

Impact of the Federal Disability Laws
Survey of Attitudes among the General Population of Minnesota

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Contents	Page
Background and Objectives	2
General Population Awareness, Familiarity and Attitudes Towards People with Developmental Disabilities	5
General Population Awareness, Familiarity and Impact of ADA, DD Act and IDEA	10
General Population Past, Present and Future Perceptions of Education, Employment and Financial Wellbeing	17
General Population Concerns About Abuse	19
Conclusions	20

Background and Objectives

The assignment:

According to the GCDD's current Five-Year Plan for FFYs 2017-2021, the following Goal Statement applies to Customer Research: Conduct or commission research studies to measure and assess quality outcomes of the federal DD Act through annual qualitative and quantitative surveys on new topics and issues or further research on topics and issues previously studied.

During January to March 2020, three surveys were conducted to fulfill the requirements of the Five Year State Plan for FFYs 2022-2026. Please note that all attitudes and opinions from these studies were taken prior to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These three reports provide the foundation for the next Five Year State Plan. This report is entitled: Impact of the Federal Disabilities Laws: Survey of Attitudes among the General Population of Minnesota.

Forthcoming reports are entitled:

- Attitudes Regarding Quality of Life For People with Developmental Disabilities Among Advocates and Self-Advocates
- The Voice of Service Providers for People with Developmental Disabilities in Minnesota

Survey Population

The sample frame used to generate a representative sample for this survey was an online panel of Minnesotans. Quota controls were used to ensure that the sample of survey respondents closely matched the demographics and geographic dispersion of the Minnesota general population, as determined by recent census parameters.

The panel itself is generated and constantly expanded in a random fashion that enables representation of the Minnesota population. Panel members go through a stringent profiling survey with logical traps and other security checks in order to maintain the integrity of the panel. The current size of the panel is approximately N=25,000 Minnesotans.

Respondents were asked:

Which region of the state do you currently live in?	Total sample: (n=920)	Census parameters
Northeast	8%	7%
Northwest	5%	4%
Central	6%	6%
West Central	8%	8%
Metro	54%	61%
Southwest	4%	3%
Southeast	16%	11%

Type of geographic location	Total sample: (n=920)
Twin Cities Suburb	33%
Minneapolis and St. Paul	21%
Small city (such as Duluth, Grand Forks, Mankato, Fargo Moorhead, Rochester, St. Cloud)	20%
Small town	15%
Rural	11%

Efforts were made to administer this survey among racial and ethnic minority communities in Minnesota, while achieving a final survey sample that closely matches the age, race, ethnic and gender diversity of the Minnesota adult population.

Age	<u>Total sample: (n=920)</u>	<u>Census parameters</u>
18-24	9%	11%
25-34	20%	19%
35-44	23%	16%
45-54	16%	19%
55-64	17%	17%
65-74	12%	12%
75+	3%	8%

Race or Ethnicity	<u>Total sample: (n=920)</u>	<u>Census parameters</u>
White, Caucasian	74%	81%
Black, or African American	7%	6%
Hispanic or Latino	6%	5%
Asian	5%	1%
East African	6%	
Indigenous or Alaska Native	5%	5%

Identification	<u>Total sample: (n=920)</u>
Male	41%
Female	59%
Other	1%

General Population Awareness, Familiarity and Attitudes Towards People with Developmental Disabilities

Survey Introduction

2020 Survey introduction to all respondents:

One current issue in Minnesota concerns services for people with developmental disabilities. A developmental disability is a severe, chronic disability from birth; manifested before age 22; attributable to a mental or physical impairment or a combination of mental and physical impairments; likely to continue indefinitely; results in substantial functional limitations in three or more major life activity areas; and reflects the individuals' need for services, supports or assistance of lifelong or extended duration and is individually planned and coordinated.

The geographic dispersion as well as age, race, ethnic and gender diversity of respondents to the survey closely matched that of the general population of Minnesota. Given this sampling, the results of this survey are representative of the attitudes and opinions of the general population of Minnesota.

