

## Employment Rates for People With and Without Disabilities

By Frank A. Smith and John Shepard

Data show that people with disabilities are consistently less likely to be working than their non-disabled counterparts. In this Data Note, the employment rate for working-age people is compared across disability types, as well as those without disabilities.

“Working-age people” is defined as those who are non-institutionalized, ages 16–64. The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of people who are employed by the sum of people who are employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force. “Not in the labor force” is defined as unemployed and not actively job searching in the past four weeks.

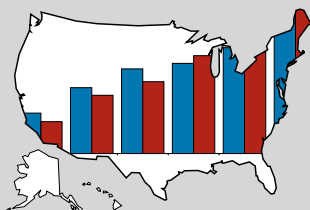
As Figure 1 shows, the employment rate for individuals with any disability, i.e., any one of the disabilities listed on the ACS, was 34.3%. Comparatively, the employment rate of individuals without disabilities was over twice that (73.6%). Looking at the disability subpopulation groups in Figure 1, individuals with a self-care difficulty (i.e., difficulty with bathing or dressing) had the lowest employment rate, at 15.4%. Those with hearing difficulty and vision difficulty had the highest at 50.7% and 41%, respectively. Fewer than 25% of people with independent living difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, and cognitive difficulty were employed.

While employment rates across disability subpopulation groups vary, all disability groups lag far behind their counterparts without a disability. The employment rates by subpopulation underscore the challenges faced by specific groups in obtaining and retaining employment. Closing the employment rate gap between working-age people in various disability subpopulations and their working-age counterparts without disabilities should be a critical goal for policy and practice.

### Suggested Citation

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The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed by the U.S. Census Bureau to show communities how they are changing. The ACS collects information from all 50 states and D.C. on topics such as disability, age, race, income, commute time, home value, and veteran status. As with the official decennial census, information about individuals is confidential. (Source: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).)



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Figure 1. 2015 Employment Rate

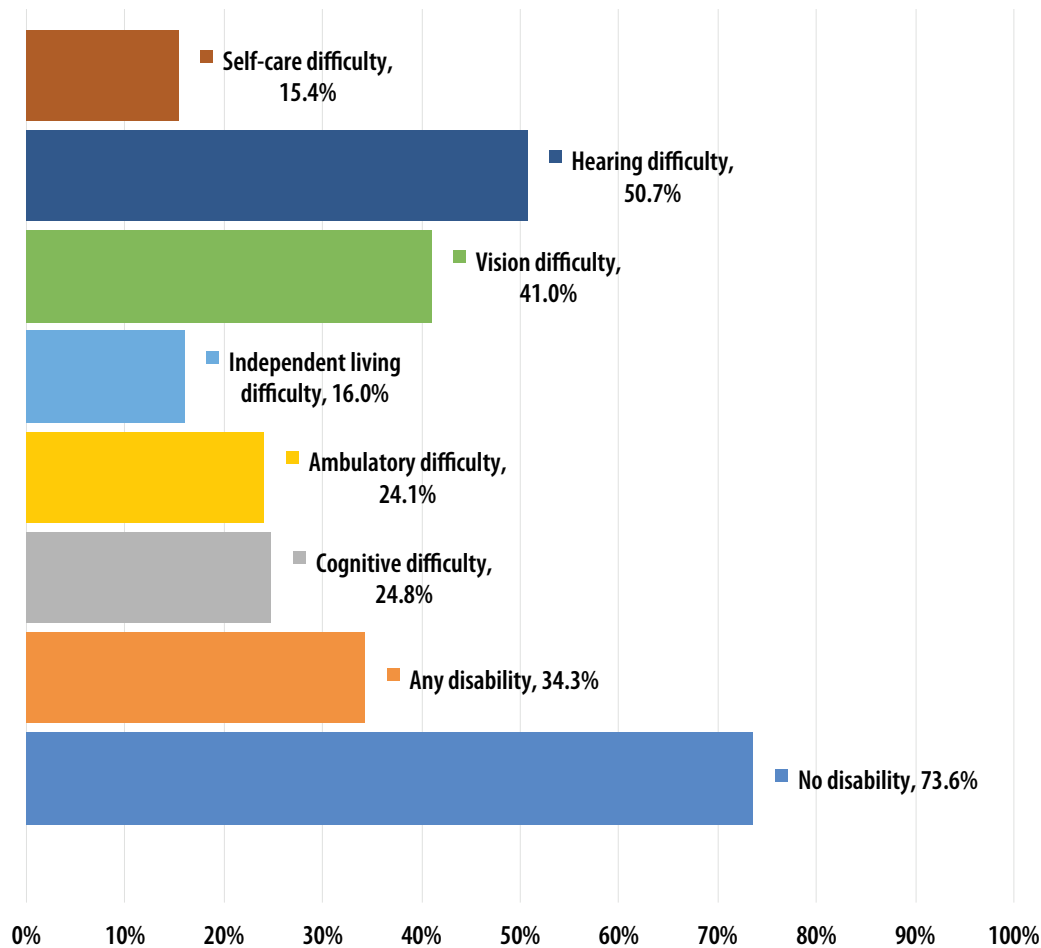


Table 1. American Community Survey Definitions and Number of Individuals by Disability Type, 2015.

ACS Disability Type Definitions		# of Individuals
Self-care difficulty	Having difficulty bathing or dressing	3,705,653
Hearing difficulty	Deaf or having serious difficulty hearing	3,999,090
Vision difficulty	Blind or having serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses	3,841,187
Independent living difficulty	Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping	7,461,834
Ambulatory difficulty	Having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs	10,147,685
Cognitive difficulty	Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions	9,109,557
Any disability	Respondent indicated "Yes" to one or more of the functional impairments listed above	20,922,729

Source: American Community Survey (ACS), 2015 <https://www.census.gov/people/disability/methodology/acs.html>