

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

# Employment Services for Individuals with Disabilities

OCTOBER 2025

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**Employment Security Department**  
WASHINGTON STATE

Cami Feek, Commissioner

Learn more at [esd.wa.gov](https://esd.wa.gov).

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# Overview

Washington state law<sup>1</sup> mandates the Employment Security Department (Employment Security) prioritize delivering services to people with disabilities, as these individuals are defined by the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973<sup>2</sup>. Employment Security is to report biennially — during every odd-numbered year — to relevant House and Senate committees, detailing actions taken to fulfill this directive.

The 2023 Employment Services for Individuals with Disabilities report provides an extensive narrative of the agency's employment services and programs, the agency's non-discrimination plan and more. This 2025 report provides updates in many areas but mostly focuses on services provided to disabled individuals. [Read the 2023 report on the legislative report page of the Employment Security website.](#)

## Employment services and the WorkSource system

The term "employment services" broadly refers to the collective efforts of both Employment Security and the state's One-Stop service delivery system, known as WorkSource Washington or simply WorkSource. WorkSource is a collaborative network of services, programs and investments designed to enhance workforce accessibility and opportunities. Both entities frequently adopt a systemwide approach to support people facing employment barriers, including those with disabilities.

WorkSource staff from multiple partner programs collaborate to deliver a wide array of individualized, one-on-one and self-service tools to people with disabilities. [Read the 2023 Employment Services for Individuals with Disabilities legislative report on the Employment Security website for a full list of employment services.](#)

Employment Security and its WorkSource partners frequently — though not always — implement equity and inclusion strategies at the system level rather than program by program. This approach ensures broader accessibility to services for people with disabilities. [Learn more](#)

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<sup>1</sup> [RCW 50.12.210 \(Employment services for persons with disabilities—Report to legislative committees\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> Public Law 93-112. [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

[on the WorkSource website about programs and services available through WorkSource centers across Washington.](#)

Washington's 2024–2028 workforce plan, Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP)<sup>3</sup>, developed by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB), sets the strategic direction for WorkSource. The TAP plan:

- Provides a roadmap to better economic outcomes for job seekers, workers, employers and communities.
- Guides multi-agency initiatives.
- Aligns partners plans and activities.
- Measures progress and gauges effectiveness.

TAP guiding principles include closing economic disparities for marginalized populations and delivering comprehensive support for people with barriers to employment, including those with disabilities.

## Washington's 2024 WorkSource nondiscrimination plan update

Washington's WorkSource Nondiscrimination Plan describes how Washington complies with the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or WIOA (29 CFR Part 38). The requirements include providing equal access to customers with disabilities and ensuring nondiscrimination when delivering programs and services. The plan is updated every two years and submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor's Civil Rights Center. [Read the 2024 Washington State Nondiscrimination Plan on the Workforce Professionals Center website.](#)

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<sup>3</sup> [wtb.wa.gov/planning-programs/washington-state-workforce-plan/](http://wtb.wa.gov/planning-programs/washington-state-workforce-plan/)

# Americans with Disabilities Act update

Thanks to Washington's WorkSource Nondiscrimination Plan and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards, customers with disabilities will find multiple accessibility features when using services at certified One-stop offices. Features include:

- Employment services coordination with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), which hosts orientation and information sessions for customers with disabilities. Employment services and other One-Stop staff provide referrals to DVR and vice versa.
- Assistive technology at One-Stop offices, with trained staff to support its use.
- Live chat support for customers experiencing challenges using the WorkSourceWA.com online job-matching platform.
- Interpretation services upon request, including American Sign Language.
- A dedicated assistive workstation at each WorkSource center, featuring adjustable equipment with zoom text and screen-reading technology.

Local workforce development boards prioritized ADA reviews of WorkSource centers across the state in 2023 and 2024. Employment Security trained local equal opportunity (EO) officers on how to conduct ADA reviews of facilities during the EO monitoring process.

In 2024, Employment Security's Facilities Unit received funding to quickly address accessibility improvements identified by EO officers during monitoring reviews; the Facilities Unit will address larger or more complex improvements during the lease renewal process, ensuring lessors comply with lease requirements.

## Governor's Committee on Disability Issues & Employment

The Governor's Committee on Disability Issues & Employment (GCDE) promotes equity, economic opportunity, independence and full community inclusion for people with disabilities. Under the leadership of Chair Yvonne Bussler-White, GCDE's 25 members with lived experience offer geographic, ethnic and culturally diverse perspectives on disability issues.

Employment Security houses the GCDE, with an executive director overseeing one program coordinator and one program specialist. GCDE is responsible for:

- Advising the governor, Legislature, and state agencies on policies that impact people with disabilities.
- Monitoring legislation to uphold equal opportunity and access in employment, education, health care and public services.
- Raising awareness about the needs and potential of people with disabilities through public information and training.
- Recognizing employers who demonstrate leadership in hiring individuals with disabilities.
- Providing training and technical assistance to businesses, promoting employment opportunities and disability inclusion.
- Conducting activities in barrier-free environments, ensuring effective communication through auxiliary aids and services.

[Read more about GCDE on the Employment Security website.](#)

## Assistive technology and accessibility support update

Employment Security is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have access to the assistive technology they need to participate fully in employment services. The agency established the Accessibility Navigator Team (ANT) in May 2022 to support and enhance the work of local and statewide employment services teams. ANT focuses on:

- Reducing access barriers for underserved community groups, including people with disabilities.
- Standardizing tools, technology, resources and service delivery to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Ensuring customers can access services without being required to disclose confidential information.
- Providing universal access to WorkSource services, ensuring that all customers benefit from available resources.
- Enhancing visual accessibility by updating logo and branding colors to improve readability for people with vision impairments.

WorkSource centers may offer a variety of on-site assistive tools, such as trackball mice, headphones, key guards, sound amplifiers, and visual aids, such as screen readers, braille

displays, and magnifiers. The Windows Ease of Access suite, available on all staff and resource room computers, provides additional accessibility features, including text-to-speech, screen magnification, color enhancements and a virtual keyboard.

Employment Security offers Washington Relay 711, a telecommunication relay service that enables individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or have speech disabilities to communicate with those using standard phones. This service connects callers to a communication assistant, who facilitates real-time text and voice communication, ensuring equal access to phone-based services.

