

A Comparison between MRS and RSA Customers

Using the 2014 National RSA-911 Data

Project Excellence - A Program Evaluation Partnership

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Using the 2014 national RSA-911 data, this Brief provides an overview of MRS customer profiles, service patterns, and outcomes by comparing MRS customers to those who received VR services from other state agencies.

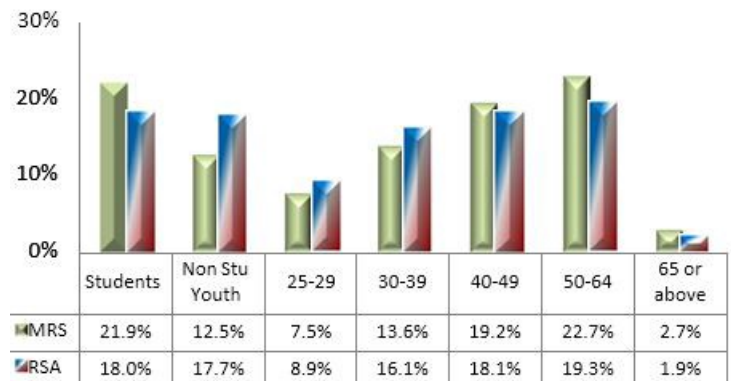
The Customer Profiles section of this Brief focuses on input variables that represent information collected on individual customers at the beginning of the VR process. The VR Services section compares the proportion of customers who received each service type, average cost of service, and the proportion of cost spent for each service. Finally, the VR Outcome section includes type of closure and information related to employment (e.g., type of occupation, hourly wage).

The 2014 national RSA-911 data consist of a total of 548,368 customers who exited all state-federal VR agencies in the U.S. during FY 2014. To ensure validity and comparability of our analysis, only cases closed from the General or Combined agencies of 50 U.S. states and District of Columbia were included (N=527,438) and compared to the FY 2014 MRS closures (N=17,633).

VR CUSTOMER PROFILES

Gender: A higher proportion of male (57.4%) vs. female (42.6%) MRS customers had their cases closed during FY 2014. This finding is similar to the 2014 national data (56.1% and 43.9%, respectively).

Age at Application: The mean age of MRS customers was 36.3 years (vs. RSA: 34.4 years). Slightly more than one third (34.4%) of MRS customers were Students¹ or Youth² with a disability. As displayed, MRS served a higher proportion of student customers and those aged 40 and older than RSA as a whole.



Race/Ethnicity: The national data indicates 60.1% of customers closed in FY 2014 were White (ranging from 3.8% in DC to 94.3% in Maine and New Hampshire). MRS was ranked 28th in terms of the proportion of White customers among the 51 General/Combined agencies. The percentage of African American customers served by MRS was 31.9% (ranked 13th), which was higher than the national average of 24.6%.

¹ Student with a disability: age 14-25 at application and enrolled in the K-12 education system.

² Youth with a disability: age 14-24 at application and NOT enrolled in the K-12 education system.

Type of Primary Disability: Mental illness was the most frequently reported primary disability for both MRS (24.9%) and RSA (25.4%), followed by learning disabilities for both MRS (16.7%) and RSA (11.8%). As illustrated in the table, MRS appears to have served a higher percentage of customers with deafness/hearing impairments (12.7%), other physical impairments (15.8%), and learning disabilities (16.7%) than RSA.

| Primary Disability | MRS | RSA |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| No Impairment | 3.1% | 7.0% |
| Blindness/Visual Impairments | 0.7% | 2.2% |
| Deafness/Hearing Impairments | 12.7% | 6.9% |
| Physical-Orthopedic/Neurological | 4.3% | 11.4% |
| Other Physical Impairments | 15.8% | 10.2% |
| Learning Disability | 16.7% | 11.8% |
| ADHD | 3.5% | 4.4% |
| Intellectual Disability | 5.0% | 7.1% |
| Autism | 3.2% | 2.9% |
| Mental Illness | 24.9% | 25.4% |
| Substance Abuse | 5.4% | 5.4% |
| TBI | 1.1% | 1.6% |
| Communicative/Other Mental | 3.7% | 3.5% |

SSA Beneficiaries: Approximately 25% of MRS and 29.1% of RSA customers closed in FY 2014 reported they were receiving SSA (SSI and/or SSDI) cash benefits at application.

Employment Status at Application: A higher proportion of MRS customers (18.0%) was working (excluding homemakers and unpaid family workers) at the time of application, compared to the RSA average (14.7%).

| | MRS | RSA |
|--|-------|-------|
| Level of Education at Application | | |
| Less than 12 th Grade | 27.1% | 25.1% |
| Special Education | 5.7% | 12.1% |
| HS diploma/equivalency | 45.2% | 33.7% |
| Postsecondary Ed | 22.0% | 29.1% |

Level of Education: Nearly half of MRS customers (45.2%) reported they had obtained a high school diploma or equivalent at application, which is higher than the national average (33.7%). In contrast to the national average (12.1%), MRS had a lower proportion (5.7%) of customers who had received or were attending special education at the time of application.

