

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **National Council on Disability Assesses Rehabilitation Act's Impact on Transition Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities**

WASHINGTON—The National Council on Disability (NCD) today released a report titled *The Rehabilitation Act: Outcomes for Transition-Age Youth* (<http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2008/doc/RehabilitationTransitions.doc>), calling on Congress and the U.S. Department of Education to make changes to current service delivery practices that will improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities.

This report is a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the Rehabilitation Act on the employment and postsecondary education outcomes of eligible transition-age youth.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, together with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, set in motion policy changes that have allowed many thousands of children and youth with disabilities in the United States the opportunity to gain the educational and vocational skills needed to transition to living, working, and participating as adults in community life.

According to NCD Chairperson John R. Vaughn, "The public sector VR program has been providing employment-related services to young adults with disabilities for decades, and currently serves more than 50,000 youth each year, but the results of the study confirm that relatively little is known about the extent and effectiveness of VR transition services. As a result, state VR agencies continue to devote substantial resources to this population without the benefit of methodologically sound evaluation approaches."

"The ever-increasing number of transition-age youth with disabilities who will exit secondary education programs and attempt to enter the workforce over the next decade will create tremendous challenges for VR agencies. While many current service delivery approaches hold promise, little empirical information is available that will allow VR agencies to accurately predict the amount and type of services required to assist transition-age youth to meet their employment goals, or the outcomes that should be anticipated for individuals served through the program," Vaughn concluded.

The 11 recommendations that emanate from the study are directed to the U.S. Congress and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), the Office of Special Education Programs, and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) within the U.S. Department of Education. Some of those recommendations include:

1. Congress should change existing VR transition legislation and policy to require that VR services be made available to eligible youth no later than three years before an adolescent or young adult exits from secondary education.
2. Congress should authorize and allocate sufficient funds to support the development of a multifunctional transition unit in each state VR agency.
3. RSA, NIDRR, and state VR agencies should design, implement, and evaluate a tiered structure for services delivered by VR counselors working with transition-age youth.

NCD is an independent federal agency and is composed of 15 members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. NCD provides advice to the President, Congress, and executive branch agencies to promote policies, programs, practices, and procedures that: guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability; and empower individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society.

For more information, please contact NCD's Director of External Affairs Mark S. Quigley at [mquigley@ncd.gov](mailto:mquigley@ncd.gov) or 202-272-2004 or visit [www.ncd.gov](http://www.ncd.gov).

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