

Disability Digest

Pandemic Puts Disability Employment at Even Greater Risk

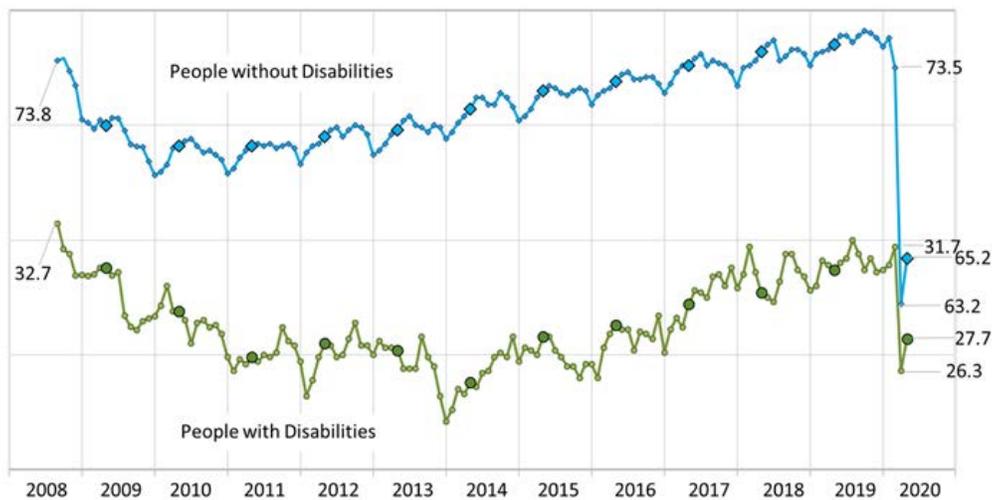
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Historically, people with disabilities have experienced employment rates half that of people without disabilities. With limited access to postsecondary education and limitations on their ability to save, people with disabilities are hit harder by economic downturns such as the one being caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Factors contributing to employment challenges for people with disabilities:

- People with disabilities have a poverty rate twice that of the general population.¹
- People with disabilities are less likely to have savings than people without disabilities.²
- When people with disabilities are able to secure employment, they earn significantly less compared to the general population.³
- Approximately 35% of students with disabilities do not graduate high school.⁴

Comparison of Employment Ratio between People with and without Disabilities⁵



U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



RANKING MEMBER *Special Committee on Aging*

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When the country's economy recovers, people with disabilities are the last to experience those benefits.

2018 Comparison of Employment Gap between Americans Aged 18-64 with and without a Disability⁶

State	Disability Employed	Without Disability Employed
U.S.	37.6	77.8
AL	29.1	73.2
AK	42.7	76.5
AZ	38.7	75.7
AR	31.3	76.1
CA	36.9	75.6
CO	47.3	81.3
CT	38.9	79.4
DE	36.6	77.2
DC	36.5	79
FL	35.1	76.3
GA	36.3	76.8
HI	43.8	80.1
ID	42.1	78.1
IL	38.1	78.8
IN	37.7	79.8
IA	46.4	82.9
KS	45.2	82.1
KY	30.6	76.5
LA	32.6	73.7
ME	37.2	82.8
MD	43.8	80.8
MA	38.2	80.1
MI	35.5	77.6
MN	49.2	84.3
MS	28.5	72.1
MO	36.2	79.6

State	Disability Employed	Without Disability Employed
MT	47.2	80
NE	50.2	83.6
NV	42.3	77.2
NH	43.8	82.6
NJ	37.5	79.3
NM	33.3	71.6
NY	34	76.8
NC	35.2	77.2
ND	56.5	83.4
OH	38.3	79.5
OK	39.5	77
OR	41.4	78.4
PA	37.6	79.4
RI	37.7	79
SC	33.4	76.5
SD	53.9	83.2
TN	33.4	77.2
TX	40.2	76.4
UT	46.5	79.9
VT	42.4	81.4
VA	40.1	79.2
WA	40.8	78.8
WV	28.5	71.3
WI	41.9	82.8
WY	48.3	80.5
PR	23.2	55.5

