



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Office of Disability, Aging and Long-Term Care Policy



THE ROLE OF SUPPORTS IN SUCCESSFUL LABOR FORCE ENTRY FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) is the principal advisor to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on policy development issues, and is responsible for major activities in the areas of legislative and budget development, strategic planning, policy research and evaluation, and economic analysis.

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The Office of Disability, Aging and Long-Term Care Policy (DALTCP), within ASPE, is responsible for the development, coordination, analysis, research and evaluation of HHS policies and programs which support the independence, health and long-term care of persons with disabilities--children, working aging adults, and older persons. DALTCP is also responsible for policy coordination and research to promote the economic and social well-being of the elderly.

In particular, DALTCP addresses policies concerning: nursing home and community-based services, informal caregiving, the integration of acute and long-term care, Medicare post-acute services and home care, managed care for people with disabilities, long-term rehabilitation services, children's disability, and linkages between employment and health policies. These activities are carried out through policy planning, policy and program analysis, regulatory reviews, formulation of legislative proposals, policy research, evaluation and data planning.

This report was prepared under contract #HHS-100-97-0011 between HHS's ASPE/DALTCP and the Lewin Group. For additional information about this subject, you can visit the DALTCP home page at http://aspe.hhs.gov/_/office_specific/daltcp.cfm or contact the office at HHS/ASPE/DALTCP, Room 424E, H.H. Humphrey Building, 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201. The e-mail address is: webmaster.DALTCP@hhs.gov. The Project Officer was Andreas Frank.

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The opinions, conclusions, and errors in this report are the sole responsibility of the authors, and do not represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the California State Independent Living Council, Berkeley Policy Associates, Cornell University, or The Lewin Group.

FOREWARD

This report is one in a series developed by The Lewin Group and its subcontractors, Berkeley Policy Associates and Cornell University, for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in connection with the study, *Research on Employment Supports for People with Disabilities*. For this project, we reviewed available studies and literature, and collected detailed information on the experiences of people with significant disabilities who are successfully and competitively employed, the events and factors affecting their employment decisions, the relative importance of specific factors, and the reasons for successful and unsuccessful employment attempts.

The goal of the study is to gain a better understanding of the role supports play in the employment of people with disabilities. In particular, the study aims to identify the role(s) supports play in two key areas: providing assistance to people with significant disabilities to participate successfully in competitive employment, and improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. This project is unique among the many investigations of the factors affecting the employment of people with disabilities in that it focuses on those who have achieved a measure of success in employment, and the factors contributing to their success.

For this study, we defined the term “supports” very broadly. Supports may include public or private income or in-kind transfers, such as Social Security Disability Insurance (DI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and payments for medical care, prescription drugs, medical devices, assistive technology, and personal assistant services. Supports also include employment development programs, such as employment and training programs, job search and retention programs, independent living programs, other housing supports, special education, school-to-work programs, and transportation services. Laws and regulations that encourage behaviors (on the part of firms or individuals) that promote the employment of people with disabilities and informal assistance provided by family members, co-workers, or friends also fall under the definition of supports used in this study.

The study has a number of components: a comprehensive review of the recent literature (since 1990) on issues related to the employment of people with disabilities; the development of an inventory of employment programs serving people with disabilities at the federal, state and local levels; and the conduct of approximately 45 focus groups with working people with significant disabilities in three sites. The findings in this report are based primarily on the information obtained via the literature review, and on the data gathered from 284 focus group participants conducted between April and December 2000 in Seattle/Tacoma, Washington; Newark, New Jersey; and Los Angeles, California. A full description of the focus methodology and summary of the findings are described in other reports in this series.