Familiarity with Developmental Disabilities

Approximately three out of four Minnesotans (73%) know someone who was thought to have a developmental disability. Of the 9% who said they themselves have a developmental disability, it may be that the majority of these respondents have a disability other than a developmental disability.

Familiarity with Developmental Disabilities	<u>Total sample: (n=920)</u>
Very familiar	32%
Somewhat familiar	40%
Slightly familiar	19%
Not at all familiar	9%

Have you ever known of a person who was thought to have developmental disabilities?	<u>Total sample: (n=920)</u>
Yes	73%
No	19%
Not sure	8%

Characterization of relationship with person with developmental disabilities	Total sample: (n=668)
Me, respondent	9%
Family member	25%
Related to me	15%
Related to friend of family	19%
Related to neighbor	7%
Related to casual acquaintance	7%
Related to person at work	3%
Other	15%

Attitudes Towards People with Developmental Disabilities

Respondents rated the extent to which they *agreed* or *disagreed* (on a one to five rating scale) with several statements related to people with developmental disabilities and selected quality of life issues. The original study was conducted in 1962 and has been replicated in 2007, 2012, 2017 and 2020.

Minnesotan’s Attitudes Regarding People with Developmental Disabilities

Minnesotans have very positive attitudes regarding the importance and value to society of inclusion and supports for people with developmental disabilities.

Over 85% agree with the following statements regarding including people with developmental disabilities in society, that it is important to help people with developmental disabilities live to their full potential and people with developmental disabilities have the potential to be productive workers.

- Eighty-nine percent agree that people with developmental disabilities should be included in public places and social events.
- Eighty-eight percent agree that society should do everything in its power to help those who are most vulnerable.
- Eighty-eight percent agree that when society helps people with disabilities live to their highest potential, we’re all better off.
- Eighty-seven percent agree that with the right education or training, most people with developmental disabilities could be very productive workers.
- Eighty-six percent have a lot of respect for companies that employ people with developmental disabilities.

Over three quarters (76%) agree that parents of children with developmental disabilities cannot be expected to provide all necessary services themselves

Differences of opinions were revealed regarding the rights of people with developmental disabilities to live on their own, and who should bear the costs of supports.

- Twenty-five percent of the general population of Minnesota agree with the statement that People with developmental disabilities should not be allowed to live on their own; they need to be closely monitored.

There is less certainty and more differences of opinions among the general population of Minnesotans regarding parental responsibility, voting rights and inclusion of students with developmental disabilities in classes with other students.

- Forty percent agree strongly that people with developmental disabilities should be allowed to vote.
- Fifty-two percent agree that everyone would be better off if school-aged children with developmental disabilities were taught together in the same classes as other children.
- Sixteen percent agree that if someone has a child with a developmental disability that is their problem. There's really no reason why the rest of us should have to pay any of the extra costs of raising that child.
- Sixteen percent agree that too much taxpayer money is being spent on developmental disabilities.

Attitudes Regarding People with Developmental Disabilities	Total sample: (n=920)				
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
People with developmental disabilities should be included in public places and social events	2%	3%	6%	20%	69%
Society should do everything in its power to help those who are most vulnerable	2%	3%	8%	24%	64%
When society helps people with disabilities live to their highest potential, we're all better off	1%	3%	8%	26%	62%
With the right education or training, most people with developmental disabilities could be very productive workers	2%	4%	7%	33%	54%
I have a lot of respect for companies that employ people with developmental disabilities	2%	2%	9%	20%	66%
Parents of children with developmental disabilities cannot be expected to provide all necessary services themselves	3%	7%	15%	37%	39%
People with developmental disabilities should be allowed to vote	3%	9%	17%	31%	40%
Everyone would be better off if school-aged children with developmental disabilities were taught together in the same classes as other children	6%	15%	28%	31%	21%
People with developmental disabilities should not be allowed to live on their own; they need to be closely monitored	20%	27%	28%	15%	10%
If someone has a child with a developmental disability that's their problem. There's really no reason why the rest of us should have to pay any of the extra costs of raising that child	45%	20%	19%	10%	6%
Too much taxpayer money is being spent on people with developmental disabilities	35%	25%	24%	10%	6%

