

A Closer Look at Vocational Rehabilitation College Training Services at the Virginia Dept. for the Blind and Vision Impaired

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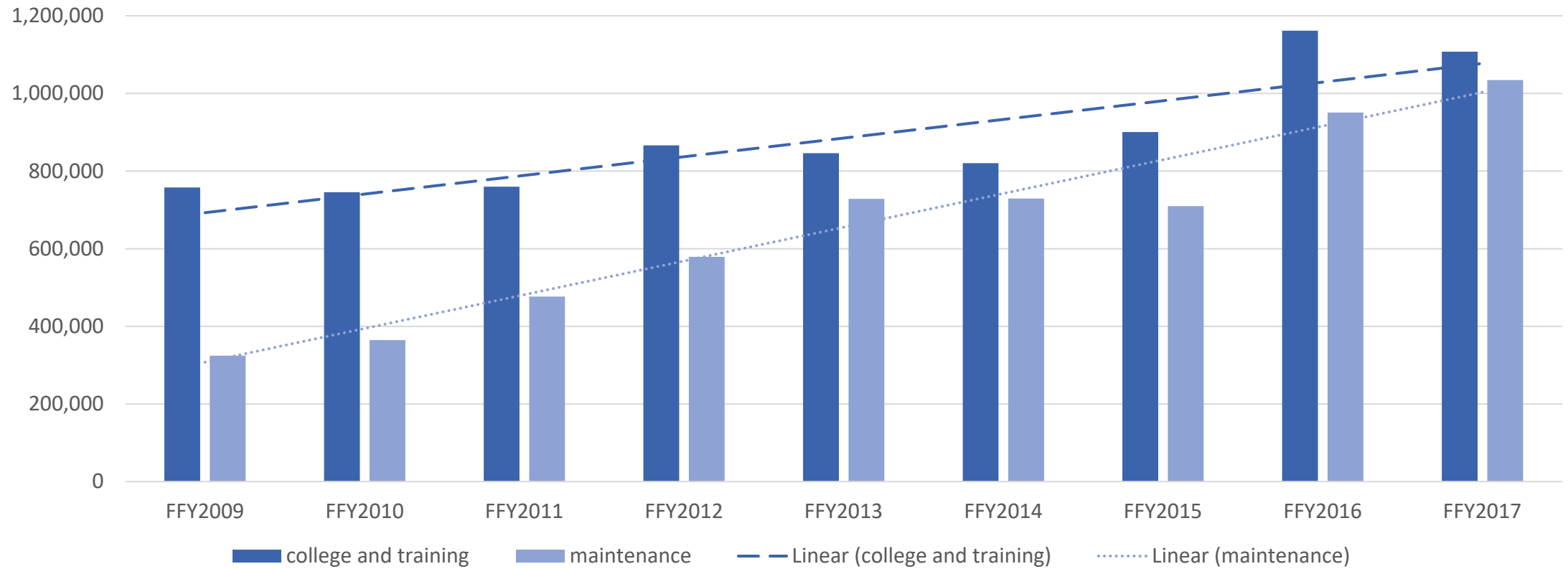


Introduction

- FFY2017 DBVI continued to serve an increasing number of individuals
- Historically DBVI spends the most VR funding:
 - College and training
 - Maintenance
 - Rehabilitation technology
- WIOA and pre-ETS

VR funds expended - college and maintenance

Chart Title



Purpose of the Study

In order to ensure prudent and equitable use of VR funds, DBVI was interested in taking a more focused look at college training services, college training policy, and outcomes of individuals who receive college training services as part of their VR program.

- Examine population of individuals who received college training services, determine whether there was an effect on employment outcomes, as compared to those who did not receive college training services
- Review other state VR agency college training policies

Evaluation Questions

Considering the populations of individuals who did receive college training services as part of their VR program, and those individuals who did not:

- Who are they? Are there any differences in the demographics of the two groups?
 - Are there any relationships between college services and VR outcomes?
 - Are there any relationships between college services and quality of employment (i.e., wage, hours worked, occupation)?
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- What can we learn from a review of other state VR agency college training policies?

