Indiana Family and Social Services Administration

Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation

Employment Services Model Evaluation - Findings Report

May 2019

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I.   PURPOSE

This report provides Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) with an examination and analysis of the State's Employment Services Model (ESM). Specifically, VR seeks to understand whether ESM, implemented on July 1, 2015, is having a positive impact on service delivery and if it is achieving key programmatic goals.

This report is one installment in a series of program evaluation reports to be produced bi-annually by Public Consulting Group in partnership with VR. Each report will analyze elements of the ESM and address programmatic questions such as:

- What elements of service delivery lead to positive employment outcomes?
- Are there differences across certain populations that can be identified to better inform policy and practice?
- Are services being individualized to best suit the needs and strengths of each participant?

The purpose of these reports is to measure and analyze a broad range of VR statistics, including hourly wages, weekly hours worked, and successful case closure rate, among others. The data results presented in the following sections provides VR with a foundation of knowledge on which to build upon in the coming months and years.

II.   CHANGES

Since the last report, Indiana VR has implemented several systems changes to improve service delivery and efficacy of services.

In May 2019, VR implemented two new software solutions to support case management, as well as a system to manage authorizations, claim submission, and payment. This report is the last report using data captured through the legacy system, IRIS. Beyond increasing efficacy and reducing administrative burden of both State and provider staff, the two software solutions implemented offer greater amounts and accuracy of data to assist the State and stakeholders in making decisions.

In March 2019, VR also implemented changes to the Employment Services Model based on feedback from VR staff, providers, and stakeholders. Documentation and policies, as well as funding structures for work experiences, were amended to be more streamlined and aligned with program purposes and goals. This report also captures data in this transition.

The source of the Supported Employment (SE) data has also changed. While previous reports used authorization data to examine trends around Supported Employment hourly services, claims data will be used moving forward. Using authorization data caused inconsistencies in reporting monthly use of SE hourly. Authorizations are written to cover different time spans (often 3 to 6 months) making analysis inconsistent. Claims data reports SE hourly use monthly, as providers consistently bill monthly. As the data from this report gives an accurate picture of SE use, this report should be referred to instead of previous reports. Please refer to the Supported Employment Section for additional details.

With these transitions, this report bridges prior data systems and reporting to new software systems and updates to the Employment Services Model.

III.   BACKGROUND

As of 2010, nearly 19% of Americans live with a disability[1]. At 7.4%, individuals with disabilities have disproportionately high rates of unemployment relative to their peers without disabilities[2]. In addition, earned wages are 37% less on average, and in some states, even more, with the pay gap widening as educational attainment increases[3]. The differences in earned income impact not only individuals, but their families who must often support them, as well as the state and federal government that provides support in the form of various benefit programs. Workers with disabilities are more likely to be employed part-time, and largely in the service industries, as well as transportation and production. Individuals with disabilities are more likely to face persistent poverty compared to those without disabilities. Individuals with a disability often face barriers to employment, including mismatches between skill and their job, discrimination, and lack of job readiness. As of October 2018, approximately 21.5% of the workforce are individuals with disabilities[4].

The goal of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services is to assist individuals with disabilities in gaining meaningful employment. VR programs are funded by federal dollars as well as state dollars through the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). VR works directly with individuals with physical or mental impairments to address the challenges they may face in the modern workplace, through authorizing a wide range of services and supports[5]. These services include job coaching, vocational assessment, training, assessing worksite accommodations, assistive technology, among other services. State VR programs also assist in job placement of individuals with disabilities by developing relationships with local businesses.

The passage of WIOA introduced new requirements to how services are offered and how success is measured in VR services administration and programming. To create accountability to job seekers and tax payers, WIOA emphasizes performance measures and stresses that agencies make data informed decisions. WIOA creates common performance measures, requires the establishment of primary indicators on attaining skills and credentials, and establishes annual reporting measures[6].

With this context in mind, Indiana VR is taking the lead in using programmatic data to drive policy and promote positive employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The **Employment Services Model (ESM)**, described in the following section, was designed based on an in-depth analysis of participant needs and service delivery gaps. VR will continue to leverage data and information to improve services and programs.

TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MODEL

To understand the full impact that ESM is intended to achieve, it is important to briefly outline the evolution of the Indiana VR program.

In 2006, IN VR shifted from hourly-units of service to a structured milestone-based system, known as the Results-Based Funding model (RBF). The idea was rooted in the ever-changing VR landscape: tie vendor reimbursements to specific "milestones", or participant accomplishments, to promote comprehensive and effective service delivery. This would lead to positive employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, IN VR separated the RBF model into two tiers of services based on the level of needs of the individual served. Tier 1 was developed to

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[1] https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html

[2] https://www.dol.gov/odep/

[3] http://www.air.org/news/press-release/those-disabilities-earn-37-less-average-gap-even-wider-some-states

[4] https://www.dol.gov/odep/

[5] https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/reg/narrative.html

[6] http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa-meetings-on-final-regs.html

serve individuals with high needs and multiple barriers to employment (Tier 1), and Tier 2 was developed for individuals requiring less intensive services than those in Tier 1.

While the implementation of the RBF model was a positive step for Indiana's VR program, it did not entirely accomplish IN VR's service delivery goals. An analysis performed by IN VR revealed that vendors were spending less time with participants during the initial intake stages. This upfront work allows vendors to identify participant strengths, skill sets, barriers to employment, and career goals, and thus lead to positive employment outcomes. RBF provided financial incentive to reach employment quickly and sometimes prematurely close the participant's case, without providing the needed job stability for individuals, particularly those with the most significant disabilities. The RBF model was successful in increasing accountability for employment outcomes and resulted in increased outcomes, however the RBF model did not emphasize the importance of the quality of employment outcomes in terms of hours worked, wages, and employer-offered benefits.

In July 2015, IN VR implemented a new service delivery model for its VR program known as the Employment Services Model (ESM). Commonly referred to as a "hybrid service model" because it contains elements of both the RBF model and hourly units of service, the ESM intends to find the balance between service structure and vendor flexibility, as well as emphasis on both achievements of outcomes and individualized, high quality services. Furthermore, the ESM eliminates the "one size fits all" approach that unintentionally resulted from the milestone-based service structure by allowing vendors to tailor their service hours to each individual participant, based on the unique needs of each individual. Most importantly, the ESM strives to provide a participant-centric approach to employment service delivery.

Overall, the purpose of the ESM is to:

- Inject flexibility into the service structure;
- Eliminate barriers for individuals with the most significant disabilities to receive appropriate services and supports; and
- Ensure that employment plans are tailored to the unique needs of each participant served.[7]

The ESM emphasizes Discovery: the upfront work of figuring out the individual's strengths and skills and determining an optimal job match. The ESM also increases access to supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, providing a mechanism for individuals to receive supports for up to 24 months to support stabilization and job retention.

ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

For clarity, the components outlined below frame the following analysis:
- Results are reported based on the number of cases rather than the number of participants. This is a more accurate representation because it captures participants that have had multiple cases with IN VR with different determination attributes. For example, a participant might have a severity determination of "non-significant disability" for one case, while another case for the same participant might reflect a severity determination of "significant disability".

- In some cases, a participant might receive multiple job placements before case closure. To ensure accuracy, only the most recent hourly wages and weekly hours received by a participant are included.

- Population distributions are categorized based on the primary impairment identified by the VR counselor. The primary impairment categories are as follows: Sensory-Vision, Sensory–Hearing, Physical,

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[7] IN VR "Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual of Employment Services"http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/VR_Manual_of_Employment_Services_June_2015_FINAL.pdf

Developmental, Mental Illness, and Other. The "Other" category includes individuals who are deaf-blind or with communication barriers.

- Severity determination distributions are based on determinations required for federal reporting purposes. The severity determination categories are as follows:

    o **Non-Significant Disability (NSD)**: Participant has a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment.

    o **Significant Disability (SD)**: Participant has a severe physical or mental impairment that will substantially limit one or two functional capacities (communication, interpersonal skills, mobility, self-care, self-direction, work skills, and work tolerance) in terms of employment outcome and who can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period.

    o **Most Significant Disability (MSD)**: Participant has a severe physical or mental impairment that substantially limits three or more functional capacities and who can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period.

- Case closure rates are determined using three different case closure codes. Each code is associated with a specific reason for case closure. Cases can be closed for a variety of reasons, including a participant leaving the program before completion. The case closure categories are as follows:

    o **Case Closure – IPE Not Implemented:** Participant receives an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) but leaves the system prior to receiving VR services.

    o **Case Closure – Not Rehabilitated:** Participant receives a comprehensive Individualized Plan for Employment but leaves the system prior to achieving employment placement and stabilization.

    o **Successful Case Closure:** Participant is successfully placed in competitive, integrated employment, has achieved stabilization, and has retained employment for at least 90 days.

IV.   EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MODEL

On July 1, 2015 IN VR fully implemented the Employment Services Model. The following data results are for individuals that received their first service authorization on or after the date of July 1, 2015.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

Figure 1 displays the distribution of participants by primary impairment. Since July 1, 2015, 11,222 unique participant cases have been served under the ESM. Most participants are individuals with a Developmental disability, followed by participants with a Mental Illness. The least number of participant cases are of those with disabilities categorized as Other and those with a Sensory-Hearing disability. This trend continues to be similar to what the data has shown in the past few reports.

Figure 2 displays the distribution of participants by severity of disability. The largest number of participant cases are from participants with the most significant disabilities. As expected, the percentage of individuals with a most significant disability continues to increase as order of selection continues. The least number of unique cases are of participants with a disability categorized as not significant, which is what we have seen in past reports.
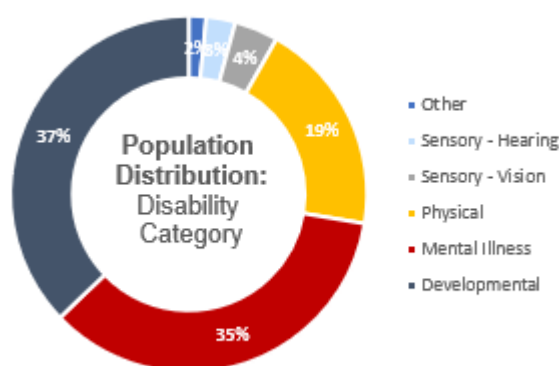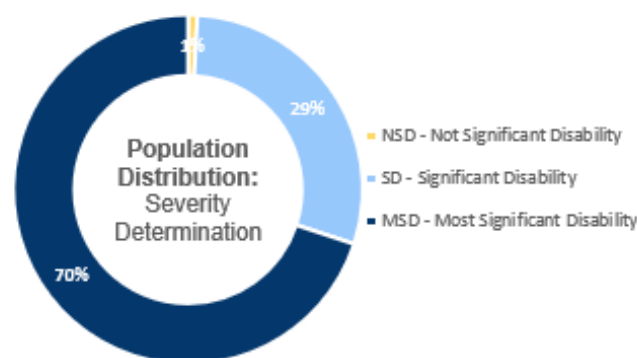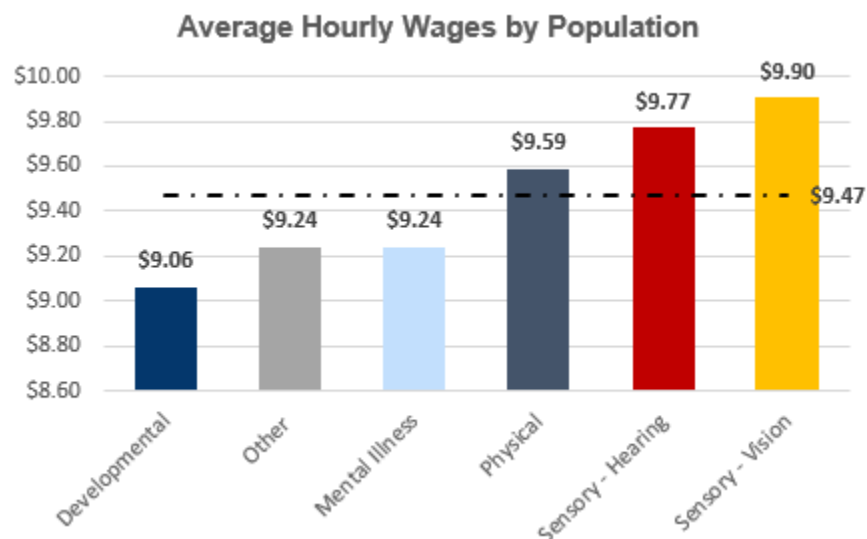

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

HOURLY WAGES

Figure 3 displays the average hourly wages by population, across the participant population. 4,431 participants were identified as receiving an hourly wage. The participants with the highest average hourly wages at $9.90 were those participants with a Sensory-Vision disability, which is the same as the last report. Participants with a Sensory-Hearing disability followed closely after at $9.77, a slight increase of $0.06 from the previous report. The participants with the lowest average hourly wages are those with disabilities categorized as Developmental at $9.06, which represents an increase of $.06 from the previous report. Those with a disability identified as Other and Mental Illness both had an hourly wage of $9.24. The overall average for average hourly wage across all individuals is $9.47, which increased by $.10 since the last report.

