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## PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY: LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS — 2009

The proportion of the population employed in 2009—the employment-population ratio—was 19.2 percent among those with a disability, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. The employment-population ratio for persons without a disability was 64.5 percent. The unemployment rate of persons with a disability was 14.5 percent, higher than the rate for those with no disability, which was 9.0 percent.

This is the first news release focusing on the employment status of persons with a disability. The information in this release was obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 households that provides statistics on employment and unemployment in the United States. Beginning in June 2008, questions were added to the CPS that were designed to identify persons with a disability in the civilian noninstitutional population age 16 and over, and 2009 is the first calendar year for which annual averages are available. The collection of these data is sponsored by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. For more information, see the Technical Note.

### Some highlights from the 2009 data are:

- For all age groups, the employment-population ratio was much lower for persons with a disability than for those with no disability. (See table 1.)
- The unemployment rate of persons with a disability was well above the rate of those with no disability. (See table 1.)
- Persons with a disability were over three times as likely as those with no disability to be age 65 or over. (See table 1.)
- Nearly one-third of workers with a disability were employed part time, compared with about one-fifth of those with no disability. (See table 2.)

### Demographic characteristics

Persons with a disability tend to be older than persons with no disability, reflecting the increased incidence of disability with age. In 2009, almost half of persons with a disability were age 65 and over, compared with about one-tenth of those with no disability. Women were somewhat more likely to have a disability than men, partly reflecting the greater life expectancy of women. Among major race and ethnicity groups, the prevalence of a disability was higher for blacks and whites than for Asians and Hispanics. (See table 1.)

## **Employment**

In 2009, the employment-population ratio—the proportion of the population that is employed—was 19.2 percent for persons with a disability. Among those with no disability, the ratio was much higher (64.5 percent). In part, this reflects the older age profile of persons with a disability; older individuals—regardless of disability status—are less likely to be employed. However, across all age groups, persons with a disability were much less likely to be employed than those with no disability. (See table 1.)

Persons with a disability who have completed higher levels of education were more likely to be employed than those with less education. However, at all levels of education, persons with a disability were less than half as likely to be employed than were their counterparts with no disability. (Because many people have completed their education by age 24, educational attainment data are presented for those age 25 and over.) (See table 1.)

Workers with a disability were more likely than those with no disability to work part time. Among workers with a disability, 32 percent usually worked part time in 2009, compared with 19 percent of workers without a disability. A slightly larger proportion of workers with a disability worked part time for economic reasons than those with no disability (8 and 6 percent, respectively). These individuals were working part time because their hours had been cut back or because they were unable to find a full-time job. (See table 2.)

Workers with a disability were slightly more likely than those with no disability to work in service occupations (20 percent, compared with 18 percent) and in production, transportation, and material moving occupations (14 percent, compared with 11 percent). Those with a disability were less likely to work in management, professional, and related occupations (31 percent, compared with 38 percent). (See table 3.)

In 2009, 16 percent of workers with a disability were employed in federal, state, and local government, about the same percentage as those with no disability (15 percent). Seventy-three percent of workers with a disability were employed as private wage and salary workers, compared with 78 percent of those with no disability. A larger proportion of workers with a disability were self-employed than were those with no disability (11 and 7 percent, respectively). (See table 4.)

## **Unemployment**

Individuals with a disability were more likely to be unemployed than were those with no disability. The unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 14.5 percent in 2009, well above the figure of 9.0 percent for those with no disability. (Unemployed persons are those who did not have a job, were available for work, and were actively looking for a job in the past 4 weeks.) (See table 1.)

Among persons with a disability, the jobless rate for men (15.1 percent) was slightly higher than the rate for women (13.8 percent). As is the case among those without a disability, the unemployment rates in 2009 for those with a disability were higher among blacks (22.1 percent) and Hispanics (19.0 percent) than among whites (13.3 percent) and Asians (11.6 percent). (See table 1.)

## **Not in the labor force**

Persons who are neither employed nor unemployed are referred to as not in the labor force. A large proportion of those with a disability—about 8 in 10—were not in the labor force in 2009, compared with 3

in 10 of those with no disability. In part, this reflects the fact that many of those with a disability are age 65 and over. However, for all age groups, persons with a disability were more likely than those with no disability to be out of the labor force.

