



The Economics of

Supported Employment:

Reducing Programmatic Costs and Increasing Outcomes

Robert Evert Cimera, Ph.D.

Kent State University

rcimera@kent.edu

Three Questions

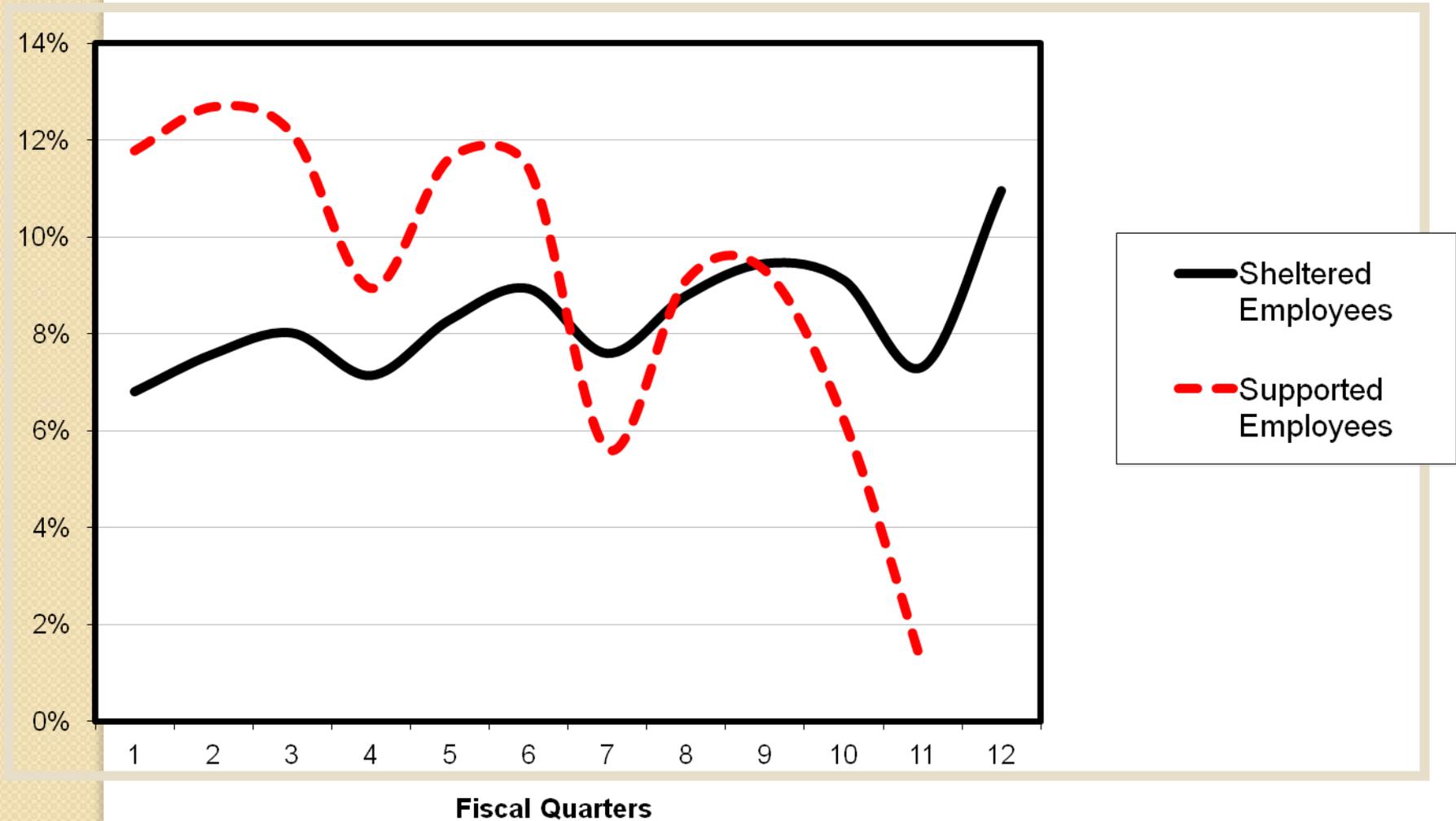
1. Which “costs” more—SE or SW?
2. Is SE a “good investment” for taxpayers?
3. How do we provide more effective and efficient SE services?

Q #1: Which “Costs” More?

	<i>SE</i>	<i>SW</i>
Cumulative Costs	\$18,813	\$46,855
Cost per Month	\$461.67	\$604.67
Cost per Hour Worked	\$8.66	\$9.41

In both programs. 40.8 and 77.5 months, 53.3 and 64.3 hours worked per month.

Percent of Total Program Costs



Q #2: Is SE a Good Investment?

- **Benefits**

- Reduction in Government Subsidies
- Taxes Paid
- Forgone Program Costs

- **Costs**

- Costs of SE
- TJTCs

Q #2: Is SE a Good Investment?

Overall Benefit-Cost Ratio **1.46**

- *Mental Illness* 1.68
- *Physical Disabilities* 1.66
- *ASD* 1.62
- *ID* 1.12

Interesting Findings...

- Rarely earned enough to lose government benefits
- From 1980s to 2009, (unadjusted) wages for SE increased from \$3.15 to \$7.15 while wages for SW increased from \$1.17 to \$1.36

Q #3: How Do We Do Better?

No SW

- Cumulative Cost: \$5,399*

SW

- Cumulative Cost: \$8,659

9,808 Individuals with Intellectual Impairments. 37.6% reduction in costs for employed group. Similar findings for ASD (\$4,212 v. \$8,364)

Age of Transition in IEPs

By Age 14

- Year 1: 74.3%*
- Year 2: 61.7%*
- Year 3: 69.7%*
- Year 4: 42.8%*

By Age 16

- Year 1: 57.8%
- Year 2: 57.0%
- Year 3: 53.8%
- Year 4: 28.2%

1,542 individuals with ID 22 years old and younger

Age of Transition in IEPs

By Age 14

- Year 1: 80.8%*
- Year 2: 77.9%*
- Year 3: 75.2%*
- Year 4: 69.1%*

By Age 16

- Year 1: 58.9%
- Year 2: 60.4%
- Year 3: 52.4%
- Year 4: 52.2%

Individuals with ASD 22 years old and younger

Other Methods

- Community-based IEP goals
- Utilization of “natural supports”

Summary

- Working in the community provides workers and taxpayers greater benefits and lower costs than sheltered programs.
- Ways to improve outcomes while lowering costs:
 - Skip sheltered workshops
 - Prepare students with disabilities early

Robert Evert Cимера, Ph.D.

Kent State University

RCIMERA@KENT.EDU