



COMMONWEALTH CORPORATION

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Study Looks at Benefits of Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

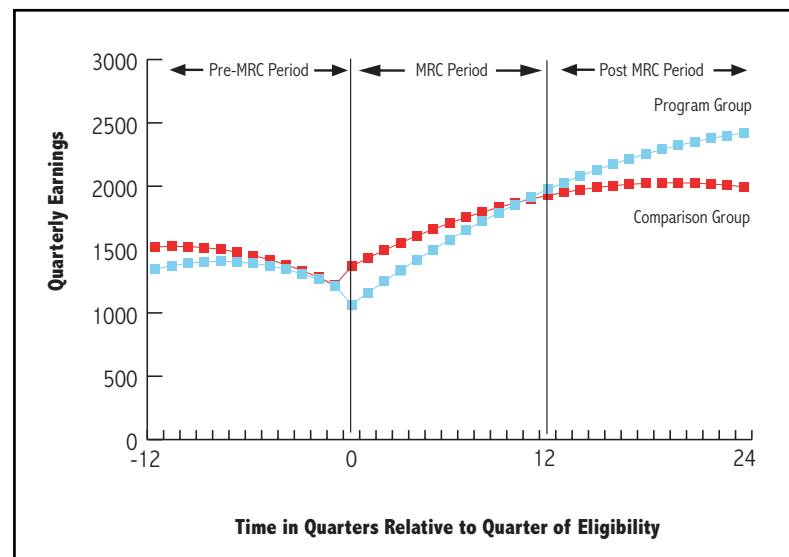
Commonwealth Corporation has released a new study looking at the Massachusetts Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program, which confirms significant benefits to individuals receiving services from this “go to work” program, and also documents the gains to the state and the economy as a whole.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s (MRC) Vocational Rehabilitation Services assist people with disabilities in improving their career opportunities, becoming employed, attaining economic independence and a higher standard of living, and the ability to live independently.

MRC contracted Commonwealth Corporation to independently evaluate the program. The study shows:

- The returns to society based on the projected increase in lifetime earnings for consumers who receive MRC services range from \$14 to \$18 dollars for each \$1 invested in the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program.
- The Benefits Cost Analysis estimates that \$5 is returned to the government in the form of increased taxes and reduced public assistance

payments for every \$1 invested in the Massachusetts Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Returns are substantial even in the first ten years, as \$1.70 is returned to the government for every \$1 invested.



The average MRC-VR consumer is 36 years of age. Since most people are well into their first or second career by this age, the MRC plays a pivotal role in building a foundation for the new life of individuals with disabilities. After receiving services for an average of 2 years, the outcomes for consumers are as follows:

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Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

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- The average increase in lifetime earnings of a successful VR participant is more than \$60,000.
- Total increase in the annual earnings of consumers is \$43.3 million in the first full year after completion of their VR Program.
- The increase in economic activity resulting from MRC consumers becoming employed produces a \$48 million dollar benefit for the economy as a result of increased employee spending and employer investments, possibly generating as many as 500 new jobs per year.
- Demand for Public Vocational Rehabilitation Programs far exceeds the supply, as evidenced by long waiting lists for services. MRC only serves about 8% of all persons with disabilities of working age in the Commonwealth. These findings support the need for adequate funding of Public Vocational Rehabilitation Programs.

Elmer Bartels, Commissioner of the MRC said, "As someone associated with the vocational rehabilitation system for more than two decades, I have seen the positive impact this program has on people's lives. For the first time in Massachusetts, this report clearly documents the benefit to society as a whole, as recipients of VR services become employed and tax-paying citizens."

"The findings from this evaluation make the case that vocational rehabilitation programs are well worth the investment. MRC has taken a bold step forward by inviting outside evaluation efforts, giving insight into the value of public investments," said Jonathan Raymond, President of Commonwealth Corporation.

CommCorp Recognizes Partners

On Tuesday, May 3, 2005, Commonwealth Corporation will hold their Eighth Annual "Excellence in Partnership" Awards at the Omni Parker House in Boston.

Each year CommCorp sets aside one day to honor the achievements and contributions made by its many partners and customers. Creating strong and lasting partnerships is critical to all the work that CommCorp does. The "Excellence in Partnership" awards is a way to say "thank you" to the people and organizations that make this work possible. This year seven individuals and companies will be presented with awards that recognize their unique contributions to workforce development, education, and the economy of the Commonwealth.

Awards and Recipients

Ann Wheeler Commitment to Learning Award

Donald Gillis

Dr. Stanley Z. Koplak Commitment to Learning Award

Jeffrey P. Howard, Ph.D.

Excellence in Research and Evaluation Award

Elliot Winer

Hubie Jones Commonwealth Community Service Award

Elmer C. Bartels

Kristie DePrete Excellence in Public Service Award

Daniel Winslow, Esq.

Peter Picknelly Business Partnership Award

Cape Cod Healthcare

SunBridge Care and Rehabilitation

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Mitt Romney, Governor; Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor; Jane C. Edmonds, Director, Mass. DWD; Jonathan Raymond, President, CommCorp