

## **Economic Picture of the Disability Community Project; Key points on Disability and Occupational Projections Tables**

This project is a joint initiative between DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy, Employment and Training Administration, Chief Economist, Office of the Secretary, and the White House Council of Economic Advisors (CEA).

The tables produced (see associated excel file) are based on CEA analysis of the Census Bureau's 2010-2012 American Community Survey, matched to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2012-2022 occupational projections.

The key points are:

- **Employment levels of people with disabilities are low, and those who are employed tend to be in low-paying occupations.**
  - Only one-third (32.0%) of working-age people with disabilities were employed on average in the 2010-2012 period, compared to over two-thirds (72.7%) of people without disabilities (Table 1).
  - Employment rates among people with disabilities do not vary greatly by gender, but are particularly low among blacks and those with low levels of education (both absolutely and relative to people without disabilities)(Table 2).
  - Employed people with disabilities are underrepresented in management and professional/technical jobs, and overrepresented in service, production, and transportation jobs (Table 4).
- **People with disabilities are somewhat overrepresented in slower-growing occupations, which lowers their projected employment growth rate through 2022 assuming disability prevalence by occupation stays constant.**
  - The projected job growth rate over the 2012-2022 period for people with disabilities is 10.4% compared to 10.8% overall, based on applying occupational projections to disability prevalence in the current occupational distribution (assuming disability prevalence stays constant within occupations)(Table 5). If the growth rates were equal there would be an additional 32,200 jobs for people with disabilities in 2022.
  - People with disabilities are underrepresented in 16 of the top 20 fastest-growing occupations, but are overrepresented in the fastest-growing occupation of "personal and home care aides" (Table 7).
  - People with disabilities are overrepresented in 17 of the top 20 fastest-declining occupations (Table 8).

- The top 20 occupations with the greatest numerical job growth for people with disabilities tend to be low-paying (except secretaries, registered nurses, carpenters, postsecondary teachers, and LPN's)(Table 11).
- **There is nonetheless substantial potential for job growth among people with disabilities in well-paying occupations over the coming decade.**
  - The greatest job growth in well-paying occupations (exceeding the median wage) for people with disabilities without a college degree will be among secretaries, carpenters, and bookkeepers. For those with a college degree, the greatest job growth will be among registered nurses, postsecondary teachers, and general and operations managers (Table 14).
  - Many people with disabilities appear to have the education for these new jobs. Of the 15.6 million new jobs overall, 3.2 million will be in occupations requiring a Bachelor's degree. Close to one-fourth (797,900) of these new jobs could theoretically be filled by current non-employed working-age people who have Bachelor's degrees. Also, 438,000 people with disabilities are enrolled as college undergraduates, which will prepare them for well-paying jobs.
  - Prior analysis of occupational ability requirements from O\*Net shows substantial job growth in occupations where many disabilities are likely to be irrelevant—for example, occupations where psychomotor and physical abilities have low or no importance.<sup>1</sup>
  - Most job growth is in occupations where computer use is important,<sup>2</sup> and the rapid development of new computer and information technologies has particular benefits for many people with disabilities by helping overcome specific physical and cognitive limitations, and significantly increasing the workplace productivity of people with disabilities.
  - Technology and corporate policies are also creating more possibilities for home-based and other flexible work arrangements that can especially benefit people with disabilities who deal with transportation difficulties and medical concerns.
- Whether the potential for increased employment of people with disabilities will be realized depends in part on public and corporate policies regarding access to appropriate education, computer skills, and other training; disability income policies; and the availability of workplace accommodations and other employment supports.

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Kruse, Lisa Schur, and Mohammad Ali, "Disability and Occupational Projections," *Monthly Labor Review*, October 2010, 31-78.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.