

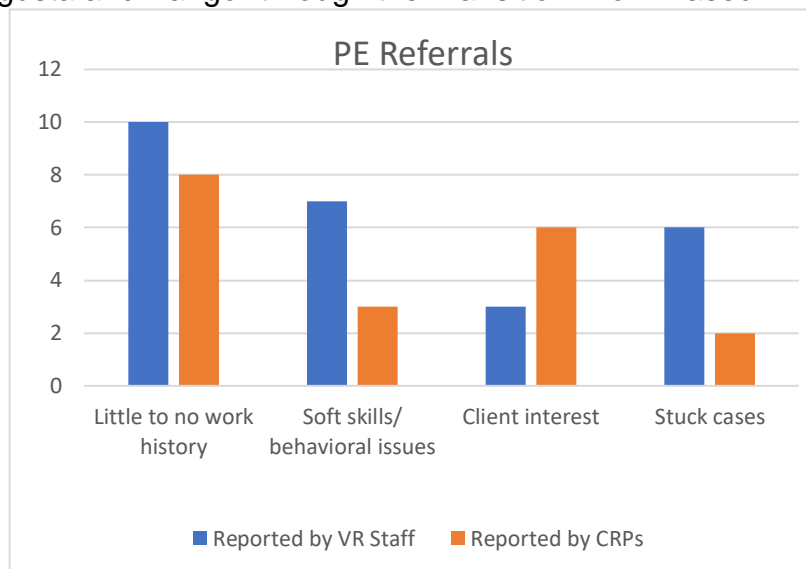
At a Glance: Progressive Employment in Maine

About Maine DVR

Maine Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a general VR agency serving over 6000 persons a year, with 30.8% being youth aged 15-22. Over 60% of the agency clientele are located in the southern half of the state, with Portland and Lewiston being the largest population service areas. VR services are provided by approximately 120 staff. Employment-related services such as job placement typically include contracted services through a network of over 50 certified Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs).

Maine DVR Progressive Employment

Maine DVR uses the Progressive Employment (PE) model as an employment strategy for their transition-age youth consumers. The PE model was first implemented in Portland and Lewiston as part of the RRTC on Demand-Side Strategies, and later expanded to two new offices in Augusta and Bangor through the Transition Work-Based Learning Model Demonstration Grant. ME DVR provided PE service data for a total of 110 VR clients. While the majority of cases (n=87 or 79.1%) are still open, 23 cases were closed in 2017. According to survey results, “little to no work history” was the most frequently selected PE client characteristic by both ME DVR staff and CRP respondents (total n=18).



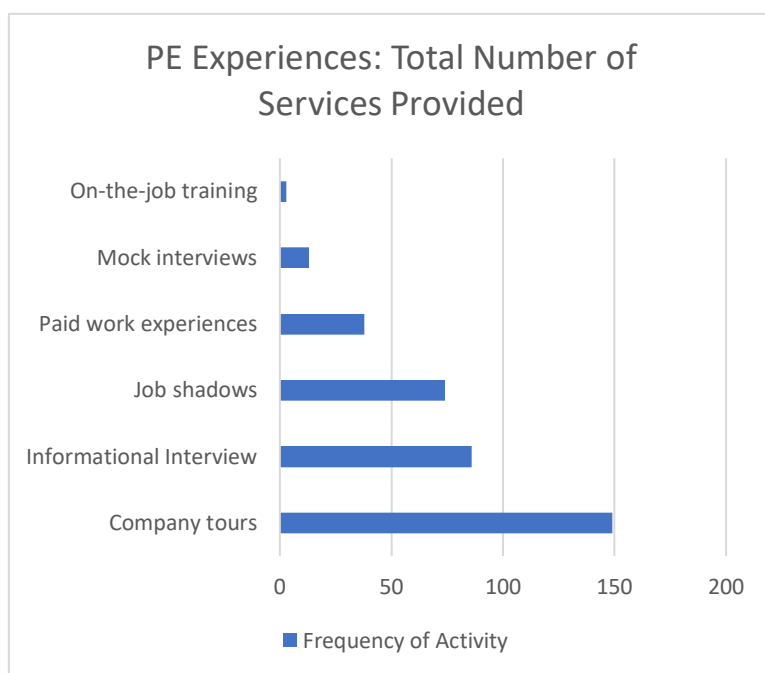
Maine DVR Implementation Strategies

- **PE Staff:** Maine DVR administrative commitment to PE is strong, and a number of adaptations have been made to promote the model, such as the initial contracting with specific CRPs to provide PE services.
- **Work Experience Utilization:** Staff seem to be focused on a wider range of work experience options for transition youth than in the past.

- **Jobsville Meetings:** Maine DVR hosts Jobsville meetings. The types and levels of staff communication during staffing sessions appear to parallel the intent of Vermont DVR Jobsville meetings.
- **Funding & Liability:** Maine DVR covers PE consumer wages through the contracting arrangements with CRPs and staffing agencies. The agency does not rely solely on employers to provide benefits or coverage.

Maine DVR PE Consumer Experiences

Although there were only 23 PE closures during the evaluation period, the results thus far give an optimistic snapshot of the potential of this model for transition youth in ME DVR. For the 110 PE cases, CRPs provided a total of 363 PE activities. These include company tours, informational interviews, job shadows, mock interviews, on-the-job training (OJT), and paid work experiences.



- The successful closure rate of PE transition youth was nearly 48%, whereas only 17.5% non-PE youth successfully closed.
- Decrease in early dropout rates as only 4.3% of PE youth closed prior to IPE, whereas the rate was 36.9% for non-PE youth.
- ME DVR has created a strong initial implementation of PE in four geographic areas. The experience and apparent longevity of ME DVR staff provide a solid foundation for positive growth and improved VR outcomes using the PE model for transition-age youth.

This 2017 data and research is a product of the Progressive Employment Model Replication and Evaluation study, funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (Grant # H133B120002). The full working papers and other products associated with this study are housed on ExploreVR (www.explorevr.org).