Research Updates

Enclave Employment at Virginia Colleges and Universities

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Summary. Surveys taken in 1991 and 1992 in Virginia suggest that the enclave model of employment may be a more successful and long-term method of employing individuals with mental disabilities (IMDs) within Virginia college grounds departments. Individual, competitive placement of IMDs seems to be less successful, resulting in increased level of temporary and short-term employment. Additional research is needed to document the methods and benefits of employment used by other grounds departments, including colleges outside Virginia in the employment of IMDs.

The enclave model of employment is a viable method for employing individuals with mental disabilities (IMDs) within a grounds department. As defined by Griffin and Chandler-Kelley (1989), enclave employment is a work crew of up to eight IMDs and one to two enclave specialists as supervisors provided by a shelter workshop or other nonprofit vocational placement facility. The enclaves usually work for community industries or businesses referred to as host companies. They are contracted by the host company as a unit to fulfill specified jobs. All paperwork related to individual employment (pay, health insurance, sick leave, and other employee issues) is handled by the facility implementing the contract. Members of the enclave can be paid wages based on the prevailing wage and the productivity of the worker. The individuals qualifying for working within an enclave usually cannot find individual competitive employment at or above the minimum wage, and they need intensive, on-going support to work in a job setting (Rhodes and Valenta, 1985).

The horticultural industry has been documented as the fastest growing segment of agribusiness in the past several decades (Davis and DeRiso, 1992). Davis and DeRiso (1992) also noted that lawn maintenance and landscaping services have been experiencing business growth increases as high as 12% per year. Along with the rapid growth of horticultural services, the need for entry level unskilled and semi-skilled personnel has increased. Currently, the industry is facing a shortage of entry-level workers (Simonds, 1991). Horticultural businesses offer

many job opportunities for IMDs, particularly in landscape maintenance. Relf and DeHart-Bennett's (1990) survey of private, ornamental horticultural businesses in Virginia established that the largest employers of IMDs are landscape maintenance businesses and golf courses. These businesses often use all of their employees in a work-crew approach in routine maintenance such as weeding, watering, and planting. At Melwood Horticultural Training Center in Upper Marlboro, Md., a landscape maintenance training program has been developed and documented for IMDs using the enclave model (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1980). A case study of enclave employment has been described within the Virginia Polytechnic Inst. and State Univ. (Virginia Tech) Grounds Dept. (Dobbs and Relf, 1991).

The Virginia Tech Grounds Dept. contracts with New River Valley Workshop to employ two enclaves of IMDs as permanent, part-time employees to perform landscape maintenance tasks such as litter control, leaf removal, weeding, and snow removal. Dobbs and Relf (1991) have noted that the IMDs can function together as a team and have become an integral part of the Virginia Tech Grounds Dept. In 1991, a survey was developed and sent to all 87 Virginia state and private colleges to determine if their grounds departments have similar experiences to Virginia Tech's in employing IMDs in enclaves. Questions were asked to determine what types of employment methods were used for hiring IMDs within a college grounds department and to identify the types of tasks performed. A follow-up survey in 1992 asked for the number of employees and the length of employment of IMDs at the colleges with employment history. It also asked what type of tools were most commonly used by these employees.

The 1991 survey consisted of close-ended questions and statements with answers provided for respondents. The survey was sent to all 87 college grounds departments in Virginia with a letter explaining the survey's purpose. Three weeks after sending the survey, a follow-up letter and survey were sent to the nonresponding college grounds departments encouraging them to participate in the survey. Of the 87 colleges, 62 (71%) responded

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Fig. 1. *Methods of employing individuals with mental disabilities within 10 Virginia college grounds departments.*

to the survey. The 1992 survey consisted of open-ended or opinion questions and was sent to the 13 colleges agreeing to participate in a follow-up survey. Three weeks after sending the survey, a follow-up letter was sent to the colleges encouraging them to participate in the survey. Two weeks after the second contact, nonresponding colleges were telephoned to encourage participation. This survey had 10 respondents. Both surveys were tallied and the results were reported quantitatively and descriptively to measure several aspects of IMD employment within Virginia college grounds departments.

enclave employees were to be given the opportunity to transfer out of the enclave and become an individual, permanent member of a college grounds crew after completing their temporary assignment.

Whether an IMD was an individual employee or part of an enclave appears to influence length of employment. According to the 10 survey respondents with a history of employing IMDs, 20 of the 25 IMDs ever em-

are useful in evaluating and reinforcing the perceived effectiveness of enclave and individual employment of IMDs. Also, the responses target issues for further research such as the benefits of employing IMDs as part of a grounds crew, as shown by the following responses to the question 'What are the advantages to using IMDs as part of the grounds staff?