Policies to Address Workforce Crisis People with Disabilities are Experiencing

- Increase the eligible age limit to 46 for people with disabilities to open an ABLE account (See ABLE Age Adjustment Act, [S. 651](#)).
- Provide incentives for employers to hire people with disabilities (See Disability Employment Incentive Act, [S. 255](#) and Disabled Access Credit Expansion Act, [S. 2290](#)).
- Increase the monthly earnings limit for people with disabilities receiving federal disability benefits (See COVID-19 Recovery for Seniors and People with Disabilities Act of 2020, [S. 3740](#)).
- Provide additional opportunities for people with disabilities to attend postsecondary education programs (See RISE Act of 2019, [S. 1585](#)).
- Transition subminimum wage employers to business models that pay workers with disabilities minimum wage (See Transformation to Competitive Employment Act [S. 260](#) and Supplemental Security Income Restoration Act of 2019, [S. 2753](#)).



A recent survey from Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) found that among disability employment service providers:

- 60% applied for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP); of those, 63% were successful.
- 45% have furloughed staff; of those, 40% are “likely” to rehire.
- Of those who have closed facility-based services, 18% will not reopen.
- 80% have been successful in helping people with disabilities get hired into essential jobs during the pandemic.

Endnotes

1. <https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/reports/financial-inequality-disability-race-and-poverty-in-america/>
2. <https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/reports/banking-status-and-financial-behaviors-2019/>
3. <https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2019%20Annual%20Report%20---%20FINAL%20ALL.pdf>
4. <https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/leader.NIB4.23022018.16>
5. <https://researchondisability.org/>
6. Citation: U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). American community survey, 1-year estimates. In Lauer, E.A., Boege, S.L., & Houtenville, A.J. (Eds.), Annual disability statistics compendium: 2019 (Table 3.2). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Based on a sample and subject to sampling variability. [1] The percentage of people employed without disabilities

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHT

Jeiri Flores

- Rochester, NY

- My name is Jeiri Flores from Rochester, NY and I am a person with a physical disability; I have cerebral palsy.
- I am worried about my job and what employment for people with disabilities will look like post Covid-19.
- I am concerned that the job I fought years to obtain is in jeopardy and I'll once again be at the mercy of the complex reality that is job searching while disabled.
- This is the first time in my adult life that I have had a fulltime job with benefits; prior to this I was a consultant struggling to plan for my future with limited funds.



Barbara Katz and Ben Fleischman

- Dane County, WI

- Barbara Katz is from Dane County, WI. Her son is Ben. Prior to COVID-19, Ben led a very full and meaningful life, working at four part time jobs for about 25 hours/week.
- Ben has returned to work at an art studio, but there are no signs that his other positions will be open to part-time, nonessential workers anytime soon.
- Even as things start to open up, Ben's life is very narrow, as his family is being very vigilant about not broadly increasing the people he connects with until there is a vaccine or at least more effective treatment for COVID-19.
- Barbara is worried that Ben's employment agencies will lose their direct support employees and they will not be able to afford to stay in business.



Community Integrated Services

- Philadelphia, PA

- Community Integrated Services (CIS) helps people with disabilities secure employment.
- Covid-19 has had a dramatic effect on the agency's work, but they continue to support workers with disabilities.
- One person CIS supports, Jasmine, was laid-off when the school she worked at temporarily shut its doors as a result of the pandemic.
- She refused to be discouraged while out of a job.
- Her patience was rewarded when the school district called her back to work in mid-May. Now, Jasmine is working again, but in an even bigger role.
- Before the pandemic, she was asked to prep and pack snack-bags for one middle school's after school program. Now, she's working for the whole district, helping prepare and deliver food bags to students at multiple schools.

