Review VR
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CAREER PATHWAYS ADVANCEMENT PROJECT 2.0
Evaluation Brief Series

Businesses' Perceptions of CPAP 2.0 Services

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Background

Beginning in 2015, the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston has been the independent evaluator of the Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Career Pathways Advancement Project (CPAP). Nebraska VR first piloted the CPAP model as one of four state VR agency grantees funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to carry out a 5-year Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities demonstration project. Building on the success of the CPAP 1.0, in 2021, Nebraska VR was awarded a second model demonstration grant funded by the RSA to build on and expand the CPAP model (known as "CPAP 2.0") for an additional five years.

For CPAP 2.0, Nebraska VR expanded:

- the target population of people with disabilities
- the number of target industries and businesses across the state

By expanding the project's target population and industries, we can test its applicability to a broader range of clients that are more reflective of the overall population Nebraska VR serves.

Introduction

As part of the program, Nebraska VR and ICI wanted to hear from the businesses who were employing CPAP 2.0 participants. ICI developed a short survey asking businesses about:

- the services they had received from Nebraska VR
- their satisfaction with those services
- their suggestions on how to improve the program

Services Received

We asked businesses if they had received specific CPAP 2.0 services. Respondents answered on a 3-point scale:

1 – "Yes, I have received that service"

2 – "No, but I would have liked to receive that service"

3 – "No, I did not want or need that service"

Respondents who reported they received the service were then asked on a 4-point scale how satisfied they were with the service (very satisfied-satisfied-dissatisfied-very dissatisfied). Every respondent who answered the questions about satisfaction reported that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the specific service.

Businesses reported receiving a range of services and supports from the CPAP 2.0 program. One core element of CPAP 2.0's services to businesses was providing information about VR and available supports for employees with disabilities. Most of the businesses surveyed

indicated that the program helped them discover opportunities for employees to advance. They reported that the program also helped them provide support for employees to pursue training opportunities or other skills they needed to advance. For several questions, different individual respondents reported that they had not received a specific service but would have liked to. Respondents appeared less interested in receiving individual business plans and Windmills disability awareness training.

Providing Information about VR and Available Supports for Employees with Disabilities

Service Received	Number (of 7)	Percentage
Yes, I have received that service	7	100%
No, but I would have liked to receive that service	0	0.0%
No, I did not want or need that service	0	0.0%
Satisfaction with Service	**Number (of 7)**	**Percentage**
Very satisfied	6	85.7%
Satisfied	1	14.3%

Discovering Opportunities for Employees to Advance

Service Received	Number (of 7)	Percentage
Yes, I have received that service	6	85.7%
No, but I would have liked to receive that service	1	14.3%
No, I did not want or need that service	0	0.0%
Satisfaction with Service	**Number (of 6)**	**Percentage**
Very satisfied	5	83.3%
Satisfied	1	16.7%

Supporting Employees in Pursuing Training Opportunities

Service Received	Number (of 7)	Percentage
Yes, I have received that service	6	85.7%
No, but I would have liked to receive that service	1	14.3%
No, I did not want or need that service	0	0.0%
Satisfaction with Service	**Number (of 6)**	**Percentage**
Very satisfied	6	100%
Satisfied	0	0.0%

Helping Employees Obtain Skills Needed for Advancement

Service Received	Number (of 7)	Percentage
Yes, I have received that service	6	85.7%
No, but I would have liked to receive that service	1	14.3%
No, I did not want or need that service	0	0.0%
Satisfaction with Service	**Number (of 6)**	**Percentage**
Very satisfied	5	83.3%
Satisfied	1	16.7%

Referring Qualified Candidates for Open Positions

Service Received	Number (of 7)	Percentage
Yes, I have received that service	3	42.9%
No, but I would have liked to receive that service	1	14.3%
No, I did not want or need that service	3	42.9%
Satisfaction with Service	**Number (of 3)**	**Percentage**
Very satisfied	3	100%
Satisfied	0	0.0%