- "We currently have a groundsman position that is frozen. The en-

Fig. 2. *Permanent and temporary employment of individuals with mental disabilities at 10 Virginia college grounds departments.*

Results of the 1991 survey showed that 21 of the 62 colleges responding (36%) have employed IMDs, with 11 colleges (18%) currently employing, and 10 colleges (16%) previously employing IMDs. The survey also showed the methods used to employ IMDs within a college grounds department (Fig. 1).

From the 1992 survey, we found that 27 IMDs currently worked for 8 of the 10 Virginia college grounds departments responding. Of these 27 IMDs, 20 (74%) were employed as members of an enclave and 7 (26%) were individual employees (Fig. 2).

Whether an employee was a member of an enclave may relate to the job's being permanent or temporary and should be explored in future research. A slightly higher number of permanent than temporary jobs were filled by IMDs. Of the 20 permanent employees, 15 (75%) were members of an enclave, and of the 7 temporary employees, 5 (71%) were members of an enclave (Fig. 2). The five temporary

employed as members of an enclave were still employed (Fig. 3). Of the 42 previously or currently employed as individual employees, only 7 were still employed.

When asked to evaluate the IMDs on specific work-related criteria, only 5 of the 10 responded; therefore, it is impossible to make broad judgments from this information (Table 1). However, the results are consistent with similar surveys in other employment areas (DeHart-Bennett and Relf, 1990; Rhodes and Valenta, 1985) and are useful to indicate trends worth further investigation. IMDs are rated above medium on all characteristics except ability to work with supervisor. The latter problem may be due in part to lack of training or experience of supervisors in working with IMDs, as the survey reveals that only three colleges have grounds supervisors who are trained to work with IMDs.

The responses to the open-ended questions from grounds supervisors with experience in working with IMDs

clave has enabled the college to accomplish its grounds maintenance responsibilities."

- "Helps build staff morale. The grounds staff and the IMDs work well together."
- "The two enclaves free our regular grounds staff to operate equipment for more complicated jobs. Their primary duties are to police the campus daily for litter. They do a fantastic job."
- "Is here every day and does a great job."
- "IMDs work well with proper supervision."
- "We receive additional supervisory help from the head-injury department affiliated with the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation and Training Center."

Additional areas of research could involve looking at the difficulty a grounds supervisor may encounter in employing IMDs, as shown by the responses to the question "What have

Fig. 3. *Employment record of individuals with mental disabilities at 10 Virginia college grounds departments.*

IMDs can fit into the grounds maintenance program.

The grounds maintenance industry has a need for capable, reliable employees. Contractual employment of enclaves from sheltered workshops eliminates some of the related problems with training, supervision, and paperwork for the employer and provides long-term employment to the individual than individual competitive placement.

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been the disadvantages to using IMDs as part of the grounds staff?"

- "Sometimes slows down work progress" (when not part of a IMD enclave).
- "None."
- "At times, it maybe impossible to have another employee work with the IMD."
- "The IMDs become confused and wander occasionally."
- "The IMDs have limited versatility."
- "There were some communication problems. There was also the problem of getting the crews to always treat the IMDs as valuable employees."
- "Most often, bureaucratic snags are the greatest disadvantage." (The respondent was referring to the paperwork and procedures

involved in employing IMDs.)

This information could be particularly valuable in developing training programs for grounds supervisors.

The top four duties performed by IMDs, as reported by college grounds departments, were litter control (90%), leaf removal (81%), lawn mowing (76%), and snow removal (76%). The college grounds departments report that the top six tools used by IMDs were leafrakes (100%), shovels (100%), their own hands (87%), snow shovels (78%), paper picks (78%), and garden rakes (78%). These results are consistent with the study by DeHart and Relf (1990) concerning the work skills and tools used by IMDs in private horticulture businesses in Virginia. This information is helpful to grounds supervisors in understanding what type of tasks IMDs can perform and where

Table 1. *Ratings (1 = poor; 4 = excellent, with 2 and 3 equally distributed) of individuals with mental disabilities by five Virginia college and university grounds supervisors.*

Rating	1	2	3	4	Mean
Ability to work with other grounds employees	0	3	1	1	2.6
Ability to work with supervisor	2	0	3	0	2.2
Ability to interact with the public	0	2	3	0	2.6
Ability to interact with employees during free time (breaks and lunches)	0	2	2	1	2.8
Overall contribution to the appearance of the college campus	0	2	1	2	3.0