Compared to the 2017 results some attitudes have shown an increase:

- More people today agree that parents of children with developmental disabilities cannot be expected to provide all necessary services themselves
- People with developmental disabilities should be allowed to vote
- Everyone would be better off if school-aged children with developmental disabilities were taught together with children without disabilities in the same classes.

Compared to the 2017 results the only attitude that has shown a decline in the last three years is:

- I have a lot of respect for companies that employ people with developmental disabilities.

Attitudes Over Time Regarding People with Developmental Disabilities	Percent who Agree Strongly or Agree Somewhat		
	A 2012 (n=285)	B 2017 (n=1,001)	C 2020 (n=920)
People with developmental disabilities should be included in public places and social events	97% BC	90%	89%
Society should do everything in its power to help those who are most vulnerable	94% BC	87%	88%
When society helps people with disabilities live to their highest potential, we're all better off	96% BC	90%	88%
With the right education or training, most people with developmental disabilities could be very productive workers	90%	87%	88%
I have a lot of respect for companies that employ people with developmental disabilities	98% BC	92% C	87%
Parents of children with developmental disabilities cannot be expected to provide all necessary services themselves	77% B	69%	76% B
People with developmental disabilities should be allowed to vote	70% B	61%	70% B
Everyone would be better off if school-aged children with developmental disabilities were taught together in the same classes as other children	Did not ask	48%	54% B
People with developmental disabilities should not be allowed to live on their own; they need to be closely monitored	26% B	15%	22% B
If someone has a child with a developmental disability that's their problem. There's really no reason why the rest of us should have to pay any of the extra costs of raising that child	7%	12% A	15% AB
Too much taxpayer money is being spent on people with developmental disabilities	14% B	10%	15% B

ABC Indicates statistically significant differences between columns at the 95% confidence level

General Population Awareness, Familiarity and Impact of ADA, DD Act and IDEA

Awareness and Familiarity with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The ADA has the highest level of awareness among the general population of Minnesota compared to the DD Act and IDEA.

Awareness of ADA, DD Act and IDEA	Total sample: (n=920)		
	Yes	No	Not sure
ADA	74%	16%	10%
DD Act	24%	52%	25%
IDEA	25%	54%	21%

Familiarity of ADA, DD Act and IDEA among those who are aware	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Aware but not at all familiar
ADA Sample size: (n=684)	28%	48%	24%
DD Act Sample size: (n=218)	30%	45%	25%
IDEA Sample size: (n=229)	38%	45%	17%

When was the ADA Passed?

Twenty five percent of those who were aware of the ADA were correct that it was passed 30 years ago.

	Sample size among those who are aware of the ADA: (n=684)
Within the past 10 years	13%
About 20 years ago	24%
About 30 years ago	25%
About 40 years ago	9%
About 50 years ago	5%
More than 50 years ago	2%
Don't know, no idea	22%

When was the DD Act Passed?

Only two percent of those who were aware of the DD Act were correct that it was passed 50 years ago.

	Sample size among those who are aware of the DD Act: (n=218)
Within the past 10 years	17%
About 20 years ago	29%
About 30 years ago	28%
About 40 years ago	6%
About 50 years ago	2%
More than 50 years ago	4%
Don't know, no idea	14%

When was the IDEA Passed?

Thirteen percent of those who were aware of IDEA were correct that it was passed 45 years ago.

