

## 10. Vocational Rehabilitation

### a. General

The Rehabilitation Division of the National Insurance Institute (NII) assists entitled persons who have dropped out of the labour market, or those lacking employment experience, to find jobs suitable for their professional skills and functional ability through vocational training and job placement. Assistance is provided by rehabilitation officers who are trained social workers, who contribute diagnostic services, occupational counseling, and guidance to the insuree throughout the entire rehabilitation process.

The main rehabilitation services provided are benefits in kind: diagnosis, guidance, and counseling for selection of a profession, remedial and vocational training, completion of education and higher education studies, and job placement assistance for those having difficulty integrating into the labour force by themselves. Moreover, anyone participating in the rehabilitation process is entitled by law to financing for the expenses related to it: funding for diagnosis and studies, rehabilitation benefits and travel expenses to and from the training site.

The population treated by this Division is divided into three groups<sup>1</sup>: new seekers of rehabilitation, participants in the middle of the rehabilitation process, and those completing the rehabilitation program. It should be noted that great effort is expended in identifying the appropriate population among entitled persons, in order to maximise the rate of those joining the job market at the end of the process.

Along with vocational rehabilitation, the Rehabilitation Division also provides professional reviews to Benefit Administration Divisions about various topics, such as determining level of earning ability for classification of benefit recipients, etc. In addition, the rehabilitation workers assist work-injured persons, and victims of hostile actions in exercising their rights to financial benefits. They also work with widows in crisis and victims of hostile actions<sup>2</sup> for the rest of their lives.

### b. Who is Entitled to Vocational Rehabilitation?<sup>3</sup>

- **General disabled** - A resident of Israel suffering from physical, cognitive, or psychological impairment, if he/she meets the following conditions: (1) was determined in disability tests to have medical disability percentages of at least 20% (2) cannot continue working in previous or other suitable job due to the impairment (3) as a result of the impairment needs, and is suitable for, vocational training and other rehabilitation services that will enable return to previous or other suitable job. The husband of a disabled individual who due to impairment is incapable of rehabilitation, and who permanently resides with the disabled person, is also entitled to rehabilitation.

1 A person undergoing rehabilitation may over the course of the year belong to more than one group.

2 The treatment of victims of hostile actions includes ongoing support and guidance over the victim's entire lifespan.

3 Besides the specified details, entitlement to vocational rehabilitation is conditional on the claimant being under retirement age.

- **Work-injured person** – someone injured at work<sup>4</sup> who has been determined to have at least 10% medical disability, and who due to the injury can no longer work at his/her previous job or in another suitable job, and requires special vocational training in order to return to his/her previous job. However, the NII is authorised to approve vocational rehabilitation for a work-injured person whose disability level is lower than 10%, if continued work at his/her previous workplace may unusually endanger his health or safety.
- **Widows/widowers** – a widow/widower as defined by law, who receives a survivor’s or dependent’s pension and who meets all the following conditions: (1) lacks a vocation or is unable to satisfactorily support him/herself from their vocation; (2) is unable to continue working in his/her previous workplace due to the death of spouse; (3) a rehabilitation worker has determined that he/she is suitable for vocational training/retraining subject to medical condition and education.
- **Victims of hostile actions** – wounded in a hostile action<sup>5</sup>, on condition that he/she was determined to have at least a 20% medical disability<sup>6</sup>, due to which he/she is unable to work at their previous or another suitable job, or who requires special vocational training in order to return to his/her previous job. Members of bereaved families as defined by law (widow/widower, orphan, and bereaved parents), whose relative died as a result of a hostile action, are also entitled to vocational rehabilitation.

### c. New Rehabilitation Applicants

In 2014, 9755 applicants contacted the NII for vocational rehabilitation, a number similar to that in 2013. This year as in previous ones, most of the applicants belong to the General Disability Division (83%), and 62% receive a monthly allowance from the various Benefit Divisions.