For persons with and without a disability, the vast majority of those not in the labor force reported that they do not want a job. Among those who do want a job, a subset is classified as marginally attached to the labor force. These individuals were not in the labor force, wanted and were available for work, and had looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months. They were not counted as unemployed because they had not searched for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey. Among persons not in the labor force, 1 percent of those with a disability were marginally attached to the labor force in 2009, compared with 3 percent of those with no disability. (Persons marginally attached to the labor force include discouraged workers.) (See table 5.)

# Technical Note

The estimates in this release are based on annual average data obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly survey of about 60,000 households that is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Questions were added to the CPS in June 2008 to identify persons with a disability in the civilian noninstitutional population age 16 and older. The addition of these questions allowed the Bureau of Labor Statistics to begin releasing monthly labor force data from the CPS for persons with a disability. The collection of these data is sponsored by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

## Reliability of the estimates

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the "true" population values they represent. The exact difference, or *sampling* error, varies depending on the particular sample selected, and this variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the "true" population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by *nonsampling* error. Nonsampling error can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

In addition, unlike other CPS data, the estimates of the population of persons with a disability are not controlled to independent population totals because such data are not currently available. Without controls, estimates are more apt to vary in unpredictable ways from one month to the next. Additionally, the labor force estimates for persons with disabilities have not been seasonally adjusted due to the fact that these data have been collected for a few months only. Typically, several years worth of monthly estimates are required before seasonally adjusted estimates can be produced.

A full discussion of the reliability of data from the CPS and information on estimating standard errors is available online at [www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability](http://www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability).

## Disability questions and concepts

The CPS uses a set of six questions to identify persons with disabilities. In the CPS, persons are classified as having a disability if there is a response of "yes" to any of these questions. The disability questions appear in the CPS in the following format:

This month we want to learn about people who have physical, mental, or emotional conditions that cause serious difficulty with their daily activities. Please answer for household members who are 15 years and older.

- Is anyone deaf or does anyone have serious difficulty hearing?
- Is anyone blind or does anyone have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?
- Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does anyone have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
- Does anyone have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
- Does anyone have difficulty dressing or bathing?
- Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does anyone have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?

The CPS questions for identifying individuals with disabilities are only asked of household members who are age 15 and older. Each of the questions ask the respondent whether anyone in the household has the condition described, and if the respondent replies "yes," they are then asked to identify everyone in the household who has the condition. Labor force measures from the CPS are tabulated for persons age 16 and older. More information on the disability questions and the limitations of the CPS disability data is available on the BLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/cps/cpsdisability\\_faq.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsdisability_faq.htm).

## Other definitions

Other definitions used in this release are described briefly below. Additional information on the concepts and methodology of the CPS is available at [www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm).

*Employed persons* are all those who, during the survey reference week (which is generally the week including the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the month), (a) did any work at all as paid

employees; (b) worked in their own business, profession, or on their own farm; (c) worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in a family-operated enterprise; or (d) were temporarily absent from their jobs because of illness, vacation, labor dispute, or another reason.

*Unemployed persons* are all persons who had no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness, and had made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the 4 weeks preceding the survey. Persons who were waiting to be recalled to a job from which they had been laid off need not have been looking for work to be classified as unemployed.

*Civilian labor force* comprises all persons classified as employed or unemployed.

*Unemployment rate* represents the number of unemployed persons as a percent of the civilian labor force.

*Not in the labor force* includes all persons who are not classified as employed or unemployed. Information is collected on their desire for and availability to take a job at the time of the CPS interview, job search activity in the prior year, and reason for not looking in the 4-week period prior to the survey week. This group includes individuals *marginally attached to the labor force*, defined as persons not in the labor force who want and are available for a job and who have looked for work sometime in the past 12 months (or since the end of their last job if they held one within the past 12 months). They are not counted as unemployed because they had not actively searched for work in the prior 4 weeks. Within the marginally attached group are *discouraged workers*—persons who are not currently looking for work because they believe there are no jobs available or there are

none for which they would qualify. The *other persons marginally attached to the labor force* group includes persons who want a job but had not looked for work in the past 4 weeks for reasons such as family responsibilities or transportation problems.

*At work part time for economic reasons*, a measure sometimes referred to as involuntary part time, refers to individuals who gave an economic reason for working 1 to 34 hours during the reference week. Economic reasons include slack work or unfavorable business conditions, inability to find full-time work, and seasonal declines in demand. Those who usually work part time must also indicate that they want and are available for full-time work.