	Sample size among those who are aware of the IDEA: (n=229)
Within the past 15 years	21%
About 25 years ago	27%
About 35 years ago	25%
About 45 years ago	13%
About 55 years ago	3%
More than 55 years ago	0%
Don't know, no idea	11%

ADA, DD Act and IDEA Descriptions

Respondents were provided with brief descriptions of the ADA, DD Act and IDEA in order to get an overview of each law.

The ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990 (30 years ago). The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

The DD Act

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) became law in 1970. The purpose of the DD Act is to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of, and have access to, needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life, through culturally competent programs authorized under the law.

The IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975 is a four-part piece of federal legislation that ensures students with a disability are provided with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that is tailored to meet their individual needs, provides funding to help states provide special education and related services; and state grants to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers and their families. Overall, the goal of IDEA is to provide students with disabilities the same opportunity for education as those students who do not have a disability.

Overall Impact of ADA, DD Act, IDEA

Over two-thirds of the general population believe that laws passed on behalf of people with developmental disabilities have had a positive impact on the community as a whole. There is a perception that the ADA has had the strongest positive impact with 77% of respondents providing a very positive or somewhat positive rating. Sixty-six percent of respondents gave the DD Act a positive rating and 70% gave IDEA a positive rating.

Overall effect of the ADA, DD Act and IDEA on the community as a whole.	Total sample: (n=920)		
	ADA	DD Act	IDEA
Very positive overall	34%	31%	36%
Somewhat positive	43%	35%	34%
Neutral, no impact either way	19%	29%	25%
Somewhat negative	3%	3%	4%
Very negative overall	2%	1%	1%

Open Ended Comments Regarding the ADA

The two most common themes from open ended comments regarding the ADA had to do with opportunity and access to resources, and Inclusion.

ADA impact on community as a whole Coded open end responses	Total sample: (n=920)
Opportunity and access to resources	22%
Inclusion	19%
Equal rights	8%
Awareness	7%
Protection	4%
Small town, no impact or awareness	3%
Family support	1%
No answer	41%

The ADA provides people with developmental disabilities the support to get what they want out of life

“All people have basic human rights and that should be protected. Also it gives people with disabilities a chance to get what they want out of life, like we all do.”

“I feel people with disabilities have more opportunities and help available these days than was available years ago.”

“The ADA allows people with disabilities the right to pursue happiness just like the rest of us and it helps their entire family be able to get out and work and enjoy life too.”

“Meeting ADA specifications allows people with disabilities accessibility to opportunities they may not have had or may not have had as easily without these accommodations.”

The general population is more compassionate and understanding towards people with developmental disabilities

“It helps others without disabilities be more compassionate and accepting of people with disabilities.”

“We all benefit from the addition of as many perspectives as possible.”

People with disabilities have more opportunities to be productive members of society

“We have many people with developmental disabilities in our small town (10,000) and some are employed at small businesses. This gives them dignity and pride, making them productive members of our community.”

“The ADA provides people with disabilities a fair and fighting chance to be productive members of society.”

Some communities have not embraced the tenets of the ADA

“No one in my community cares about the disabled or the homeless or seniors or battered women.”

Open Ended Comments Regarding the DD Act

The two most common themes regarding the DD Act had to do with opportunity and access to resources, and inclusion. This suggests a correlation between the ADA and the DD Act and these two themes.

DD Act impact on community as a whole (Coded open end responses)	Total sample: (n=920)
Opportunity and access to resources	19%
Inclusion	12%
Equal rights	6%
Family support	5%
Awareness	4%
Small town, no impact or awareness	3%
Protection	2%
No answer	55%

“We all do better when we all do better.” (Senator Paul Wellstone)

“I believe that we all do better when we all do better, so a law that helps those in one segment of the population helps us all. Any one of us could find ourselves disabled at any point, so by supporting laws that support the disabled, we are really supporting ourselves.”

“It has had a positive impact because it has allowed families to get the assistance they’ve needed and allowed for better acceptance of people with developmental disabilities and increased the general public’s overall knowledge.”

There is more work to be done

“I think including people with disabilities in the planning process is great, but there is still work to be done to ensure everything is accessible.”