Young adults in their 20s have the greatest potential for rehabilitation, because training or higher education will significantly further their chances of finding a job, and it is thus unsurprising that 36% of rehabilitation-seekers are at these ages (figure 1). Furthermore, as age goes down, the rate of rehabilitation-seekers from the General Disability Division rises, as this group includes those disabled from birth who are seeking rehabilitation to exercise their rights upon reaching the age of 18. At older ages, the share of the work-injured and widows/widowers increases, while near retirement age – from age 68 – the share goes down to about 5%.

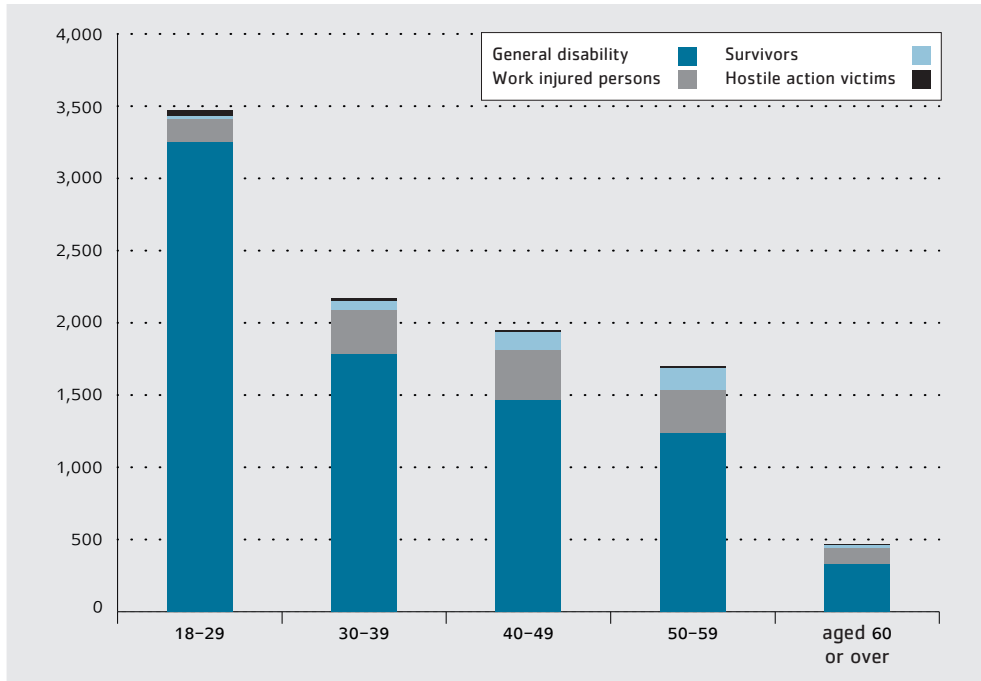
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4 A work-injury is a work-accident occurring at the time of and due to work, including an accident that happens on the way to and from work, or an occupational disease, in accordance with the list of occupational diseases defined in work-injury legal provisions.

5 A hostile action victim is one who has been injured by the action of military/paramilitary/irregular forces of a state or organization hostile to Israel, or by an action carried out with the assistance of such, as their agent, or on their behalf, and that was directed against Israel.

6 A hostile action victim injured before 1996 is entitled to vocational rehabilitation if determined to have medical disability of 10% or more.

**Figure 1**  
**Vocational Rehabilitation Applicants by Age and Division, 2014**



**Table 1**  
**Vocational Rehabilitation Applicants by Division, Number of Applications, and Initiator (Absolute Numbers and Percentages), 2014**

Number of Applications	Contact Initiator	Total		General disability	Work-injured	Survivors	Hostile action victims
		Absolute numbers	Percentages				
Total	Numbers	9,755		8,085	1,217	384	69
	Percentages		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
First inquiry	Total	7,228	74%	73%	81%	83%	70%
	Rehab seeker	5,926	61%	59%	76%	58%	64%
	NII clerk	1,085	11%	12%	5%	24%	6%
	Community element	217	2%	3%	0%	1%	.
Repeat inquiry	Total	2,527	26%	27%	19%	17%	30%
	Rehab seeker	2,186	22%	23%	19%	14%	29%
	NII clerk	189	2%	2%	0%	3%	1%
	Community element	152	2%	2%	0%		