*Occupation, industry, and class of worker* for the employed relate to the job held in the survey reference week. Persons with two or more jobs are classified in the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours. Persons are classified using the 2002 Census occupational and 2007 Census industry classification systems. The class-of-worker breakdown assigns workers to the following categories: Private and government wage and salary workers, self-employed workers, and unpaid family workers. Wage and salary workers receive wages, salary, commissions, tips, or pay in kind from a private employer or from a government unit. Self-employed persons are those who work for profit or fees in their own business, profession, trade, or farm. Only the unincorporated self-employed are included in the self-employed category. Self-employed persons who respond that their businesses are incorporated are included among wage and salary workers because, in a legal sense, they are paid employees of a corporation.

**Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by disability status and selected characteristics, 2009 annual averages**  
 [Numbers in thousands]

Characteristic	Civilian noninstitutional population	Civilian labor force						Not in labor force
		Total	Participation rate	Employed		Unemployed		
				Total	Percent of population	Total	Rate	
<b>TOTAL</b>								
Total, 16 years and over.....	235,801	154,142	65.4	139,877	59.3	14,265	9.3	81,659
Men.....	114,136	82,123	72.0	73,670	64.5	8,453	10.3	32,013
Women.....	121,665	72,019	59.2	66,208	54.4	5,811	8.1	49,646
<b>PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY</b>								
Total, 16 years and over.....	26,981	6,050	22.4	5,174	19.2	876	14.5	20,931
Men.....	12,184	3,221	26.4	2,735	22.4	486	15.1	8,963
Women.....	14,797	2,829	19.1	2,439	16.5	390	13.8	11,968
<b>Age</b>								
16 to 64 years.....	14,845	5,220	35.2	4,406	29.7	814	15.6	9,625
16 to 19 years.....	597	173	28.9	107	17.9	66	38.2	424
20 to 24 years.....	792	376	47.5	279	35.2	97	25.9	416
25 to 34 years.....	1,646	758	46.1	606	36.8	153	20.1	887
35 to 44 years.....	2,230	931	41.8	782	35.1	149	16.0	1,298
45 to 54 years.....	4,182	1,476	35.3	1,278	30.6	198	13.4	2,706
55 to 64 years.....	5,398	1,505	27.9	1,354	25.1	152	10.1	3,893
65 years and over.....	12,136	830	6.8	768	6.3	61	7.4	11,306
<b>Race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity</b>								
White.....	22,039	5,066	23.0	4,391	19.9	675	13.3	16,972
Black or African American.....	3,493	633	18.1	493	14.1	140	22.1	2,861
Asian.....	621	117	18.9	104	16.7	14	11.6	504
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,478	562	22.7	455	18.4	107	19.0	1,915
<b>Educational attainment</b>								
Total, 25 years and over.....	25,591	5,501	21.5	4,788	18.7	712	12.9	20,091
Less than a high school diploma.....	6,558	705	10.8	574	8.7	132	18.7	5,852
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	9,160	1,773	19.4	1,535	16.8	238	13.4	7,387
Some college or associate degree.....	6,174	1,782	28.9	1,542	25.0	240	13.5	4,393
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	3,700	1,241	33.5	1,138	30.8	103	8.3	2,459
<b>PERSONS WITH NO DISABILITY</b>								
Total, 16 years and over.....	208,820	148,092	70.9	134,703	64.5	13,389	9.0	60,728
Men.....	101,952	78,902	77.4	70,935	69.6	7,967	10.1	23,050
Women.....	106,868	69,190	64.7	63,769	59.7	5,421	7.8	37,678
<b>Age</b>								
16 to 64 years.....	182,958	142,388	77.8	129,358	70.7	13,029	9.2	40,570
16 to 19 years.....	16,446	6,217	37.8	4,731	28.8	1,486	23.9	10,229
20 to 24 years.....	19,732	14,595	74.0	12,485	63.3	2,110	14.5	5,137
25 to 34 years.....	38,635	32,540	84.2	29,409	76.1	3,131	9.6	6,095
35 to 44 years.....	38,690	33,307	86.1	30,734	79.4	2,573	7.7	5,382
45 to 54 years.....	40,183	34,730	86.4	32,335	80.5	2,394	6.9	5,453
55 to 64 years.....	29,272	21,000	71.7	19,665	67.2	1,335	6.4	8,273
65 years and over.....	25,862	5,705	22.1	5,345	20.7	359	6.3	20,158
<b>Race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity</b>								
White.....	168,864	120,578	71.4	110,605	65.5	9,972	8.3	48,286
Black or African American.....	24,748	16,999	68.7	14,532	58.7	2,467	14.5	7,749
Asian.....	10,220	7,039	68.9	6,531	63.9	508	7.2	3,181
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	30,413	21,790	71.6	19,191	63.1	2,599	11.9	8,623
<b>Educational attainment</b>								
Total, 25 years and over.....	172,642	127,281	73.7	117,488	68.1	9,793	7.7	45,361
Less than a high school diploma.....	19,571	11,441	58.5	9,797	50.1	1,644	14.4	8,130
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	52,309	36,413	69.6	32,952	63.0	3,461	9.5	15,896
Some college or associate degree.....	45,552	35,033	76.9	32,346	71.0	2,687	7.7	10,519
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	55,210	44,393	80.4	42,393	76.8	2,000	4.5	10,816

