports Consultants indicated that they agree or strongly agree that services in their local area lead to integrated, community-based employment outcomes. Comparatively, 94% of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and 36% of Teachers and Transition Consultants agree or strongly agree with this statement.

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of Care Managers and Employment Consultants indicated that they disagree or strongly disagree that local services provided to people with disabilities lead to integrated, community-based employment outcomes. 46% of Self-Directed Supports Consultants, 6% of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, and 21% of Teachers and Transition Specialists disagreed or strongly disagreed. In addition to responding to the statement via the scale, participants who disagreed or strongly disagreed were asked to volunteer opinions as to how services can be improved. Comments offered by the respective key system stakeholder groups are presented below to help illustrate the varying perspectives.

Care Managers and Employment Specialists

- Must be an increase in community-based employment options and locations of employment
- We’d have to have some [services] before we can start improving them
- More individualized programming, everyone gets the same assessment and work experiences
- Increased DVR involvement needed
Transportation and education to providers
More education on options
Limit pre-vocational for those youth transitioning into adult long-term care. Instead, focus on community employment prior to graduation. Otherwise, people become dependent on pre-vocational; they grow comfortable and feel "safe" in a pre-vocational environment and figure a paycheck from pre-vocational is sufficient – ultimately there is limited intrinsic motivation to find community employment or do well on any work experience
More job trials, more transportation options needed
Improve DVR processes
More supportive options needed
I find that not all [professionals] work toward community-based employment and want to keep them in sheltered workshops
Services are limited in this area
Need more employment options
They never get a job out in the community. The process goes nowhere
Not enough [supported employment] SE providers, not enough job opportunities, limited transportation/uncooperative transportation, efforts to transition from pre-vocational to integrated employment is limited (people do not want to move on from pre-vocational and they are not encouraged by pre-vocational to do so)
There just aren't the opportunities and services in our rural area
Educate employers of possible jobs that intellectually disabled persons can do
We need additional providers or trained ones to provide more options
By supporting a shared vision between agencies and promoting it from start to finish
Education to employers and to the community in general
Not 100% integrated yet
More providers who develop community jobs
More work placements and work experience needed
Increased community employment placement
Many work experiences do not have paid job openings available right after employment, so if it does turn into a job- it is a long time after the experience
Not enough jobs in the small community, and no transportation available out of area
There needs to be a paradigm shift at the Vocational Workshop sites
Local job market is saturated
Prevocational services providers need more buy-in to the potential for success with community based employment
A certain pre-vocational provider tends to feel people that start at pre-vocational
would have a very difficult time in the community. They tend not to push people to explore that option

- The amount of staff needed to provide employment services needs to increase so opportunities for employment doesn't take so long
- More support/hours by service providers on seeking out options in the community
- Some of my members have been on the program over 2 years and have not even had a job experience
- Depends on vendor
- Waiting list, or minimal activity occurring, slow process
- Have more services available and more job experience opportunities
- More education from vocational providers to employers in the area
- Increased marketing to local businesses
- More services and vendors need to be in area, waiting lists are too long, vendors don't want to work with VR system because of changes, not enough hours of work, need more varied opportunities, need out of the box thinkers in [job development] JD positions
- Public education, involvement/education of civic organizations
- More locations for potential job sites need to be explored
- There remains a "sheltered workshop" mentality among most, not all, of the vocational providers in our region. This is also many times reflected with the community at large, including guardians
- Education to employers on how disabled can benefit the company

Self-Directed Supports Consultants

- This is partially due to scarce jobs; not sure how to improve; it's the economy
- There are some but need more services, especially job development
- Several of the manufacturing companies will only hire through temp agencies. If the individual isn't able to meet the requirement of the temp agency, they won't get an interview. DVR is not able to help in these situations. These manufacturers need incentives to directly hire
- DVR could be funded better; more staff needed
- Those with challenges need continuing education because the school system has failed to provide adequate foundation to move into job placement
- Lack of opportunities in rural areas. More education for potential employers. Need more supported employment providers and job developers in rural areas
- Waiting lists are too long; lack of provider agencies; DVR needs to support independent job development
- Rural areas are a challenge; however, the biggest area of weakness appears to be
making the transition from what services we have. We appear to be locked into what
we have instead of what we can develop. I know the job placement specialists in the
area are working hard and it is challenging, but I believe people are not offered
chances due to fears of losing worksites
• I think we need more options in certain areas. Our very rural areas are not covered at
all and transportation is not available
• Transportation and education are both needed
• Transportation to work and to training and other services is not sufficient
• More services needed; those that exist are OK
• Focus needs to be on the person's strengths and be able to support that
• Support agencies in the area need to be mandated to develop opportunities for work
• Educating companies so they are willing/open minded about people with different
abilities and the many benefits they can provide to other workers
• Need more providers who support community employment. Most successful
employment experiences occur because families or schools were able to get something
started. Poor follow-through after graduation