One of the most influential factors in rehabilitative success is the internal motivation of the person undergoing the process: it is reasonable that someone who seeks rehabilitation of their own initiative will be more highly motivated than someone who was contacted by

the NII. In most cases, contact is made through the initiative of the rehabilitation seeker: for 74% of applicants, this was their first inquiry, while 82% of them did so on their own initiative. In only 13% of cases rehabilitation clerks initiated contact with insurees – most of whom were individuals from the Survivor or General Disability Divisions who had never sought rehabilitation assistance in the past (table 1).

#### d. Participants in the Rehabilitation Process

Rehabilitation activity focuses on assisting insurees to integrate into the labour market. There are several phases in the process by which insurees' suitability for rehabilitation is examined, and they are found the most suitable program for their needs, desires, and abilities based on a professional opinion issued by the rehabilitation workers. Following are the most prominent phases in the process:

- **Occupational diagnosis** – Examination of the insuree's occupational skills. This includes vocational counseling and direction provided by rehabilitation clerks, diagnostic institutes, or rehabilitation centers. Diagnosis is carried out in accordance with the insuree's abilities and in line with the rehabilitation clerk's analysis.
- **Remedial vocational training** – Imparting work habits at rehabilitation centers, enrichment courses, completion of education (matriculation certificate, psychometric exam, preparatory school, etc.), in accordance with the findings of the occupational diagnosis, and as preparation for integration into vocational training or work.
- **Vocational training** – Training for those with occupational skills suitable for studies, through which they will acquire a vocation that will assist them in finding a job: studies at institutions of higher learning (universities and colleges), practical engineering schools, or vocational courses (such as for technicians, secretaries, bookkeepers, and cooks).
- **Job placement** – Workers assist the insurees who have a vocation, or have completed vocational training, to seek a job suited to their abilities and acquired vocation, while guiding and tracking their integration at their workplace.

Participants in the rehabilitation process include those who are starting the rehabilitation program, and those who have started it in the past but have not yet completed it. In 2014, approximately 23,000 insurees participated in 51,000 occupational diagnoses and various rehabilitation programs (table 2). On average, each participant participated in two programs, one of which was diagnosis for the program. 4,611 programs were run by providers of rehabilitation services, 62% of them at the rehabilitation centers of the Fund for Rehabilitation Projects.

The State of Israel is among the leaders of the Western world in respect to rate of population with academic degrees, as well as rehabilitation programs. Many (approximately 61%) were referred to academic studies. It is interesting to see the development in the percentage of higher education programs over the years (figure 2): from 2006 to 2014 the

**Table 2**  
**Programs for Vocational Rehabilitation and their Participants, by Division and Type of Program (Absolute Numbers and Percentages), 2014**