Methods

Quantitative analysis of existing program data

- Case management system – AWARE
- RSA 911 data files

Data selection parameters

- VR cases closed in FFY2011 through 2016
- Exited after IPE development

Variables included

- Individual characteristics (e.g. age, gender)
- Types of closure
- Occupation at closure
- Quality of employment (hourly wage, and hours worked)

Qualitative analysis of other state VR agency policy manuals and documents

- VR college training services and sponsorship
- States bordering Virginia
- State VR agencies similar in size to DBVI
 - Four agencies for BVI

Who are they? Summary Statistics – FFY2011 – FFY2016

	With College training services (n = 215)	Without College training services (n = 1,584)
Ave Age*	35.4 (SD = 12.1)	45.2 (SD = 14.4)
% Female	55	51
% Male	45	49
% Asian	1.4	3.1
% Black	37.7	40.1
% Hispanic	4.7	3.3
% White*	62.7	57.5
% Supported Employment	0.5	4.6
% SSI benefits*	25.1	17.4
% SSDI benefits	44.7	46.3
% Significantly Disabled (SD)*	80.0	76.2

Are there any relationships between college services and VR outcomes?

Are there any relationships between college services and quality of employment (i.e., wage, hours worked)?

Overall Employment Statistics – FFY2011 – FFY2016

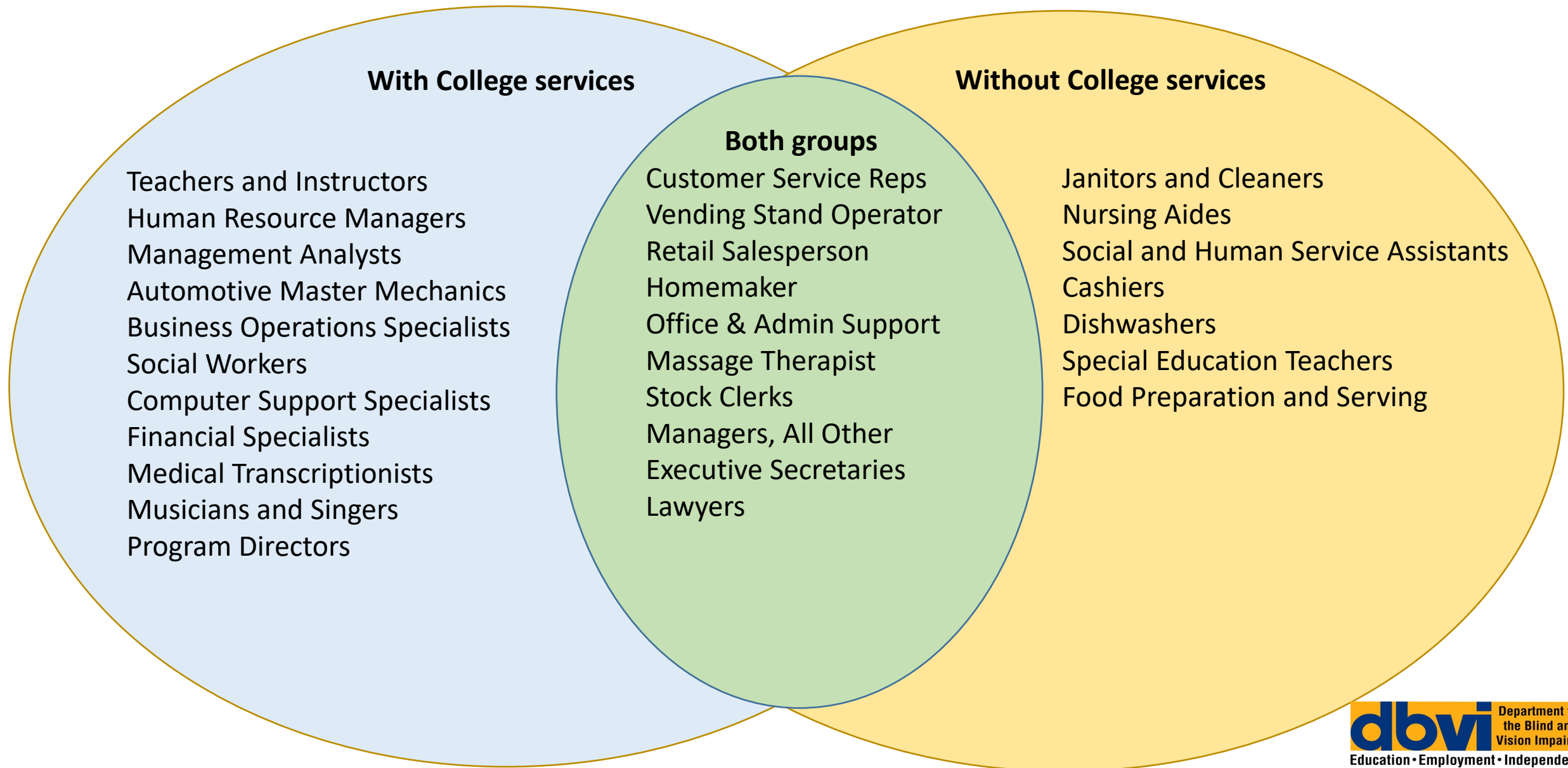
	With College training services (n = 138)	Without College training services (n = 937)
% Rehabilitated	64.2	59.2
Hourly wage – mean	\$16.15 (SD = \$10.66)	\$16.19 (SD = \$13.61)
Weekly hours worked	30.12	30.38

