

Does job coaching really work?

August 9 2010

Can a government-sponsored job coaching program for individuals with intellectual disabilities really help someone get a job?

That's what a team of USC researchers wanted to find out when they looked into a statewide job-coaching program offered through the S.C. Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN).

“We've been collecting data on special needs-individuals in South Carolina for 13 years, focusing on both prevention of disabilities and [quality of life](#) issues,” said Suzanne McDermott, a professor in the School of Medicine's Department of Family and [Preventive Medicine](#). “As we turned our attention to people with intellectual disabilities who want to earn a real wage, we wondered if government-supported job coaching programs really work—are the programs any more effective than someone just going out and finding a job without assistance?”

The question is particularly relevant for South Carolina, which administers a federally mandated job coaching effort to assist the roughly 10,000 citizens who have [intellectual disabilities](#) and the basic abilities to hold down a job.

“We did an economic analysis of the [job coaching] program to find out if it's really making a difference and, if so, how much,” said Melayne McInnes, an economics professor who worked with McDermott and Joshua Mann from preventive medicine and economics department colleague Orgul Ozturk. “As economists, Orgul and I really wanted to know if there was selection bias coming into play. In other words, were

the people being assisted by job coaching the kind of people who could have found a job anyway without help?”

Turns out the job-coaching program is enormously beneficial, even when accounting for the selection bias factor. Only 9 percent of those who found jobs did so without job coaching, while 56 percent of the intellectually disabled clients landed employment as a result of the job-coaching program.

“We know it’s possible that some of the apparent benefits of job coaching are due to underlying differences between those who receive coaching and those who do not,” Ozturk said. “Our study is the first to examine the effectiveness of job coaching while controlling for selection and existence of unobserved heterogeneity that might affect both job coaching and employment outcomes biasing the estimates of the effect of job coaching.

“Even when you factor in those things that might bias the results, it’s apparent that individuals who receive job coaching are three-times more likely to be employed as those who weren’t job coached.”

While the study was not a cost-effectiveness analysis, the researchers noted that the average cost of a job-coached employment placement is \$4,000 (half of all placements cost less than \$3,000 per person), while serving individuals in day programs costs \$7,400 annually.

“And that’s not even factoring in the taxes those working individuals are paying, plus the sense of well being and esteem that comes with holding down a job that pays a living wage,” McInnes said.

Source: University of South Carolina

Citation: Does job coaching really work? (2010, August 9) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-08-job.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.