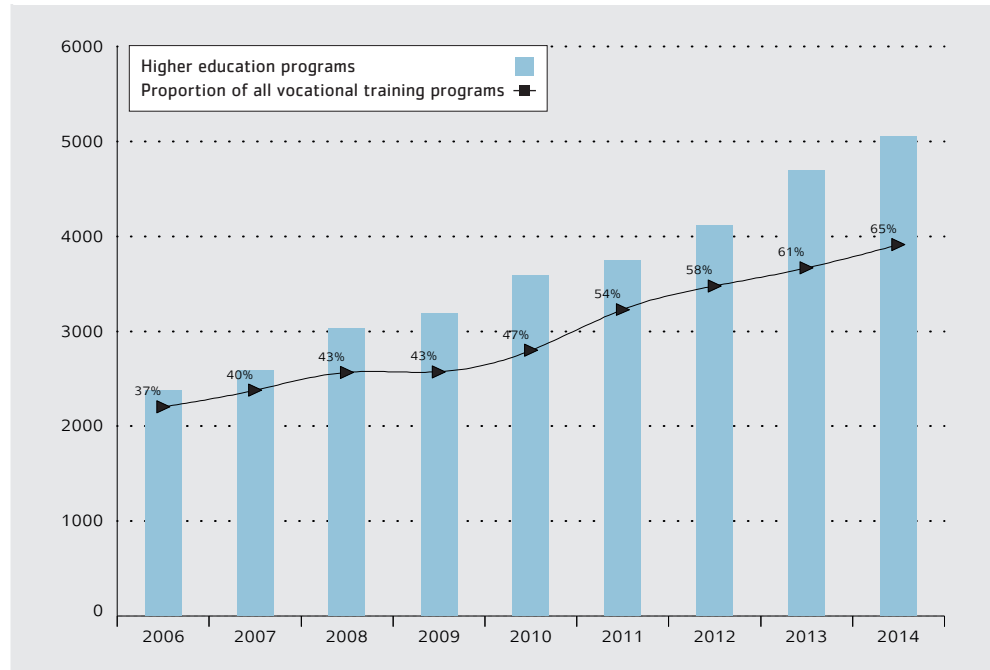
Program type		Total		General disability	Work injured	Survivors	Hostile action victim
		Absolute numbers	%				
Total programs	Absolute numbers	51,965		42,398	6,398	2,120	1,049
	Percentage		100	82	12	4	2
Diagnosis for program	Total	22,595	100	81	14	3	2
	Internal analysis for suitability	10,696	100	83	13	3	1
	Internal analysis for programme	7,116	100	81	13	4	2
	External evaluation	4,783	100	75	18	3	3
Remedial training	Total	3,835	100	78	13	6	2
	Education completion	2,707	100	78	14	6	2
	Imparting work habits	1,128	100	78%	13	5	4
Vocational training	Total	9,459	100	84	9	4	3
	Vocational course	2,693	100	73	15	10	1
	Higher education	5,045	100	87	7	2	4
	Creation of academic conditions	1,721	100	92	7	1	0
Placement assistance		3,005	100	100	12	4	1
Referral to other party	Total	473	100	96	4	0	0
	Work at Hameshakem	280	100	95	4	.	0
	Community element	193	100	96	3	1	1
Tracking and maintenance		12,598	100	100	11	5	2
Total participants	Absolute numbers	23,266		18,677	3,034	908	647
	Percentages		100	80	13	4	3

percentage of the higher education program doubled. Nevertheless, this rise also reflects a decline in the number of vocational training programs, which impacted the growth in numbers of these programs.

Table 3 presents the distribution of participants according to main impairment<sup>7</sup> and level of medical disability. It is reasonable to assume that those with low levels of medical disability are more independent and better able to find a job by themselves, and that as disability levels rise the likelihood of finding a job in the open market goes

<sup>7</sup> Main impairment is that have the highest medical disability level of a person's impairments.

**Figure 2**  
**Higher Education Programs and Their Percentage Within Total Vocational Training Programs (absolute numbers and percentages), 2006-2014**



**Table 3**  
**Participants in Vocational Rehabilitation Programs by Medical Disability Percentage and Main Impairment (Absolute Numbers and Percentages), 2014**

Main Impairment	Total		Medical disability percentage					
	Absolute numbers	%	No disability*	10-19	20-39	40-59	60-79	80-100
<b>Total – numbers</b>	<b>23,266</b>		<b>1,257</b>	<b>1,443</b>	<b>5,242</b>	<b>8,205</b>	<b>4,018</b>	<b>3,101</b>
<b>Percentages</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Mental or retardation	6,423	28		12	32	45	18	5
Internal	4,615	20		10	19	21	25	25
Urogenital	585	3		1	2	2	3	6
Neurological	3,099	13		8	11	11	18	25
Locomotor	4,370	19		62	23	15	17	12
Sight	1,108	5		1	2	2	4	20
Hearing	973	4		2	3	2	12	4
Other**	2,093	9	100	3	7	3	3	2

\* Entitlement to rehabilitation in the Hostile Action Victim and Survivor Divisions is not necessarily linked to an applicant's medical condition.