Employment Security also supports access to the Washington Assistive Technology Act Program Device Lending Library and WA State Assistive Technology Classifieds. These programs allow customers to borrow devices temporarily to test equipment before purchasing, access backup devices while repairs are completed, or use assistive tools while awaiting delivery. These initiatives ensure individuals can maintain access to essential technology and continue participating in employment services without interruption.

## WIT replacement project update

The 2023 Employment Services for Individuals with Disabilities report introduced the WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) Replacement Project. This statewide initiative is essential for delivering reemployment services to employers and job seekers while ensuring compliance with state and federal reporting requirements. WIT implementation has been delayed due to upcoming changes in federal requirements and reporting. Employment Security now anticipates implementation in 2026. WIT enhancements include several features to improve service delivery to people with disabilities. [Read the 2023 report on the legislative report page on the Employment Security website for details.](#)

## Individuals with disabilities data

RCW 50.12.210 emphasizes counseling, referral and job notification services to ensure people with disabilities have full access to employment opportunities. Employment Security's Data Integrity team created the Official Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard to provide key insights into the number of customers with disabilities receiving employment services directly related to RCW 50.12.210.

The dashboard is accessible to the public on the Workforce Professionals Center website. Users can sort data in a number of ways, including by location, service type, program and program year. [View the Official Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard on the Workforce Professionals Center website.](#)

When customers create a WorkSource account to access services, they are asked to complete a full registration, which includes demographic data. Providing their disability status is voluntary, so Employment Security data is based only on customers who chose to self-identify as having a disability.

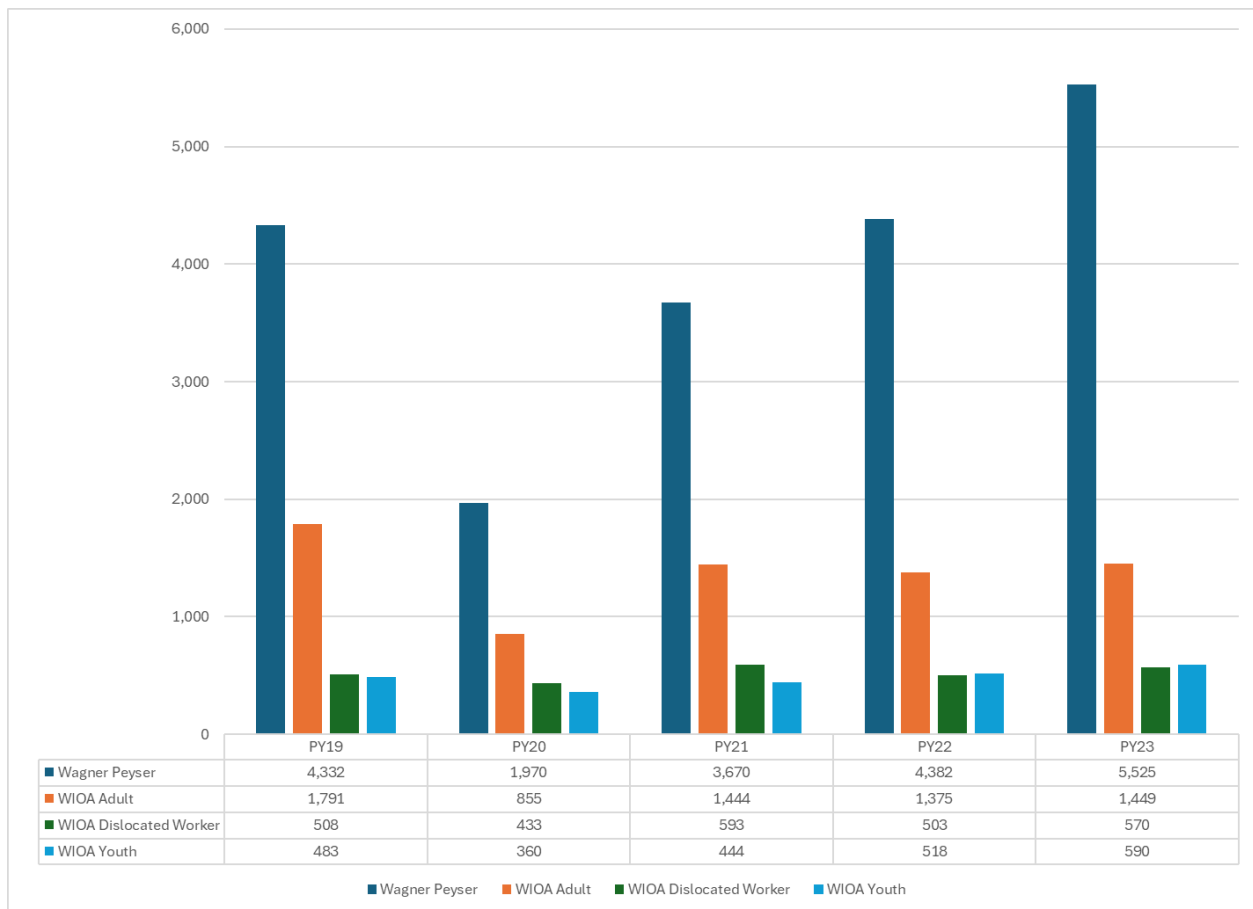
The following figures show a sample of data from the dashboard for program years (PY) 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. Data for PY 2024 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) was not available for this report. These figures include employment services most pertinent to RCW 50.12.210:

- Staff-assisted counseling, such as career guidance, individual employment plans and prevocational activities.
- Staff-assisted job search and referral services to connect individuals with job opportunities.
- Other employment services, consolidated by Employment Security into a separate category for tracking.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 show the unduplicated counts of “participation episodes” for people with disabilities. A participation episode begins when a customer first receives a qualifying staff-assisted service. The episode continues as long as the customer receives services without a gap of 90 consecutive days. If the customer receives no qualifying service within those 90 days, WIOA considers them to have exited the program. Customers may reenter and begin a new participation episode if they receive another qualifying service.



