



# National Autism Indicators Report:

Vocational Rehabilitation

2016



**Life Course Outcomes**  
Research Program

 DREXEL UNIVERSITY  
A.J. Drexel  
Autism Institute

# National Autism Indicators Report series:

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# A.J. Drexel Autism Institute

## A public health approach to autism

Primary

Reduce/eliminate  
avoidable causes

**Modifiable  
Risk Factors**

Craig Newschaffer, Ph.D.



Secondary

Identify  
symptoms early  
and intervene

**Early Detection  
& Intervention**

Diana Robins, Ph.D.



Tertiary

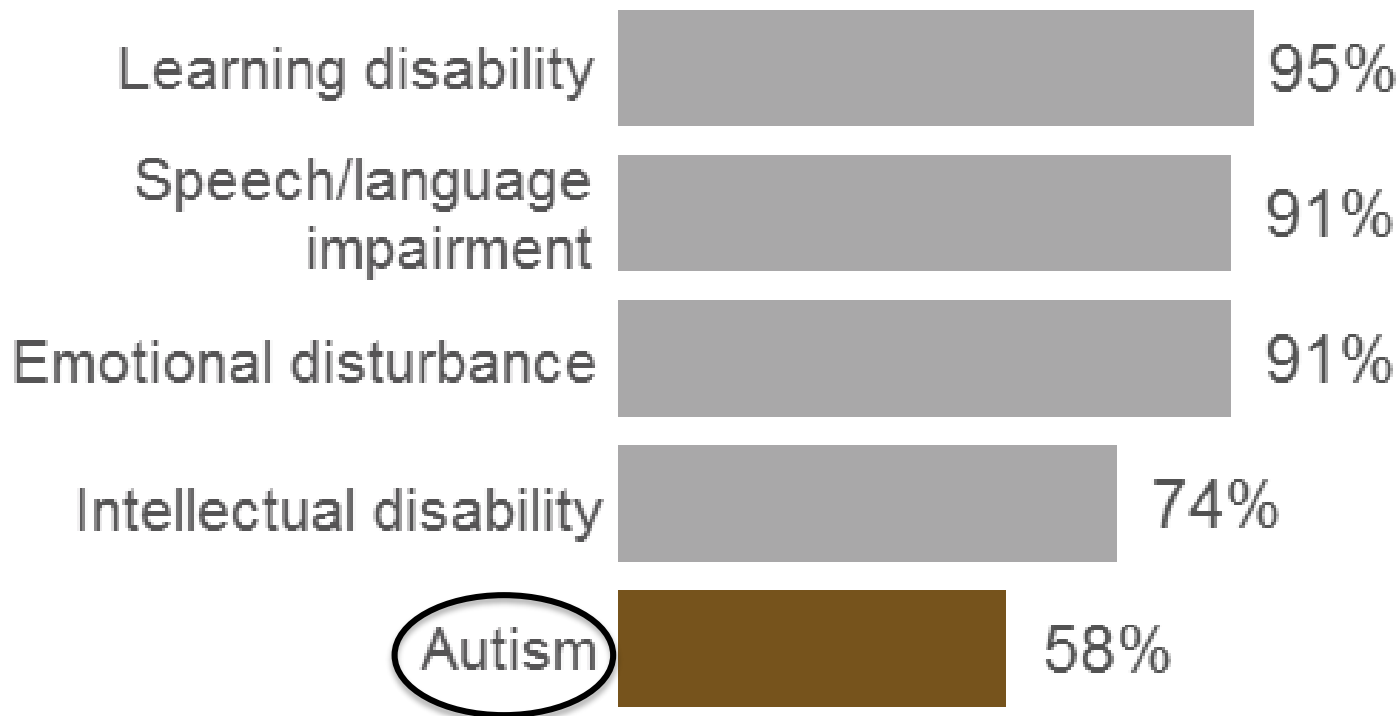
Minimize disability  
and promote  
quality of life

**Life Course  
Outcomes**

Paul Shattuck, Ph.D.

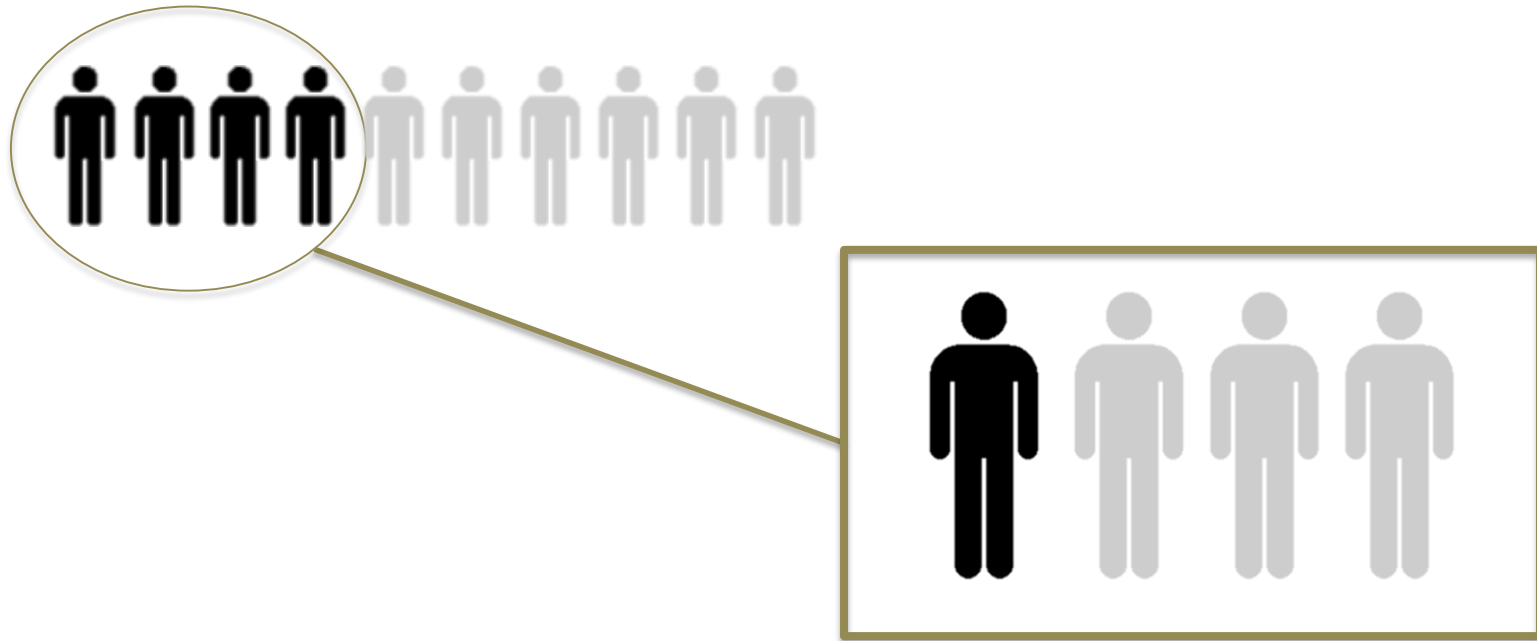


# Rates of employment



Percent ever worked after high school





One in four who were **disconnected** from jobs and education after high school also had **no access to services**.