Students in Secondary Ed

Institution: Overall rates of students with disabilities served were comparable between MRS and RSA (21.9% and 20.0%, respectively). Most students served by MRS and RSA were receiving

Student in Secondary Education

| | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| Not a student with a disability | 78.1% | 80.0% |
| A student with a 504 plan | 0.2% | 0.3% |
| A student with IEP | 20.8% | 17.5% |
| A student with neither 504 plan nor IEP | 0.9% | 2.1% |

services under an IEP at the time of application; however, more MRS students (20.8%) had IEPs in comparison to the national average (17.5%). While the national average for students with disabilities not receiving any accommodations or special education services was 2.1%, the same figure was markedly less for MRS students with disabilities (0.9%).

| Significance of Disability | MRS | RSA |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|
| No Significant Disability | 9.3% | 7.0% |
| Significant Disability | 24.2% | 49.6% |
| Most Significant Disability | 66.5% | 43.4% |

Significance of Disability: In FY 2014, MRS served a higher proportion of customers with most significant disability (66.5%) than

RSA (43.4%), while RSA served a larger number of customers with significant disability (49.6%) compared to MRS (24.2%).

2014 MRS Customer Profiles at Application

| Characteristics | Percent/Average |
|--|---|
| Male: | 57.4% |
| Average age: 36.3 years | 36.3 years |
| Students & Youth: | 34.4% (21.9% students; 12.5% youth) |
| Race: | 60.1% White; 31.9% African American |
| Level of education | 50% have high school diploma or equivalency |
| Experiencing postsecondary education | 22% |
| Students in secondary education institution: | 21.9% |
| Primary disability | 24.9% mental illness; 16.7% LD; 20.1% physical; 12.7% deafness/hearing impairments |
| Most significant disability: | 66% |
| SSI/DI recipients: | 24.7% |
| Employed at Application | 18% |

VR Services

There were several notable changes in VR services in FY 2014. Overall, 77% of the 2014 MRS closures (vs. 78.4% for RSA) received at least one type of VR service. The amount of total expenditures spent was approximately 38.5 million (vs. 1.4 billion for RSA) while the mean cost for purchased services was \$2,822 (vs. \$2,664 for RSA).

Type and Cost of Services: The most frequently utilized service was assessment, accounting for 49.2% of MRS costs and 54.6% of RSA costs. While job placement (25.4%), maintenance (23.4%), and transportation (16.7%) accounted for the next highest cost expenditures by MRS, the top expenditures for RSA included: VR counseling and guidance (41.2%), diagnosis and treatment (26.2%), and transportation (18.8%). No MRS customers reported receiving any of the six newly added service types in FY 2014 (e.g., graduate college and university training, benefits counseling, customized employment), but it is expected that this trend will change in FY 2015.

