

Disability Employment Statistics: 2018 Update

In 2018, Minnesotans living with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to realizing their full economic potential.



DEED's mission is to empower the growth of the Minnesota economy, for everyone, by reducing employment disparities and promoting an equitable work environment. For the Labor Market Information Office, this means paying close attention to the specific labor market challenges faced by populations with barriers to employment. This article focuses on Minnesotans with a disability, comparing and contrasting their labor market statistics with the general population and Minnesotans with no disability.

As of 2018, more than 600,000 Minnesota residents reported having at least one disability, comprising 11 percent of the state's population (Table 1). This was up from 580,494 in 2014 (10.8 percent of the total population). A little over half of Minnesotans

Table 1. Percentage of Minnesotans with Disabilities and Percent Female

Year	Total Population*	With a Disability	Percent with a Disability	Percent Female Among Those With a Disability
2018	5,553,564	608,744	11.0%	49.2%
2017	5,519,199	615,846	11.2%	48.2%
2016	5,462,438	602,014	11.0%	49.8%
2015	5,431,894	593,675	10.9%	49.2%
2014	5,398,211	580,494	10.8%	49.0%

Source: American Community Survey, one year estimates 2014 through 2018

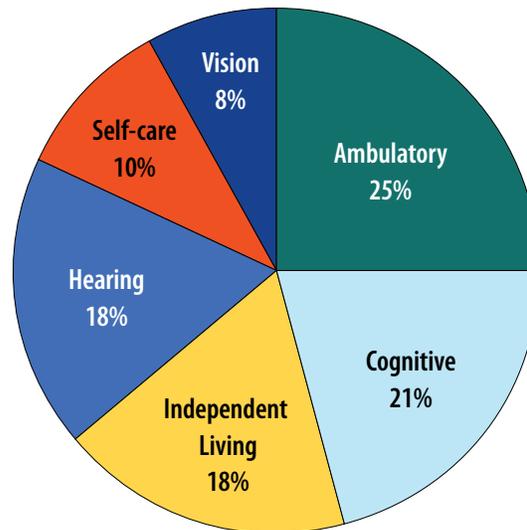
with a disability are male; the share of females increased marginally, from 49 percent in 2014 to 49.2 percent in 2018.

As Figure 1 shows, the most common disability reported was ambulatory (25 percent), followed by cognitive (21 percent), independent living (18 percent), hearing (18 percent), self-care (10 percent), and vision (8 percent).

By race and ethnicity, American Indian and Alaska Natives have the highest prevalence of disability at 15.6 percent (Figure 2). Native Hawaiians and other Pacific islanders have the second highest prevalence at 12.7 percent, followed by blacks or African Americans (12.3 percent), and whites (10.6 percent). Hispanics and Asians have the lowest prevalence rates, at 7.0 and 6.8 percent respectively.

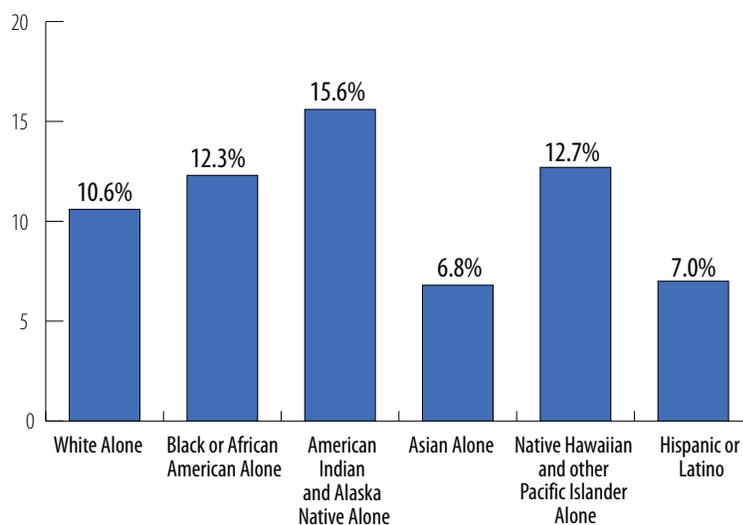
One of the best indicators of economic well-being and gaps in quality of life between sub-populations is poverty status. Living with a disability is associated with an alarmingly high poverty rate. In 2018, almost a quarter of the working-age population with one or more disabilities lived below the poverty line, compared to only 7.9 percent of those with no disability. Although poverty rates have fallen since 2014 for both those with disabilities and those

Figure 1. Breakdown of Minnesotans Living with Disabilities by Type of Disability, 2014-2018



Source: American Community Survey, one year estimates 2014 through 2018

Figure 2. Percentage of Minnesotans Living with Disabilities by Race and Ethnicity, Minnesota, 2013-2017



Source: American Community Survey, five year estimates 2013 through 2017

who are temporarily able-bodied, the gap has endured over the past five years.