# National Autism Indicators Report: Vocational Rehabilitation 2016

A comprehensive report from A.J. Drexel Autism Institute's Life Course Outcomes Research Program describing how people with autism use Vocational Rehabilitation services and their outcomes. Freely available for download.

[drexel.lu/autismindicators16](http://drexel.lu/autismindicators16)



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# Vocational Rehabilitation Services

## What is VR?

- Major funder of employment services in the U.S.
  - Paid for with federal + state funds
  - Grants funds to state VR agencies to implement services
- Serves transition-age youth and adults with disabilities



# Vocational Rehabilitation Services

## Who does VR serve?

- Individuals with significant physical or mental impairment
  - Who have substantial problems with employment
  - Who require services to get, keep, or regain employment

# Vocational Rehabilitation Services

## What does VR do?

- Funds a variety of services including:
  - Job search assistance
  - Counseling and guidance
  - Job placement
  - On-the-job supports

# Why focus on VR?

- Guided by federal law
- Large, national public dataset
- Standard questions across states
- System for addressing user concerns
- Timely given recent legislative changes



# Context

- Employment First
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
  - 15% of state VR funds directed to transition-age youth (Pre-Employment Transition Services)
  - Extended length of time youth may receive services
  - Addressed sub-minimum wage
  - 50% of state Supported Employment funds directed to those with most significant impairments

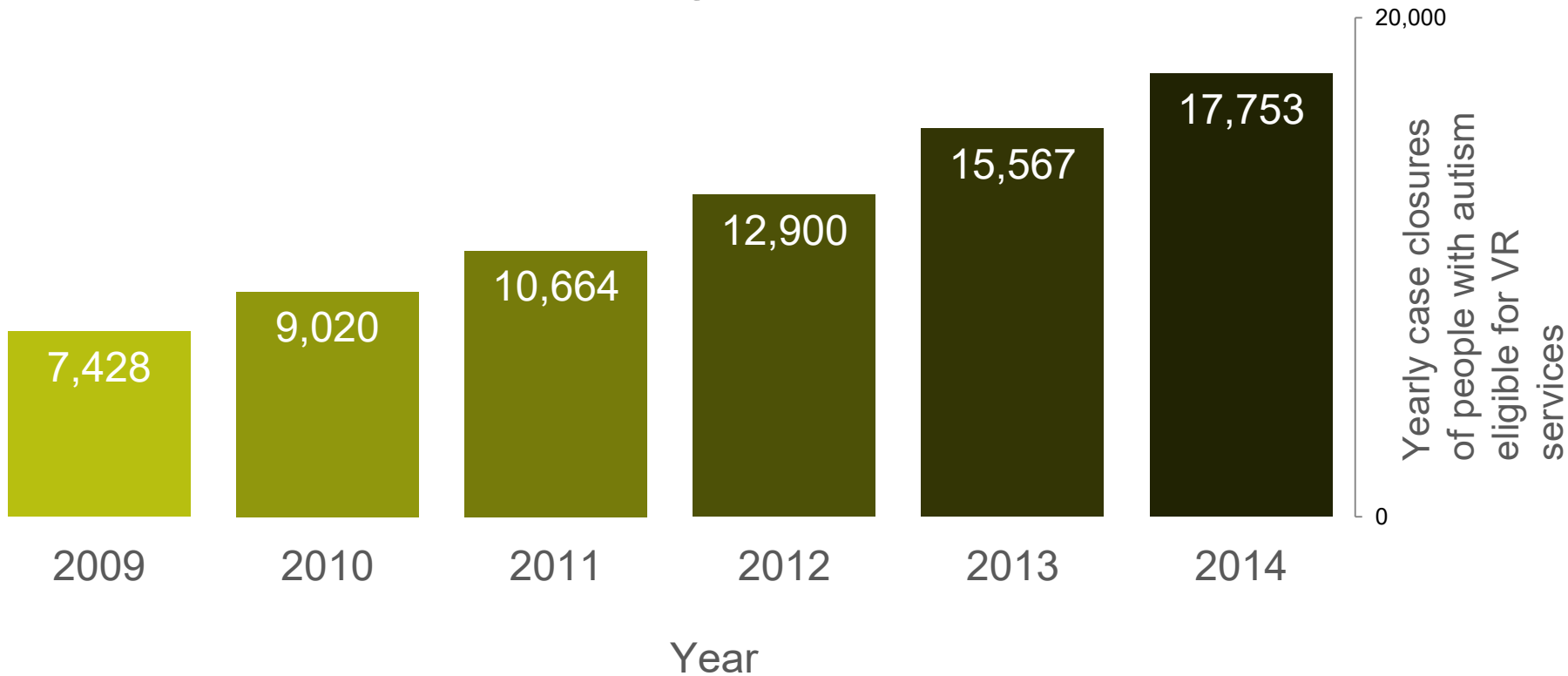


# Data source

- Rehabilitation Services Administration  
RSA-911 2014
- Administrative data
  - Complete
  - But no direct reporting by people with autism



## Annual case closures for individuals with autism have increased steadily.



RSA-911, 2009-2014







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## What do we know about VR service users with autism?