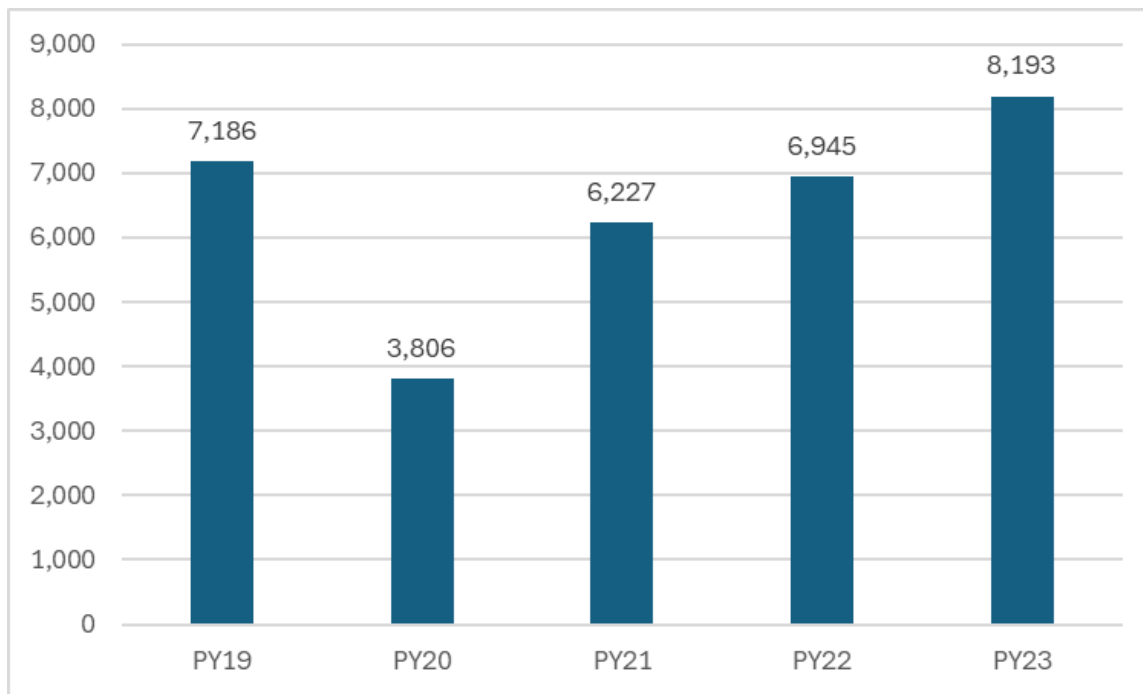
Figure 1: Individuals with disabilities – unduplicated count of participation episodes by program in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23



Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

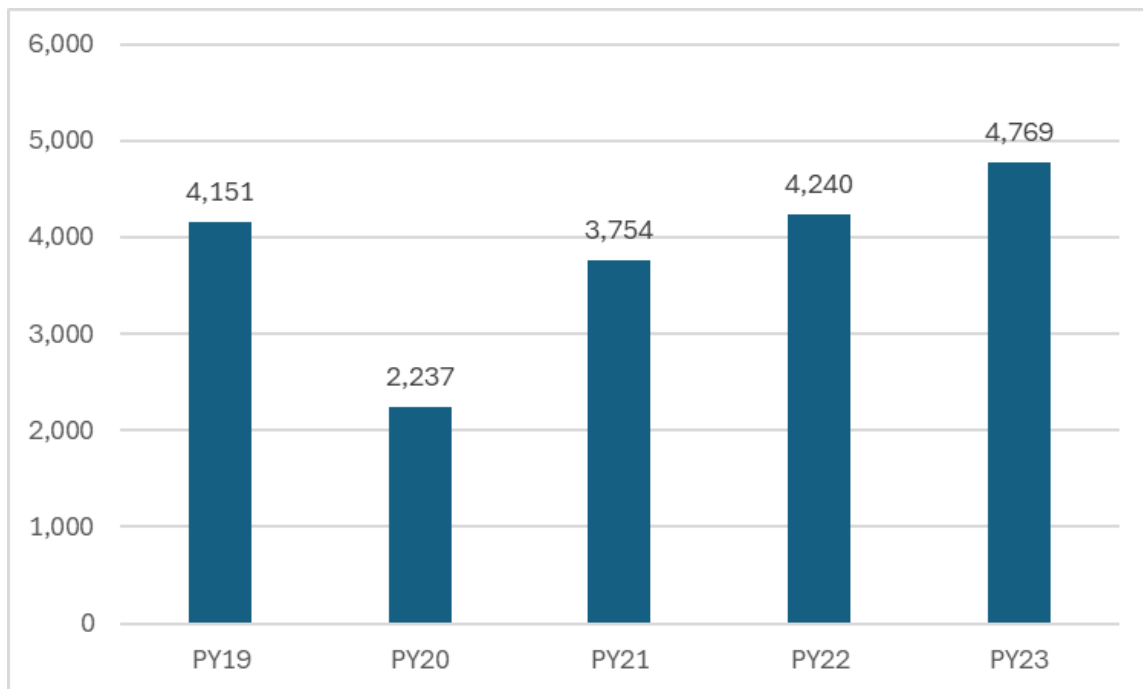
Note: All customers receiving a qualifying staff-assisted service are automatically enrolled in the Wagner-Peyser (general employment service) program. Along with Wagner-Peyser, the figure captures core employment and training programs for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Customers can be enrolled in more than one program simultaneously.

Figure 2: Individuals with disabilities – unduplicated count of all participation episodes in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23



