

RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER ON
Independent Living

4089 Dole, 1000 Sunnyside Ave.
The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045
785.864.4095 Voice, 785.864.0706 TTY
RTCIL@ku.edu

For immediate release
July 2004

Earnings Lag for People With Disabilities

LAWRENCE, KS — Although civil rights legislation and independent living movement have made major strides in the last couple of decades, employment and vocational rehabilitation services still fall short for people with disabilities, say University of Kansas researchers in a recent *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* article.

“The traditional and emerging disabled population continues to have high unemployment and underemployment rates. It remains among the poorest in the country,” said Dot Nary, training director at The Research and Training Center on Full Participation in Independent Living, a division of the Research and Training Center on Independent Living at the University of Kansas.



Funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, the researchers worked with representatives from two national disability organizations and others to prepare a survey highlighting topics of concern, including consumer-control, housing, health care, advocacy, community services and access, transportation, parenting, the media, personal assistance services, recreation, voting, assistive technology, peer counseling, education, employment, vocational rehabilitation, and center for independent living services.

The 1,367 respondents from all 50 states reported 29 different disabilities with 50% having three or more disabilities. Multiple chemical sensitivity (32%) was the most frequently indicated disability. They rated items based on the highest and lowest percent of difference between importance and satisfaction

The survey was distributed by disability groups, mailing lists, chat rooms, websites, and conference exhibit tables. To get additional comments, the researchers presented the results at two national conferences and through a national web cast.

“Results indicate that there is need for increased collaboration between those working in employment services, vocational rehabilitation, and independent living to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities and to ensure that all Americans with disabilities have the same opportunities for full participation as non-disabled people living in this nation,” Nary said.

Also evident from survey results was the finding that those with traditional and emerging disabilities shared similar concerns.

The Research and Training Center on Independent Living at The University of Kansas furthers independent living for people with disabilities by collaborating with target populations on productive research and innovative knowledge distribution.

-XXX-