# Characteristics

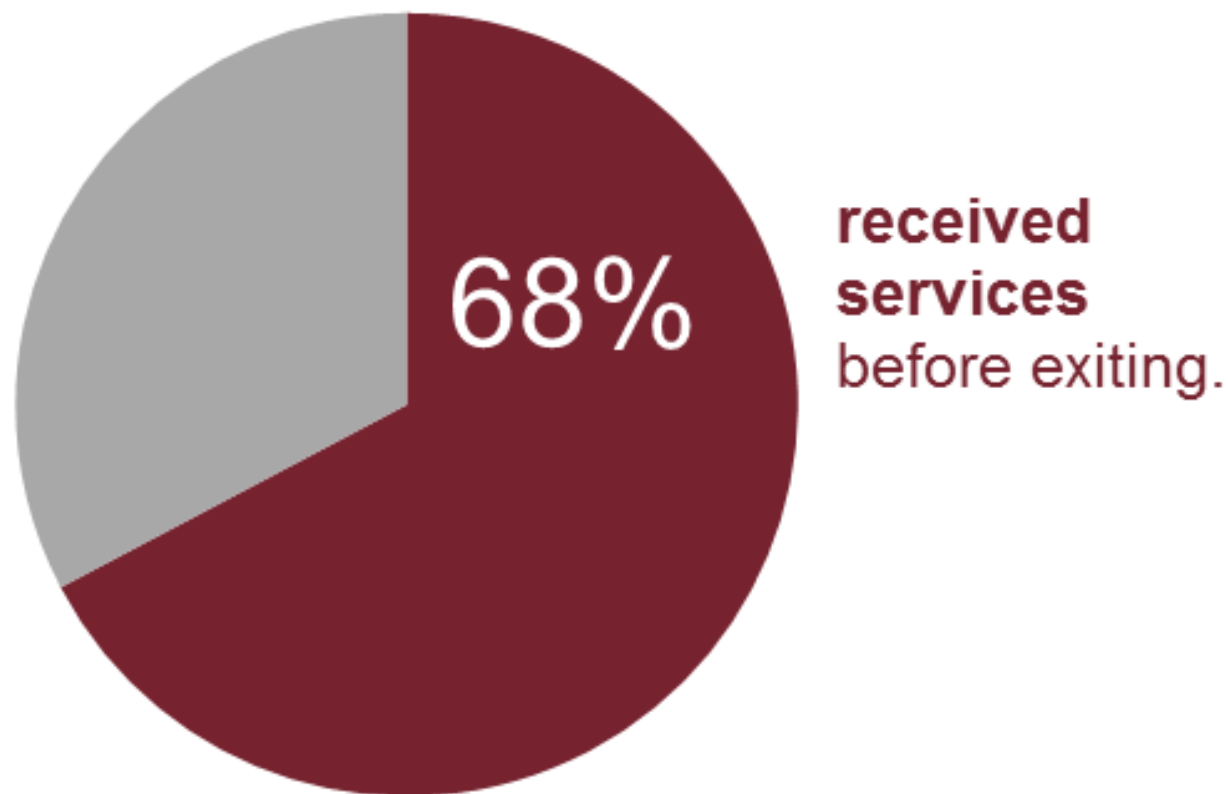
**Most were unemployed, living at home, with both public and private financial supports.**

 <b>Employment</b>	<b>Currently employed (11%)</b>
 <b>Where they lived</b>	<b>Private residence (96%), Community homes (3%), Other settings (1%)</b>
 <b>Insurance</b>	<b>Private (38%), Public (33%), Uninsured (25%), Both (5%)</b>
 <b>Benefits</b>	<b>SSI (29%), SSDI (9%), Other public support (5%)</b>





**Two-thirds of eligible VR applicants with autism received services through VR.**

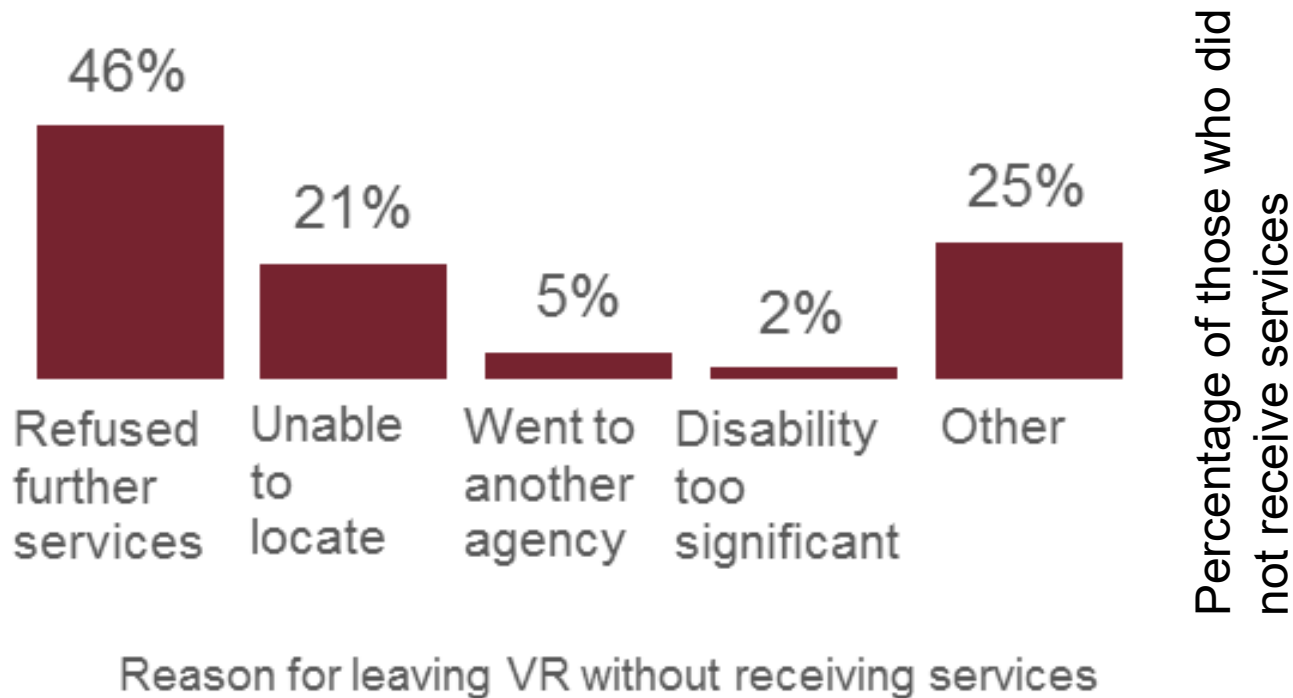


Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2014



# Exit without service receipt

**Refusing further services was the most common reason that eligible VR applicants with autism did not receive services.**