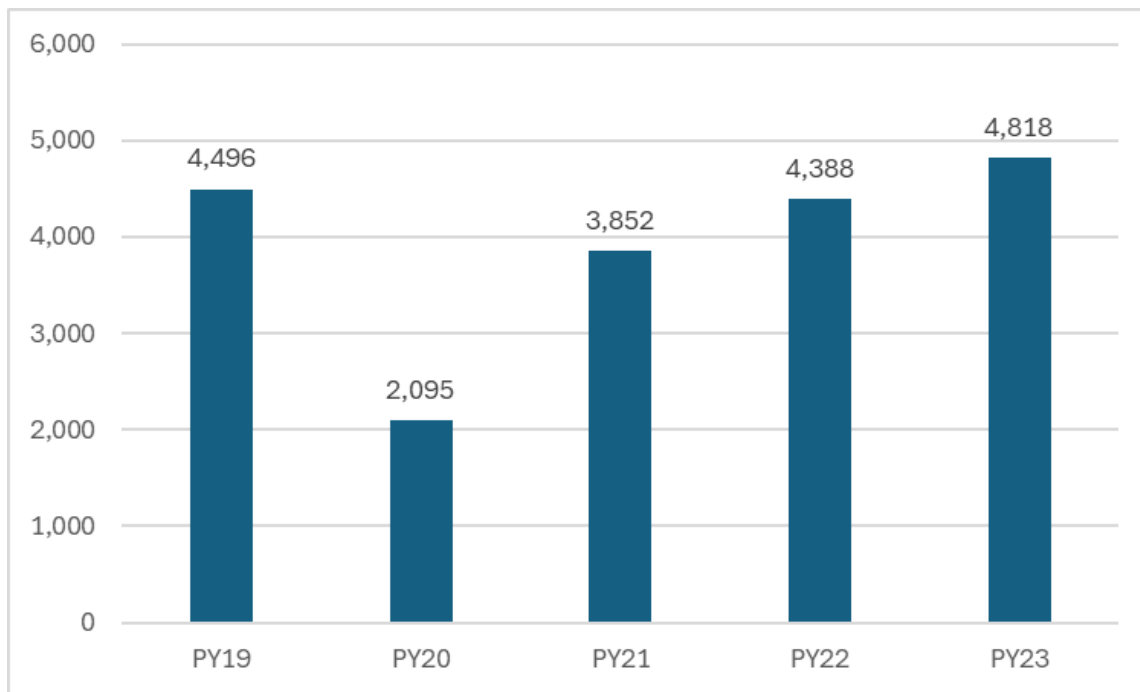
Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

Figure 3: Individuals with disabilities – unduplicated count of counseling services participation episodes in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23



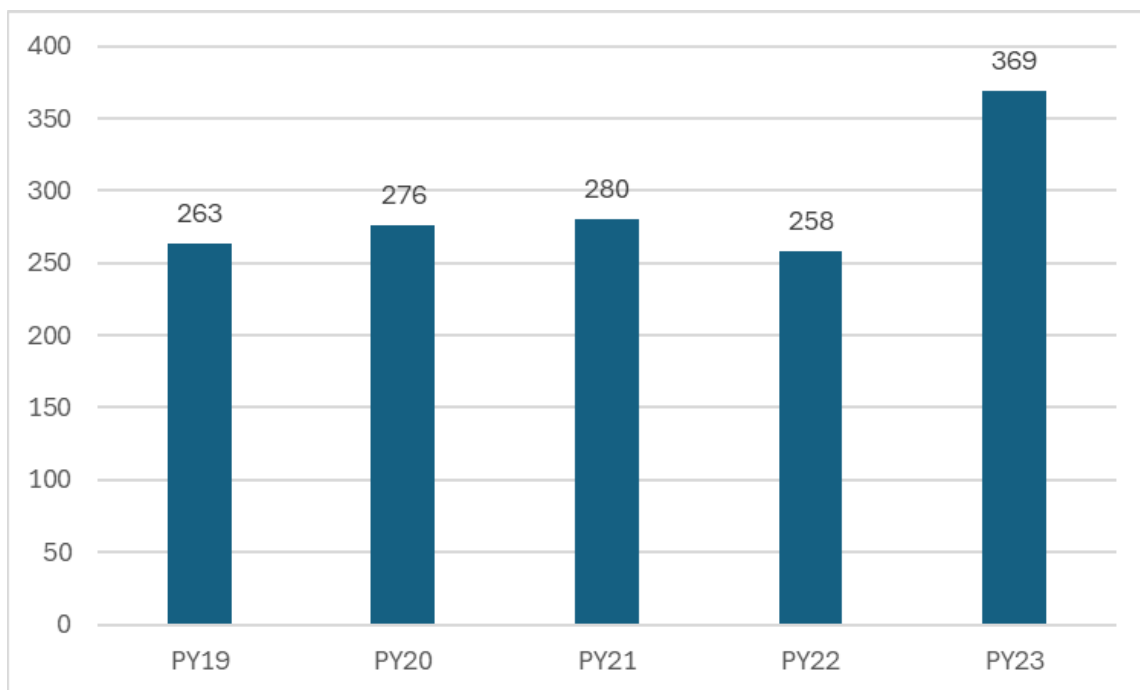
Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

Figure 4: Individuals with disabilities – unduplicated count of job search and job referral services provided in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23



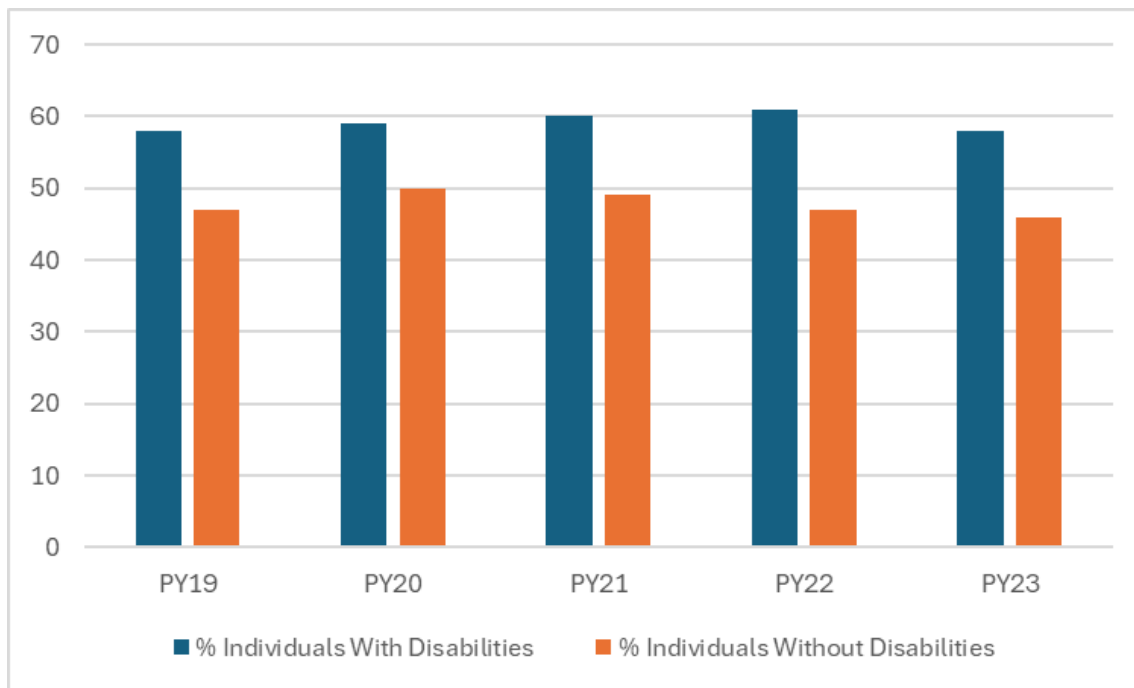
Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

