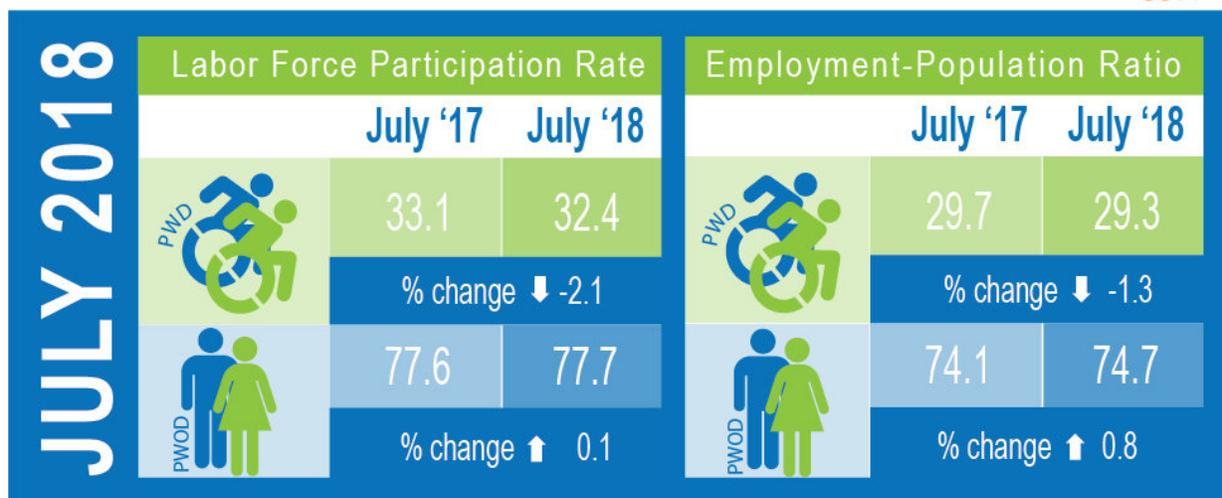


Confidence persists despite dip in July job numbers for Americans with disabilities

August 3 2018

national Trends In Disability Employment:
Comparison of People With and Without Disabilities
(July 2017 and July 2018)



* PWD – People with disabilities; PWOD – People without disabilities
Source: Kessler Foundation/University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability

This infographic compares the economic indicators for July 2017 and July 2018, showing declines for people with disabilities and increases for people without disabilities. Credit: Kessler Foundation

Job numbers declined again for Americans with Disabilities last month, according to today's National Trends in Disability Employment—Monthly Update (nTIDE), issued by Kessler Foundation and the University of New Hampshire's Institute on Disability (UNH-

IOD). Despite the second month of downturns, experts remain optimistic about future job gains as the labor market continues to tighten.

Accommodations are an important factor in the successful hiring of people with [disabilities](#), and in the retention of employees who develop new [disabilities](#). Employers that are open to providing accommodations and have the capability to provide them, will have greater success in meeting their need for staffing.

In the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Jobs Report released Friday, August 3, the employment-to-population ratio for working-age people with disabilities decreased from 29.7 percent in July 2017 to 29.3 percent in July 2018 (-0.4 percentage points; down 1.3 percent). For working-age people without disabilities, the employment-to-population ratio increased from 74.1 percent in July 2017 to 74.7 percent in July 2018 (+0.6 percentage points; up 0.8 percent). The employment-to-population ratio, a key indicator, reflects the percentage of people who are working relative to the total population (the number of people working divided by the number of people in the total population multiplied by 100).

"From February 2016 until May 2018, we saw steady improvement in the employment situation for people with disabilities. However, for the past two months, we have seen slight declines in their employment-to-population ratio and [labor](#) force participation rate," according to John O'Neill, Ph.D., director of employment and disability research at Kessler Foundation. "This downturn is disappointing, but given the tight [labor](#) market, we may yet see further improvement for Americans with disabilities."

In addition, the labor force participation rate for working-age people with disabilities decreased from 33.1 percent in July 2017 to 32.4 percent in July 2018 (-0.7 percentage points, down 2.1 percent). For

working-age people without disabilities, the labor force participation rate also increased from 77.6 percent in July 2017 to 77.7 percent in July 2018 (+0.1 percentage points; up 0.1 percent). The [labor force participation](#) rate is the percentage of the population that is working or actively looking for work.

"It is certainly disappointing to see the [labor force participation](#) rate of people with disabilities declining, compared to the same time last year, especially since the economy has been doing so well," said Andrew Houtenville, Ph.D., associate professor of economics at UNH and research director of the Institute on Disability. "Of course, two months do not imply a trend, so we will be watching this closely in the coming months."

Working-age people who sustain a disabling illness or injury face major decisions about staying in their jobs or returning to the workforce after treatment and/or rehabilitation. The availability of accommodations may be a major influence in their decision to return to their current job or seek new employment. In 2017, Kessler Foundation released survey findings that revealed useful data about workplace practices for accommodating employees with disabilities.

According to the Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey: Supervisor Perspectives, 66 percent of employers have implemented a process to provide requested accommodations. Of the 3,000 supervisors surveyed, 96 percent found these processes effective, according to Dr. O'Neill, a survey co-author. "The 34 percent of employers who lack an accommodations process clearly have an opportunity to improve their hiring and retention of people with disabilities by implementing a process for requesting accommodations," he noted. The majority of supervisors (96 percent) also responded favorably to having access to a centralized accommodations fund to help them provide requested accommodations. Only a small percentage of

employers—16 percent—have such funds, however. "This highlights another opportunity for the majority of employers," Dr. O'Neill emphasized. "Setting up such a fund would facilitate the provision of accommodations, and help supervisors keep employees in their jobs."

In July 2018, among workers ages 16-64, the 4,424,000 workers with disabilities represented 3 percent of the total 147,354,000 workers in the U.S.

Provided by Kessler Foundation

Citation: Confidence persists despite dip in July job numbers for Americans with disabilities (2018, August 3) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-confidence-persists-dip-july-job.html>

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