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
• We need more job developers in our area
• More resources for the low functioning consumers
• Some agencies focus too much on pre-vocational programs or there is a conflict of
interest among agencies offering both pre-vocational and job placement

Teachers and Transition Specialists
• Improved youth transition service delivery is needed; improved rehabilitation services
for minorities with disabilities, including seasonal farm workers and their families
• Increase DVR services and support
Satisfaction with Employment Service Provision

Participants were asked to respond to the statement, “I am satisfied with the quality of employment services provided to people with disabilities in my local area” based on a scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

![Bar chart showing satisfaction levels](chart.png)

Participant satisfaction regarding the quality of employment services was relatively low with 14% of both Care Managers and Employment Specialists and Self-Directed Supports Consultants respectively indicating that they agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with the quality of employment services provided to people with disabilities locally. 52% of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and 36% of Teachers and Transition Consultants agree or strongly agree with this statement.

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of Care Managers and Employment Consultants indicated that they disagree or strongly disagree that they were satisfied with the quality of employment services provided to people with disabilities locally. Sixty percent (60%) of Self-Directed Supports Consultants, 21% of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, and 36% of Teachers and Transition Specialists disagreed or strongly disagreed with the quality of employment services available locally. In addition to responding to the statement via the scale, participants who disagreed or strongly disagreed were asked to volunteer opinions as to how services can be improved. Comments offered by the respective key system stakeholder groups are presented below to help illustrate the varying perspectives.

**Care Managers and Employment Specialists**
- Not enough staff and lots of change in staff so you can never build a relationship
- The employment process is too long
- Doors need to be opened by the business owners in our area
• Have DVR do more than offer to put on waiting list
• More transportation options for this rural part of WI. More focus on trained staff at day centers. More oversight on the quality of activities at the day centers that include making sure the employees are being helped to be integrated into the community
• I think more employers with disabilities are needed to increase empathy and problem-solving strategies so that additional opportunities to others
• There are few vendors and the ones here are not at all creative in developing opportunities
• Most of the time, members are engaged in leisure activities, and not involved in actual work tasks
• Same as above, transportation, education to providers
• More education on options for community-based employment
• Quicker job development; sooner intervention for those in transition
• More options, and more community employment, less workshop
• Increase communication and action toward goals
• DVR doesn't seem to want to help out people as much as they say they will
• Better training, education and funding of employment professionals
• Less turnover, more qualified providers
• More individualized based on strengths
• Get them options and get past the planning stage
• I think what has been done has been wonderful for those who are receiving but there could be so much more for them. I just don't have the answer
• Not enough GOOD providers
• Simply not enough jobs available, probable employer fear it's more trouble than its payoff and they can hire youth at the same rate for more work output
• There is one job coach in our area and not many areas are or can be explored
• Simply put, capacity is not adequate. The services we do have try and often succeed in providing quality assistance, but there is a disconnect many times between paying agencies and the employment services providers
• More providers with potentially different approaches
• The community needs education
• Community employment for our members is very hard to accomplish
• Decrease waiting lists, new providers must try harder to find employers that will work with them
• More job coaching options needed
• More education to employers about the benefits of employment for individuals who experience disabilities
• Provide training to staff on working with individuals with visual limitations
• Job Developers have limited caseloads that they are able to work with at one time
• The community has a lack of education on the incentives of these programs, and value of hiring those with disabilities
• Get back to the people in a timely manner; take them seriously
• Again, there needs to be a paradigm shift within the staffing agencies at the employment services centers
• Waiting list is often long for employment services
• DVR appears quick to close cases
• It is improving, but the trend is still to keep people in workshops and not work towards community outcomes
• Availability of transportation for people in evenings and weekends. More work experiences available in the community. More long term placement options. This is difficult in a small community
• Work towards a time frame of finding a job in less then a year, at least one work experience if not employment
• They need to find more work, and DVR should stay involved longer
• More vendors
• More providers who work the area of the member
• Having more services available. Incentives for the local businesses? Internships?
• Increase the focus on community employment and educate participants that community employment is the goal
• Most jobs are janitorial- there is room to branch out
• Transportation and job availabilities
• Employers need better understanding of system/benefits, see above as well
• Better more committed people that understand that despite disability we all need to be productive in our society and we all have skills to share, no matter how small they seem
• The one we have is good, however, there aren’t enough options and the waitlists to receive services can be from 6 months to a year
• We need strong inspirational leadership in government, education, and society in general
• People are on waiting lists with Supported Employment even after they are through the DVR process. SE does a great job in locating work sites once they begin working with the consumer
• Waitlists are beginning to deter people and DVR can often be intimidating
• Improvement will come with transitioning of our focus upon community integration
as a whole and with less comfort with the idea of segregated workshop type employment vs. community integrated employment. The provider serve model will need to change and incentives put in place by the MCO to encourage this change

