

Self-Employment: An Overview

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Why use self-employment for job seekers with disabilities?

Self-employment offers naturally occurring supports that can assist with defining ideal conditions of employment, such as:

1. Wake-and-work hours
2. Medication effects
3. Timing of customer interactions
4. Performance peaks and valleys
5. Supervision preferences
6. Impact on Benefits

Self-employment and Vocational Rehabilitation

1. Self-employment remains underutilized across all disabilities.
2. Section 404 of WIOA states: “(5) COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT.—The term ‘competitive integrated employment’ means work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis **(including self-employment)**—
3. Self-employment is referenced in the amendments ten times, including citations regarding telecommuting for people with disabilities.
4. WIOA makes reference to: “...provide technical assistance to providers and organizations on developing self-employment opportunities.”
5. Under WIOA, self-employment is connected to customized employment.

Quick data on self-employment

Table 1
Status 26 Closure Rates in Self-employment Compared to All Status 26 Closures: Fiscal Years 2003–2007 for General/ Combined VR Agencies

Fiscal Year	# Closed in Self-employment	# of Status 26 Closures	% of Status 26 Closures in Self-employment
FY 2003	4,067	206,764	2.0%
FY 2005	3,388	196,733	1.7%
FY 2007	3,246	195,805	1.7%

Table 2
 11 VR Agencies (General/Combined Only) with Highest % of
 Status 26 Closures in Self-employment: FY 2007

State VR Agency: General/Combined Only	FY 2007: % of Status 26 Closures in Self-employment	# of Status 26 Closures in Self-employment
1. Mississippi	12.6%	572
2. Wyoming	7.9%	55
3. Alaska	6.6%	35
4. Maine	6.0%	42
5. New Mexico	4.3%	74
5. Vermont	4.3%	63
6. Idaho	4.1%	86
7. North Dakota	4.0%	36
8. Iowa	3.6%	77
9. Ohio	3.2%	288
10. Montana	3.1%	28
National Summary**	1.7%	3,246

Self-employment should be considered within a person-centered plan:

1. Ideal Conditions of employment should be explored.
2. Considering self-employment as part of customization (think contractual work, telecommuting, and home office space) is a best-practice approach.
3. Customization is a fluid process and requires the full range of possibilities and just like IPS-SE, there are KSAs needed.
4. Self-employment works best when there's an active team surrounding the person, therefore, a good person-centered plan should include natural supports as well as paid/professional services.
5. The Career Plan or Profile should address support needs, followed by feasibility, so that: "They don't like people," doesn't become the *reason* for self-employment.

Diversity, Disability Awareness and Character Counts!

A JOINT PROJECT BETWEEN GALLUP CULTURAL
CENTER AND ABUELO'S MUSIC

What is it?

1. A free opportunity for elementary school students to learn first hand about the lived experience of disability.
2. Field trip to Gallup Cultural Center on historical Route 66.
3. Incorporating disability and diversity as part of the six pillars of character counts, through storytelling and music.
4. Students will explore disability history in New Mexico.

How does it work?

1. Through a multimedia presentation Leo will share his story about living and working in New Mexico.
2. Students may voluntarily share their own stories related to diversity and disability.
3. Students will participate by playing instruments along with Leo to celebrate diversity.
4. Presentation and music activity to last up to an hour and includes a 10 minute tour of the storyteller museum led by Leo!

Why?

1. Standards connected to History and Diversity Lesson Plans
2. Character Counts Initiative
3. Disability Awareness (Civil Rights, ADA, Employment and Community Living) is all about anti-bullying.
4. Fun and interactive way to teach these important values
5. Cultural history of New Mexico

GALLUP CULTURAL CENTER

A PROJECT OF THE
SOUTHWEST INDIAN
FOUNDATION

STORYTELLER MUSEUM • KIVA
CINEMA • CEREMONIAL GALLERY
EL NAVAJO CAFE
GIFT SHOP • GREYHOUND • AMTRAK
VISITORS CENTER & INFORMATION



Piloting expansion of the option of self-employment

1. Train staff on the basics of self-employment (VR, case management, SE Specialists) Many times, we have people on staff that actually run microenterprises during their off time.
2. Ensure feasibility is part of the Discovery Process, not an after thought.
3. In mental health, Peer staff can be activated around including the option of self-employment in Recovery tools such as WRAP and others.
4. People tend to get excited about the notion of self-employment, but without a solid team (paid and non-paid supports) the likelihood of success is significantly diminished.
5. Self-employment offers a substantial option available under our Social Security and Medicaid/Medicare systems, to accumulate personal wealth and manage income in a way that is predictable. (CWIC and WIPA systems can be partners for awareness of self-employment)

Resources and Next Steps

1. Return to WIOA and learn about self-employment as amended.
2. ODEP Resources on self-employment:
<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/SelfEmploymentEntrepreneurship.htm>
3. SCORE: <https://www.score.org/> (Tip: offer up Mental Health First Aid or some other service in exchange for some self-employment overview)
4. <http://products.brookespublishing.com/Making-Self-Employment-Work-for-People-with-Disabilities-Second-Edition-P736.aspx>

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