\*\* This category also includes rehabilitation participants with no impairment.

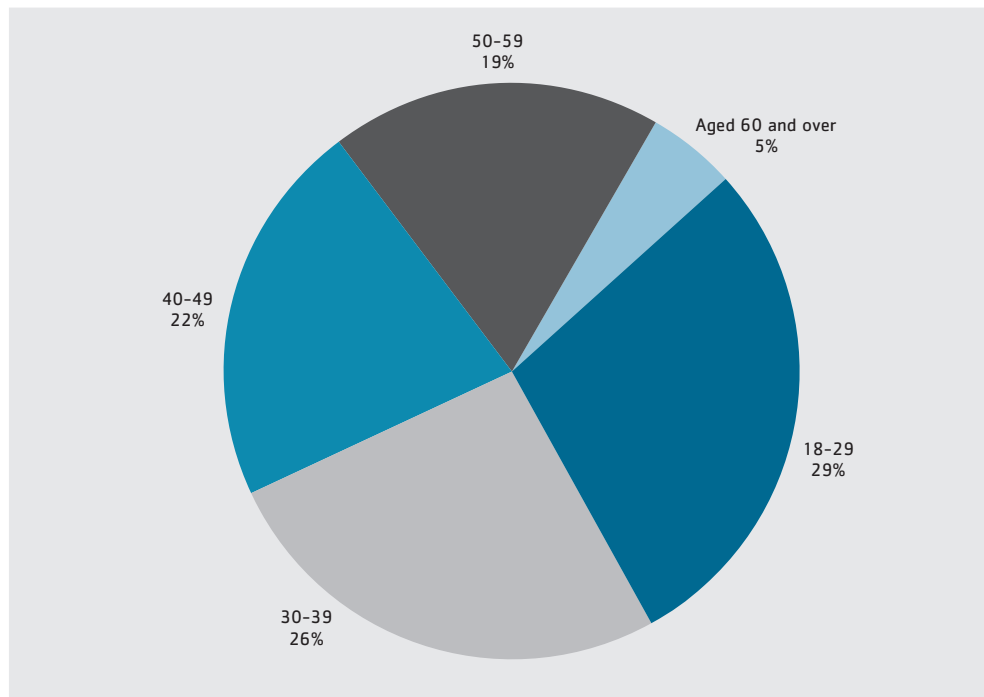
down. It is unsurprising, then, that 35% of rehabilitation participants in 2014 have 40-59% medical disability, since this population has the highest potential for rehabilitation among disabled persons. Among rehabilitation participants with low medical disability levels (10%-19%), those suffering from locomotor problems are prominent, and most of this group belong to the Work-injured Division. Those with higher disability levels, generally suffer from internal and neurological problems and come mostly from the General Disability Division.

### e. Rehabilitation Program Graduates

The success of vocational rehabilitation depends on the motivation of the participants, such that acceptance into the job market is not possible if the rehabilitation participant is not interested in it.

In 2014, treatment ended for 11,437 people. 5,627 completed at least one of the programs preparing for work in the free market, and 76% of them succeeded in getting a job. Half of those who found work were entitled to a monthly disability allowance from the General Disability Division or Work- Injury Division. This data highlights the fact that the Rehabilitation Division of the NII is a major factor in integrating disabled people in the job market. For 5,223 people, the rehabilitation process was discontinued, generally (65%) because they were found unsuitable.