Figure 5: Individuals with disabilities – unduplicated count of training enrollments and training services provided in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23



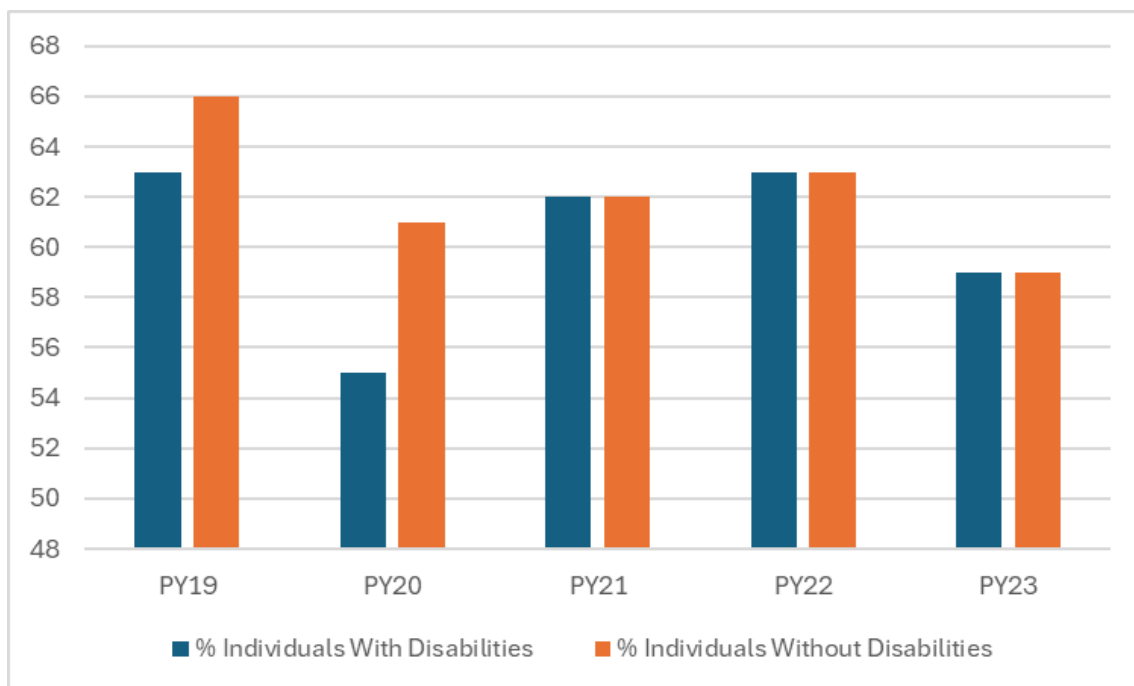
Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

Figure 6: Percentage of customers with and without disabilities receiving counseling services in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23



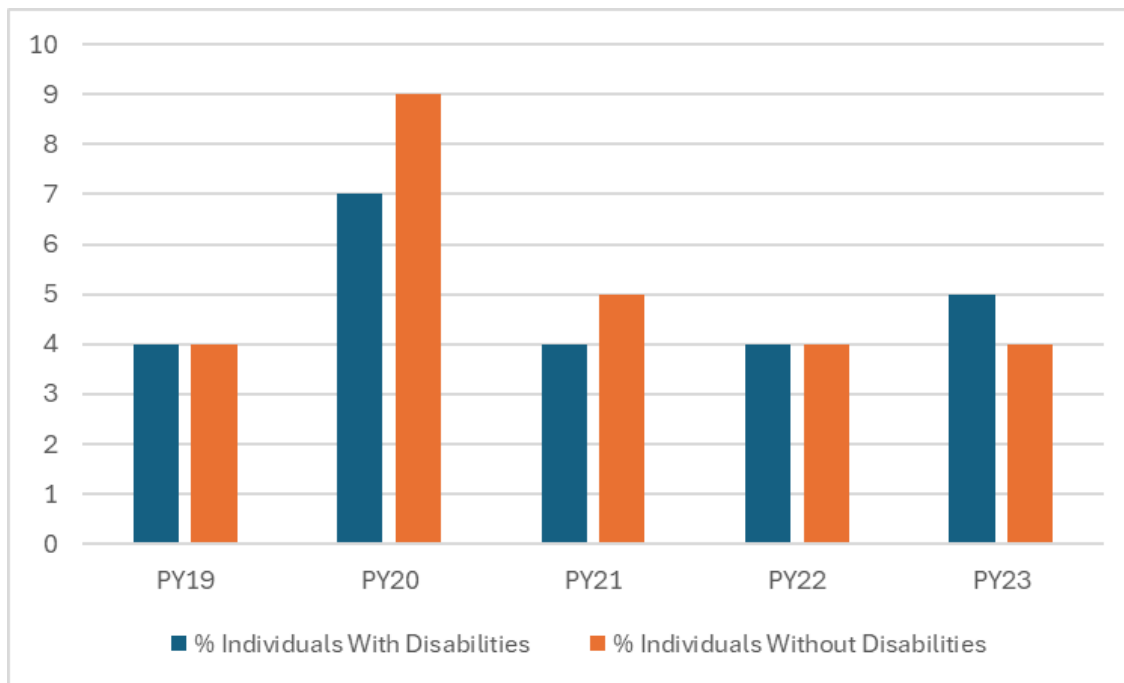
Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

Figure 7: Percentage of customers with and without disabilities receiving job search services in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23