FIGURE 3

Average hourly wages are further categorized by severity of disability, as seen in **Figure 4** below. Participants with the most significant disabilities achieved the lowest hourly wages on average, at $9.05, which is an $0.11 increase from the last report. Participants with non-significant disabilities achieved the highest average hourly wages at $9.77, which again, is a slight increase from the last report. Those individuals with a significant disability also saw a slight increase compared to the last report.

Severity of Disability	Average Hourly Wages
Non-Significant Disability	$ 9.77
Significant Disability	$ 9.67
Most Significant Disability	$ 9.05

FIGURE 4

WEEKLY HOURS WORKED

Figure 5 displays the average weekly hours worked by population. A total of 4,449 unique cases received weekly work hours. The overall average of weekly hours worked across populations is 25.2, changing minimally from the last report. The populations with the highest weekly hours worked on average are Sensory-Hearing and Sensory-Vision, at 28.0 and 27.4 respectively. Participants with Other disabilities or Developmental disabilities had the lowest hours, at 22.9 and 22.7 respectively, which is consistent with past reports.
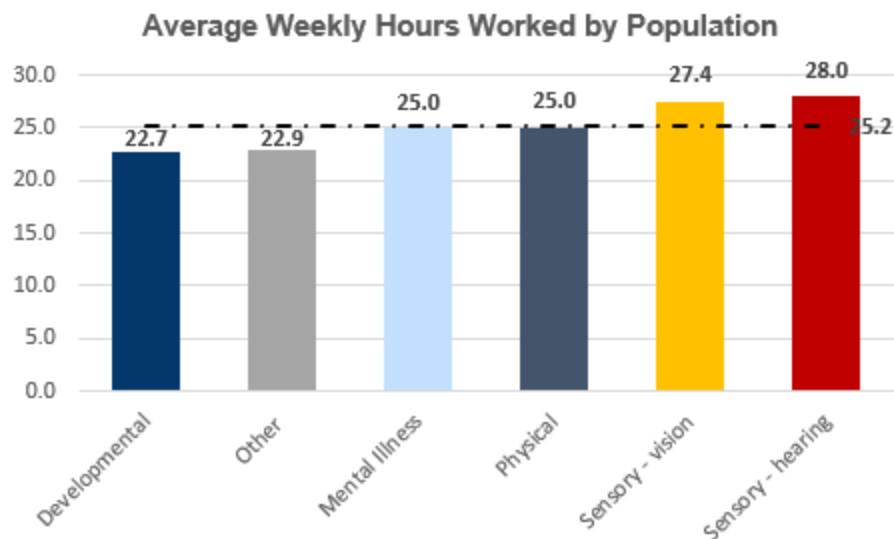
Average Weekly Hours Worked by Population

FIGURE 5

Figure 6 displays the average weekly hours worked by severity determination. Participants with a most significant disability worked an average of 22.4 hours weekly. This is 9.4 hours less than participants with not significant disabilities. When comparing individuals who began work within the last 6 months (November 2018 – March 2019), the average weekly hours worked did not change considerably for participants with MSD or SD. Forty-six participants, and 407 participants with SD and MSD began work in the last 6 months, respectively.

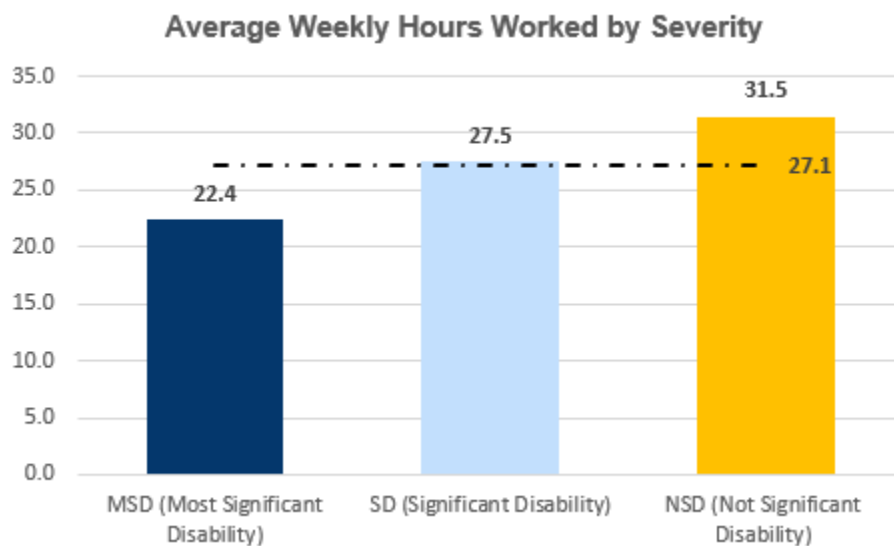## Average Weekly Hours Worked by Severity

FIGURE 6

LENGTH OF TIME FROM FIRST AUTHORIZATION TO EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT

Figure 7 displays, by severity determination, the average number of weeks from a participant's first authorization to the date of employment placement. Previous reports analyzed length of time from first authorization to

employment placement by population. In the last report, the overall average across disability types was 42 weeks. Participants with MSD spend the most time from first authorization to employment placement at 49.3 weeks. Vendors may spend more time determining strengths and skills and developing a job that is a good fit. As most participants currently served by VR have a MSD, this increases the average. One possible explanation is that the length of time continues to increase as the proportion of participants with MSD served through VR continues to increase due to the order of selection. Additionally, the increase could indicate increased focus on working with participants through methods such as Discovery prior to stabilization, which was a key goal IN VR hoped to accomplish with the Employment Service Model.
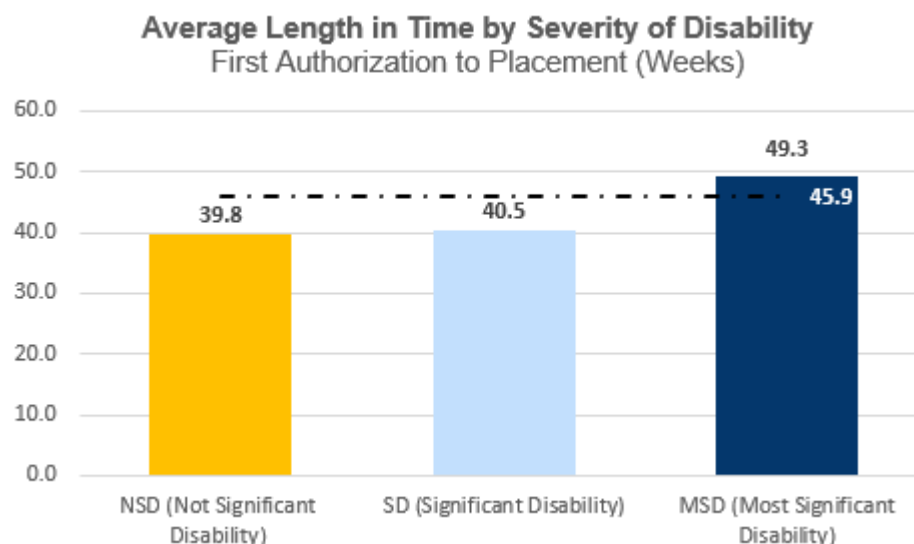

Average Length in Time by Severity of Disability
First Authorization to Placement (Weeks)

FIGURE 7

SUCCESSFUL CASE CLOSURE RATE

Figure 8 displays the rate of the number of cases that received both an employment placement and 90-day stabilization. The case closure rates reflect the proportion of closed cases that received a "Successful Case Closure" designation, compared to other case closure designations. 8,283 unique cases received a case closure code. All population categories either maintained a successful case closure rate or increased. Participants identified as having "Other" disabilities continued to have the highest successful case closure rate. The average for all categories remained steady at 42%.

Figure 9 displays the case closure rate by severity determination. Participants with NSD have the highest case closure rate, but the number of individuals with this determination being served through VR is less than the other categories. Additionally, participants with an NSD may have greater flexibility in conditions of employment and have skills more easily transferrable to jobs available in the current job market.

Case Closure Rate by Population

■	Physical	38%
■	Mental Illness	38%
■	Sensory - Vision	37%
■	Other	50%
■	Developmental	47%
■	Sensory - Hearing	46%
	Overall Average	**42%**

FIGURE 8

Case Closure Rate by Severity

■	NSD - Not Significant Disability	54%
■	SD - Significant Disability	42%
■	MSD - Most Significant Disability	42%
	Overall Average	**42%**

FIGURE 9

DISCOVERY HOURS COMPARISON

Figure 10 below represents the average number of hours ESM participants spend in Discovery by severity determination. Previous reports examined time spent in Discovery by population. Here, we examine time spent in Discovery by severity determination. Participants with MSD spend the most time in Discovery with an average of 21.5 hours, compared to participants with SD who spend an average of 10.5 hours of Discovery. Participants with NSD spend the least amount of time in Discovery with an average of 8.3 hours. Participants with an MSD may spend more time in Discovery than participants with SD and NSD as more exploration may be needed to determine strengths, successful support strategies, and conditions for successful employment. It is important to note that the average time reported here reflects a decrease from prior reports because prior reports included work experience in the calculation of average time spent in Discovery, while this report separates work experience data which can be viewed in Figure 11.
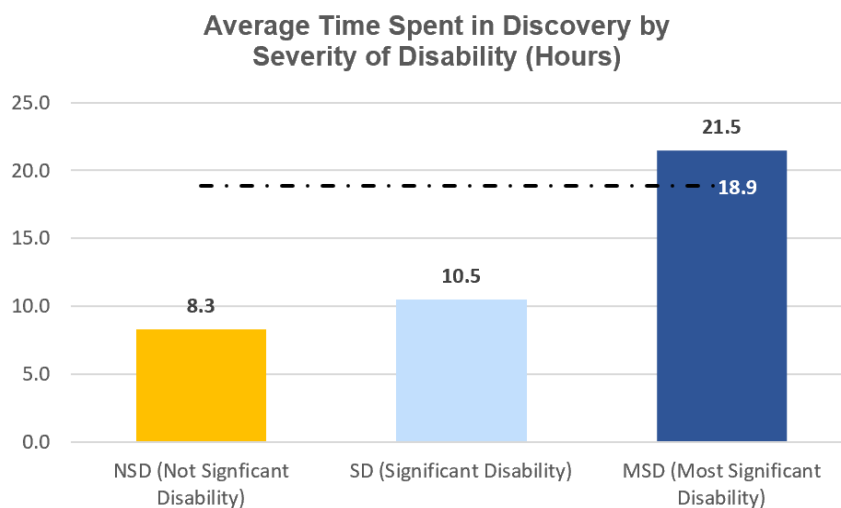
Average Time Spent in Discovery by Severity of Disability (Hours)

NSD (Significant Disability): 8.3
SD (Significant Disability): 10.5
MSD (Most Significant Disability): 21.5
(average line: 18.9)

FIGURE 10

WORK EXPERIENCE COMPARISON

Work Experience is a Discovery activity that is authorized and tracked separately from other Discovery activities. Work Experiences are conducted in competitive, integrated work settings that are consistent with the type of work the participant prefers. This activity is individualized in duration, hours per week, and level of support, to meet the needs of the participant. Until March 2019, Work Experiences were authorized and paid in tiers corresponding to the hours the participant worked, with a requirement of an average of 75% of on-site support by the provider to ensure enough support and assessment time. After March 2019, the funding structure for Work Experience shifted to an hourly service to allow for further flexibility and support the participant in receiving whatever level of support is needed. With this change in the model, providers will bill the hours of services provided directly to the participant, rather than the number of hours the participant works. Vocational Rehabilitation has also provided guidance that participants should work at least 5 hours a week during a Work Experience. This shift in service delivery will impact the way data is reported.