- Less sheltered work shop in house pre-vocational that benefits the company to keep the good workers there
- Improve funding for MCOs to pay incentives to job development providers

Self-Directed Supports Consultants

- Match jobs to people's interests
- There needs to be more job development
- Again, access to continuing education is imperative to success! Learning does not stop just because they magically reach the age of 21
- More education for potential employers; need more supported employment providers and job developers in rural areas
- Right now there are none available
- Create independent job development agencies as wait lists are too long and there is no sense of urgency
- Limited resources, poor transitional services from high schools, not enough involvement with DVR up front in most cases
- I think that we need more options for people in our Northern areas. There are just not many options out there
- Employer education on hiring disabled, work experiences that lead to positions.
- Not participant centered enough
- More services needed; those that exist are OK
- More and varied opportunities are needed
- Agencies in the area need to be mandated and monitored to develop opportunities for work
- Difficult to find places who are willing to provide work experiences with possible future hiring
- More DVR counselors who can help participant reach their goals and attend IEP meeting to help in the transition process
- Most are “stuck” and use the excuse that there are not enough jobs for “able bodied” job seekers

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

- More Supported Employment providers who get better results for consumers
- Better coordination between DVR and job placement vendors
- More providers are needed to reduce waiting lists; providers need more training
- More quality service providers for supported employment services and job development and placement services
- Need more vendors
- More job developer options needed; better business-minded vendors
- More providers

Teachers and Transition Specialists
- More employment and transportation opportunities
- Order of selection has been an issue
- Increase DVR services and support
- The DVR counselors are overworked and can't keep up with over 100 clients on each caseload

Employment-Focused Services Professionals are Most Likely to Refer For
Participants were asked to rank the reasons why they refer individuals with disabilities for specific employment-focused services. The following information represents the individual and combined percentage of Agree and Strongly Agree responses specific to professional role indicated by Wisconsin respondents. Responses specific to the employment-related services are presented here across the four primary system stakeholder groups: (a) Care Managers and Employment Specialists; (b) Self-Directed Supports Consultants; (c) DVR Counselors; and (d) Teachers and Transition Specialists.

Care Managers and Employment Specialists
Wisconsin Care Managers and Employment Specialists affiliated with Medicaid-funded long-term care programs (n=116) indicated Participate in Work Experiences (96%), Identify Work Skills, Interests, and Strengths (92%), and Identify the Accommodations or Supports Necessary for Successful Employment in the Community (92%) to be the three primary reasons for referring individuals with disabilities for specific employment-focused services. Identify Employment Strengths (91%) and Identify Employment Barriers (86%) were also noted as key reasons for making a referral.

Care Managers and Employment Specialists reported being less likely to refer for specific employment-related services to Help Determine Feasibility of Post-Secondary Education (42%) or Determine Motivation for Work (58%).

Self-Directed Supports Consultants

Self-Directed Supports (SDS) Consultants in Wisconsin Care (n=34) indicated Identify Employment Strengths (91%), Identify Work Skills, Interests, and Strengths (88%), Provide a Direct Connection to Employer Networks and Contacts (88%), Promote Economic Development and Independence (88%), and Promote Health and Well-Being (88%) as the primary reasons for referring individuals with disabilities for specific employment-focused services.

SDS Consultants reported being less likely to refer for specific employment-focused services to Determine Motivation for Work (44%) or Help Determine Feasibility of Post-Secondary Education (47%).
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Counselors (n=32) reported **Participate in Work Experiences** (97%), **Identify Employment Strengths** (94%), and **Identify Employment Barriers** (94%) as the three primary reasons for referring individuals with disabilities for specific employment-focused services. They also indicated **Provide a Direct Connection to Employer Networks and Contacts** (91%), **Identify the Accommodations or Supports Necessary for Successful Employment in the Community** (88%), **Identify or Validate Job Goals** (88%), and **Identify Work Skills, Interests, and Strengths** (88%) as important.

DVR Counselors reported being less likely to refer for specific employment-focused services to **Help Determine Feasibility of Post-Secondary Education** (63%) or **Promote Health and Well-Being** (68%).

