

Postsecondary Education Improves Employment and Earnings Outcomes for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

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The low employment rates of individuals with intellectual disabilities are a major concern. In 2011, only 34% of adults with intellectual disabilities were employed compared to 76% of adults without disabilities.¹ Higher educational attainment is associated with higher employment rates for students with intellectual disabilities.² Postsecondary education has been shown to increase employment.³ Increasingly postsecondary education is becoming an option for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

This study analyzed employment, earnings, and reliance on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for individuals with intellectual disabilities who had postsecondary education. The Rehabilitation Services Administration's RSA 911 dataset from 2008 through 2013 was analyzed. The purpose of this study was to examine whether there was a change in employment, earnings and reliance on SSI for individuals with intellectual disabilities who had postsecondary education compared to those who did not.

Individuals with intellectual disabilities who had postsecondary education were more than twice as likely to be employed, earned \$406 per month more, and required \$77 less of SSI benefits when compared to their counterparts who did not have postsecondary education. These findings indicate that postsecondary education is important for individuals with intellectual disabilities in obtaining employment, increasing earnings, and lessening reliance on SSI.

This study employed secondary data analysis of the Rehabilitation Services Administration's RSA 911 from 2008 through 2013 to examine the effect of postsecondary education on employment and earnings for individuals served by state Vocational Rehabilitation Service Agencies. The RSA 911 includes variables on attendance of postsecondary education, employment outcomes, earnings, as well as individual and demographic information. Those outcomes for those individuals with intellectual disabilities who had postsecondary education were compared to those who did not.

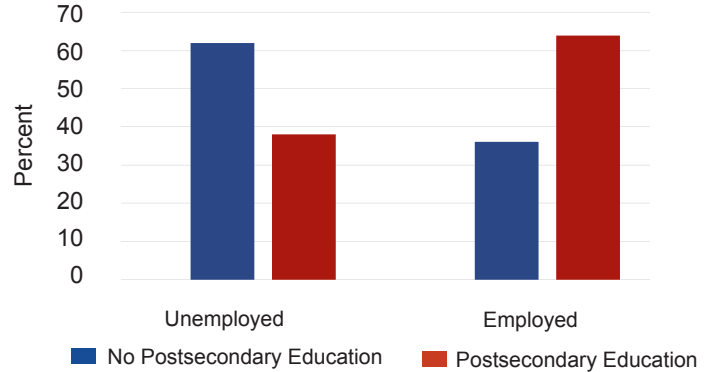
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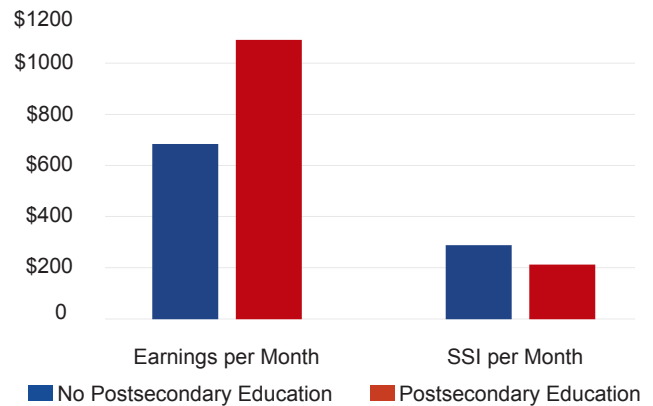
Findings

- ▶ Individuals with intellectual disabilities who had postsecondary education were more than twice as likely to be employed than their counterparts who did not have postsecondary education.
- ▶ Individuals with intellectual disabilities who had postsecondary education earned \$406 per month more than their counterparts who did not have postsecondary education.
- ▶ Individuals with intellectual disabilities who had postsecondary education required \$77 less per month in SSI benefits than their counterparts who did not have postsecondary education.

Effect of Postsecondary Education on Employment



Effect of Postsecondary Education on Earnings and SSI



Summary & Recommendations

Postsecondary education improves the odds of employment, increases weekly earnings, and decreases reliance on SSI benefits for individuals with ID. Policymakers must consider broad based policy changes to include individuals with intellectual disabilities in postsecondary education to improve employment and earnings, and less reliance on government benefits.

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References

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