Figure 11 shows the use of Work Experience levels by severity determination. Across severity determinations, Work Experience levels have been used at similar rates. It is interesting to note that individuals with an MSD and individuals with an NSD both use Level C, with the greatest number of hours most frequently, while individuals with a SD use Level A, with five or fewer hours at the greatest frequency. Individuals who receive an authorization prior to a severity determination are identified as 'Null'. While the number of individuals classified as 'Null' is only 1.5% of the users of Work Experiences, data is provided for a full picture. When comparing all data from the ESM to the last six months, no notable differences were identified.

Work Experience Levels	MSD	SD	NSD	Null	Grand Total
Level A (0-5 hours)	27%	37%	23%	32%	31% (1019)
Level B (6-10 hours)	34%	32%	28%	38%	33% (1104)
Level C (11+ hours)	39%	30%	50%	30%	36% (1216)
Grand Total	100% (1797)	100% (1287)	100% (199)	100% (56)	100% (3339)

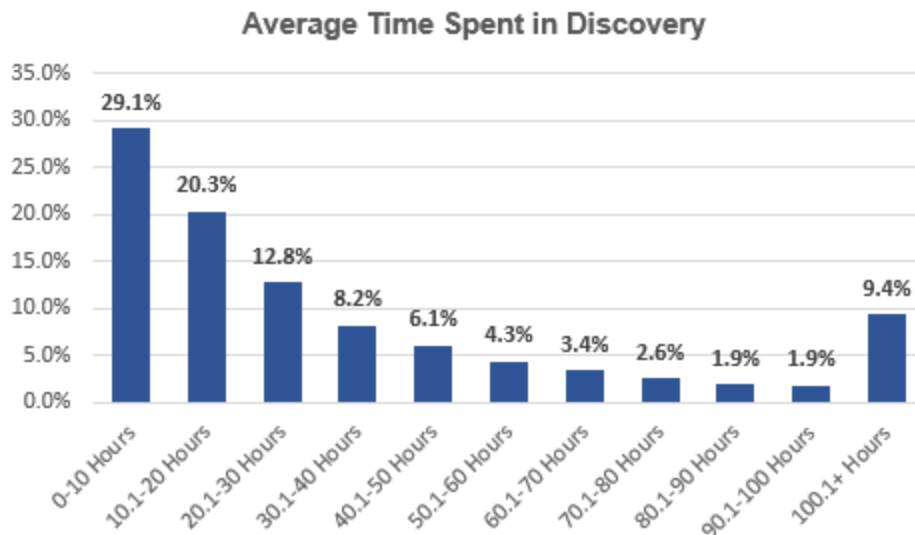**FIGURE 11**

Average Time Spent in Discovery

FIGURE 12

Figure 12 above outlines the average number of hours spent in Discovery based on increments of 10 hours. Approximately half of participants spend 20 hours or less in Discovery, while approximately 70% spend 40 hours or less. Continued review of this data will determine if the average amount of Discovery time is impacted by the ongoing shift in the population being served under the order of selection.

INDUSTRY PLACEMENT

Industry Placement by Job Function

IN VR uses O*NET federal job codes to designate a participant's employment placement. These job codes correspond to a "Job Family" category. A Job Family is composed of different occupations that require similar skills and expertise. In Other words, a Job Family is grouped by job functions. Categorizing participant employment placements by job functions allows for an easy analysis across multiple industries. For the sake of clarity, any reference to "category" in the remainder of this section will refer directly to the Job Families found in O*NET.
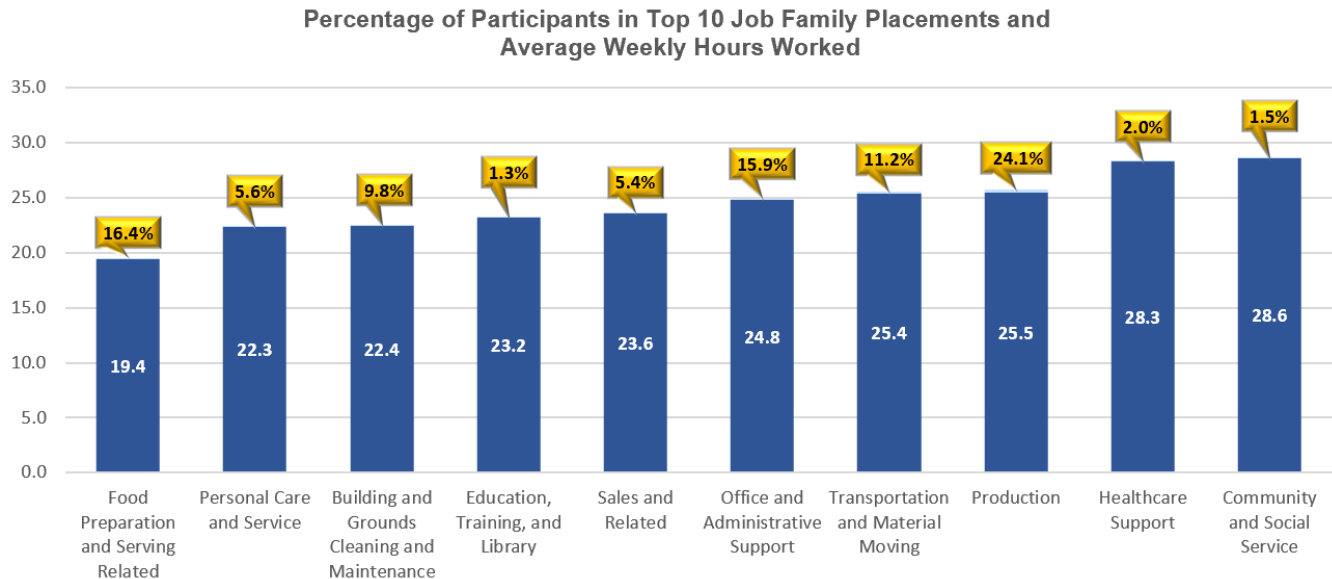
Percentage of Participants in Top 10 Job Family Placements and Average Weekly Hours Worked

FIGURE 13

Figure 13 displays two data points: the top 10 Job Family Placements, which represents the Job Families with the highest participant placements, and the average weekly hours worked for each Job Family. Food Preparation and Serving Related, the Job Family with the second most placements, had the lowest weekly hours on average, at 19.4, which is similar to the last report. The highest weekly hours worked was for participants that were placed in jobs categorized in Community and Social Service, at an average of 28.6 weekly hours. However, only 1.5% of participants found a job placement in this Job Family. Production, the Job Family with the most placements, decreased slightly from 25.5 hours to 25.4 weekly hours worked. The Job Family with the third most placements, Office and Administrative Support, has an average of 24.8 hours per week. Overall, industry placement data remains largely unchanged from the last report.

The categories with the largest percentage of participant placements in ESM are as follows:

- **Production**
- **Office and Administrative Support**
- **Food Preparation and Serving Related**

In 2017, the estimated number of employment opportunities for Production-related jobs occupations in Indiana was 373,540. Similarly, the number of employment opportunities for Office and Administrative Support was 419,830, and 279,700 for Food Preparation and Serving jobs[8].

Since July 1, 2015, 1108 participants have been placed in occupations designated in the "Production" category. Many of these participants achieved the job title of "Helpers-Production Workers". Production workers perform activities such as supplying or holding materials or tools, cleaning work area or equipment, examining products for quality assurance, and starting equipment[9]. The skills required are minimal, although some occupations may require

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[8] OES Dashboard
[9] Details Report for: Helpers- Production Workers

knowledge of mechanical concepts (maintenance, machines, tools), or some technology. Educational requirements for occupations in this Job Family typically require a high school diploma[10]. In the state of Indiana, the average wage for workers in this job family is $17.97, while workers receiving support through VR receive an average wage of $9.48 for this category. Projected growth (2014-2024) for Production Worker occupations is expected to see a 4% decline nationally but is expected to increase in the state of Indiana by 8%.[11]

The second largest category that participants were placed in is "Food Preparation and Serving Related" Job Family, with 752 participant placements. Most participants received a "Food Server, Non-restaurant" job title. Activities that are typically performed under this Job Family include serving food to individuals outside of a restaurant environment, such as hotels and residential care facilities, and often have occupations such as "Dietary Assistant", "Food Service Worker" and "Room Service Server". [12] The skills required include active listening, speaking, service orientation and monitoring/assessing to make improvements or take corrective action[13]. The educational requirements to obtain a job in this category include less than high school diploma to some college[14]. The average wage for occupations in this Job Family is $10.33 in Indiana[15], while workers receiving support through VR receive an average wage of $8.63 for this category. Furthermore, career growth is expected to be at 13% nationally, and 16% in Indiana between 2014 and 2024. [16]

The third largest Job Family, with 730 participant placements, is "Office and Administrative Support". An example of a job title received by a participant is "Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other". Other participants in this job category find employment in occupations such as Stock Clerks, Customer Service Representatives, Receptionists and Information Clerks, and Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks. The skills required for these jobs include clerical and administrative duties, and often require moderate on-the-job training[17]. Educational expectations are high school diploma, though some college education is required for certain job titles. The average wage is $16.74 in the state of Indiana[18], while workers receiving support through VR receive an average wage of $9.96 for this category. Projected growth for Office and Administrative Support occupations is expected to be at 7% nationally and 8% in Indiana[19].

Figure 14 outlines the discrepancy in average wages for workers across Indiana versus average wages for workers who received support through VR. It is possible that part of the difference in wages comes from workers who remain in a field for an extended period and continue to receive wage increases. Participants receiving VR services may be entering a new field and starting in entry-level positions with lower wages.