Living with a disability can create barriers to education, which in turn can create barriers to employment. Having a

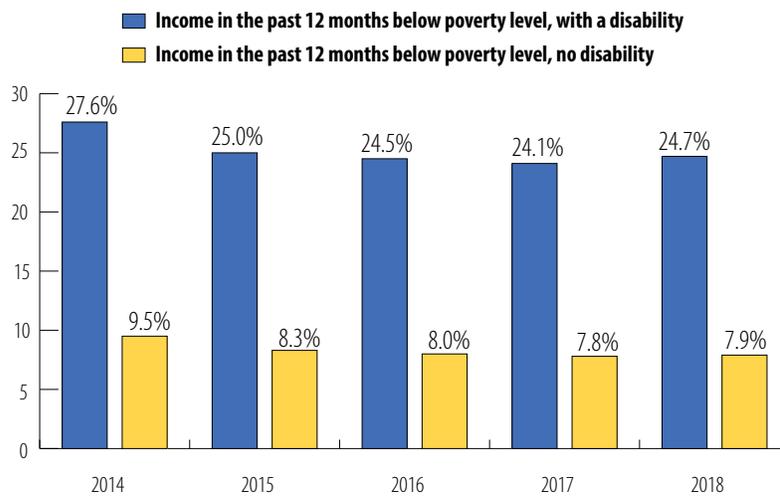
disability is associated with lower levels of educational attainment (Table 2). While 32.9 percent of Minnesotans with no disability finish their education at the high school level or less, the percentage jumps above 60 percent for people living with

self-care, independent living and cognitive disabilities.

People living with disabilities also tend to achieve lower levels of higher education. For example, while the bachelor's degree completion rate is 22.5 percent for Minnesotans with no disabilities, it is drastically lower for those with disabilities (Table 2). Those living with self-care difficulties have the lowest rate of bachelor's degree completion at 8.4 percent.

Compared to the overall Minnesota workforce, Minnesotans with a disability typically have lower levels of labor market participation, lower employment-to-population ratios, and substantially higher unemployment rates (Table 3). In 2018, the annual unemployment rate for Minnesotans living with a

Figure 3. Disability, No Disability, and Poverty Status: Minnesota, Age 18-64



Source: American Community Survey, one year estimates 2014 through 2018

Table 2. Educational Attainment by Disability Status in Minnesota, 2013-2017

	Up to (and including) High School Diploma/GED	Some College, No Degree	Associate	Bachelor	Masters, Professional or Doctoral
With disability					
Vision	55.5%	20.2%	7.5%	10.5%	6.4%
Hearing	52.6%	20.8%	7.3%	12.2%	7.0%
Ambulatory	57.2%	21.1%	6.9%	9.9%	4.9%
Independent living	63.1%	18.5%	5.7%	8.5%	4.3%
Self-care	63.2%	18.1%	5.4%	8.4%	4.8%
Cognitive	60.7%	20.7%	6.4%	8.6%	3.6%
No disability	32.9%	23.2%	10.7%	22.5%	10.7%

Source: American Community Survey, one year estimates 2013-2017, and ipums.org online analyze data tool

disability was 9 percent, more than double that of the general population, which was 3.4 percent.

On the positive side, the unemployment rate of Minnesotans with disabilities declined more rapidly between 2014 and 2018, down by 2.2 percentage points, than for the total population over the same time period, down 1.2

percentage points. The annual labor force participation rate in 2018 was 84 percent for all Minnesotans, but only 54.1 percent for Minnesotans living with disabilities. However, the labor force participation rate for Minnesotans living with disabilities increased 4.1 percentage points over the five-year period, up from 50 percent in 2014, whereas the participation rate for all

Minnesotans has remained stagnant over the same time period (Table 3).