**Teachers and Transition Specialists**
Teachers and Transition Specialists (n=13) reported **Participate in Work Experiences** (77%), **Identify Employment Strengths** (77%), **Identify Employment Barriers** (77%), and **Identify the Accommodations or Supports Necessary for Successful Employment in the Community** (77%) as the primary reasons for referring students with disabilities for specific employment-focused services.

Teachers and Transition Specialists reported being less likely to refer for specific employment-focused services to **Determine Motivation for Work** (42%).

### Primary Reasons for Employment Service Referrals Across Professional Groups

When averaging the agree and strongly agree responses across the four primary system stakeholder groups, the five primary reasons individuals with disabilities are referred for specific employment-focused services are **Participate in Work Experiences** (88%), **Identify Work Skills, Interests, and Strengths** (86%), **Identify Employment Strengths** (86%), **Identify Accommodations and Supports** (85%), and **Identify Employment Barriers** (84%).

![Bar chart showing reasons for employment service referrals across groups.](chart.png)
Employment Service Needs Identified by Professionals

Participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Services that I wish were available in my local area include…” as comments which are presented below by the four primary system stakeholder groups.

Care Managers and Employment Specialists

- More transportation options
- True job development and job carving!
- Community-based employment options for people with developmental disabilities - to get them integrated in their community, not working in sheltered workshops, or disintegrated lives
- Job development, job coaching, benefits counseling
- More reasonable transportation opportunities; more of a focus of educating the communities and employers of the support services they could offer to these precious participants
- Job development
- Networking for small business owners; more services for co-occurring MI in the workforce
- Creative job developers with more options
- Increased opportunities for community employment versus prevocational sites
- Transportation
- More medical/specialized transportation
- Transportation
- More community employment options
- More ability for work experiences and job development
- Agencies who are willing to go the extra mile to find jobs
- More transportation options, more job development
- I wish we had more job development and mentoring opportunities. The wait lists are WAY too long!
- More transportation that is wheelchair accessible
- Work incentive counseling
- Vocational Evaluation-better options for customized approaches to obtaining employment
- Increased provider options for job development and employment support; Increased transportation options
- Customized Employment, better fit for people with physical disabilities
- I wish the services available would be used as they are supposed to be. People sit and wait for years without any movement forward
- Better more reliable, friendly, caring, and consumer focused transportation with empathy for those with disabilities; more supported employment and job development providers
• Assistive Technology
• We could use a center that has more to offer for them and more jobs to send them to...
• More employment vendors that have a good track record and a stable staff
• Job advertisement targeted to the intellectually disabled
• Additional providers or additional training to the current one to allow for more customized job placements
• More job development agencies. Better transportation options as we have limited bus service and very expensive taxis.
• More job opportunities or a better understanding on how including persons with disabilities could assist in a work environment.
• Additional pre-vocational services and job coaching. There is a long waiting list for job coaching and DVR and we need more services available. Also more community employers that are willing to work with people with disabilities.
• Job developers willing to develop carved out job positions
• More transportation, more job availability
• I feel that a lot of my members sit waiting for something to happen and aren’t very well supported
• More successful job development
• More options related to transportation
• Increased staffing at DVR
• More transportation options
• Out of town transportation for work purposes
• More job coaching support and more job development roles
• Vocational Futures Planning; Job Developers
• Additional DVR contracted job development agencies. Job development agencies that are not directly connected to pre-vocational services
• More prevocational services providers
• More pre-vocational providers that actually focus on job readiness and getting the clients out in the community
• Tax incentives for employers who hire capable disabled persons. DVR staying involved longer to ensure success
• Additional options for vendors
• Better transportation options
• More Transition services, Employer Education for SEP. Provider Education on employment mission, and reporting
• Public transportation in smaller communities
• Transportation and more available jobs in the area for the need level
• Transportation to and from work; more available jobs
• More services for individuals with ADHD, specialized vendors who gain expertise with certain populations
• Educational opportunities advertised more so that people realize that with education you can be successful and become a contributing member of our community.
• More vocational providers to provide job development, supported employment services
• Vocational Futures planning
• Access to transportation
• More cost effective access to benefits counseling
• Community based prevocational services (have only 1 provider, need more)
• Increase in affordable transportation including area of service.
• Better transportation. Better jobs
• Proactive services by vocational providers for development of customized employment with the communities
• Pre-vocational incentive to move on education to businesses on value of disabled workers training sites that offer real world training
• Job development