1 Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

2 Includes persons with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

**Table 2. Employed full- and part-time workers by disability status and age, 2009 annual averages**  
 [Numbers in thousands]

Disability status and age	Employed			At work part time for economic reasons <sup>1</sup>
	Total	Usually work full time	Usually work part time	
<b>TOTAL</b>				
16 years and over.....	139,877	112,634	27,244	8,913
16 to 64 years.....	133,764	109,155	24,609	8,671
65 years and over.....	6,114	3,479	2,635	241
<b>Persons with a disability</b>				
16 years and over.....	5,174	3,502	1,672	425
16 to 64 years.....	4,406	3,134	1,271	394
65 years and over.....	768	368	401	31
<b>Persons with no disability</b>				
16 years and over.....	134,703	109,132	25,572	8,488
16 to 64 years.....	129,358	106,021	23,337	8,278
65 years and over.....	5,345	3,111	2,234	210

<sup>1</sup> Refers to persons who, whether they usually work full or part time, worked 1 to 34 hours during the reference week for an economic reason such as slack work or unfavorable business conditions, inability to find full-time work, or seasonal declines in demand. Persons who usually work part time for an economic reason, but worked 35 hours or more during the reference week are excluded. Also excludes employed persons who were absent from their jobs for the entire reference week.

NOTE: Full time refers to persons who usually work 35 hours or more per week; part time refers to persons who usually work less than 35 hours per week.

**Table 3. Employed persons by disability status, occupation, and sex, 2009 annual averages**  
 [Percent distribution]

Occupation	Persons with a disability			Persons with no disability		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total employed (in thousands).....	5,174	2,735	2,439	134,703	70,935	63,769
<b>Occupation as a percent of total employed</b>						
Management, professional, and related occupations.....	30.5	28.5	32.7	37.6	34.7	40.8
Management, business, and financial operations occupations.....	13.3	15.0	11.5	15.5	16.8	14.0
Management occupations.....	9.8	12.3	7.1	11.1	13.2	8.8
Business and financial operations occupations.....	3.5	2.7	4.4	4.4	3.6	5.2
Professional and related occupations.....	17.1	13.5	21.2	22.1	17.9	26.8
Computer and mathematical occupations.....	1.6	2.4	0.8	2.5	3.6	1.3
Architecture and engineering occupations.....	1.3	2.2	0.4	2.0	3.2	0.6
Life, physical, and social science occupations.....	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.0
Community and social services occupations.....	1.9	1.4	2.5	1.7	1.2	2.2
Legal occupations.....	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.2	1.2	1.3
Education, training, and library occupations.....	5.3	2.7	8.2	6.2	3.0	9.7
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations.....	1.6	1.6	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.9
Healthcare practitioner and technical occupations.....	3.8	1.7	6.3	5.6	2.7	8.8
Service occupations.....	20.3	16.8	24.3	17.5	14.2	21.1
Healthcare support occupations.....	2.6	0.7	4.9	2.4	0.5	4.5
Protective service occupations.....	2.0	3.1	0.8	2.3	3.3	1.1
Food preparation and serving related occupations.....	5.5	4.3	6.8	5.5	4.7	6.5
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations.....	5.8	7.0	4.6	3.7	4.2	3.2
Personal care and service occupations.....	4.4	1.8	7.3	3.6	1.5	5.9
Sales and office occupations.....	25.5	17.4	34.6	24.1	16.9	32.1
Sales and related occupations.....	11.3	10.4	12.3	11.2	10.7	11.7
Office and administrative support occupations.....	14.2	7.0	22.3	12.9	6.2	20.4
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.....	9.2	16.6	0.9	9.5	17.3	0.9
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.....	0.7	1.2	0.3	0.7	1.0	0.3
Construction and extraction occupations.....	4.9	8.8	0.5	5.3	9.9	0.3
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.....	3.6	6.7	0.2	3.5	6.4	0.3
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations..	14.4	20.6	7.4	11.3	16.9	5.1
Production occupations.....	7.6	10.1	4.7	5.4	7.4	3.2
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	6.9	10.6	2.7	5.9	9.5	1.9