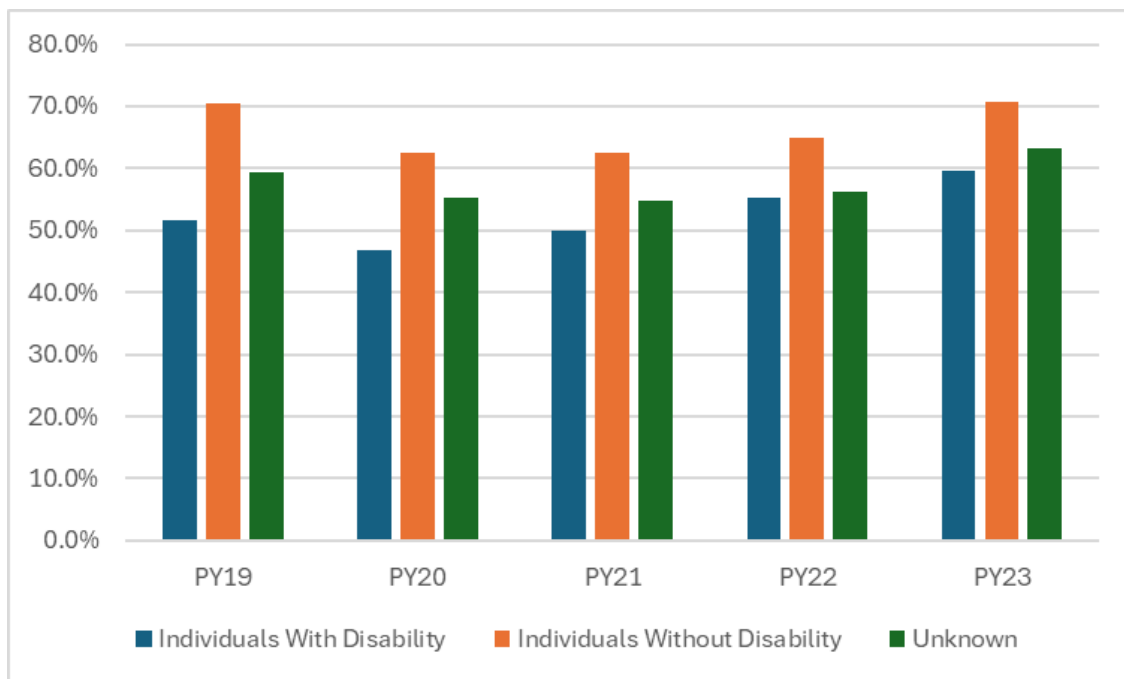
Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

Figure 8: Percentage of customers with and without disabilities receiving training services in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23



Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

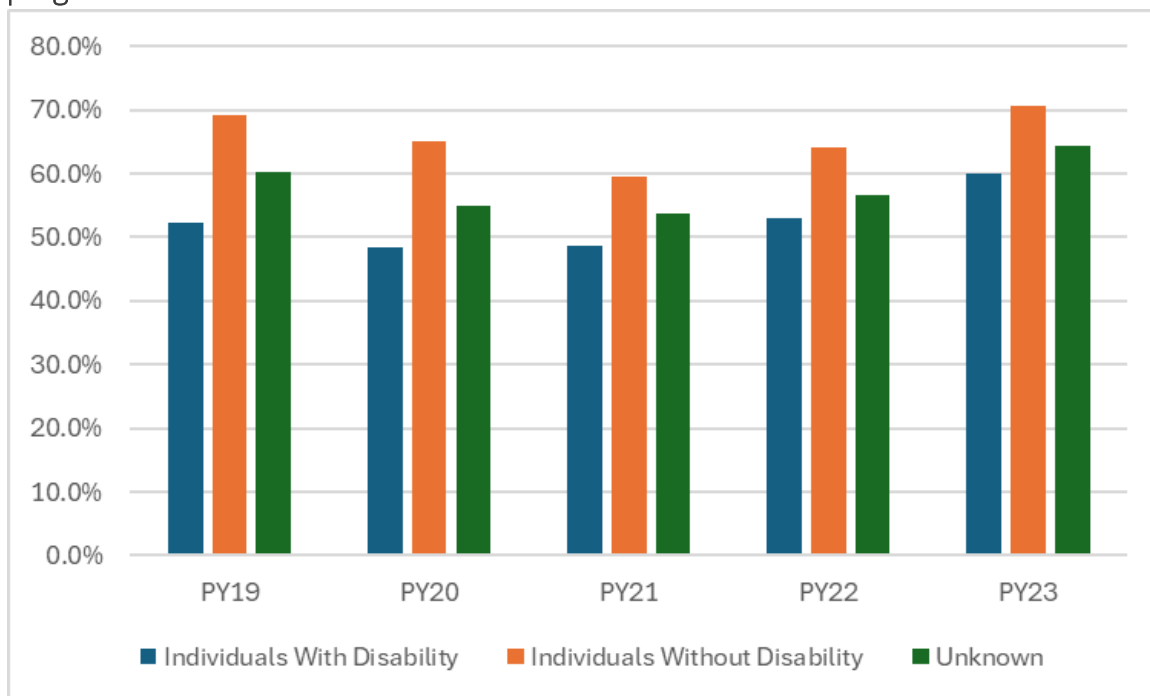
Figure 9: Employment rate of customers with and without disabilities and of those who did not disclose their disability status in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exiting program



Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

Note: Employment rate is defined as the percentage of individuals employed during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter following their exit from the enrolled program.