“I don’t really think the Act has been enforced where I live. I do think better efforts needs to be undertaken.”

The DD Act provides opportunities for people with developmental disabilities and their families to lead more independent and productive lives

“People are able to have their own homes and are able to work for a living rather than being swept under the rug so to speak.”

“Having a disability can be a huge financial burden on a family and they shouldn’t have to suffer due to raising or taking in a person with a disability.”

Open Ended Comments Regarding the IDEA

Overall common themes from open ended comments regarding IDEA had to do with resources, an equal right to education, and an education that is personalized to a student's needs and inclusion.

IDEA impact on the community as a whole	Total sample: (n=920)
Coded open end responses	
Resources	16%
Right to equal education	13%
Inclusion	12%
Personalized education	11%
No answer	55%

Education that meets individual needs enhances the learning experience and decreases discrimination

"I work as a paraprofessional in a special education program in an elementary school. Our students are in the severe to profound range, and are separated for the academics, but join their classmates for music, gym, art, media center, classroom parties, and field trips. The interaction between students without disabilities and our students is amazing."

"Everyone is worthy of an education presented in a way that fits their needs."

"Every child should have the right, regardless of a disability, to have schooling that will greatly enhance their lives in this world, without discrimination."

Some understand the importance of IDEA, but are skeptical that funds are being used appropriately

"I think that IDEA is a solid foundation for ensuring that special needs children receive appropriate education. That being said, the school system must ensure that the money is appropriately allocated and appropriately used."

Early interventions help young students with disabilities prepare for education with students without disabilities

"Everyone should be able to have an education and for those with disabilities, early interventions can make a big difference in their future potential."

"People with developmental disabilities, especially the young are very vulnerable and so for them to have the same rights as any child is vital in their acceptance in society as they grow, because people are introduced at an early age and they become the norm rather than being alienated and this act helps that."

General Population Past, Present and Future Perceptions of Education, Employment and Financial Wellbeing

Past, Present, Future Outlook: Public Education

In the first two months of 2020 (before the COVID-19 outbreak), the general population of Minnesotans had a more positive impression and outlook regarding the overall quality of public education, as compared to 2012.

Overall quality of public education today compared to two years ago	2020	2012
Better today than it was 2 years ago	24%	15%
About the same today as it was 2 years ago	41%	45%
Not as good today as it was 2 years ago	12%	25%
Don't know	23%	15%

Overall quality of public education in two years compared to today	2020	2012
Better in 2 years than it is today	33%	25%
About the same in 2 years as it is today	35%	37%
Worse in 2 years than it is today	13%	24%
Don't know	19%	14%

Past, Present, Future Outlook: Employment for People with Developmental Disabilities

Compared to attitudes in 2012, in the first two months of 2020, Minnesotans were more likely to believe that employment services and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities had improved in recent years, and is a trend that is likely to continue.

Overall quality of employment services and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities today compared to two years ago	2020	2012
Better today than it was 2 years ago	33%	27%
About the same today as it was 2 years ago	40%	32%
Not as good today as it was 2 years ago	7%	28%
Don't know	21%	13%

Overall quality of employment services and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities in two years compared to today	2020	2012
Better in 2 years than it is today	38%	39%
About the same in 2 years as it is today	36%	33%
Worse in 2 years than it is today	6%	14%
Don't know	21%	13%

Past, Present, Future Outlook: Personal Financial Wellbeing Overall Today

In 2020, Minnesotans had a more positive impression and outlook regarding personal financial wellbeing overall and its quality compared to 2012.

Personal financial wellbeing overall today, compared to two years ago	2020	2012
Better today than it was 2 years ago	36%	22%
About the same today as it was 2 years ago	39%	46%
Not as good today as it was 2 years ago	18%	32%
Don't know	7%	0%

Quality of personal financial wellbeing overall in two years compared to today	2020	2012
Better in 2 years than it is today	43%	36%
About the same in 2 years as it is today	36%	48%
Worse in 2 years than it is today	10%	12%
Don't know	10%	4%

General Population Concerns About Abuse

Families with a family member with developmental disabilities are more likely to be concerned about the possibility of abuse towards someone in their family.

Concerns about abuse towards any member of your household or immediate family a concern	Total sample: (n=920)	Know a person with developmental disabilities (DD)		
		(A) DD in family (n=215)	(B) Know person with DD (n=453)	(C) Don't know person with DD (n=251)
Very concerned about the possibility of abuse toward someone in my family	17%	26% BC	15%	13%
Somewhat concerned about the possibility of abuse toward someone in my family	23%	29% BC	21%	20%
Not at all concerned about the possibility of abuse toward anyone in my family	51%	39% BC	58%	51%
Don't know, not sure	9%	7%	6%	16% AB
ABC Indicates statistically significant differences between the two populations at the 95% confidence level.				

Concerns About Types of Abuse

Respondents with a family member with developmental disabilities are statistically significantly more likely to be very concerned or somewhat concerned about verbal and emotional abuse, physical abuse, financial exploitation and sexual abuse compared to people who don't know a person with developmental disabilities.

Level of concern about each of the following forms of abuse (Percent who are very concerned or somewhat concerned)	Total sample: (n=920)	Know a person with developmental disabilities (DD)		
		(A) DD in family (n=214)	(B) Know person with DD (n=453)	(C) Don't know person with DD (n=249)
Verbal abuse, emotional abuse, teasing, bullying, etc.	38%	45% BC	38% C	31%
Physical abuse such as shoving, hitting, etc.	31%	38% BC	29%	28%
Neglect, lack of food or clothing	28%	34% B	26%	27%
Physical restraint and seclusion	28%	36% B	27%	24%
Financial exploitation	31%	37% BC	30%	29%
Inappropriate touch or other forms of sexual abuse	32%	36% C	33%	28%
ABC Indicates statistically significant differences between the two populations at the 95% confidence level.				

Conclusions

Attitudes Towards People with Developmental Disabilities

- Over 85% of the general population agree that:
 - People with developmental disabilities should be included in public places and social events
 - Society should do everything in its power to help those who are most vulnerable
 - When society helps people with disabilities live to their highest potential, we're all better off
 - With the right education or training, most people with developmental disabilities could be very productive workers
 - I have a lot of respect for companies that employ people with developmental disabilities
- Compared to 2017, more people today agree that:
 - Parents of children with developmental disabilities cannot be expected to provide all necessary services themselves
 - People with developmental disabilities should be allowed to vote
 - Everyone would be better off if school-aged children with developmental disabilities were taught together in the same classes with children without disabilities
- Since 2017 there has been a decline in people having a lot of respect for companies that employ people with developmental disabilities.
- Also, since 2017, there is a stronger minority of people who agree that:
 - People with developmental disabilities should not be allowed to live on their own; they need to be closely monitored
 - If someone has a child with a developmental disability, that's their problem. There's really no reason why the rest of us should have to pay any of the extra costs of raising that child
 - Too much taxpayer money is being spent on people with developmental disabilities

Awareness, Familiarity and Impact of ADA, DD Act and IDEA

- The ADA has the highest level of awareness among the general population compared to the DD Act and IDEA.
- Over two-thirds of the general population believe that laws passed on behalf of people with developmental disabilities have had a positive impact on the community as a whole.

Past, Present and Future Perceptions

- Compared to 2012 perceptions, in the first two months of 2020 (before the COVID-19 outbreak), the general population had a more positive impression and outlook regarding:
 - Overall quality of public education
 - Employment services and employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities
 - Personal financial wellbeing overall

Concerns of Abuse

- Families with a family member with developmental disabilities are more likely to be concerned about the possibility of abuse towards the family member.

Thank you

If you have any questions, please contact MarketResponse International

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