





Modest increases indicate ongoing job growth for Americans with disabilities

December 7 2018

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



NOVEMBER 2018	Labor Force Participation Rate			Employment-Population Ratio			
		Nov '17	Nov '18		Nov '17	Nov '18	
		33.1	33.5	% change ↑ 1.2		30.0	30.7
	76.5	76.9	% change ↑ 0.5		73.6	74.3	% change ↑ 1.0

* PWD – People with disabilities; PWOD – People without disabilities

Source: Kessler Foundation/University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability

This graphic compares the economic indicators for people and without disabilities. Both groups had increases in their employment-to-population ratio and labor participation rate. Credit: Kessler Foundation

Americans with disabilities saw modest job gains in November, indicating the continuation of an upward trend, 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). These gains extend the upward trend that resumed in August 2018, following a brief downturn.

On December 3, during the commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities at the United Nations, a minute of silence honored President George H. W. Bush, who died on November 30. In 1990, Bush proudly signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), calling it "the world's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities." Almost three decades later, the ADA continues to ensure fair and just access to community life and the workplace for individuals with disabilities.

In the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Jobs Report released Friday, December 7, the employment-to-population ratio for working-age people with disabilities increased slightly from 30.0 percent in November 2017 to 30.7 percent in November 2018 (up 2.3 percent or 0.7 percentage points). For working-age people without disabilities, the employment-to-population ratio also increased slightly from 73.6 percent in November 2017 to 74.3 percent in November 2018 (up 1 percent or 0.7 percentage points). 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).

"These November data continue the upward trend in economic indicators for people with disabilities," said John O'Neill, Ph.D., director of employment and disability research at Kessler Foundation. "The continued strength in the [labor market](#) is producing higher demand for workers, including jobseekers with disabilities."

The labor force participation rate for working-age people with disabilities increased slightly from 33.1 percent in November 2017 to 33.5 percent in November 2018 (up 1.2 percent or 0.4 percentage

points). For working-age people without disabilities, the labor force participation rate also increased slightly from 76.5 percent in November 2017 to 76.9 percent in November 2018 (up 0.5 percent or 0.4 percentage points). The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the population that is working or actively looking for work.

"These are pretty modest gains for both people with and without disabilities," said Andrew Houtenville, Ph.D., associate professor of economics and research director of the UNH-IOD. "While it is good to see the continued increase in the employment and participation of people with disabilities, there is still a long way to go toward closing the gap between people with and without disabilities," he emphasized.

At the signing of the ADA, President Bush addressed the potential benefits for American business. Advances in civil rights and accessibility meant that individuals with disabilities would be better positioned to contribute to the workforce, providing a new source of workers. "Today, we know that the majority of Americans with disabilities are striving to work," remarked Dr. O'Neill, "and that many are succeeding in overcoming obstacles to finding and maintaining work by getting further education or necessary training, and finding solutions to transportation issues." Jobseekers with disabilities find some barriers more difficult to overcome, however, according to the 2015 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey. They cite a major barrier to be employers' underestimation of their ability to do the job.

In 1990, President Bush told employers that jobseekers with disabilities had "only one request: the chance to prove themselves." Given that opportunity, they "would move proudly into the mainstream of American life." The spotlight on the Bush legacy provides the opportunity to focus efforts on the persistent barriers to greater participation in the workplace. "President Bush understood that hiring people with disabilities benefits employers and our economy, as well as

the individuals who gain greater independence," noted Dr. O'Neill. "When more employers recognize that they can rely on employees with disabilities, more job seekers with disabilities will effectively compete for jobs. Let's encourage employers across the nation to raise their expectations and honor his memory by hiring people with disabilities, thus providing opportunities for them to succeed."

In November 2018, among workers ages 16-64, the 4,726,000 workers with [disabilities](#) represented 3.2 percent of the total 146,968,000 workers in the U.S. The next nTIDE will be issued on Friday, January 4, 2019.

Each nTIDE release is followed by a Lunch & Learn webinar at 12:00 pm Eastern. This live broadcast, hosted via Zoom Webinar, offers attendees Q&A on the latest nTIDE findings, provides news and updates from the field, as well as invited panelists to discuss current disability-related findings and events. On December 7, Maria Kukla, Ph.D., HSPP, research scientist and clinical psychologist from Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis (IUPUI), joins Dr. Houtenville, Dr. O'Neill, and Denise Rozell, Policy Strategist at AUCD, to discuss the use of cognitive behavioral therapy for employment success. Join live, or watch the recordings at: <http://www.ResearchonDisability.org/nTIDE>.

More information: The statistics in the nTIDE are based on Bureau of Labor Statistics numbers, but are not identical. They are customized by UNH to combine the statistics for men and women of working age (16 to 64). nTIDE is funded, in part, by grants from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) (90RT5022 and 90RT5017) and Kessler Foundation.

Provided by Kessler Foundation

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