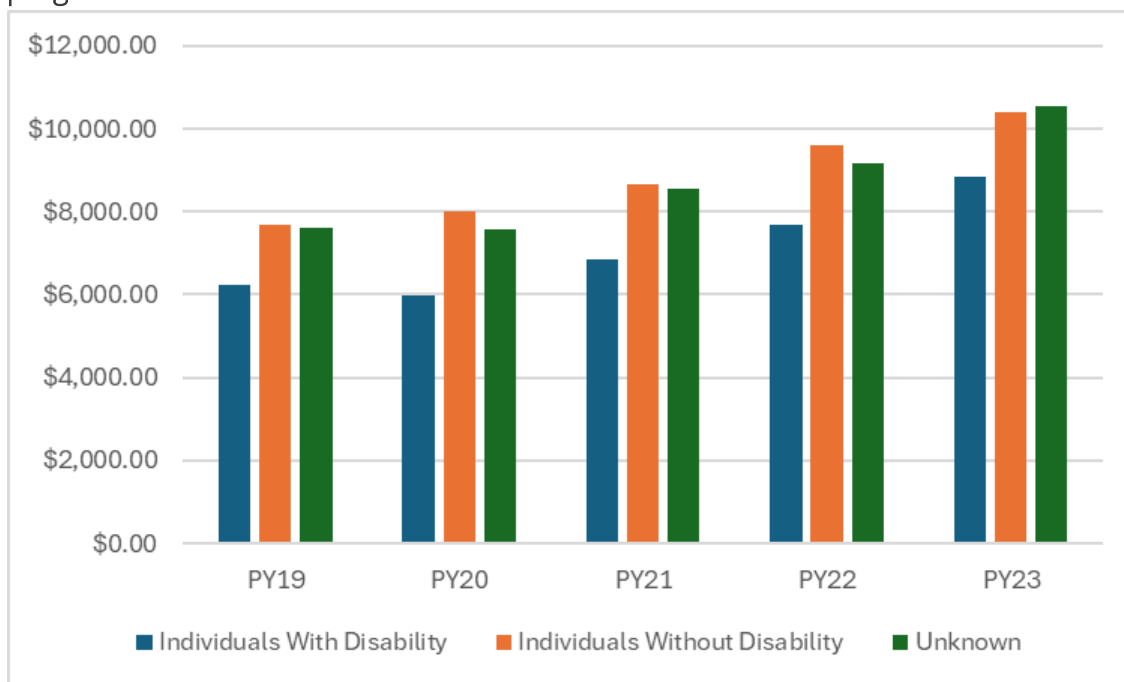
Figure 10: Employment rate of customers with and without disabilities and of those who did not disclose their disability status in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exiting program



Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

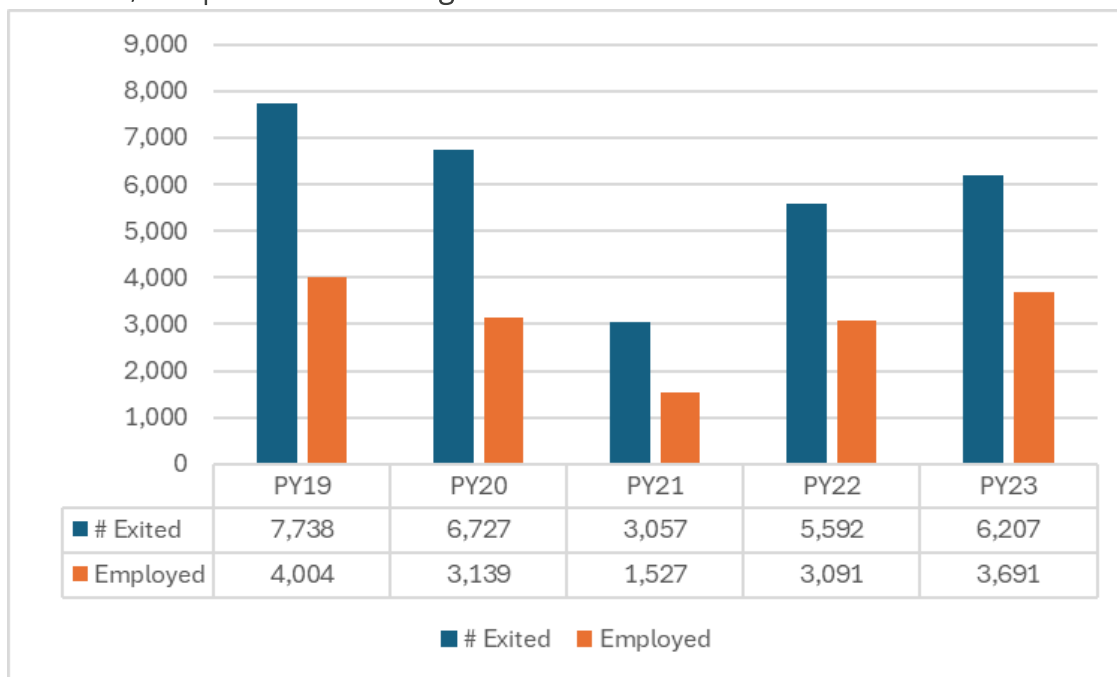
Note: Employment rate is defined as the percentage of individuals employed during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter following their exit from the enrolled program.

Figure 11: Median earnings of customers with and without disabilities and of those who did not disclose their disability status in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exiting program



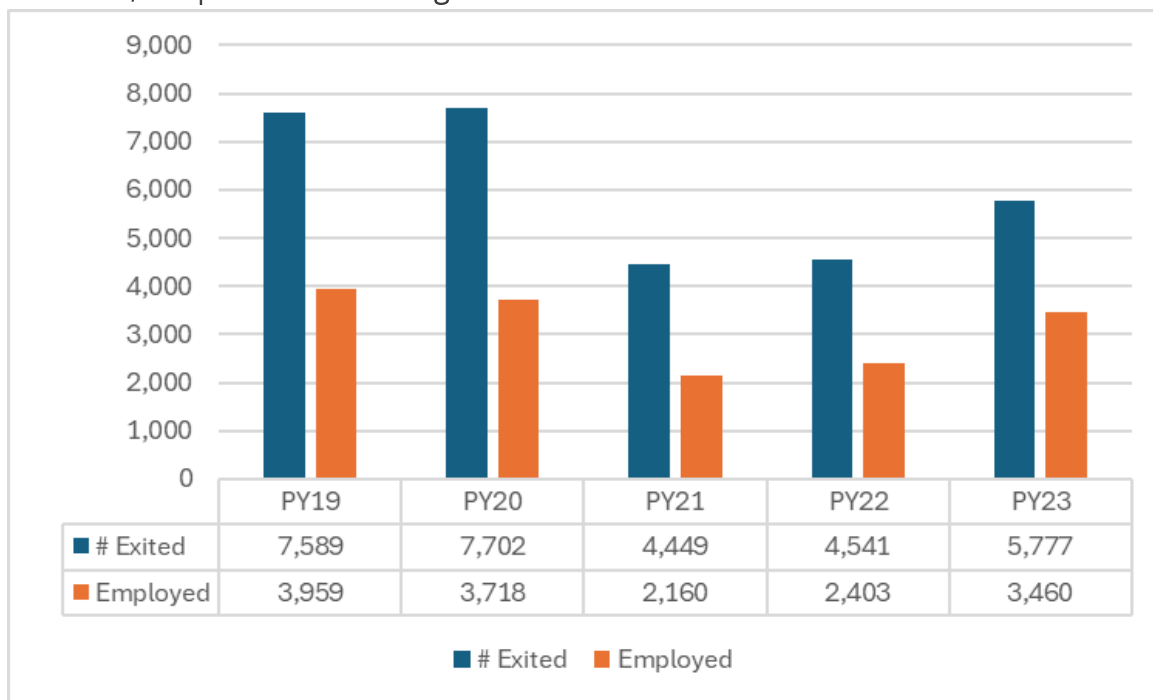
Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