Are there any relationships between college services and VR outcomes and quality of employment (i.e., wage, hours worked)?

Employment Outcomes by Age

Age	With College Services			Without College Services		
	Number	% Rehab	Hourly wage - mean	Number	% Rehab	Hourly wage - mean
<= 24	28	59.6	\$13.75	110	30.4	\$9.49
25 – 40	64	63.4	\$15.66	183	57.5	\$14.63
41 – 64	44	68.8	\$15.11	323	63.3	\$15.26
>= 65	2	66.7	\$12.54	31	73.0	\$17.79

Are there any relationships between college services and quality of employment (i.e. occupation)?



What can we learn from a review of other state VR agency college training policies?

Qualitative analysis - policy review of 16 state VR agencies

- 69% (11/16) have college training sponsorship limits, in-state requirements, other state incentives or programs for college training sponsorship
- 38% (6/16) require initial college training to occur at the local community college level
- 31% (5/16) have in-state requirements or other college sponsorship guidelines

Implications

- Qualitative and quantitative results used to inform DBVI leadership regarding decisions on how to best utilize agency resources to deliver college training services.
- When considering VR outcomes and quality of employment, study showed younger individuals were more likely to receive college training services and have more benefit from the services.
- College training is a high cost service
 - Continue to monitor findings (both qualitative and quantitative)
 - Include additional variables – education level at start of program, length of time in service, other VR services received, previous employment experience
 - WIOA Performance Measures, current RSA 911
- Consider including data from other states in quantitative analysis

Lessons Learned

- When initiating a study that will be used to inform agency decision making, it is critical to understand the questions that decision makers are asking, including what is the most relevant information needed. Specifically, consider if the purpose of the research is to guide budget development or funding requests, to ensure compliance with federal or state regulations, to strengthen policy guidance, or to assist with training for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Administrators.
- When working with a diverse data set or several data sets, spend time in the beginning of the project, organizing and understanding the information. Consider combining the information from different data sets in the most appropriate way to optimize the analysis.
- When considering changes to VR policy related to sponsorship of college training, there are many factors to take into account. Specific elements to be considered in future studies include the length of time an individual received VR services, other types of VR services received, and previous employment experience.

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