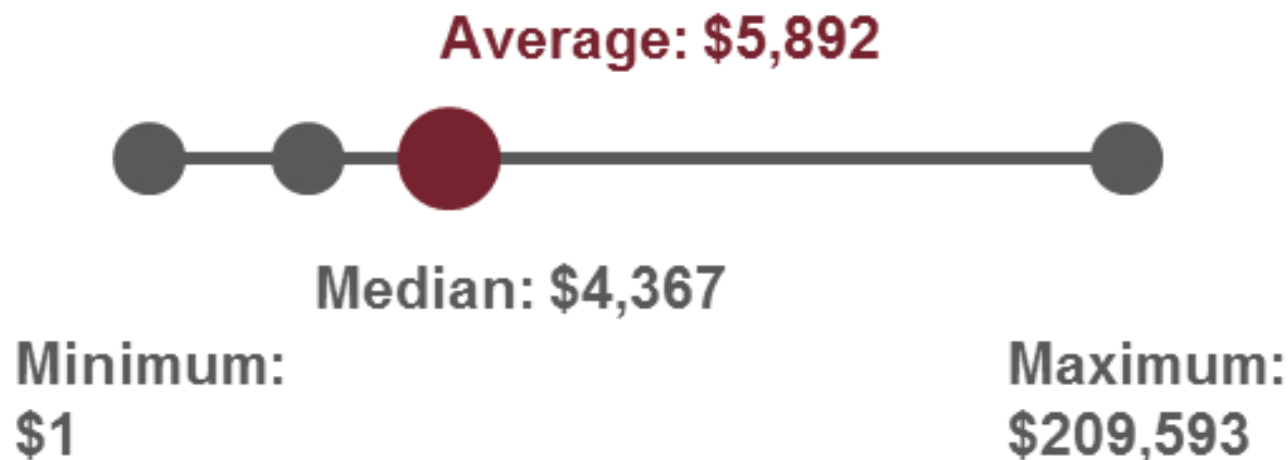


Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2014



# Service expenditures

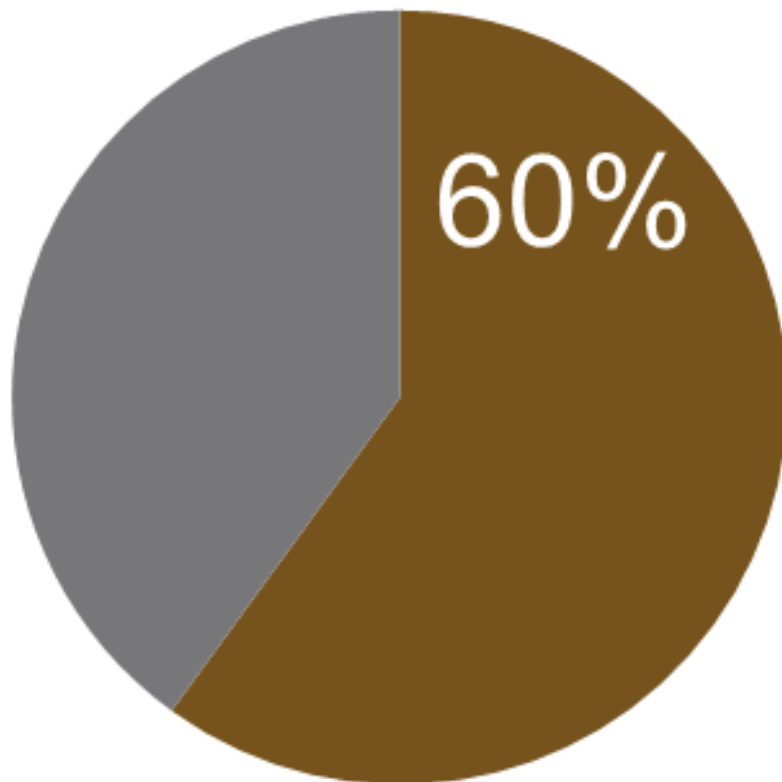
On average, VR service users with autism received almost \$5,900 per person in services through community rehabilitation programs across all services they utilized.



Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2014



**Over half of VR service users with autism exited VR with a job.**



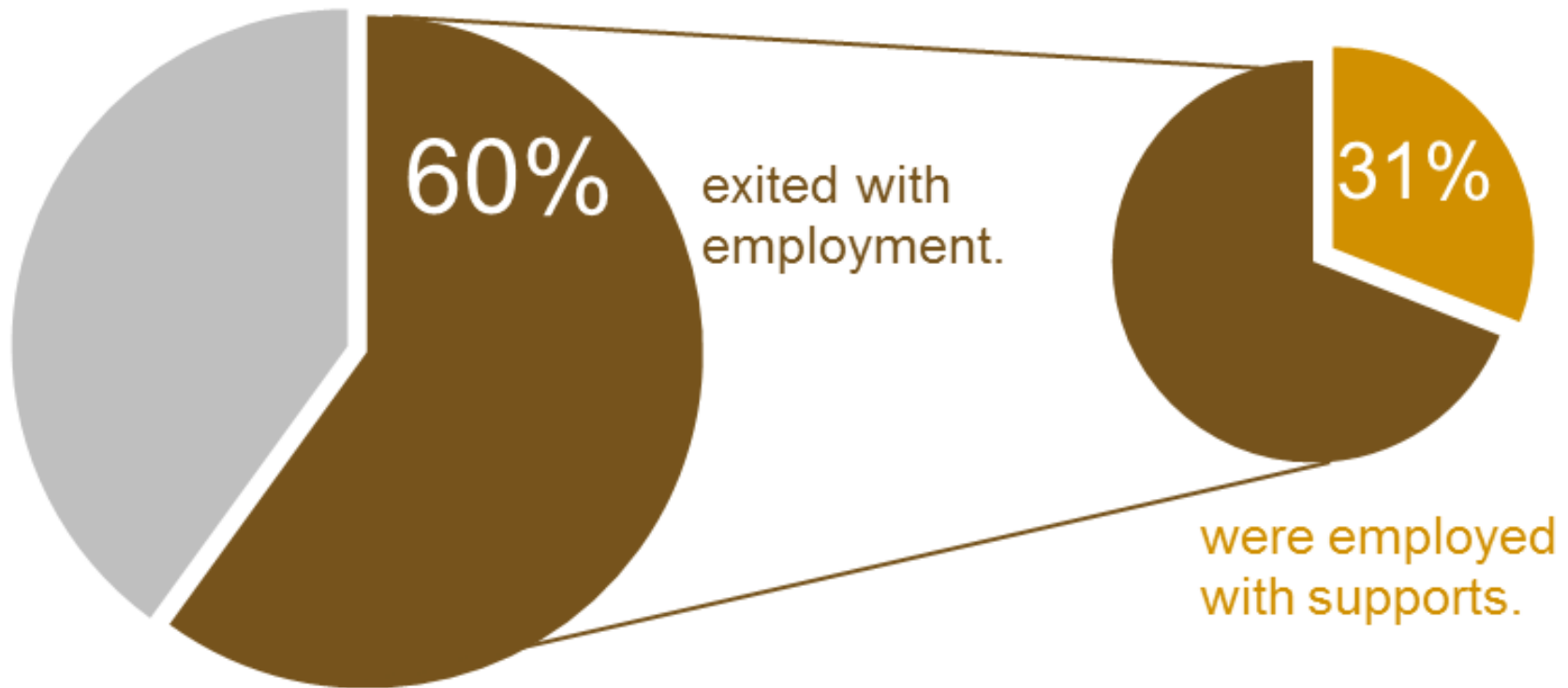
of VR service users with autism **exited with employment.**

Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2014



# Supported employment

**Almost one-third of workers with autism had on-the-job supports\* when they exited VR.**



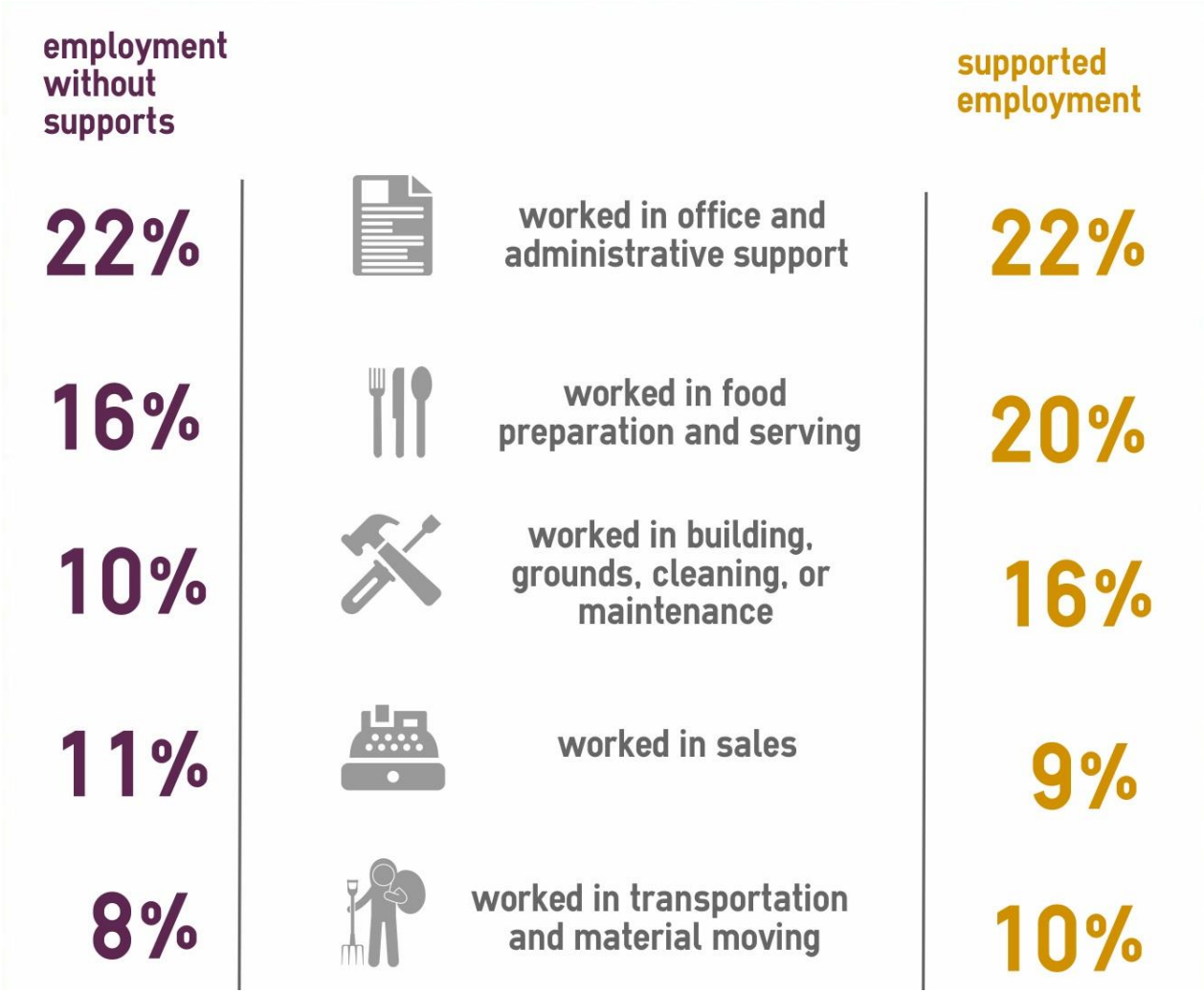
Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2014



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## Top five job types for individual with autism.



# Employment

Of those with autism who left VR with a job:

**80%** worked part-time.

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**\$160** was the median weekly income for part-time workers.

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**\$380** was the median weekly income for full-time workers.

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**69%** were **employed without supports.**

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**31%** were **employed with supports.**



# Employment

Of those with autism who left VR with a job:

**80%** worked part-time.

**\$160** was the median weekly income for part-time workers.

**\$380** was the median weekly income for full-time workers.

**69%** were **employed without supports.**

**31%** were **employed with supports.**

**76%** part-time

**\$170** week





# Employment

Of those with autism who left VR with a job:

**80%** worked part-time.

**\$160** was the median weekly income for part-time workers.

**\$380** was the median weekly income for full-time workers.

**69%** were **employed without supports.**

**31%** were **employed with supports.**

**90%** part-time

**\$145** week

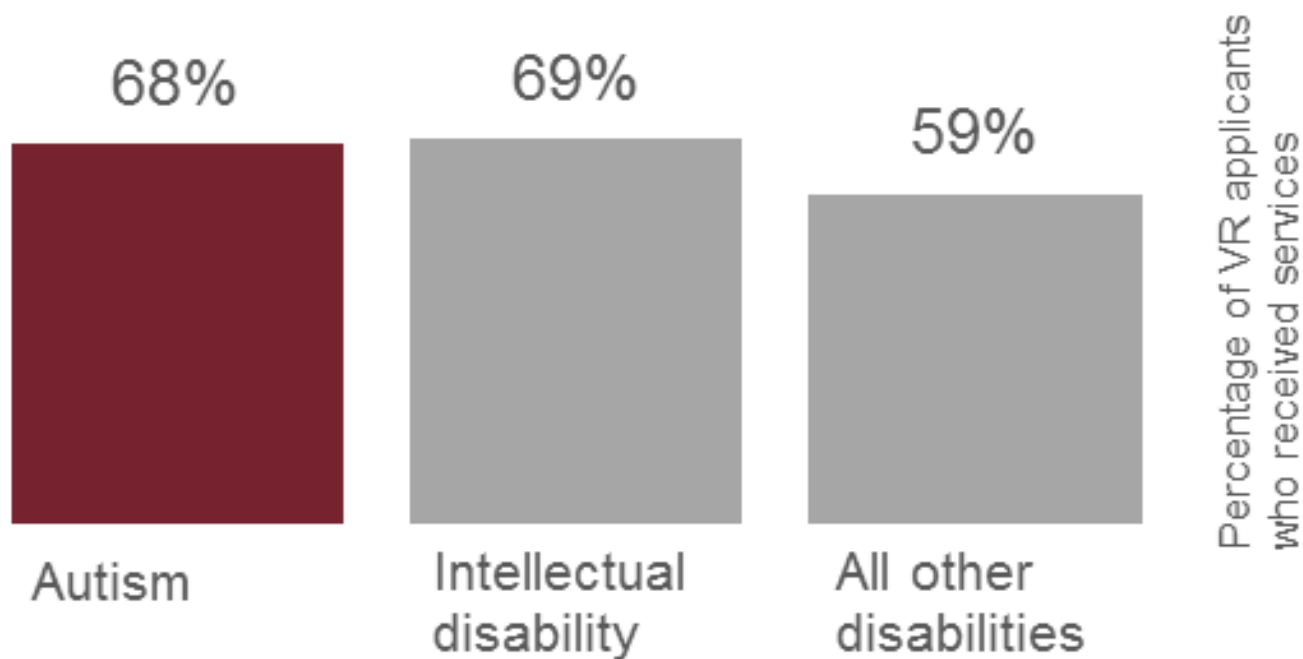


## How do services and outcomes compare across groups and states?



# Disability comparisons

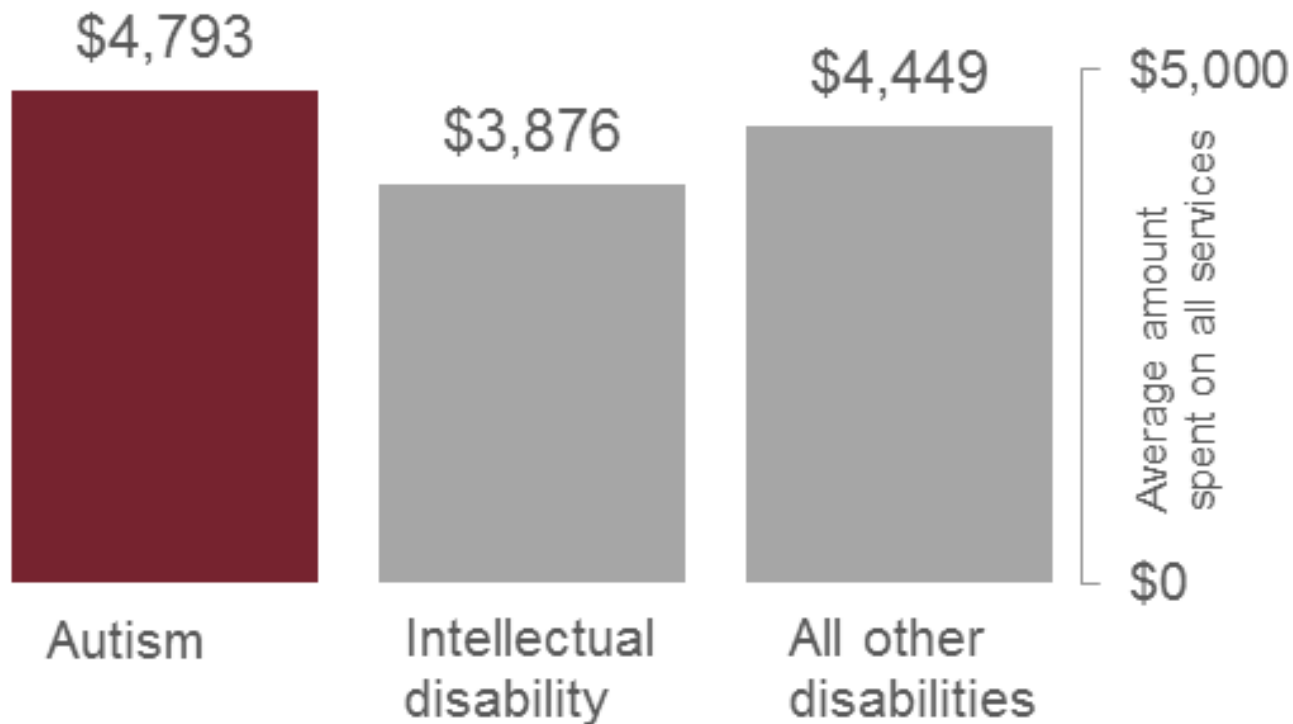
**VR applicants with **autism** received services at a similar rate as those with ID, and a slightly higher rate than those with other disabilities.**



Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2014



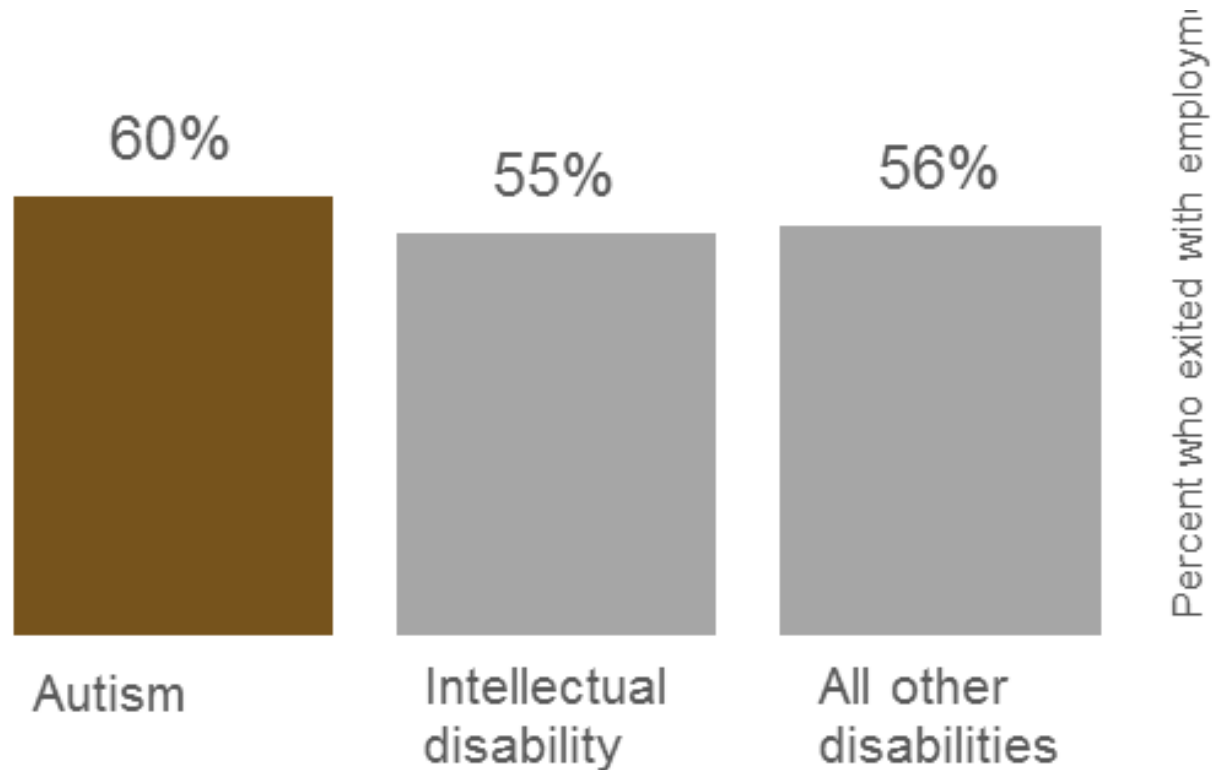
**Average expenditures for total VR services were higher for service users with **autism** than the other groups.**



Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2014



**VR service users with autism exited with a rate of employment similar to those with ID and other disabilities.**

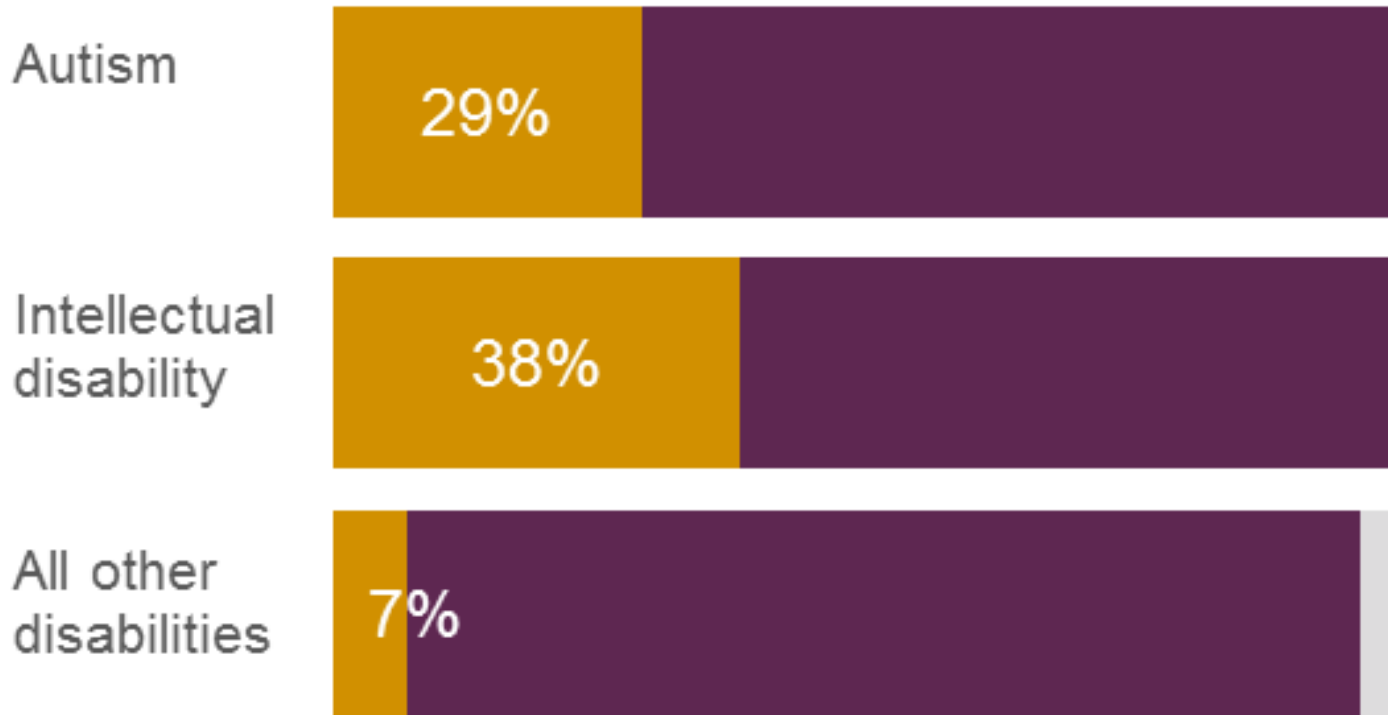


Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA-911), FFY 2014



# Disability comparisons

VR service users with autism worked in **supported employment** less often than those with ID but more often than those with other disabilities.\*

