

Bi-Annual Newsletter

Vocational Rehabilitation Return on Investment Project

Estimating Return on Investment in State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

VR-ROI Collaborates to Host Summit 2016

The 9th Annual Summit on Performance Management in Vocational Rehabilitation took place in Richmond, Virginia on September 7-8, 2016. This event was sponsored by the University of Richmond's VR-ROI Project, Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, University of Wisconsin-Stout's Technical Assistance Center for Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (PEQA), the Summit Group, and in partnership with the George Washington University's Center for Rehabilitation Counseling, Research, and Education (CRCRE).

There was an exciting lineup of presentations and speakers, including Commissioners James Rothrock and Ray Hopkins from Virginia, Elizabeth Creamer (Advisor for Work-



Kim Vitelli, Joseph Ashley, and Elizabeth Creamer at the 2016 Summit in Richmond, VA

force Development, Virginia Governor's Office), and keynote speaker Kim Vitelli (Deputy Administrator, Office of Workforce Investment in Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Dept. of Labor). The panel presentations on "Transitioning to Common Measures: Challenges and Opportunities" and "Issues of National Importance/Return of Investment" were well-received.

The breakout sessions brought in researchers of national recognition from Mathematica, American Institutes for Research, WorkLife Resources, U.S. Social Security Administration, and the Institute for Community Inclusion, among many others.

Thanks to all who made this year's Summit a success! Information on the 2017 Summit will be provided in the coming months!

Welcome to our First VR-ROI Newsletter!

We are happy to present our first bi-annual newsletter! We look forward to sharing the latest news related to the research project.

The VR-ROI Project is funded by the National Institute on

Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) as part of a 5-year grant. This research project makes use of readily-available administrative data from state vocational rehabil-

itation agencies such as participant characteristics, competitive employment, and earnings, in order to estimate the impact of VR services. We are thankful for your interest in the project!

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Special points of interest:

Be sure to follow us on social media for all your latest news in VR-ROI!

Twitter: [@VRR01](https://twitter.com/VRR01)

Facebook: [VR-ROI Project](https://www.facebook.com/VR-ROI-Project)

LinkedIn: [Vocational Rehabilitation Return on Invest-](https://www.linkedin.com/company/vr-roi)

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Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) and VR-ROI

The introduction of the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) is an incredibly valuable one. According to their [website](#), the VLDS includes collaboration from several VR and educational entities in Virginia. The goal is to provide a cost-efficient method for sharing and examining longitudinal data across partner agencies.

The VR-ROI project has already seen the value in the ability to analyze longitudinal data in order to determine ROI on VR services and PERT services. Previously, the belief that VR programs were effective relied heavily on anecdotal information, as well as consumer and field professional reports. Now with funding from NIDILRR, de-identified individual-level data is being used to evaluate the return on investment of VR services in Virginia. The study is already providing support for VR with 80% of Virginians with disabilities involved in VR services in

2000 earning more in the following decade that they would have without participating in VR services. For every \$1000 in VR expenditures, the average participant earned \$7,100 in the next 10 years than they would have earned without VR. The top 10% of VR participants who applied in 2000 earned at least \$45,100 more in the next 10 years. The researchers also examined the long-term impact of the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) program. They found that this school-to-work initiative for individuals with disabilities is successful, in that it showed that with an average per-student investment of \$3,500, PERT increased students' likelihood for obtaining and maintaining employment by 31%. When at least one year of education was added, students experienced an increase in chances of obtaining and maintaining employment by 96%. Additionally, students' earnings increased.

The VR-ROI project data and VLDS show the value that data-sharing and longitudinal analysis possess, in providing a more detailed look at outcomes resulting from involvement in services. With a more well-rounded perspective, the importance of these programs is apparent to those who do not witness the impact of services first-hand.



Virginia is for Data Lovers!

VR-ROI: How does it fit within WIOA?

Many VR programs are now transitioning to using Common Performance Measures (CPM) to track performance in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). We believe that VR-ROI is the perfect supplement to Common Measures!

VR-ROI uses readily-available administrative data from state VR agencies and state UI wage systems. WIOA encourages the use of common state identifier for individuals in core programs. With this transition, states should be able to share data and track services across programs at the individual level as well as document competitive employment and earnings. With the new CPM that WIOA requires, there is an opportunity for VR programs to both track and present fur-

ther evidence on the value of these services.

The expansion of the definition of employment outcomes within WIOA is consistent with the definitions used by the VR-ROI project. VR-ROI project members have always agreed that longitudinal tracking is beneficial in providing a more detailed story of the employment outcome. The previous 90-day window wasn't capable of giving the same well-rounded results. Because of the research design and its' rigorous statistical model, this project has been able to estimate longitudinal VR impacts and examines the impacts of specific services types, different disabling conditions, and impacts by service and disabling condition.

This is not your father's ROI!



VR-ROI- Slow and Steady wins the Race!



David H. Dean: The Father of VR-ROI

By: Bob Schmidt

Although David H. Dean passed away in August 2013, he remains the father of, and guiding force behind, the VR-ROI Project. With his in-depth understanding of the VR program as well as his academic training in labor economics, David bridged those two worlds in assembling the VR-ROI team from the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services, the George Washington University's Center for Rehabilitation Counseling, Research, and Education (CRCRE), together with economists from the University of Richmond and the University of Virginia.

David's research into the economics of disability spanned his entire career of more than thirty years. His interest was kindled as a Rutgers University graduate student by his mentor, Monroe Berkowitz, and continued throughout his career at the University of Richmond where he taught for 26 years. David combined a desire for learning with enthusiasm, a strong work ethic, sense of humor, strength of character, and a great pride in rigorous work. He received numerous awards for teaching and posthumous recognition within the VR community for his steadfast commitment to rigorous

research on the effectiveness of VR programs for jobseekers with disabilities.

While still carrying full-time teaching responsibilities, David directed a Field-Initiated Project funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) to develop scientifically valid ROI models for state VR programs. That project led to the current NIDILRR grant that funds the VR-ROI Project. Also, until his illness forced him to curtail his activities, David was an active member of the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues Prime Study Group that developed the 2015 monograph on ROI (To view, click [here](#)).

This final work, which he considered the best work of his life, is having a major impact in shaping the national discussion of methods for evaluating ROI in state VR programs and is providing guidance for policymakers and agency administrators. David has been posthumously recognized by the National Rehabilitation Association with the 2014 W. F. Faulkes Award for contributions of national importance to the increase of knowledge in the field of rehabilitation and by the Virginia Rehabilitation As-

sociation with the 2013 Corbett Reedy Award for Excellence. Additionally, the 2015 ROI monograph was dedicated to David as was a special volume of the online IZA Journal of Labor Policy, entitled "Social Security Disability Benefits: Finding Alternatives to Benefit Receipt." The dedication can be found [here](#).

For the most up-to-date information on VR-ROI News, follow us:
Twitter: @VRRROI
Facebook: VR-ROI Project

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Maureen and Rob representing the project management team at the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Council's Fall Training in 2015.



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VR-ROI News Updates

- ◇ Dr. Stern is now the Chair of Graduate Studies at Stony Brook University in New York, where he is Professor of Economics.
- ◇ The 2017 Summit on Performance Management in Vocational Rehabilitation will be in Omaha, Nebraska.
- ◇ VR-ROI Project will hold a learning community meeting at the 2017 Summit in Omaha, Nebraska. More information will be provided to learning community members at a future date.
- ◇ VR-ROI Project has been on the road:
 - ◇ Presented at Fall 2016 CSAVR
 - ◇ Presented at 2016 NRA National Conference



Meet the Project Management Team

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