**Data Sources for Workers with Disabilities**

Employment-related disability statistics can be somewhat confusing, because the Federal government introduced [new disability definitions](http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsdisability_faq.htm) into several surveys in 2008, most importantly the ACS and CPS. The previous questions in the monthly CPS were not designed to directly measure disability: for a good explanation of their limitations, see [Lack of a Disability Measure in Today’s Current Population Survey](http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2001/06/ressum1.pdf) (2001).

The entries below provide more detail on the four major Federal surveys that regularly publish employment-related disability data, but here is an overview of the impact of the survey and definitional changes in recent years. For the years before and after 2009, annual averages for employment and unemployment for persons with disabilities that use consistent disability and unemployment definitions can only be obtained from SIPP (number 3 below) — and then only via an unpublished Census Bureau table — and the CPS ASEC (see more below). The primary source of unemployment statistics, the monthly CPS, only began issuing such data for persons with disabilities in June 2008 (and therefore annual average data only begin with 2009). Annual unemployment and other labor force data are available from the ACS using one disability definition for the years 2000-2006 (although ACS is dropping the earlier years from its public database, and no data from before 2005 are currently available), and then another definition for 2008 forward (unemployment data do not appear to be available for 2007).

For the fourth survey — the CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement — the situation is the most potentially confusing of all. Since the CPS ASEC is a *supplement* to the monthly CPS, it contains two sets of disability questions: one for the monthly survey itself (which introduced the new questions in 2008), and the other for the questions that appear in the supplement. Unlike all the other surveys above except SIPP, the Census Bureau has not changed the questions in the supplement. The Bureau will no longer publish disability data from these questions, but you can generate this data using the CPS ASEC Table Creator (see number 2 below). The advantage of doing so is that, besides SIPP, CPS ASEC is the only source that allows the analysis of employment-related disability using a consistent definition before and after the 2008-9 period.

State-level employment-related disability data can be obtained from either the CPS ASEC or the ACS; local data only from the latter.

Finally, BLS will shortly release data from a [new disability supplement to the CPS](https://winwin.workforce3one.org/view/2001232860005553292/info) (interviews occurred in May 2012).

1. [**Labor Force Characteristics of Persons with Disabilities**](http://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#disability) (BLS, from the monthly CPS). See the [latest BLS disability news release](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/disabl.pdf) for the most current annual data, and [Disability Archived Data](http://www.bls.gov/schedule/archives/all_nr.htm#DISABL) for prior years. These annual data include employment, unemployment, employment-to-population ratios, and labor force participation. Annual average disability data from this source are only available for the years 2009 forward.

[**Weekly earnings of full-time employees with disabilities**](https://winwin.workforce3one.org/page/resources/1001232861242986785) (also from the monthly CPS) are only available from unpublished tables, based on questions concerning “usual weekly earnings” asked of one-fourth of the sample. The tables show — for those either with or without a disability — “usual” weekly earnings for full-time wage and salary workers for 16 earnings brackets (under $100, $100-150, etc.) by age, gender, race, and Hispanic origin. Data are available on an annual basis from 2009 forward, but the earnings categories are not adjusted for inflation.

1. **Annual earnings from the CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement** (Census Bureau). The most current data from this source are available in the Census Bureau’s [P60 report series](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/p60.html), in those titled “Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage.” The latest report, for [2011](http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p60-243.pdf), contains data for both that year and 2010 solely for full-time, year-round workers either with or without a disability (median annual earnings only — note that the table heading is misleadingly titled “Median income”). For persons with disabilities, earnings data can be found on pp. 7 and 12, poverty data on pp. 14 and 16-17, and health insurance data on pp. 23 and 26. Since the ASEC queries individuals about their earnings during the prior year, the data are potentially available for 2008, although the Census Bureau has not published the data for that year.

The Bureau has [earnings tables for persons with disabilities](http://www.census.gov/people/disability/data/cps.html) (using the pre-2008 definition) for 1995-2006. As noted above, the Census Bureau will continue to use the same ASEC disability questions, but will no longer publish the data from them. Such data can be obtained from the [CPS ASEC Table Creator](http://www.census.gov/cps/data/cpstablecreator.html).

1. **Survey of Income and Program Participation** (Census Bureau). SIPP is a longitudinal survey, and the Census Bureau has issued several studies including the employment experiences of persons with disabilities in its [P70 report series](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/p70.html). These are all titled “Americans with Disabilities,” and have been issued for [2010](http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p70-131.pdf) (in July 2012), [2005](http://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/p70-117.pdf) , [2002](http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/p70-107.pdf), [1997](http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/p70-73.pdf), and [1994-5](http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/p70-61.pdf) (see also [SIPP disability data from 1984-2002](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/disabtables.html), in the first column). SIPP has a much more detailed definition of disability than other Federal surveys that include employment-related data, and also includes data on employment, both monthly earnings and income, social program participation, and disability-related work limitations for those both employed and not employed. The last mentioned questions investigated whether disability-related problems made it difficult to remain employed, and whether the affected individuals were limited in the kind or amount of work they could do (including whether this limitation prevented them from working).

To obtain the only series of disability employment data based on consistent definitions of disability and unemployment from 2001 forward (noted above), see the [SIPP Unpublished Disability Employment Data, 2001-11](https://winwin.workforce3one.org/view/2001220861616317261/info), which includes a comparison of recent SIPP and CPS unemployment rates.

Since SIPP uses a different definition of both disability and employment than the other surveys described here, the respective data are not comparable.

1. [**Other Surveys Containing Disability Data**](https://winwin.workforce3one.org/view/2001212365477234753/info) (including ACS — see the “Disability” entry in this link to the U.S. Employment and Training Administration’s (ETA) *[Guide to State and Local Workforce Data](https://winwin.workforce3one.org/view/2001212365477234753/info)*). These include links to disability-related data from the ACS, U.S. Social Security Administration, U.S. Education Department, and private sector sources.

ACS data tables from 2008 forward are available from the [Census Bureau’s Disability Data Web page](http://www.census.gov/people/disability/data/).

In contrast to the other surveys described here, only ACS includes individuals living in group quarters (including mental health facilities). To obtain ACS data on disability status for these individuals directly from [AmericanFactFinder](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t), type “Table S2601B” in the search box. Note that this table only supplies disability data, and not employment data by disability status.

**Note:** For more tips on using the Census Bureau’s AmericanFactFinder and Table Creator customized tools, see the first two entries in ETA’s [*Guide to State and Local Workforce Data*](https://winwin.workforce3one.org/view/2001212365477234753/info), as well as the ETA Webinar, “[Using Bureau of Labor Statistics and Census Disability Statistics for Employment and Training Decisions](https://www.workforce3one.org/view/5001228246807294558/info).”

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