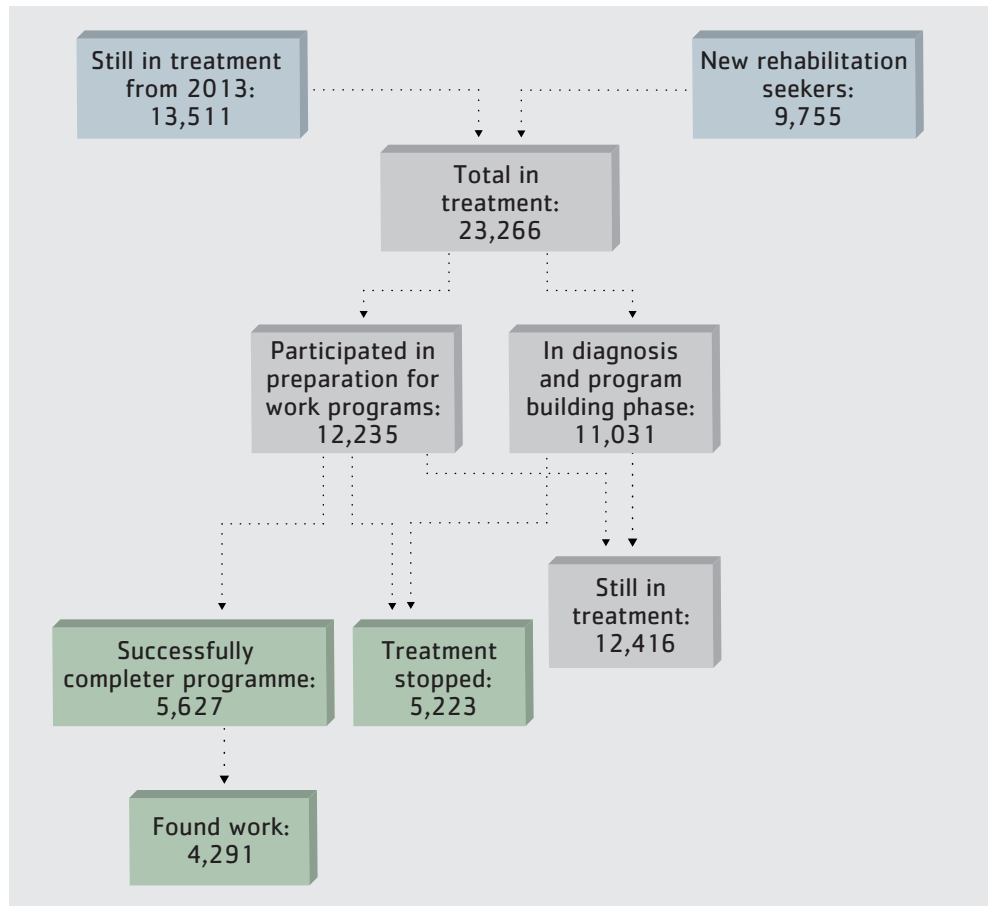
**Chart 3**  
Rehabilitation Treatment Graduates Accepted into the Job Market by Age, 2014



**Table 4**  
**Persons who Ended Rehabilitation Treatment**  
**by NII Division and Outcomes**

Outcomes	Total		General disability	Work injured	Survivors	Hostile action victims
	Absolute numbers	%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>Absolute numbers</b>	<b>11,437</b>	<b>8,949</b>	<b>1,691</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>314</b>
	<b>Percent</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
Found a job		4,291	76	15	6	3
Completed vocational training		651	79	11	8	2
Completed remedial training		685	81	13	5	0
Referred to another party		587	94	5	.	1
Treatment discontinued		5,223	78	16	3	3

**Flowchart 4**  
**Population in Vocational Rehabilitation by Phase of Process, 2014**





An average of two years and two months was required in 2014 to complete the rehabilitation programme. However, the rehabilitation process is not of fixed length, and is affected by many factors, including the number of programs in which the participant takes part, the type of training, and medical condition. Thus, for example, those belonging to the General Disability Division completed the program on average in 2.2 years, while those from the Work-Injury Division needed on average only 1.8 years to finish. These differences stem among other things, from work habits and levels of independence.

The medical condition of the participant also has a great impact on their length of stay in the rehabilitation framework: for those with a medical disability level higher than 65%, the process was 35% longer than for those with a level of 40% and up (2.7 years versus 1.11 years).