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[10] Summary Report for: Helpers-Production Workers
[11] Salary Finder: Production Workers, All Other
[12] Summary Report for: Food Servers, Non-restaurant
[13] Skills Summary
[14] Summary Report for: Food Servers, Non-restaurant
[15] Salary Finder
[16] Occupation Profile
[17] U.S. Department of Labor
[18] Salary Finder: Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other
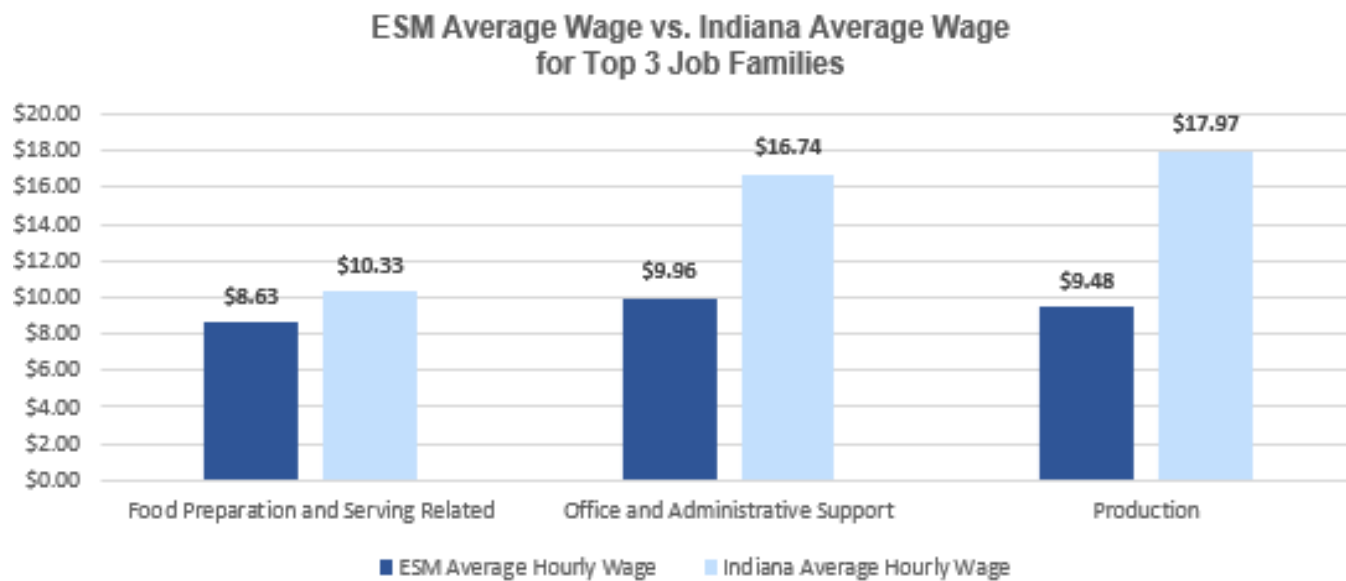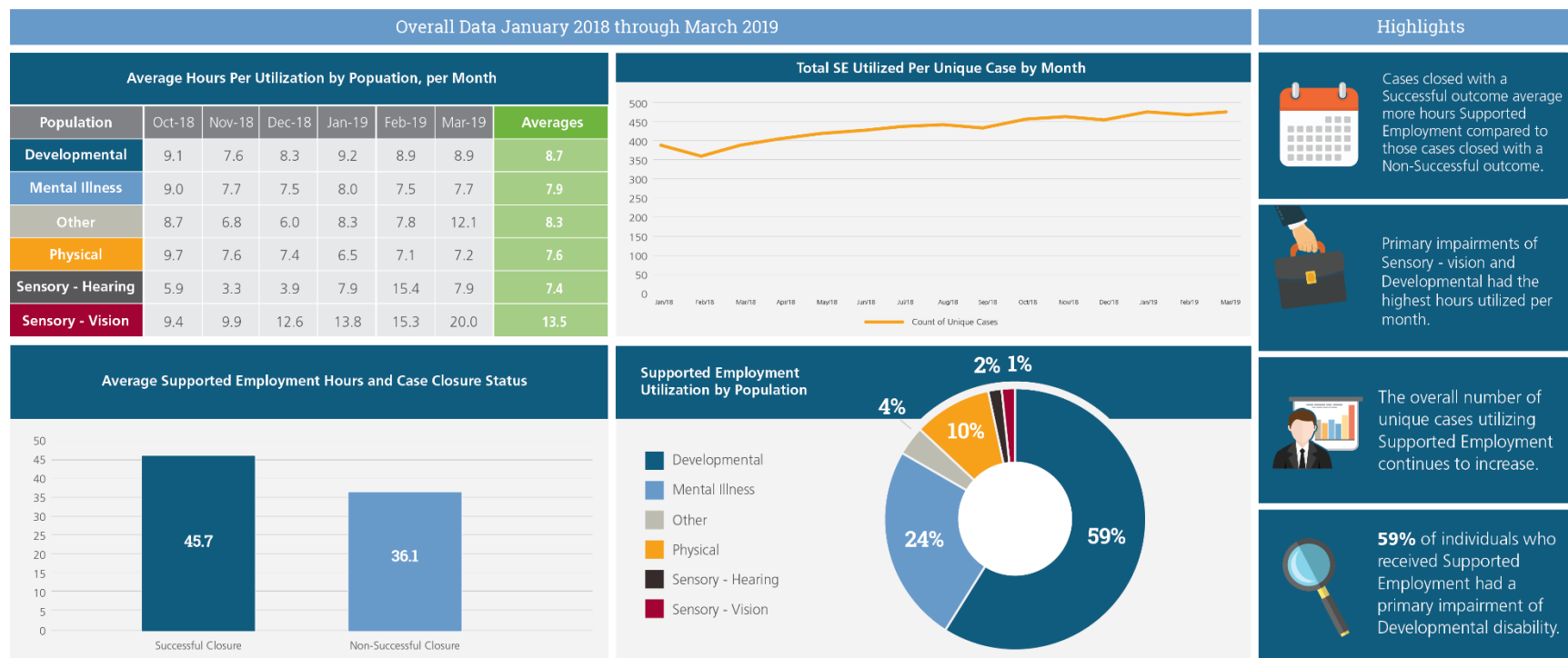[19] Occupational Profile: Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other

ESM Average Wage vs. Indiana Average Wage for Top 3 Job Families

FIGURE 14

V.   SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Overall Data January 2018 through March 2019								Highlights

Average Hours Per Utilization by Popuation, per Month

Population	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Averages
Developmental	9.1	7.6	8.3	9.2	8.9	8.9	8.7
Mental Illness	9.0	7.7	7.5	8.0	7.5	7.7	7.9
Other	8.7	6.8	6.0	8.3	7.8	12.1	8.3
Physical	9.7	7.6	7.4	6.5	7.1	7.2	7.6
Sensory - Hearing	5.9	3.3	3.9	7.9	15.4	7.9	7.4
Sensory - Vision	9.4	9.9	12.6	13.8	15.3	20.0	13.5

Total SE Utilized Per Unique Case by Month

Count of Unique Cases

Average Supported Employment Hours and Case Closure Status

45.7 — Successful Closure

36.1 — Non-Successful Closure

Supported Employment Utilization by Population

- Developmental — 59%
- Mental Illness — 24%
- Other — 4%
- Physical — 10%
- Sensory - Hearing — 2%
- Sensory - Vision — 1%

Highlights

Cases closed with a Successful outcome average more hours Supported Employment compared to those cases closed with a Non-Successful outcome.

Primary impairments of Sensory - vision and Developmental had the highest hours utilized per month.

The overall number of unique cases utilizing Supported Employment continues to increase.

59% of individuals who received Supported Employment had a primary impairment of Developmental disability.

Utilization Dashboard

Supported Employment (SE) services are ongoing support services and other appropriate services an individual with an MSD uses to reach stabilization and job retention[20]. Supported Employment is authorized on an hourly basis. Many participants using this support have previously been unsuccessful at maintaining and retaining employment, or traditional employment has not occurred at all.

Prior to the ESM, the milestone payment structure did not provide a mechanism or incentive for providers to vary the level of support to meet the needs of the participant. In other words, providers were reimbursed at the same rate regardless of the level of support provided. The ESM provides financial support to providers serving individuals with the highest needs that might need longer to stabilize at their place of employment.

Supported Employment authorizations are compensated on an hourly basis, to allow flexibility and to ensure the participant gets the level of support needed to be successful. This service allows participants to receive support after achieving employment placement as long as needed, for up to 24 months. Supported Employment services may be provided on-site or off-site, or a combination[21], and are expected to "fade", or lessen, as the participant works toward stabilization.

Even while IN VR continues to allocate funds specifically for Supported Employment, the service has been underutilized. VR counselors have been encouraged to routinely authorize Supported Employment as soon as a participant with a most significant disability obtains employment. In addition, IN VR has provided multiple training opportunities for providers to develop provider capacity and encourage the use of Supported Employment.

As described in the introduction, prior reports used authorization data to report supported employment utilization and trends. The data reported here is based on services delivered and provides a more accurate picture of service delivery. The data in this report should be used rather than the data in prior reports.

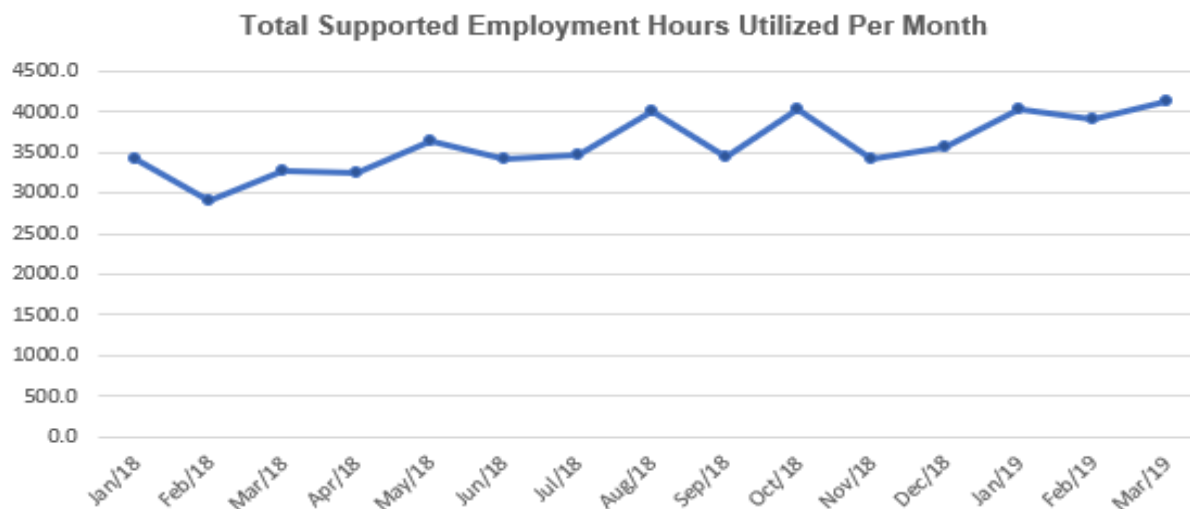## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT HOURS AUTHORIZED PER UNIQUE CASE

FIGURE 15

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[20] http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/VRS-Manual%20of%20Employment%20Services%20Revised%20September%202016.pdf
[21] http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/ES_Round_2_training.pdf

Figure 15 above displays the total Supported Employment utilization by month. Since January 2018, the month with the least number of supported employment hours utilized is February 2018. The months with the highest supported employment utilization are March 2019, followed by October 2018. While there continue to be fluctuations between months, there is a clear trend of increasing utilization of Supported Employment services. IN VR expects Supported Employment hours to increase as it continues to work with providers on leveraging this service, which is reflected in the data on participant utilization.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT UTILIZATION OVER TIME

Figure 16 below shows Supported Employment Utilization over Time, as well as the average number of Supported Employment hours utilized each month. The average number of hours of Supported Employment hours utilized remains very stable month to month. Over the last year, the number of participants using SE hourly has slowly increased.
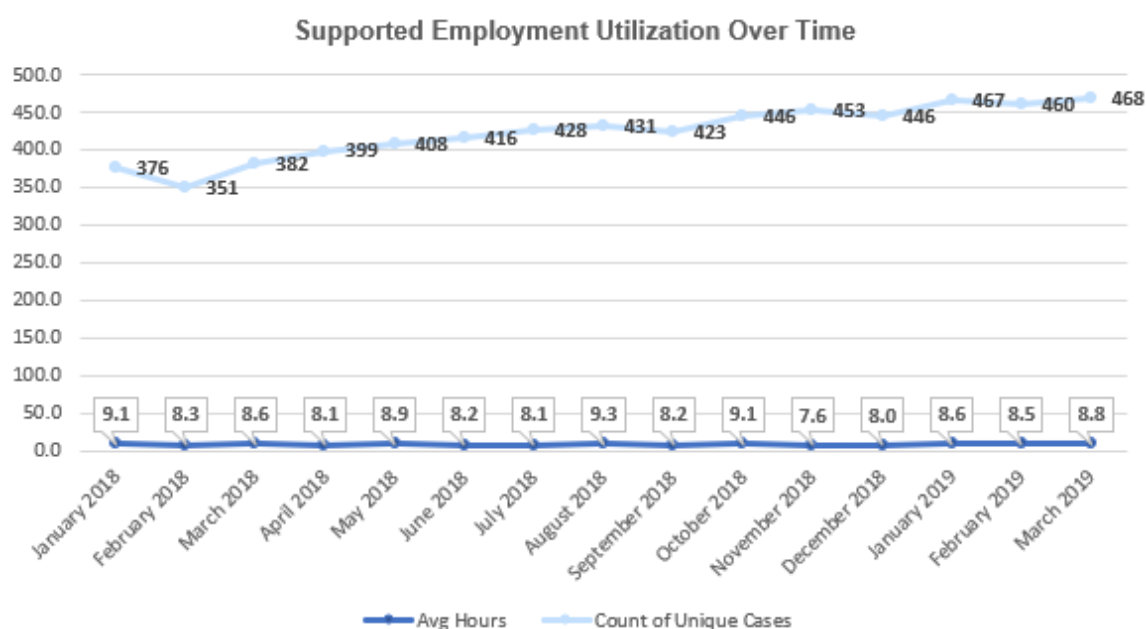

FIGURE 16

INTENSITY OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Figure 17 below displays the intensity of services received by participants. In other words, the graph depicts how many hours of service each participant receives, compared to the number of months of service. Visually, it is apparent that most participants receive SE hourly services for 15 or less months, and 200 or less hours. However, it is also apparent that a number of participants receive services outside these parameters.
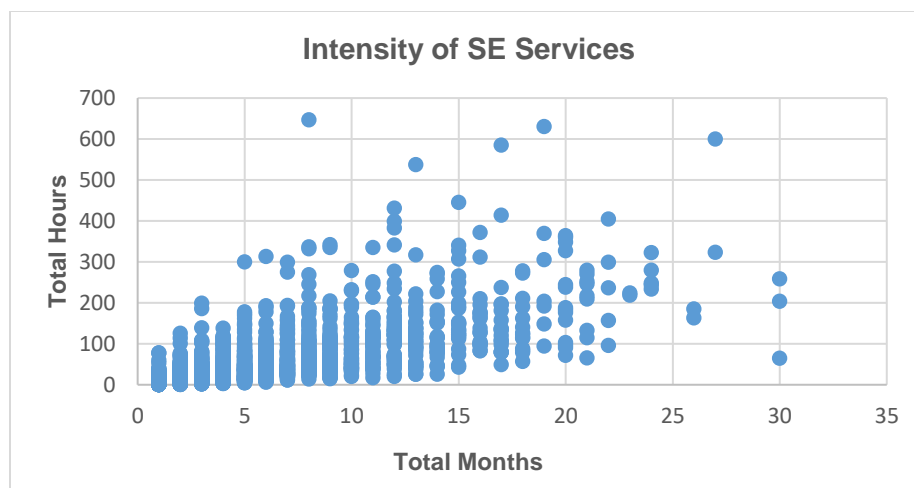
Intensity of SE Services

[Scatter plot: Total Hours (y-axis, 0 to 700) vs Total Months (x-axis, 0 to 35)]

FIGURE 17

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AND SUCCESSFUL CASE CLOSURE

Figure 18 looks at the relationship between the hours of Supported Employment received and status at case closure. Successfully closed cases utilize 9.6 more hours of Supported Employment on average when compared to closed cases that are identified as non-successful. This represents a 26.5% difference in the number of hours.
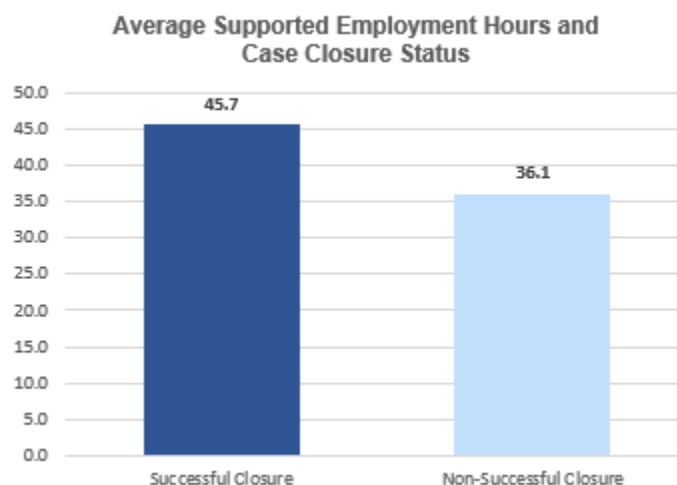
Average Supported Employment Hours and Case Closure Status

[Bar chart: Successful Closure = 45.7, Non-Successful Closure = 36.1]

FIGURE 18

TOTAL SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT HOURS UTILIZED BY AREA

The heat map on the following page illustrates the Supported Employment hours by area. Indiana has 22 regional VR offices across four distinct regions. The data analyzes Supported Employment hours utilized in each respective area, in the 6-month evaluation period. The data included in the map includes the following, per Area:

- Total number of Supported Employment hours utilized
- Average hours per case
- Percentage of unique cases in the Area, in relation to the overall IN VR cases

The hours per case and hours overall varied across areas. It is important to consider factors such as the number of unique cases in the Area when analyzing the data. Area 4 continues to have the highest total number of Supported Employment hours utilized at 11,200.5. Area 4 also has the most unique cases that utilized Supported Employment hours at 1,309. Area 18 continues to have the highest average hours of Supported Employment per case at 20.79, but only 2.3% of total cases statewide that received Supported Employment services. The area with the least average number of Supported Employment hours per is Area 8 at 3.67 hours per case.
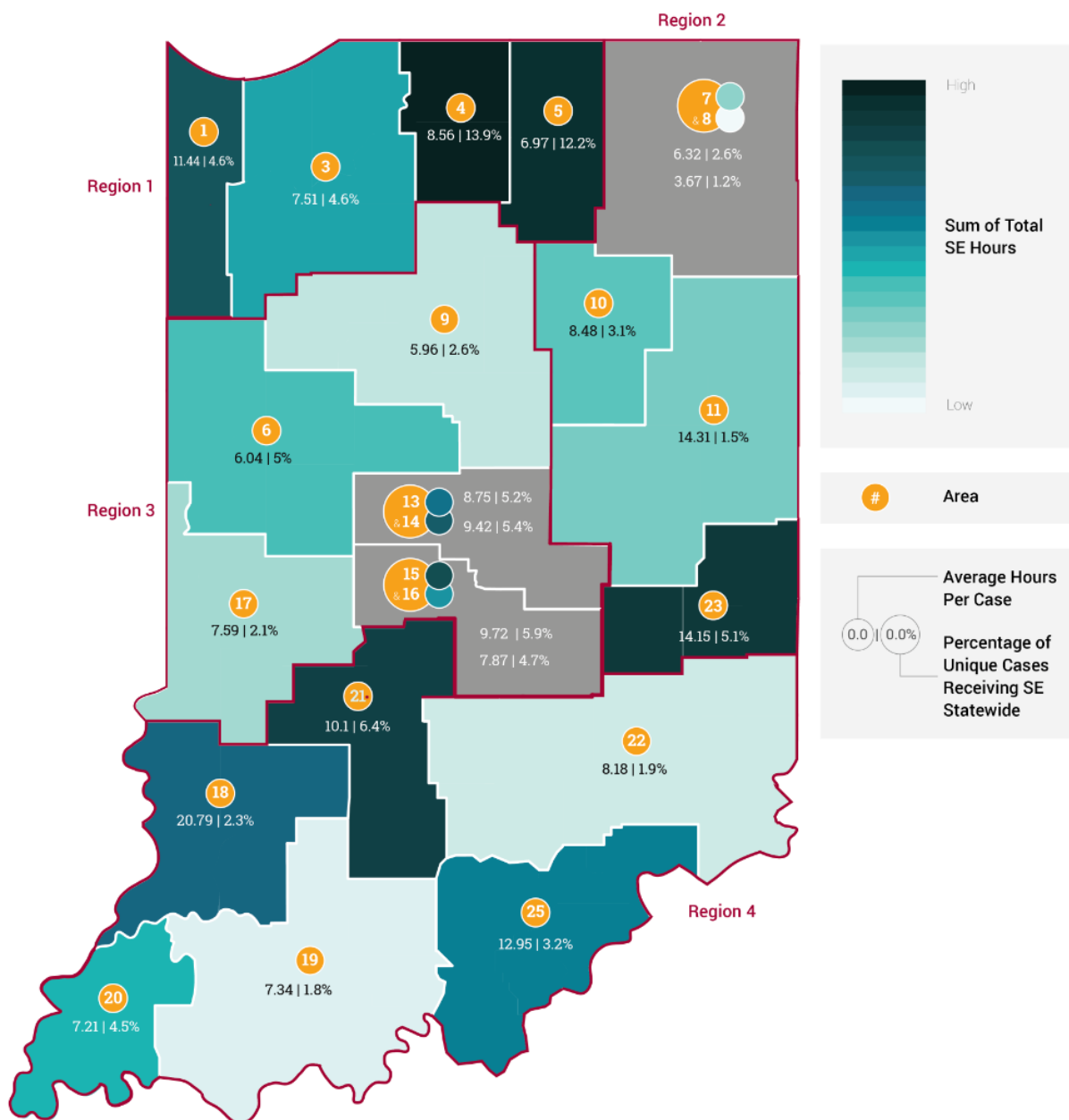

FIGURE 19

VI.   VENDOR ANALYSIS

This section is an analysis of the six vendors in each of the 4 regions with the most claims for Milestone 1, as a measure of vendor activity, in the past six months (beginning October 1, 2018). Therefore, these are the six most active vendors from each region. This high-level analysis examines participant outcomes for the entire vendor population as well as the top six vendors individually. For the purposes of this report, we replaced actual vendor names with generic titles such as "Vendor A", "Vendor B", etc.
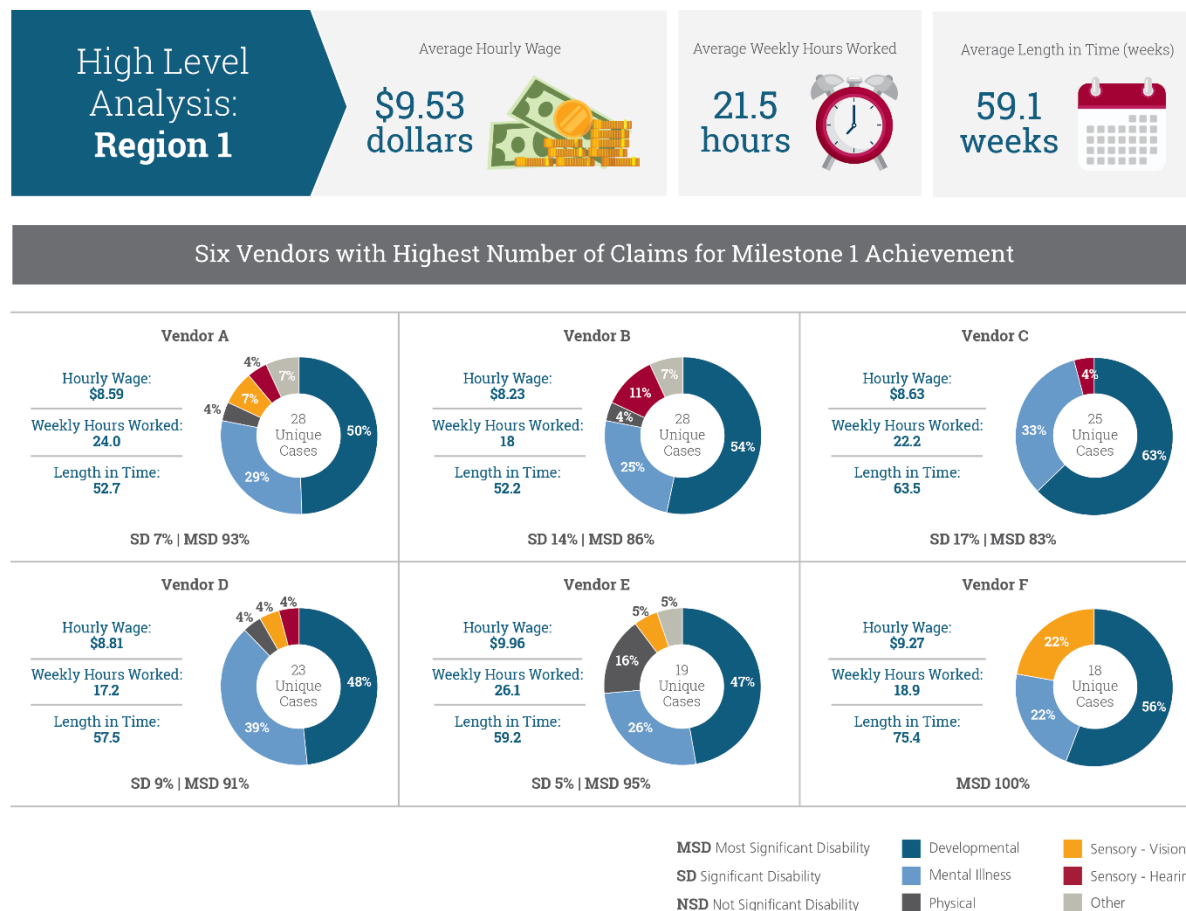
REGION 1

FIGURE 20

Participants in Region 1 have an average wage of $9.53 and an average of 21.5 weekly hours worked. The length in time from the first authorization to status 22 (stabilization on the job) on average is 59.1 weeks. Vendor E supported participants receiving the highest average hourly wage of $9.96 and highest average of weekly hours worked at 26.1 hours. Region 1 has the highest overall average length of time between first authorization and placement, aligning with the data on average length of Discovery below, which shows Region 1 with the highest average time spent in discovery compared to the other regions.

Figure 21 below represents the average number of hours ESM participants spend in Discovery in Region 1. The population with the highest number of Discovery hours are those categorized as Other, which mirrors the entire ESM population. Those with a primary impairment of Sensory – Hearing had the least time spent in Discovery, at 16.0 hours. Overall, the average time spent in Discovery for Region 1 was 18.0 hours.
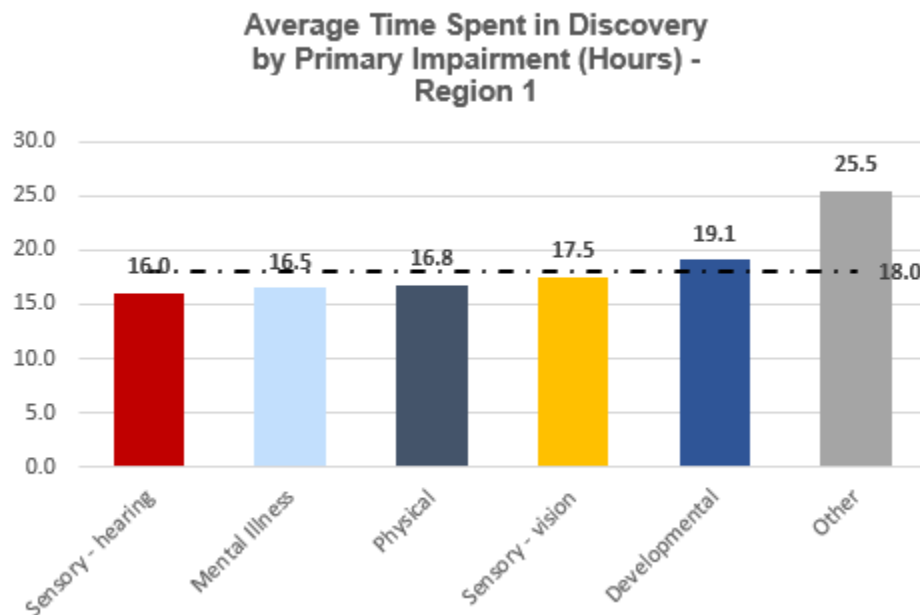

FIGURE 21

Figure 22 below displays the total Supported Employment hours utilized by month. While there are fluctuations between months, there is a clear trend of increasing utilization of Supported Employment services. Region 1 has high use of Supported Employment services compared to other regions, particularly considering that this region has a lower volume of VR participants compared to regions 3 and 4, and a more comparable volume of participants as Region 2. IN VR expects Supported Employment hours to increase as it continues to work with vendors on leveraging this service, which is reflected in the data on participant utilization.
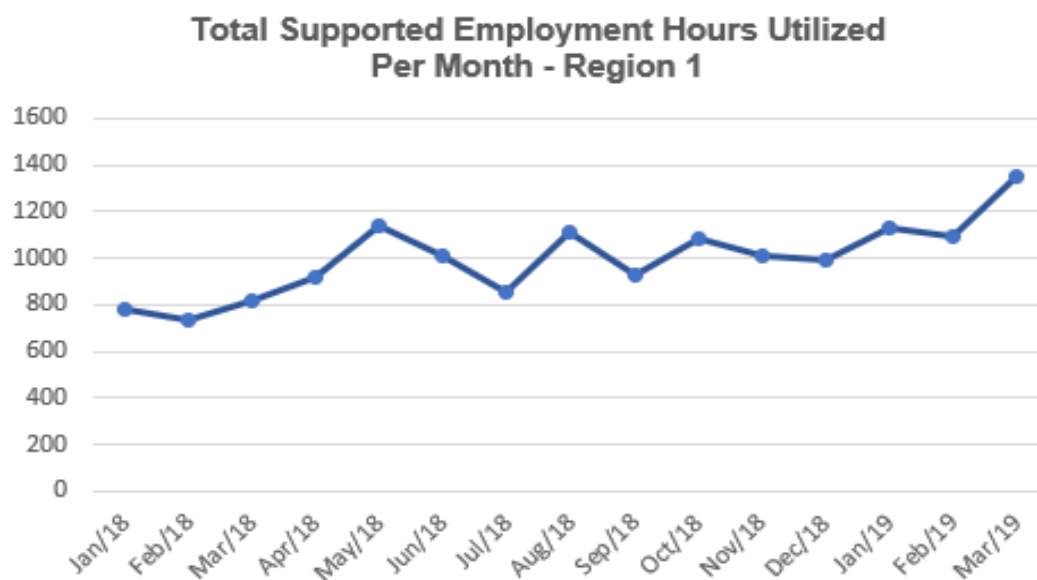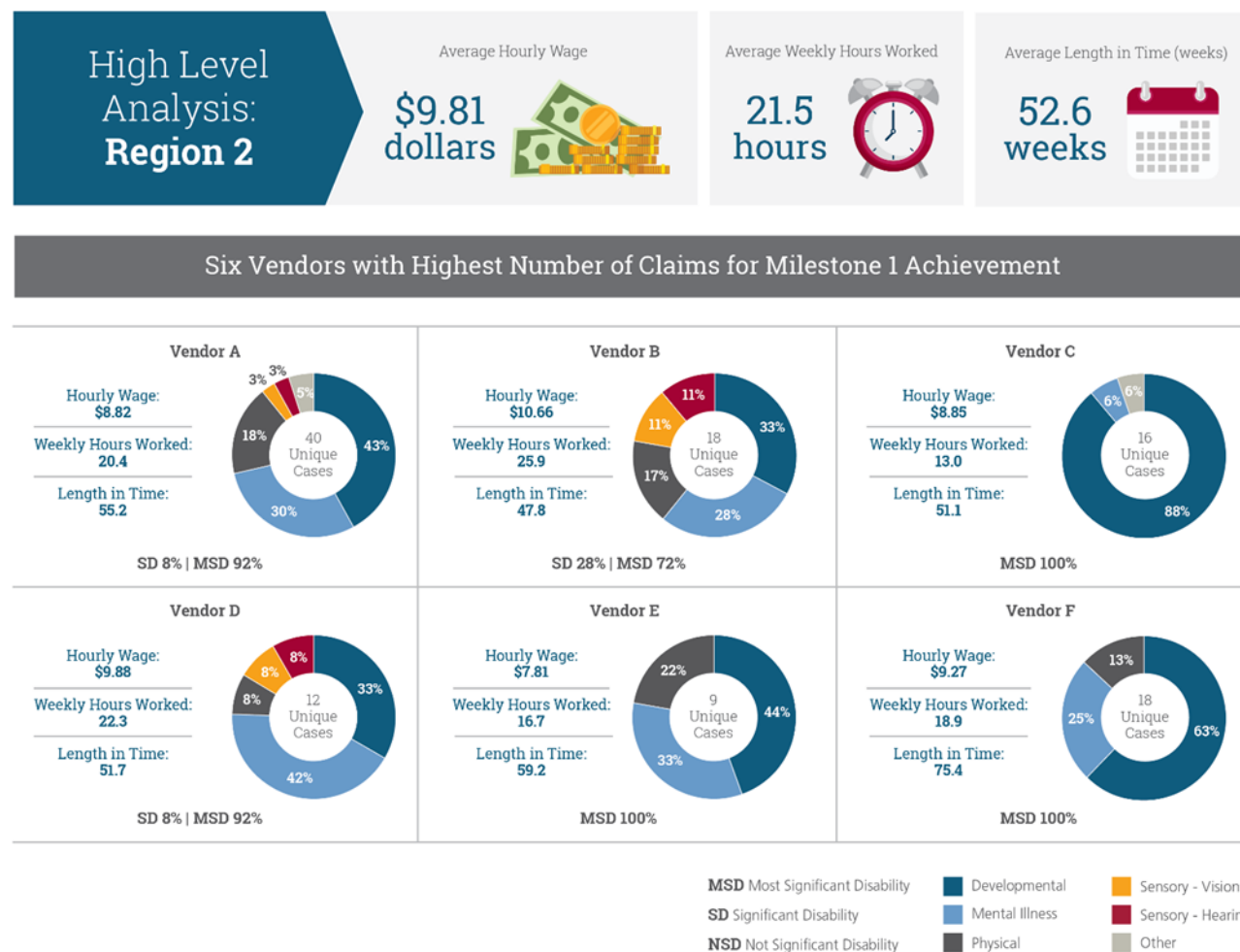

FIGURE 22

REGION 2

FIGURE 23

The above graphic displays data for vendors in Region 2. Participants in this region have an average wage of $9.81 and an average 21.5 weekly hours worked. The length in time from the first authorization to stabilization on average is 52.6 weeks. Vendor B supported participants with the highest average hourly wage of $10.66 and weekly average hours worked of 25.9 hours. Participants supported by Vendor B earned an average $2.81 more than participants supported by Vendor E, the vendor with the lowest average hourly wages, and worked an average of 12.9 hours more per week than participants supported by Vendor C, the vendor with the lowest average weekly work hours.

Figure 24 below represents the average number of hours ESM participants spend in Discovery in Region 2. The population with the highest number of Discovery hours are those categorized as Other, which mirrors the entire ESM population. Individuals with a primary disability of Sensory – Hearing had the least time spent in Discovery, at 13.8 hours. The overall average of time spent in Discovery for this group was 14.9 hours.
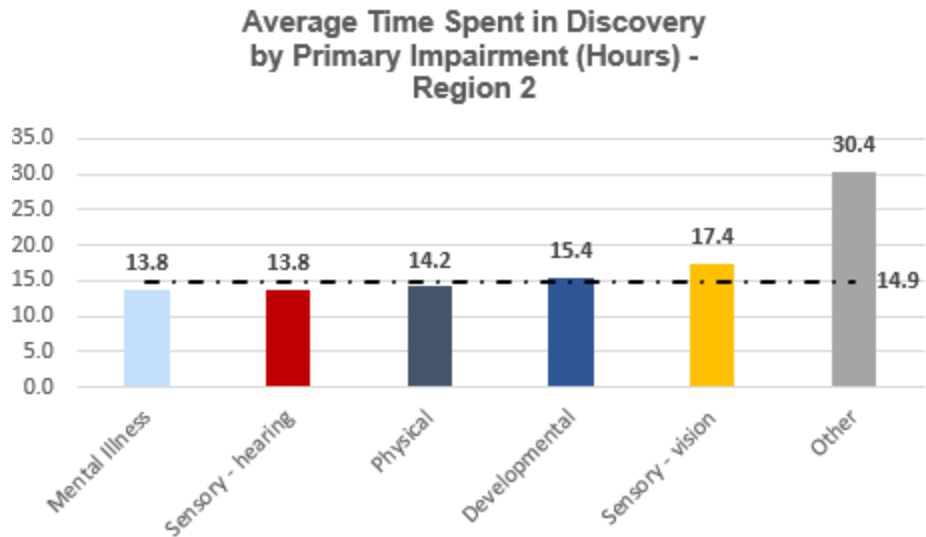
FIGURE 24

Figure 25 below displays the total Supported Employment utilization by month. While there are fluctuations between months, the number of Supported Employment hours appears to be very stable. IN VR expects Supported Employment hours to increase as it continues to work with vendors on leveraging this service, which is reflected in the data on participant utilization. Region 2, which is most comparable in size to Region 1 in terms of the volume of participants served, and smaller than regions 3 and 4, had significantly less Supported Employment hours utilized than all other regions.
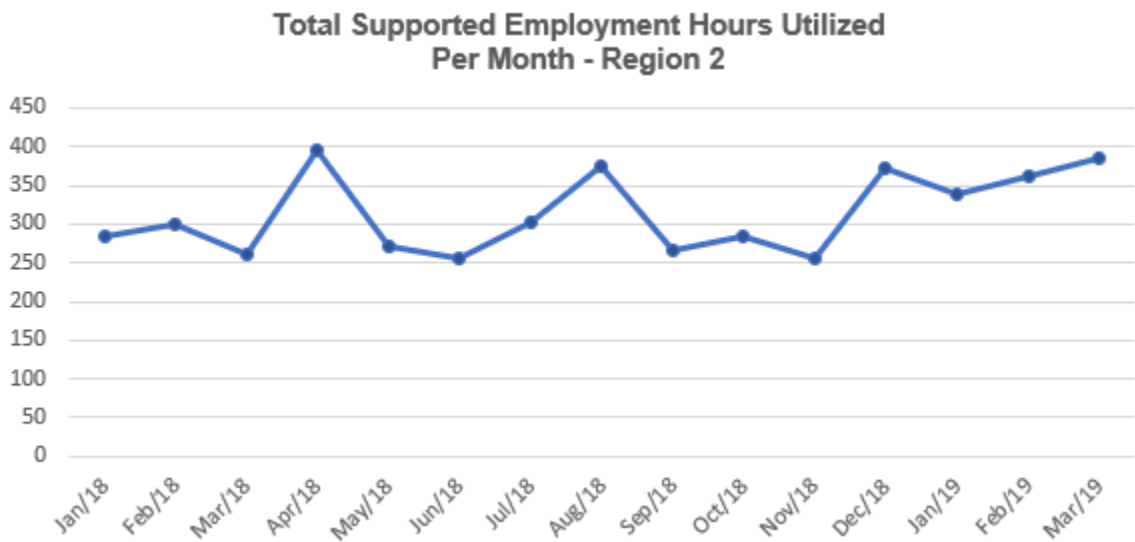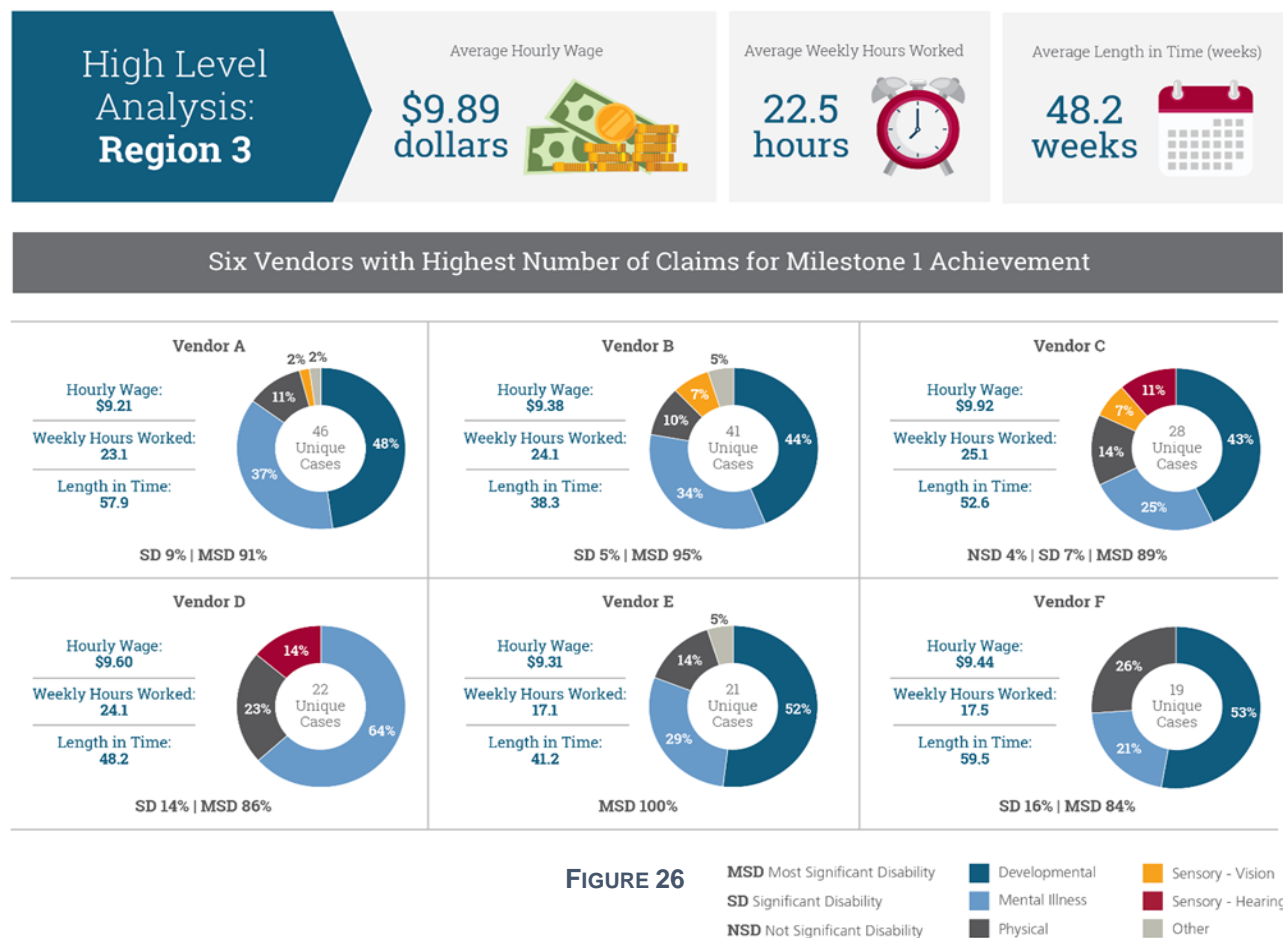

FIGURE 25

Region 3

High Level Analysis: Region 3

Average Hourly Wage
$9.89 dollars

Average Weekly Hours Worked
22.5 hours

Average Length in Time (weeks)
48.2 weeks

Six Vendors with Highest Number of Claims for Milestone 1 Achievement

Vendor A
Hourly Wage: $9.21
Weekly Hours Worked: 23.1
Length in Time: 57.9
46 Unique Cases
2% 2% | 11% | 48% | 37%
SD 9% | MSD 91%

Vendor B
Hourly Wage: $9.38
Weekly Hours Worked: 24.1
Length in Time: 38.3
41 Unique Cases
5% | 7% | 10% | 44% | 34%
SD 5% | MSD 95%

Vendor C
Hourly Wage: $9.92
Weekly Hours Worked: 25.1
Length in Time: 52.6
28 Unique Cases
11% | 7% | 14% | 43% | 25%
NSD 4% | SD 7% | MSD 89%

Vendor D
Hourly Wage: $9.60
Weekly Hours Worked: 24.1
Length in Time: 48.2
22 Unique Cases
14% | 23% | 64%
SD 14% | MSD 86%

Vendor E
Hourly Wage: $9.31
Weekly Hours Worked: 17.1
Length in Time: 41.2
21 Unique Cases
5% | 14% | 52% | 29%
MSD 100%

Vendor F
Hourly Wage: $9.44
Weekly Hours Worked: 17.5
Length in Time: 59.5
19 Unique Cases
26% | 53% | 21%
SD 16% | MSD 84%

FIGURE 26

MSD Most Significant Disability
SD Significant Disability
NSD Not Significant Disability

Developmental
Mental Illness
Physical
Sensory - Vision
Sensory - Hearing
Other

The above graphic displays data for vendors in Region 3. Participants in this region have an average wage of $9.89 and an average 22.5 weekly hours worked. The length in time from the first authorization to stabilization on average is 48.2 weeks. All six vendors supported participants who received average hourly wages above $9.00. Participants supported by Vendor C had the highest average hourly wages and worked the greatest average weekly hours of 25.1, which is 8 more hours on average compared to Vendor E which had the lowest average weekly hours worked.

Figure 27 below represents the average number of hours ESM participants spend in Discovery in Region 3. The population with the highest number of Discovery hours are those categorized as Other, which mirrors the entire ESM population. Individuals with a primary impairment of Sensory – Vision had the least time spent in Discovery, at 11.5 hours. The overall average of time spent in Discovery for this group was 13.2 hours. Individuals in Region 3 receive less average hours of Discovery than all other regions.
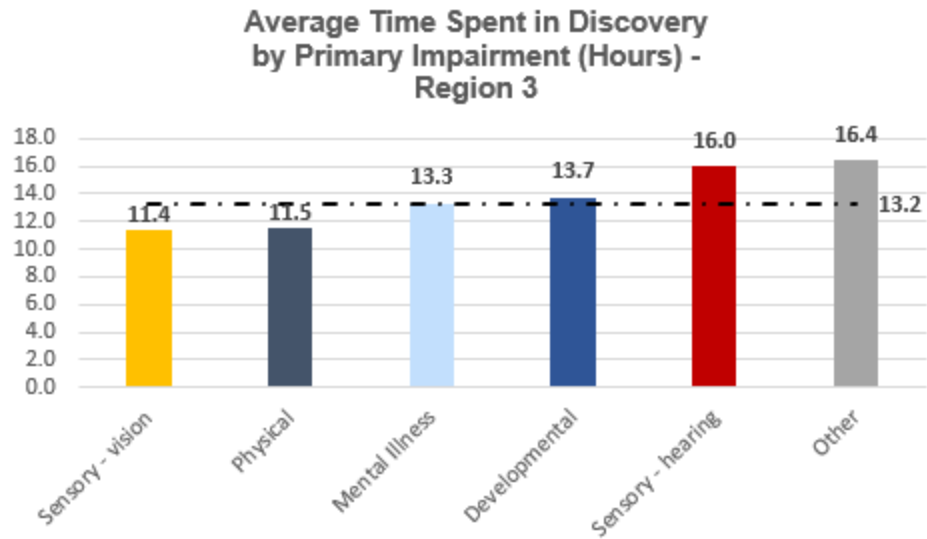
Average Time Spent in Discovery
by Primary Impairment (Hours) -
Region 3

FIGURE 27

Figure 28 below displays the total number of Supported Employment hour utilizations by month. Like in other regions, there is fluctuation in the utilization of Supported Employment across months. Region 3 serves a high volume of participants and is more comparable in size to Region 4, compared to Regions 1 and 2 which serve a smaller volume of participants.
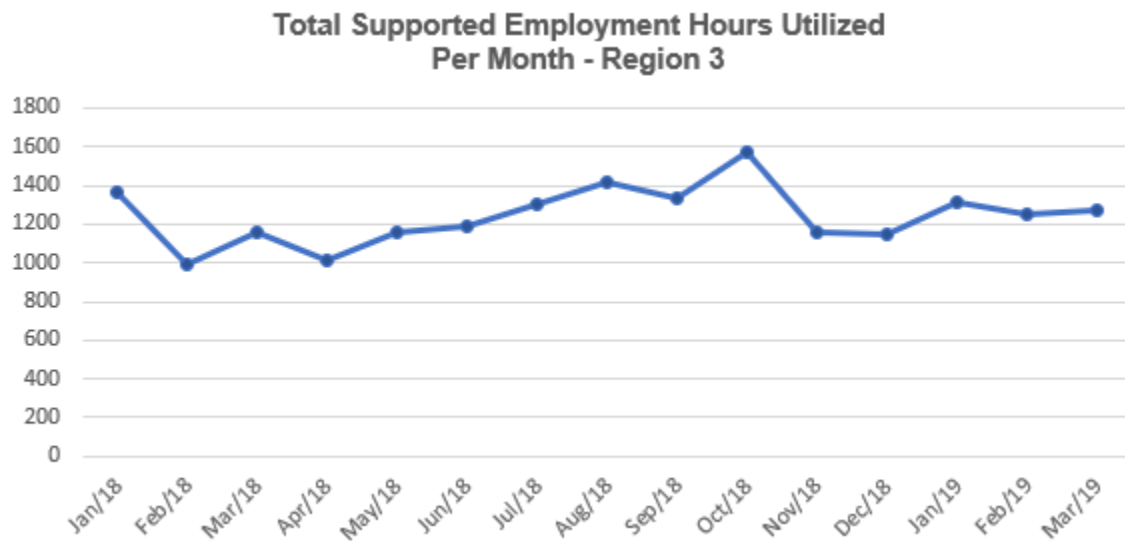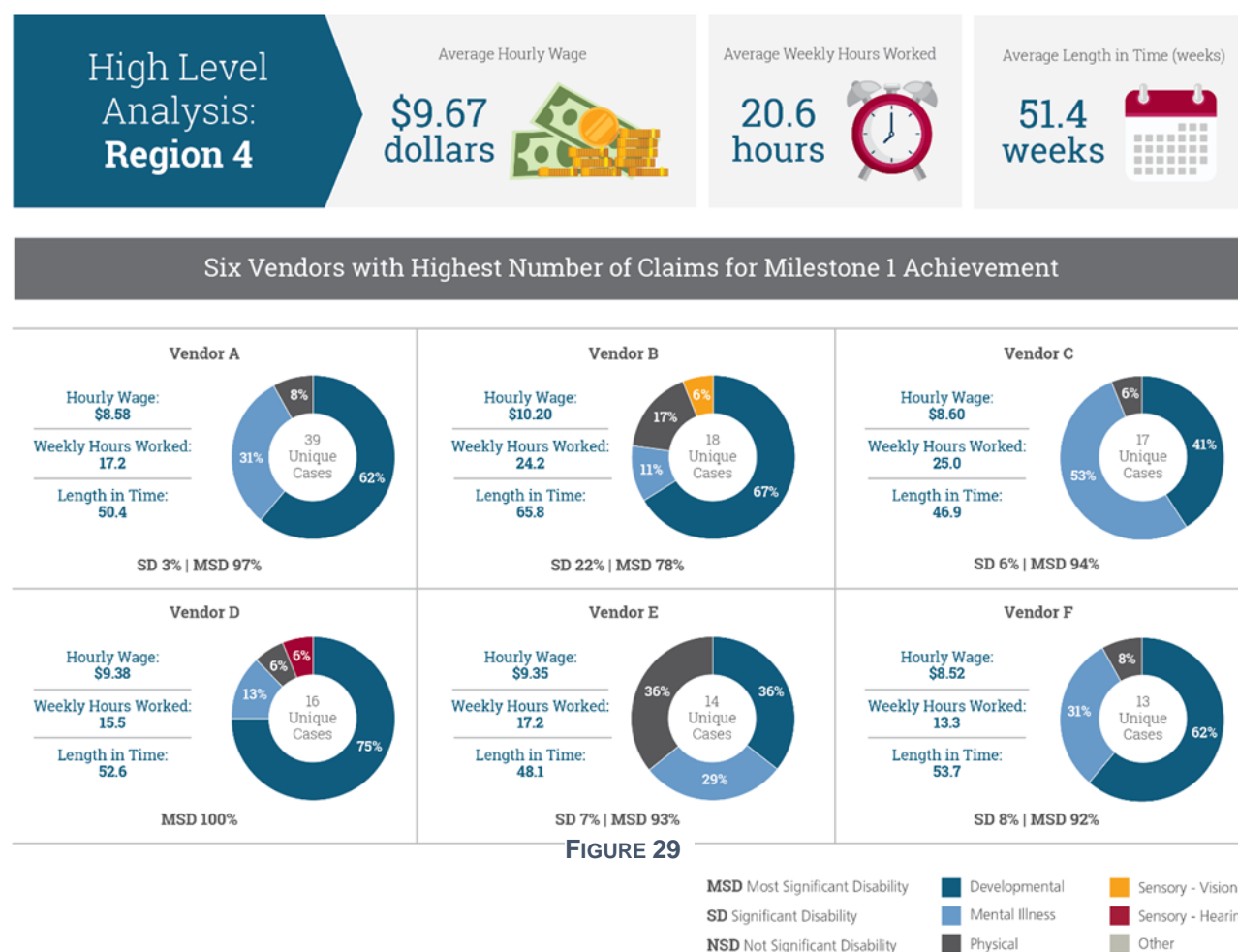
Total Supported Employment Hours Utilized
Per Month - Region 3