Comparing Average Service Costs MRS and RSA

| Services | % of MRS Customers who received service | Average cost of MRS services | % of Total MRS Service Cost | % of Customers who received service (RSA) | Average cost of services (RSA) | % of Total Service Cost (RSA) |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Assessment | 49.2% | \$968 | 21.8% | 54.6% | \$506 | 10.4% |
| Diagnosis and Treatment | 6.3% | \$985 | 2.9% | 26.2% | \$1,141 | 11.2% |
| VR Counseling and Guidance | 9.6% | \$387 | 1.7% | 41.2% | \$4 | 0.1% |
| Graduate Col/Univ Trg | 0.0% | NA | 0.0% | 0.6% | \$5,276 | 1.1% |
| Four-Year Col/Univ Trg | 1.5% | \$5,437 | 3.9% | 4.6% | \$7,357 | 12.8% |
| Junior or Community Col Trg | 0.0% | NA | 0.0% | 2.6% | \$1,947 | 1.9% |
| Occupational or Voc Trg | 7.8% | \$816 | 2.9% | 7.1% | \$2,482 | 6.6% |
| On-the-job Trg | 2.6% | \$1,175 | 1.4% | 1.6% | \$1,123 | 0.7% |
| Apprenticeship Trg | 0.0% | NA | 0.0% | 0.0% | \$530 | 0.0% |
| Acad. Remedial or Literacy Trg | 2.8% | \$294 | 0.4% | 0.8% | \$415 | 0.1% |
| Job Readiness Trg | 6.1% | \$786 | 2.2% | 8.1% | \$1,401 | 4.3% |
| Disability-Related Skills Trg | 0.4% | \$1,250 | 0.2% | 1.1% | \$2,034 | 0.9% |
| Miscellaneous Trg | 12.7% | \$1,189 | 6.9% | 4.2% | \$1,478 | 2.3% |
| Job Search Assistance | 3.2% | \$484 | 0.7% | 16.1% | \$973 | 5.9% |
| Job Placement Assistance | 25.4% | \$1,706 | 19.8% | 17.5% | \$1,404 | 9.2% |
| On-the-job Supports | 4.2% | \$1,507 | 2.9% | 5.4% | \$1,404 | 2.8% |
| On-the-job Supports – SE | 0.0% | NA | 0.0% | 5.2% | \$3,131 | 6.1% |
| Transportation | 16.7% | \$653 | 5.0% | 18.8% | \$591 | 4.2% |
| Maintenance | 23.4% | \$422 | 4.5% | 11.7% | \$808 | 3.6% |
| Rehabilitation Tech | 12.6% | \$2,966 | 17.0% | 7.3% | \$3,259 | 8.9% |
| Reader | 0.0% | \$516 | 0.0% | 0.0% | \$2,251 | 0.0% |
| Interpreter | 0.7% | \$2,449 | 0.8% | 1.7% | \$2,691 | 1.7% |
| Personal Attendant | 0.1% | \$5,314 | 0.2% | 0.1% | \$8,646 | 0.3% |
| Technical Assistance | 0.5% | \$1,789 | 0.4% | 0.6% | \$1,097 | 0.2% |
| Information and Referral | 1.1% | \$0 | 0.0% | 18.3% | \$5 | 0.0% |
| Benefits Counseling | 0.0% | NA | 0.0% | 2.1% | \$207 | 0.2% |
| Customized Employment | 0.0% | NA | 0.0% | 1.1% | \$389 | 0.2% |
| Other | 10.0% | \$944 | 4.3% | 13.7% | \$828 | 4.3% |

Besides the proportion of customers utilizing each service, huge discrepancies were also observed in cost of services among state agencies. For example, the average cost of counseling and guidance services nationally is \$4, while the average cost of this service for MRS is \$387. This discrepancy may further reflect the different policies each agency employs; some states report counseling and guidance as a service provided to all customers. In addition to counseling and guidance, MRS spent more money for the following services, compared to RSA: assessment, job placement, on-the-job supports, technical assistance and other services.

The mean cost for total purchased services of MRS was \$2,822 (vs. \$2,664 for RSA). Even though the average total costs were similar, the mean cost by type of closure was

| | MRS | | RSA | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| | Mean Cost | % of Total Cost | Mean Cost | % of Total Cost |
| Before determined eligible | \$239 | 1.8% | \$124 | 0.7% |
| Determined eligible, No IPE | \$482 | 3.6% | \$273 | 2.7% |
| Services initiated, not employed | \$2,427 | 32.8% | \$3,001 | 28.9% |
| Employment outcome | \$3,599 | 61.8% | \$5,470 | 67.6% |
| Order of Selection | - | - | \$131 | 0.1% |

somewhat different. The costs for those who received services based on their IPE were lower than those of RSA. The attached table shows that 62% of MRS' total costs were incurred in serving customers with an employment outcome; similarly, RSA spent 68% on customers with employment closures. Expenditure rates for customers with IPEs but no employment outcome were less (33% of MRS total costs vs. 29% of national costs).

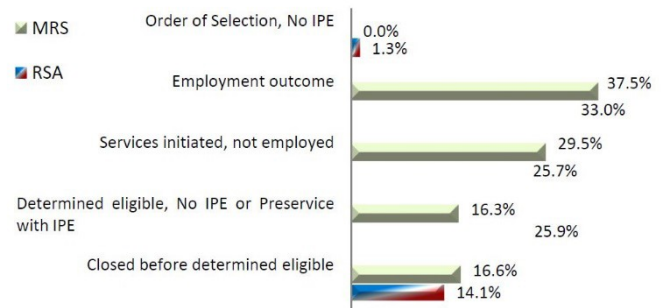
← MRS Service Patterns & Cost of Services →

Patterns and Costs

- % of customers who received at least one VR service: 77%
- Most frequently utilized services: assessment (49%), job placement (25%), maintenance (23%) & transportation (17%)
- Total cost of services: 38.5M
- Mean cost for purchased services: \$2,822
- Expenditure Patterns: 21.8% of total expenditure spent for assessment, 19.8% for job placement & 17.0% for rehab tech, and 62% of total expenditure spent for customers with an employment outcomes

VR Outcomes

Type of Closure: In FY 2014, a total of 6,618 (37.5%) MRS customers were closed with an employment outcome. This rate is higher than the national average (33.0%) and ranks MRS 14th among 51 General/Combined agencies (rates ranged from 17.2% to 51.4%). For reference, MRS was ranked 10th among the 25 General agencies (rates ranged from 20.7% to 42.6%).