Figure 12: Individuals with disabilities employed and exiting program in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exiting



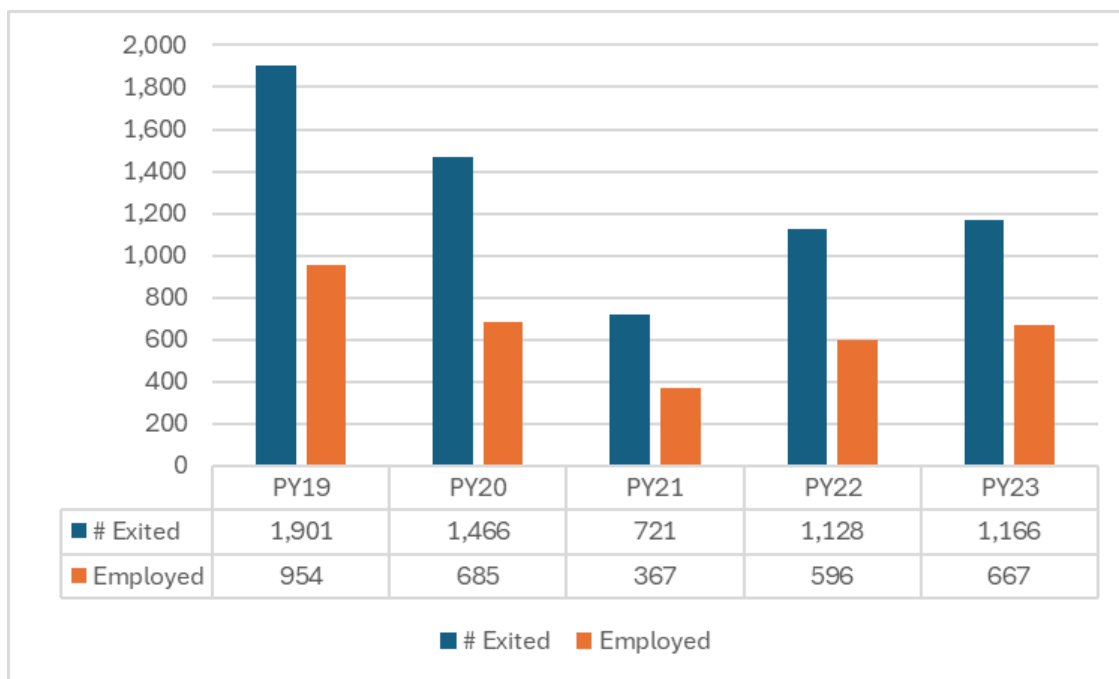
Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

Figure 13: Individuals with disabilities employed and exiting program in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exiting



Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)

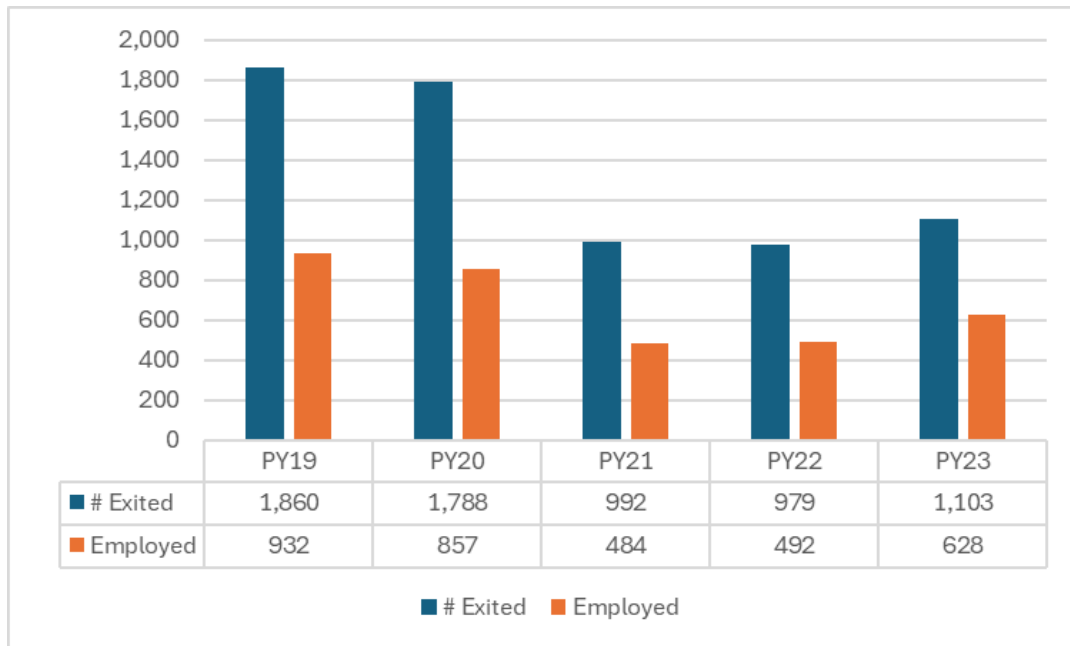
Figure 14: Veterans with disabilities employed and exiting program in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exiting



Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)



Figure 15: Veterans with disabilities employed and exiting program in PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22 and PY23, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exiting



Source: [Workforce Professionals Center - Services for Persons with Disabilities Dashboard](#)