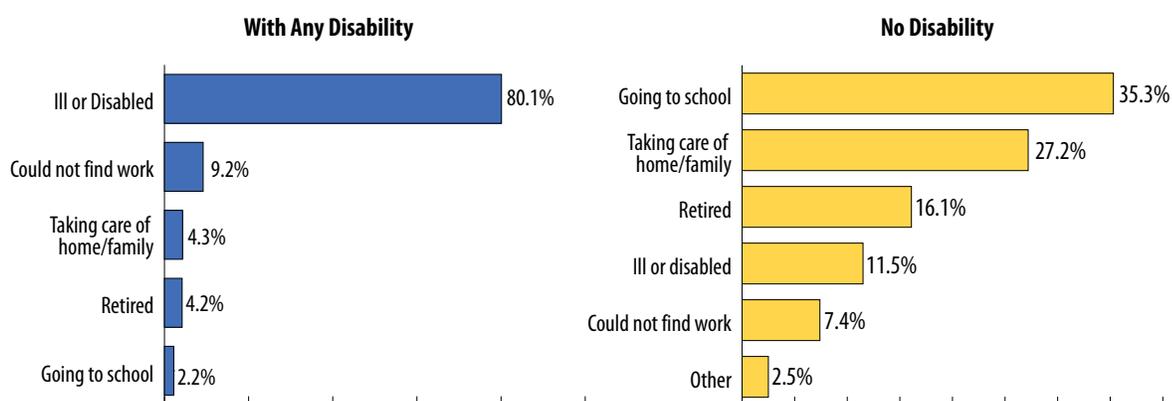
What employment barriers do people living with disabilities face? Figure 4 shows that among non-participants, 80 percent of disabled people cite ill health and disability as the reason for not working or looking for work compared to only 11.5 percent of those with no disability.

Table 3. Labor Force Indicators for Working Age Population, Age 18 to 64, Minnesota

Year	Labor Force Participation Rate		Employment to Population Ratio		Unemployment Rate	
	All	With Disability	All	With Disability	All	With Disability
2018	84.0%	54.1%	81.2%	49.1%	3.4%	9.0%
2017	83.9%	52.0%	81.0%	47.8%	3.6%	8.1%
2016	83.8%	52.3%	80.6%	48.0%	3.7%	8.2%
2015	83.9%	52.5%	80.6%	47.5%	4.0%	9.6%
2014	83.4%	50.0%	79.6%	44.4%	4.6%	11.2%

Source: American Community Survey, one year estimates 2014 through 2018

Figure 4. Main Reason Not Looking for Work During Last Four Weeks, Age 16 to 64, Minnesota, 2014-2018



Source: Current Population Surveys (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplements (ASEC), 2014-2018

Moreover, 9.2 percent of people living with disabilities were unable to find work compared with 7.4 percent of those with no disabilities. In contrast, non-participants without any disabilities are more likely to cite reasons such as going to school, family responsibilities, and retirement.

People living with a disability who are employed tend to work fewer hours and have lower earnings than those with no disability. Table 4 shows that 78.8 percent of employed people with no disability usually work full-time while only 52.7 percent of employed people living with a disability usually work full-

time. In contrast, 47.3 percent of people living with a disability work part-time, compared to only 21.2 percent of those with no disability.

Having a disability is associated with substantially lower earnings (Table 5). Among all labor force participants with earnings in 2018, those with no disability earned \$40,370 annually at the median, while those living with disabilities earned only \$23,000. By gender, females with disabilities have the lowest median earnings at \$19,305, compared to females with no disabilities at \$33,795. Males with disabilities earn \$26,257 at the median, compared to

\$46,548 for males with no disabilities.

People living with disabilities in Minnesota tend to have lower educational attainment, worse labor market outcomes, and higher poverty rates than those with no disabilities. The critical takeaway is that people living with disability continue to face significant barriers to realizing their full economic potential.

We embrace our role in helping people with disabilities break down barriers to full and equitable employment in Minnesota. 

Table 4. Usual Hours of Work Last Year by Disability Status, Minnesota, 2014-2018

	With Any Disability (%)	With No Disability (%)
Usually full-time hours (35+ hours per week)	52.7%	78.8%
Usually part-time hours	47.3%	21.2%
Total	100%	100%

Source: Current Population Surveys (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplements (ASEC), 2014-2018

Table 5. Median Earnings in Past 12 Months (2018 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Disability Status and Sex, Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings, Minnesota

Year	With a Disability			No Disability		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
2018	\$23,000	\$26,257	\$19,305	\$40,370	\$46,548	\$33,795
2017	\$20,957	\$24,029	\$18,329	\$39,234	\$45,514	\$32,297
2016	\$19,767	\$21,914	\$16,767	\$37,142	\$42,423	\$31,378
2015	\$19,681	\$22,927	\$15,860	\$35,986	\$41,757	\$30,410
2014	\$19,253	\$23,632	\$14,638	\$35,184	\$41,189	\$29,732

Source: American Community Survey, one year estimates 2014 through 2018