**Table 4. Employed persons by disability status, industry, class of worker, and sex, 2009 annual averages**  
 [Percent distribution]

Industry and class of worker	Persons with a disability			Persons with no disability		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total employed (in thousands).....	5,174	2,735	2,439	134,703	70,935	63,769
<b>Industry as a percent of total employed</b>						
Agriculture and related industries.....	2.7	4.0	1.2	1.5	2.1	0.7
Nonagricultural industries.....	97.3	96.0	98.8	98.5	97.9	99.3
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction.....	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.1
Construction.....	6.4	10.6	1.6	7.0	12.0	1.4
Manufacturing.....	10.0	13.8	5.7	10.2	13.8	6.2
Wholesale trade.....	2.4	3.1	1.7	2.7	3.7	1.7
Retail trade.....	12.9	12.4	13.5	11.3	10.9	11.7
Transportation and utilities.....	5.0	6.7	3.0	5.2	7.6	2.5
Information.....	2.1	2.5	1.6	2.3	2.6	2.1
Financial activities.....	5.8	5.3	6.3	6.9	6.0	7.9
Professional and business services.....	9.9	10.5	9.2	10.8	11.9	9.5
Education and health services.....	22.7	11.7	35.1	22.7	10.7	36.2
Leisure and hospitality.....	9.1	8.3	10.0	9.1	8.4	9.9
Other services.....	5.5	5.3	5.7	4.9	4.5	5.4
Public administration.....	5.1	5.1	5.1	4.9	5.1	4.7
<b>Class of worker as a percent of total employed<sup>1</sup></b>						
Wage and salary workers.....	88.8	86.6	91.3	93.1	91.8	94.5
Private industries.....	73.0	73.6	72.3	77.9	79.6	76.1
Government.....	15.8	12.9	19.0	15.2	12.3	18.4
Federal.....	2.9	3.2	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.4
State.....	5.3	3.8	6.9	4.5	3.5	5.6
Local.....	7.5	5.9	9.4	8.1	6.1	10.4
Self-employed workers.....	11.1	13.3	8.6	6.9	8.1	5.5

<sup>1</sup> Includes a small number of unpaid family workers, not shown separately.

NOTE: The self-employed refer to the unincorporated self-employed. Self-employed persons whose businesses are incorporated are classified as wage and salary workers.

**Table 5. Persons not in the labor force by disability status, age, and sex, 2009 annual averages**  
 [Numbers in thousands]

Category	Total, 16 years and over	16 to 64 years			Total, 65 years and over
		Total	Men	Women	
<b>PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY</b>					
Total not in the labor force.....	20,931	9,625	4,489	5,136	11,306
Persons who currently want a job.....	620	459	220	239	161
Marginally attached to the labor force <sup>1</sup> .....	193	166	87	79	27
Discouraged workers <sup>2</sup> .....	60	50	29	20	10
Other persons marginally attached to the labor force <sup>3</sup> .....	133	116	58	58	17
<b>PERSONS WITH NO DISABILITY</b>					
Total not in the labor force.....	60,728	40,570	14,707	25,863	20,158
Persons who currently want a job.....	5,273	4,821	2,270	2,550	453
Marginally attached to the labor force <sup>1</sup> .....	2,034	1,927	1,027	900	107
Discouraged workers <sup>2</sup> .....	718	673	426	247	45
Other persons marginally attached to the labor force <sup>3</sup> .....	1,315	1,254	601	653	62

1 Data refer to persons who want a job, have searched for work during the prior 12 months, and were available to take a job during the reference week, but had not looked for work in the past 4 weeks.

2 Includes those who did not actively look for work in the prior 4 weeks for reasons such as thinks no work available, could not find work, lacks schooling or training, employer thinks too young or old, and other types of discrimination.

3 Includes those who did not actively look for work in the prior 4 weeks for such reasons as school or family responsibilities, ill health, and transportation problems, as well as a number for whom reason for nonparticipation was not determined.