

Census Bureau Reports Workers with a Disability Less Likely to be Employed But More Likely to Hold Jobs with Lower Earnings

Individuals with disabilities were less likely to be employed than individuals without disabilities, and those who were employed typically held jobs with lower earnings and also earned less than their colleagues with no disability, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Based on the new [Disability Employment Tabulation](#), the statistics show that between 2008 and 2010, individuals without disabilities were about three times more likely to be employed than individuals with disabilities. Overall, individuals with disabilities accounted for 9.4 million, or 6.0 percent, of the 155.9 million civilian labor force.

More than half of all workers with a disability were concentrated in four general occupation groups: service workers (except protective services) with 18.2 percent, followed by administrative support (15.1 percent), sales workers (10.4 percent) and management, business and finance (8.9 percent).

Among specific occupations, janitors and building cleaners had the highest number of employees with a disability at 315,000, or 11.8 percent of all workers in that field, followed by drivers/sales workers and truck drivers with 263,000 people, cashiers with 256,000 and retail salespeople with 223,000.

Among occupations with 100,000 or more people, dishwashers had the highest disability rate at 14.3 percent, followed by refuse and recyclable material collectors (12.7 percent), personal care aides (11.9 percent), and janitors and building cleaners (11.8 percent). The rates for refuse and recyclable material collectors, personal care aides, and janitors and building cleaners were not statistically different from one another.

More than half of workers with disabilities (52 percent) earned less than \$25,000 in the previous year, compared with just 38 percent of workers with no disabilities. This translates into an earnings gap where individuals with disabilities earn about 75 percent of what workers without disabilities earn.



"Even within the largest occupations, employed workers with disabilities, on average, earned less than similarly employed workers without disabilities," said Jennifer Cheeseman Day, the assistant chief for employment characteristics in the Census Bureau's Social, Economic and Housing Statistics Division. "Several factors may account for this earnings gap, such as differences in age, work experience, number of hours worked, or other factors. For example, 46 percent of workers with a disability worked full time, year-round compared with 62 percent of workers with no disability."

The Disability Employment Tabulation 2008-2010 — available on [American FactFinder](#) (the Census Bureau's online statistics search tool) — is sponsored by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.

"Reliable, accurate data on disability employment is an essential tool for furthering education, research and policy initiatives that improve employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities," said acting Secretary of Labor Seth D. Harris.

The Disability Employment Tabulation, which has similar content to that found in the recently [released](#) Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation, now presents in-depth labor force characteristics of individuals with disabilities, with more details on employment status, occupation, education and earnings.

In addition, the latest tabulation provides information about the labor force across several variables, including, age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, occupation groups, citizenship and earnings by employment status.

Overall, janitors and building cleaners were among the most common occupations for individuals with a disability for non-Hispanic whites (184,000 people), non-Hispanic blacks (60,000) and Hispanics (54,000).

Individuals with disabilities accounted for 6.3 percent of the male civilian labor force and 5.7 percent of the female civilian labor force.

The three most common occupations for men with disabilities were drivers/sales workers and truck drivers (246,000); janitors and building cleaners (217,000); and laborers and freight, stock, and material movers (171,000). For women, they were cashiers (195,000); secretaries and administrative assistants (189,000); and nursing, psychiatric and home health aides (172,000). The number of male laborers and freight, stock, and material movers was not significantly different from the number of female nursing, psychiatric and home health aides.

The American Community Survey allows us to obtain statistics for detailed geographic entities with this tabulation, allowing individuals, businesses and local governments the opportunity to study employment and labor force diversity by disability status within their communities.

The American Community Survey provides a wide range of important statistics about people and housing for every community across the nation. The results are used by everyone from town and city planners to retailers and homebuilders. The survey is the only source of local estimates for most of the 40 topics it covers, such as education, occupation, language, ancestry and housing costs for even the smallest communities. Ever since Thomas Jefferson directed the first census in 1790, the census has collected detailed characteristics about our nation's people. Questions about jobs and the economy were added 20 years later under James Madison, [who said](#) such information would allow Congress to "adapt the public measures to the particular circumstances of the community," and over the decades, allow America "an opportunity of marking the progress of the society."

Earnings of Employed Population, By Disability Status