Approximately 30% of MRS customers were closed without an employment outcome after services were initiated, and 16.3% were closed without an IPE developed. In addition, 16.6% of MRS customers were closed before eligibility determination.

Note that the high rate of MRS customers closed without an employment outcome after services were initiated (11th among the 51 agencies) was associated with a lower adjusted rehabilitation rate (56.0%). The adjusted rehabilitation rate ranged from 29.9% to 73.4% among comparable agencies, with MRS ranked 40th.

Reason for Closure: Among MRS customers without an employment outcome, the top three reasons for closure were “unable to contact” (40.6% vs. 29.7%), “no longer interested in receiving services or further services” (32.5% in MRS vs. 43.8% in RSA), and “all other reasons” (17.7% vs. 16.8%). Compared to the national data, a higher percentage of MRS cases were closed due to VR counselors reporting that they were not able to contact customers. In contrast, a lower percentage of MRS cases were closed due to customers indicating that they were no longer interested in receiving services.

Earnings and Hours Worked: Excluding homemakers and unpaid family workers who did not provide wage information, 99.6% of 6,608 MRS customers vs. 98.4% of 171,420 RSA customers employed at closure reported making more than the federal minimum hourly wage amount of \$7.25. The average hourly wage for MRS was \$12.07 (SD=\$7.97) and RSA was \$11.33 (SD=\$6.46). For reference, 97.3% of MRS customers reported earning more than the minimum wage at the state level of \$7.40.

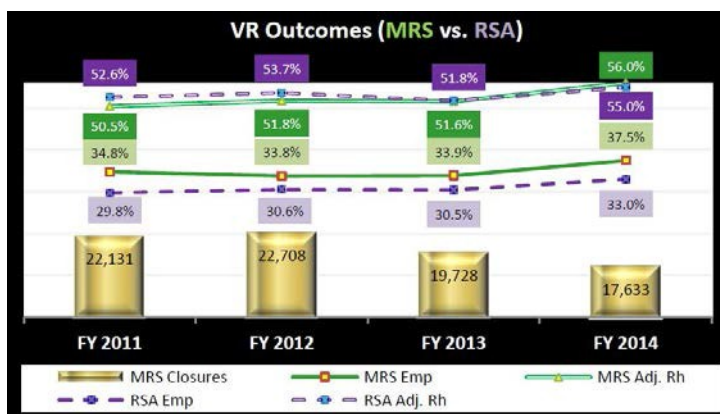
The majority of employed customers were making between \$7.25 and \$11.99 per hour (70.6% in MRS; 70.6% in RSA). It is interesting that a higher proportion of MRS customers (9.4%) reported making more than \$22 per hour at closure (vs. 5.2% in RSA). In addition, 42.8% of MRS customers reported working 36-40 hours per week; similarly, 39.4% of RSA customers were working the same hours. The average number of hours worked per week was 31.0 for MRS customers and 29.9 nationally.

Competitive Employment: In FY 2014, 6,429 MRS customers achieved competitive employment, representing 97.3% of successful closures (vs. 89.5% at the RSA level). The average hourly wages of those customers was \$12.21 (SD=\$8.05) for MRS and \$11.83 (SD=\$6.64) for RSA.

Type of Occupations: The following table indicates the top five types of occupations (using the Standard Occupational Classification System) that MRS/RSA customers reported having at closure and the average hourly wages for each occupation category. As illustrated, the frequency order was slightly different between MRS and RSA. For example, the highest proportion of MRS customers with an employment outcome (16.0%) was engaged in the building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations while 15.0% of RSA customers had office and administrative support occupations (Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance, Production, Food Preparation and Serving Related, Office and Administrative Support, and Sales and Related).

| Occupation Categories | MRS | | RSA | |
|---|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|
| | % | Hourly Wage | % | Hourly Wage |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance | 16.0% | \$8.70 | 9.8% | \$9.23 |
| Production | 13.6% | \$10.69 | 7.9% | \$10.74 |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related | 11.3% | \$8.25 | 11.5% | \$8.65 |
| Office and Administrative Support | 10.7% | \$11.88 | 15.0% | \$10.44 |
| Sales and Related | 10.0% | \$10.69 | 8.8% | \$9.68 |

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MRS Outcomes

- Employment Rate: 37.5%
- Adjusted Rehab Rate: 56.0%
- Most frequent reason for closure: Unable to contact (40.6%)
- Average hourly wage & hours worked: \$12.07 & 31.0 hours
- Trend Analysis: The number of MRS closures has dropped over the past four years. When compared to RSA, MRS shows higher employment rates but lower adj. rehab rates. However, both outcome rates increased in MRS in FY 2014, the first year to have a higher adj. rehab rate than the average adj. rehab rate of RSA.