Summary of the Issue: Several federal statutes mandate equal access to services at postsecondary education institutions and are intended to improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities (i.e., Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 (IDEA 1997), the Rehabilitation Act of 1995 and the inclusion of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments in the 1998 Workforce Investment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act). Therefore, it is critical to understand the impact that these laws have on assisting individuals with disabilities in gaining access to and in completing a postsecondary education and, ultimately, in securing employment. In an effort to determine the impact these laws have had on creating greater access to, retention in, and completion of a postsecondary education a secondary data analysis will be conducted of elements of the national Rehabilitation Services Administration’s (RSA) database to identify state trends in postsecondary education services and supports for individuals with disabilities overtime through the Vocational Rehabilitation System.
Study Questions/Method:

• Has there been a change overtime in the services offered by the Vocational Rehabilitation system that support students with disabilities in postsecondary education?

• What is the cost per case for postsecondary education services for students with disabilities?

• Has the IDEA 1997, the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1995 and the inclusion of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments in the 1998 Workforce Investment Act had an impact on postsecondary education services for individuals with disabilities?

Findings:
Analysis not complete at this time

Implications by Audience: (projected implications prior to final analysis)

• The need for the vocational rehabilitation system to provide a greater number of supports to individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education and employment.

• The need for VR counselors to view postsecondary education as a linkage to employment for individuals with disabilities.

• The need for consumers, teachers, school counselors, families, special education personnel to learn about the vocational rehabilitation system and how to advocate for postsecondary education and employment services.
Contact Information: Debra Hart

Institute for Community Inclusion

University of Massachusetts and Children’s Hospital / Boston

300 Longwood Avenue

Boston, MA 02115

Telephone: 617-355-7443

E-mail: hart_d@a1.tch.harvard.edu

Fax: 617-355-7940