Lunch & Learn Sessions

Service Received	Number (of 7)	Percentage
Yes, I have received that service	4	57.1%
No, but I would have liked to receive that service	1	14.3%
No, I did not want or need that service	2	28.6%
Satisfaction with Service	**Number (of 4)**	**Percentage**
Very satisfied	4	100%
Satisfied	0	0.0%

Individual Business Plans

Service Received	Number (of 7)	Percentage
Yes, I have received that service	2	28.6%
No, but I would have liked to receive that service	0	0.0%
No, I did not want or need that service	5	71.4%
Satisfaction with Service	**Number (of 2)**	**Percentage**
Very satisfied	0	0.0%
Satisfied	2	100%

Windmills Training

Service Received	Number (of 7)	Percentage
Yes, I have received that service	2	28.6%
No, but I would have liked to receive that service	0	0.0%
No, I did not want or need that service	5	71.4%
Satisfaction with Service	**Number (of 2)**	**Percentage**
Very satisfied	1	50.0%
Satisfied	1	50.0%

Is CPAP 2.0 Helping Employees Advance in their Careers?

We asked a few follow-up questions to better understand the overall impact of the CPAP 2.0 program. Businesses were asked if they felt the CPAP 2.0 program was helping their employees advance in their careers. The responses were divided: Three businesses indicated that the program was helping their employees to advance and gave examples in their own words.

Several businesses reported that the program was giving employees opportunities to further their careers through training.

- *Employees are able to get additional training opportunities in order to be more valuable.*
- *The services offered are great – [the counselors] have been so helpful to expand opportunities to our team members.*

A few added that this training would not be possible with the program's financial support.

- *The education they are receiving with the support of the CPAP 2.0 funding is allowing them to further their career within our department. Without the financial assistance and career coaching, this would not be possible.*
- *Without the program, finances were a limitation to seeking additional education needed for advancement.*

Some businesses indicated that they were not sure if the program was helping. One potential reason for this was that they were not certain who was actually using the program.

- *Most of the time we don't know who is using the grant's services.*
- *I am not sure team members have utilized the services, but we hope to offer for educational sessions to reach more team members.*

One respondent felt some employees were reluctant to access the program because it required them to disclose themselves as disabled to obtain services.

- *[T]he grant requires an employee to identify as "disabled" or a person with a disability and to engage in that process. Oftentimes, there are negative connotations associated with those terms, and employees are hesitant to label themselves as such. If the grant could cover a population of people rather than just specifically disabled persons, it would be easier to utilize.*

That same respondent further suggested the program's overall goals were sometimes unrealistic.

- *The grant requires employees to receive a pay increase, promotion, or otherwise for completion of the training. That's not always feasible. Sometimes, an employee may just need additional training to do well in their current role, and while that will lead to an increase in pay, it doesn't trigger an immediate increase.*

When asked to explain their overall satisfaction with the CPAP 2.0 program, respondents who answered generally said that they were very satisfied.

- *We are happy to support the mission of Nebraska VR.*
- *Very satisfied, the process is long but manageable.*

A few respondents specifically praised the support they received from the CPAP 2.0 counselors.

- *We are very satisfied with our experience with the CPAP 2.0 services. The Career Pathways Advancement Specialists are so kind and helpful.*
- *The staff leading this process is so helpful and easy to work with—we appreciate their willingness to provide these opportunities and elevate our team members!*

Conclusions and Next Steps

Businesses overall were very satisfied with the CPAP 2.0 program, and some specifically appreciated the commitment and support of specific counselors. The survey revealed some challenges with the program, such as how progress is measured (even with training, it might not be possible to obtain a pay increase or promotion within the specified time) and some participants' reluctance to disclose their disabilities. Businesses were all satisfied with the specific services they received, but there were some services very few businesses reported receiving. It is possible that businesses do not understand these services and their potential benefits as well as they understand other services. This survey was one of the ways the CPAP 2.0 program's business partners could share feedback about their experiences. Future projects might want to consider additional ways to gain the business perspectives, such as more frequent surveys, interviews, or focus groups.

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VISIT: Nebraska VR's CPAP website to learn more about this effort.

ACCESS: ICI's Career Pathways Toolkit

ExploreVR
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