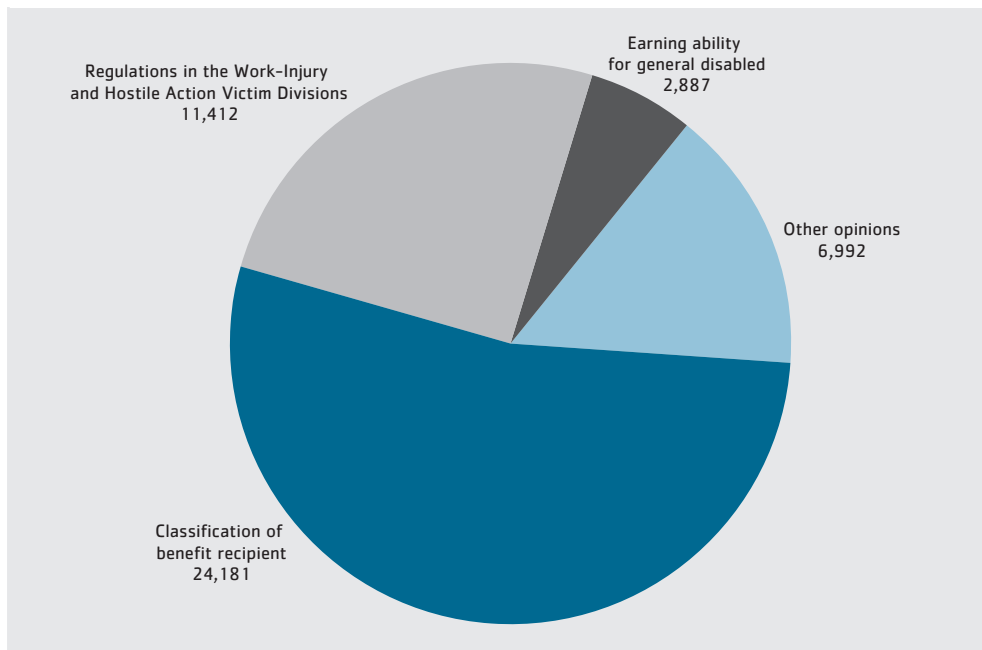
Undoubtedly, the age distribution among those seeking rehabilitation has a crucial impact on the rate of job market integration in each age group (chart 3). Despite the effort to integrate them into employment, the rate of 18-29 year olds who find work is slightly lower than that of new rehabilitation seekers (29% versus 36%), apparently due to a lack of job skills and work experience, as well as medical conditions.

#### f. Additional Activities of the Rehabilitation Division

- Professional review preparation – Rehabilitation Division workers provide professional reviews for the Divisions of the Benefits Administration in the following areas:

Chart 5

Recipients of Assistance from the Rehabilitation Division by Subject, 2014



(1) determination of the earning ability of disabled persons (2) classification of benefit recipient (3) analysis of work-injured person's entitlement to a higher disability level and determination of entitlement to discounts (4) entitlement of work-injured persons and hostile action victims to special benefits. Workers of the Division also provide analyses outside of the context of the National Insurance Law.

- In 2014, rehabilitation workers wrote a total of 45,472 reviews, 53% of them determining the earning ability of general disabled persons (chart 5).
- **Assistance for work-injured and hostile action victims in exercising rights to monetary benefits** to which they are entitled (such as special allowances and grants). In 2014, they assisted 4,735 people in exercising rights to monetary benefits, completing 981 of the cases this year.
- As social workers, Division employees also treat widows in crisis and hostile action victims for the rest of their lives. In 2014, 85 people were treated.