Self-Directed Supports Consultants
• Increased job development
• Public transportation, increased job availability, more opportunities outside of day services and sheltered workshop
• Transportation!
• Post secondary education access; educational system has failed to provide adequate foundation for individuals to move forward in to employment; there is a need for those with disabilities to have technological training (especially in the areas of Skype and Facebook to help negate isolation; it would be wonderful if social skills training was readily available to all as I see this as a fundamental service for successful employment outcomes
• More supported employment employees and agencies; more job developers
• Any type of employment help
• More housing options and transportation options
• Variety of provider agencies that offer the services without an extended waiting period
• More hands on work experience sites for higher functioning individuals who do not fit into a Sheltered Workshop environment
• It is not what services, it is more services and options; however, that would affect what we currently have available due to the limited market in this area and the non-profit status that most maintain. Transportation is a major issue, and many do not have families that can be
reimbursed and most local cabs only work certain hours, which do not align with work schedules

- More DVR workers
- More options for employment opportunities and more transportation options; when you get into the Northern rural areas there are no options available
- Milwaukee and Washington County where I work in Wisconsin lack employer participation opportunities unless speaking about sheltered employment at minimum wage/no transportation. We need integrated employment opportunities and willing employers to hire the workers. Liability and performance with lean budgets for most companies does not allow for placement at this time

- Transportation
- More opportunities
- Strong presence of employment agencies and incentives for people with disabilities
- Services that would provide more than an hour per week searching for work experiences or assisting clients with job applications; people with disabilities often need to complete just as many job applications as others before even getting the chance for a possible interview. People with disabilities are often in need of some type of work contact/connection in order to move forward with possible work experiences
- More public transportation for evening and weekend hours to accommodate work schedules
- AT and to help create a work setting for the individual to practice work skills before apply for a job
- Independent job coaches and job developers; Few or none sheltered workshops

**DVR Counselors**

- Public transportation available twenty-four seven three sixty-five
- Additional free health care services
- Expanded countywide transportation services; ongoing training opportunities for placement staff
- Transportation options; job development; vocational evaluations
- Better/more plentiful transportation options; basic skills training and resources
- Supported Employment Services who are able to get consumers employed; Assistive Tech evaluations; services; training
- Soft skills training
- Informational sessions on how to access services
- Transportation
- Work Experience sites
- Vocational Evaluation and more providers for job development
- Options for low functioning consumers
• More AT resources; better job developers; better job coaches - more consistency in personnel doing coaching; not a new person every day
• Public transportation; better supported employment and job development services
• More trained job developers to reduce waiting lists. Training needs to be provided in sensitivity to disabilities, communication skills, and job development processes
• More local job developers and assistive tech assessors
• Employment soft skills training
• More supported employment providers, skills training, transportation
• Self-employment business planning and feasibility; more supported employment service providers and job coaching

Teachers and Transition Specialists
• More employment and better transportation services
• Broader programmatic use of WIA [WIOA] youth employment/training funding; currently used primarily for returning home adjudicated youth and youth over 18
• More state and federal support to programs
• Job experiences with support of DVR
• Assistive technology & assessments for individuals with physical disabilities who need these for their personal vehicles
• More Vocational Evaluation and Psychological assessment areas
• Increased availability of competitive wage jobs for people with disabilities; full time employment; transportation at more sites and more times
Summary and Conclusions

Professionals consistently reported discrepancies in the services they believe to be the most useful in assisting individuals with disabilities achieve integrated, community-based employment outcomes and the availability of these services locally. On-the-Job Supports, Job Development and Placement, Work Experiences, Situational Employment Assessments, and Transportation were repeatedly reported as the most useful services across systems. However, all four professional groups also indicated a need to improve service delivery capacity in these areas.

DVR counselors were more likely than teachers and transition specialists, care managers and employment specialists, or self-directed supports consultants to agree or strongly agree that services available locally lead to integrated, community-based employment. Participant comments overall reflect a need for providers who focus on quality, community-based assessments, work experiences and job development and placement rather than pre-vocational or facility-focused services. They also indicate the desire for active communication across system partners to ensure consistency in helping individuals with disabilities identify and accomplish employment goals; often with a need to coordinate system funding to provide an array of support options necessary for maintaining and enhancing employment outcomes. Professionals reported a need to increase the number of vendors and/or provider options in order to reduce consumer wait lists for employment services. A desire for service providers, in concert with system partners, to enhance and improve communication with employers was also mentioned.

Given the uneven distribution of responses across professional groups in Wisconsin, discretion is advised when interpreting the results for broad applicability. This report is designed to provide information for system partners and encourage dialogue and collaboration in identifying common areas of concern and solutions regarding services that promote integrated, community-based employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin.