



The Vermont JOBS Program Serving Vermont's At Risk Youth and Young Adults

Program Overview

Young people with mental health issues often fall through the cracks of our service system. They often have been in trouble with the law or have infamous reputations in their communities. They are at risk of abusing drugs or alcohol, and a very high proportion do not have a stable or safe place to live. These challenges are compounded by the fact these young people often shy away from seeking help from typical social service programs.

The following demographic data from JOBS illustrates the challenges they face:

- **74%** have a reported substance abuse issue
- **30%** had been involved with Child Protective Services
- **45%** had been involved with the juvenile justice or Corrections system
- **38%** had been homeless or in unstable housing

The JOBS Program reaches JOBS youth using employment

as the *incentive to get them engaged in other services*. Assisting youth to become employed is one of the most effective ways of increasing self-esteem and reducing risky behavior. The JOBS program is also an enduring example of interagency collaboration to serve the youth and young adult population. Currently, JOBS is supported in Vermont by: the Department of Mental Health, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Department of Corrections and the Department for Children and Families.

Outcome Data

- **JOBS is highly effective at getting youth and young adults employed:** In 2015, 79% or 317 of the 400 youth served were competitively employed or had a paid work experience. Of these, 136 (29%) were employed for at least three months and were considered stable enough to be successfully closed by Vocational Rehabilitation.
- **JOBS helped youth and young adults secure stable housing:** In 2015, 160 of the 400-youth served by JOBS were homeless or did not have stable housing on entry into the program. On program exit only 38 were still housing insecure.
- **JOBS supported youth and young adults in completing their high school diploma or GED:** In 2015, 274 (68%) of JOBS youth did not have a high school diploma or GED on entry into the program. On program exit 100 of these youth had a high school diploma or a GED.
- **JOBS helped youth and young adults stay out of trouble:** On entry 144 of JOBS youth were currently under the supervision of the juvenile justice or Corrections system. On program exit only 37 continued to be under supervision.

For More Information Contact: James Smith, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
James.Smith@vermont.gov or (802) 241-0320

Success story

When John was referred to the JOBS Program, he was living in his car and constantly feared for his safety. He suffered from complications due a traumatic brain injury that occurred in the workplace, and was struggling with memory loss and disorganization, as well as ongoing physical impairments. He was also frustrated with the system – feeling marginalized in the arduous insurance process following his injury and unable to navigate social supports. Even so, John’s goals were clear: connect with a trusted medical provider, reenter the workforce, and obtain stable housing.

The JOBS Program, in partnership of VR, initiated and maintained contact with John during a very difficult time. He had no phone, slept wherever he could park his car, and would sometimes go days without eating. Seeing that any concrete steps towards employment would be very difficult in his situation, John was provided a temporary cell phone, a bus pass, and was connected to food assistance. The JOBS Program also connected him to a housing specialist, which included transportation for his medical appointments.

These initial milestones made all the difference. The JOBS Program continued to coordinate his reentry to the workforce, as well as his continued medical follow up. John was hired by a local employer and within a short time he moved into a position with more responsibility. After a few months of steady employment, he worked with JOBS to research other options to further his career goals. This young man reported a significant improvement in wellbeing and was also able to reconnect with his family and coordinate a stable living situation.

Vermont Statewide JOBS Program Outcomes SFY2015