FIGURE 28

Region 4

FIGURE 29

The above graphic displays data for vendors in Region 4. Participants in this region have an average wage of $9.67 and an average 20.6 weekly hours worked. The length in time from the first authorization to stabilization on average is 51.4 weeks. Participants supported by Vendor C worked the highest average weekly hours of 25 hours per week, while participants supported by Vendor B received the highest average hourly wage of $10.20.

Figure 30 below represents the average number of hours ESM participants spend in Discovery in Region 4. The population with the highest number of Discovery hours are those categorized as Other, which mirrors the entire ESM population. Individuals with a primary impairment of Sensory – Vision had the least time spent in Discovery, at 6.9 hours. The overall average of time spent in Discovery for this group was 16.6 hours.
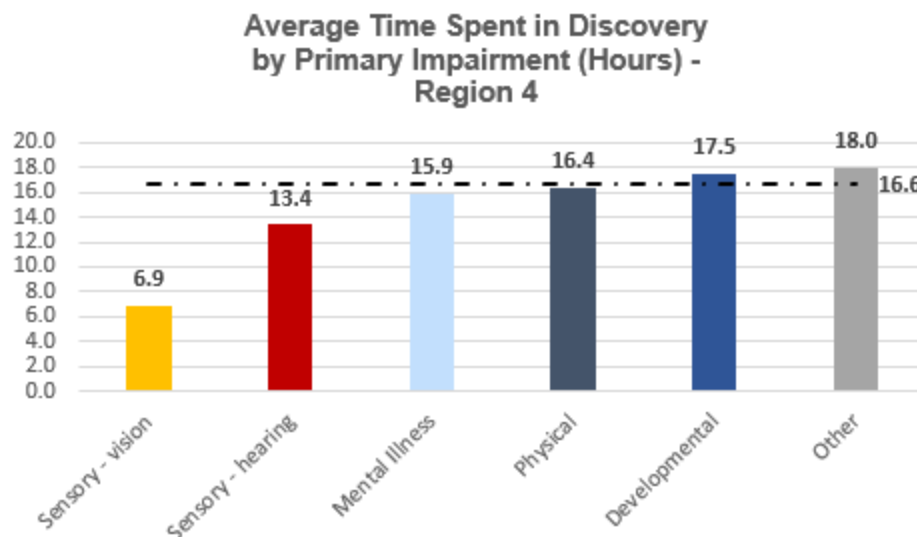
FIGURE 30

Figure 31 below displays the total Supported Employment utilizations by month. Like the other groups, there are fluctuations between months, but there does appear to be a clear trend of increasing utilization of Supported Employment services. There is less utilization of Supported Employment in Region 4 compared to Region 3, the region most comparable in size to Region 4 in terms of the volume of participants.
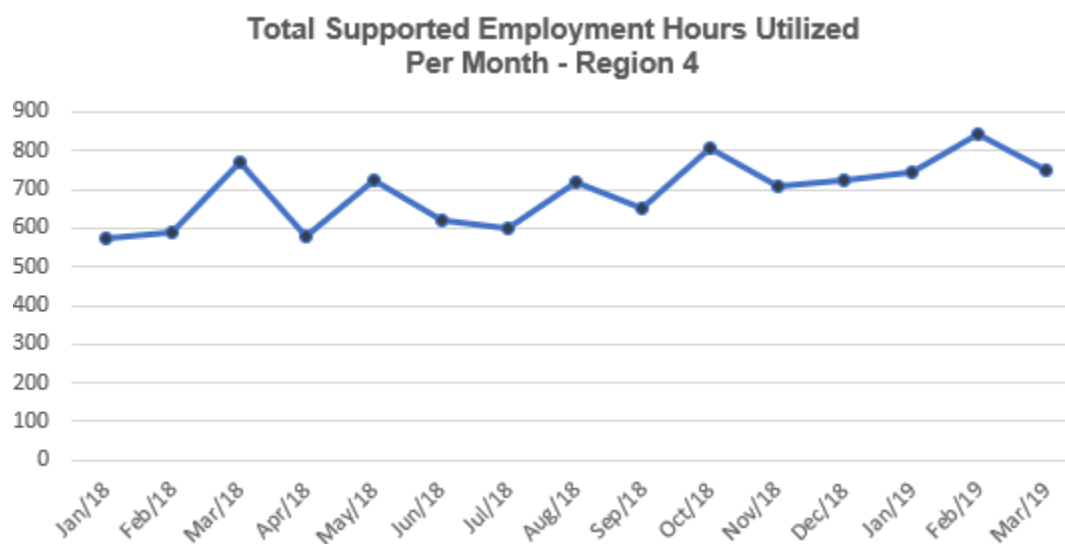

FIGURE 31

ORDER OF SELECTION

On August 1, 2017, Indiana IN VR implemented an "order of selection", a federally-sanctioned process that must be implemented when a state VR agency does not have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals. Under an order of selection, VR is federally required to give participants with most significant disabilities priority in receiving VR services, including employment services. The impact on employment services and outcomes is unknown, however this will be evaluated as applicable in future reports. It should be noted that most participants that receive employment services are those with a most significant disability currently, and this population is expected to increase over time. IN VR continues to encourage VR employment service providers to work with participants for as long as they need to achieve stable employment, through services such as supported employment, and to provide appropriate and comprehensive discovery activities.

VII.   KEY OBSERVATIONS

As VR services continue to be authorized under ESM, the data set has grown and is revealing broader trends and patterns. Key observations will drive future analyses and reveal questions for further consideration.

- **Observation 1: Changes and system implementation will likely yield a shift in service delivery.**

  As noted in the beginning of this report, Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation has recently implemented changes to the Employment Services Model. These changes were intended to increase the flexibility of service delivery to meet the varied needs of participants, and to streamline service delivery. The analysis of Work Experience data reveals that approximately 1/3 of participants in the past have used a Work Experience tier where they work 5 or less hours a week. Moving forward, the practice will be that all work experiences must be above 5 hours, unless there are specific circumstances where it will be the best fit for the participant to work less than 5 hours per week. Work Experiences will now be billed at an hourly rate, based on provider support, rather than the number of hours a week the participant works. This was an effort to streamline service delivery and increase flexibility of the service to ensure that participants receive adequate and appropriate support. Future reporting of work experience data will subsequently look different, as prior data includes tiers based on the weekly hours worked by the participant, versus future data, where the provider will bill hours spent supporting the individual.

- **Observation 2: Service delivery and participant outcomes vary across the state.**

  While past reports have examined service delivery and participant outcomes in different population densities, this report compared vendors by VR region. The analysis revealed that service delivery and participant outcomes vary across the state. For example, utilization rates of SE hourly vary considerably across regions. Learning more about these differences, and examining impact on outcomes, may help inform technical assistance and decision-making. Additionally, there are differences in the average hourly wages and average weekly hours worked across vendors in the same region. Learning more about differences across providers may reveal best practices and opportunities for capacity building.

- **Observation 3: Outcomes and service delivery trends vary by severity determination categories.**

  As IN VR entered Order of Selection on August 1, 2017, the proportion of participants with an MSD has increased. In this last report, outcomes and service delivery trends were analyzed by severity determination, in addition to primary impairment. The purpose of this analysis was to learn if trends in outcomes and service delivery vary by severity determination, and if the growing proportion of participants with an MSD impacts trends. Compared to participants in other severity categories, participants with an MSD spent more time in Discovery, the greatest amount of time between first authorization and placement, lowest hourly wages, and lowest average weekly hours worked. However, participants with an MSD continue to have steady rates of weekly hours worked, and steady increases in average wages over time. Participants qualify under MSD if they experience limitations to three or more functional capacities and who can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period. Subsequently, a longer time in Discovery can be anticipated to allow for the service provider to identify effective supports, and the conditions of employment needed for a quality job match. Further exploration may be considered as to the difference in wages and average weekly hours compared with other severity categories.

VIII.   FUTURE ANALYSES

This report is one installment in a series of program evaluation reports to be produced every six months by Public Consulting Group in partnership with IN VR. As each report builds off its predecessor, IN VR will identify areas for further exploration. Based on the key observations to date, the following areas should be considered for future analyses:

- **Trend Analysis:** ESM has been active for almost four years, and we now have enough data to begin analyzing trends. In the coming reports, we will focus on the changes in participant outcomes since the start of ESM. Although we have done analysis on the changes from report to report, we will look at trends over a longer period, which is important in measuring the impact of ESM on participant outcomes.

- **Further Vendor Analysis:** The analysis of participant outcomes across VR regions in this report revealed valuable information and many questions about employment services. This report continued to evaluate data points for Discovery time and Supported Employment. Future reports will analyze other important factors in order to see if correlations are present between the increased supports and improved outcomes.

- **ESM Length of Time:** PCG will look at the data to determine the average length of time that participants are spending in the ESM. This data will be based on Service ID codes. Looking at this data may help to identify whether participants are remaining in the VR system longer before closure and provide documentation on total participants actively receiving ESM. This data will help to further analyze whether more time being spent with participants is leading to more positive outcomes for participants and providers both.

- **Opportunities with new VR software systems**: As mentioned in the introduction, IN VR has implemented new software systems. This brings opportunity to analyze additional data elements such as employment retention up to one year after VR case closure and identify contributing factors that lead to improved employment retention such as utilization of supported employment services.

APPENDIX A – CITATIONS

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