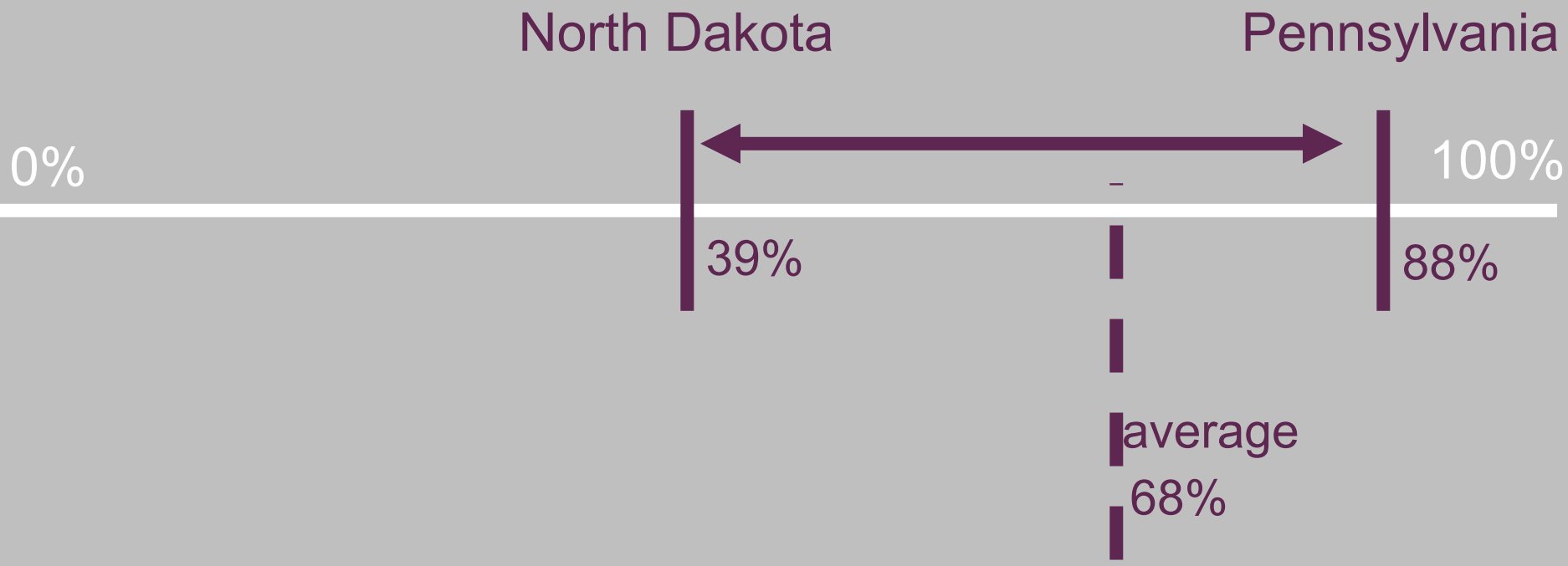


**Where you live matters.**



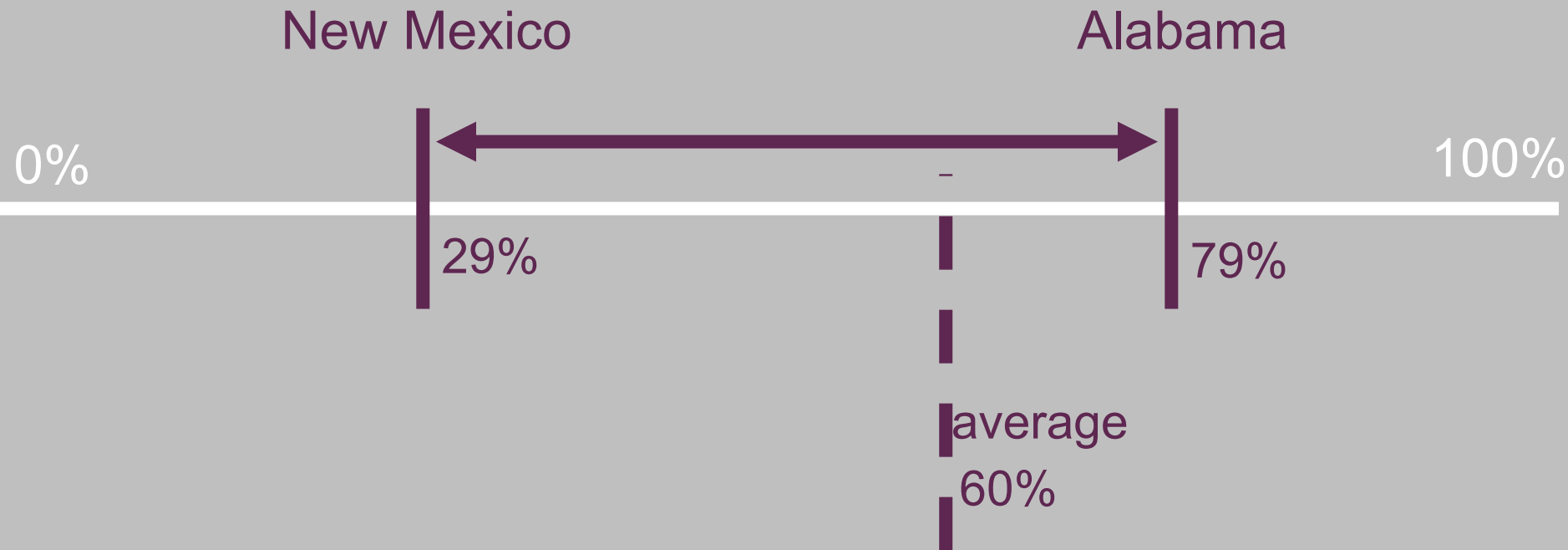
# State comparisons

## How many eligible applicants with autism received VR services?



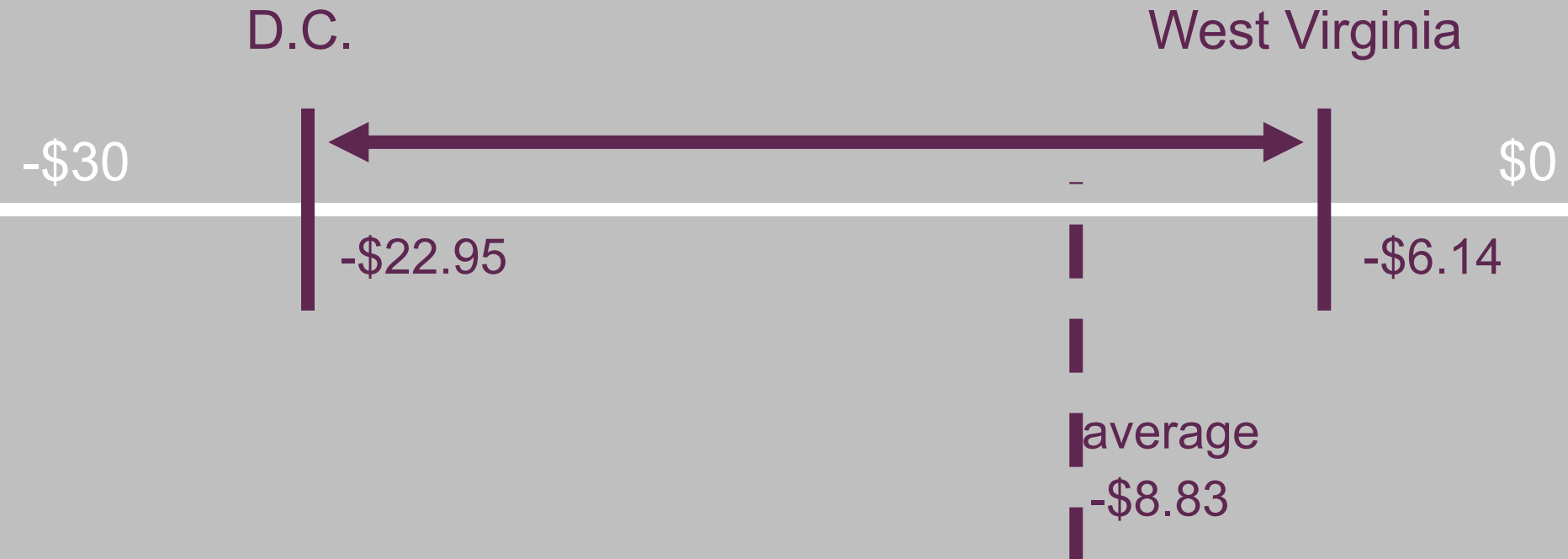


## How many with autism exited VR with employment?



# State comparisons

## What was the gap between hourly wages for workers with autism exiting VR and all workers in the state?



# Limitations

- No reliable measure of impairment severity
- Likely inconsistencies in data collection and entry
- No direct reporting from service users with autism
- No info on those who do not receive VR or who exit before they have a job



# Research priorities

- Service use patterns:
  - “Churn” in and out of VR services
  - Interaction of VR and SSI benefits
- State- and local-level variation
- Impact of WIOA state plans



# Further Information

A.J. Drexel Autism Institute

[www.drexel.edu/autisminstitute](http://www.drexel.edu/autisminstitute)

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