#### g. Payments

Vocational rehabilitation also involves financing related expenses required for rehabilitation:

- **Rehabilitation benefits:** A monthly subsistence benefit at the level of a full disability allowance, paid during the period of studies for rehabilitation participants not entitled to a general disability allowance or work disability allowance, on condition they study at least 20 hours per week.
- **Travel expenses:** There are three possibilities for participation in travel expenses: (1) refund for public transportation to training/diagnosis. (2) supplement to mobility benefit for those receiving a partial mobility benefit. (3) use of NII-operated transport services for rehabilitation participants with a medical disability level of 65% or higher without a vehicle or driver's license.
- **Tuition:** Participation in academic tuition or cost of training, up to the maximum amount set by the Rehabilitation Division guidelines.
- **Tutoring and accessibility services:** Tutoring assistance as needed, and in accordance with the rehabilitation participant's total study hours, as well as translation into sign language, closed captioning, and reading aloud, for those needing such services.
- **Rent:** Participation in rent or dormitory fees for those participating in rehabilitation at a distance of more than 40 km from their permanent place of residence, in accordance with their study program.
- **Equipment:** Assistance to disabled persons in purchasing vital equipment necessary for rehabilitation (computer, customised keyboards for the blind, books, school supplies, etc.)

- **Other expenses (including per diem expenses):** Assistance in exercising monetary rights, mainly among work-injured and hostile action victims, as well as participation in subsistence expenses subject to regulations.

In recent years, greater care has been taken to issue rehabilitation entitlement permits only to suitable candidates, and to match candidates with optimal rehabilitation programs. In 2014, some NIS 269 million were paid to 14,148 different people<sup>8</sup> (table 5). The average cost per rehabilitation participant in 2014 was approximately NIS 19,000 – a rise of 26% versus the preceding years, apparently due to the growth in number of rehabilitation participants referred to academic studies.

**Table 5**  
**Expenditure on Vocational Rehabilitation –**  
**Total and by Division, 2013 Prices (thousands of NIS), 2010-2014**

Year	Total expenditure	General disability	Work injury	Survivors	Hostile action victims
2010	266,931	178,169	28,723	13,210	46,829
2011	204,311	125,889	24,288	12,089	42,044
2012	243,920	163,044	26,651	11,871	42,354
2013	250,074	170,354	26,954	10,232	42,533
2014	268,783	186,342	26,876	10,298	45,267

The distribution of payments in 2014 is similar to those of the preceding years (table 6):

- Expenditure on rehabilitation participants in the Disability Division represents 69% of the total annual expenditure, although they represent 80% of total rehabilitation participants – which is a result of entitlement to benefits in other Divisions.

**Table 6**  
**Related Payments for Vocational Rehabilitation by Division**  
**and Number of Recipients (thousands of NIS and percentages), 2014**

	Total	Tuition	Rehabilitation benefits	Travel	Rent	Tutoring	Equipment	Other expenses*	
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>268,783</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>
General disability	186,342	100	51	31	6	7	4	0	0
Work-injury	26,876	100	35	57	5	1	2	0	0
Survivors	10,298	100	42	49	8	0	1	0	0
Hostile action victims	45,267	100	29	10	0	0	0	0	60
<b>Total recipients</b>	<b>14,148</b>	<b>12,708</b>	<b>4,997</b>	<b>8,969</b>	<b>1,452</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>1,193</b>	

\* Not all of those entitled to other payments participated in a vocational rehabilitation program.

8 These payments do not include amounts for special allowances and discounts.

- The Division's main expenditures are on tuition (45% of total expenditure), which is paid to some 90% of participants, and on rehabilitation benefits (approximately 1/3 of total expenditure).

According to the law, one who is found suitable for completion of education or for vocational training is entitled to a greater number of payments (including tutoring, equipment, travel, and rent) in comparison to one who is not studying, with the option of receiving more than one payment. Similar to previous years, in 2014 approximately 32% received a supplement to full disability allowance (rehabilitation benefit) as part of their participation in the rehabilitation program (figure 6). In 59% of the cases, the NII participated in travel expenses to the study location. 26% of tuition recipients do not receive other payments – and it can be assumed that most of them receive full disability allowances.

**Figure 6**  
**Additional Rehabilitation Payments to Tuition Recipients, 2014**

