



New York Makes Work Pay

Developing a path to employment for New Yorkers with disabilities

New York State

Disability & Employment Status Report

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2010



2010 New York State **Disability & Employment Status Report¹**

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The mission of the New York Makes Work Pay (NYMWP) project is to involve the whole community in improving employment outcomes and increasing the financial independence of New Yorkers with disabilities. This report, developed as part of NYMWP, presents relevant and current information on disability and employment in New York State, providing our community of stakeholders a better understanding where we are now, as we continue to work toward improving outcomes for individual with disabilities.

In this report, we provide a picture of disability and employment among New York State’s working-age population.² The report presents:

- 1) Estimates of disability prevalence overall and among various groups.
- 2) Indications of where disparities exist between people with and without disabilities in employment.
- 3) Factors that may influence the employment environment of New Yorkers in general, and of New Yorkers with disabilities.
- 4) Utilization rates of programs and other mechanisms that are designed to serve people with disabilities.
- 5) Outcomes that demonstrate the importance of employment – specifically, evidence of disparities in financial security between people with and without disabilities.



Tip Most statistics presented in this report are based on the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS); other sources are described in the endnotes.

Disability Prevalence

The working-age civilian population (ages 21-64) of New York State in 2009 was 11,462,500. Of this group, 1,041,100, or 9.1 percent, report having one or more disabilities.³ The prevalence of disability⁴ in New York State is lower⁵ than the national average of 10.4 percent.

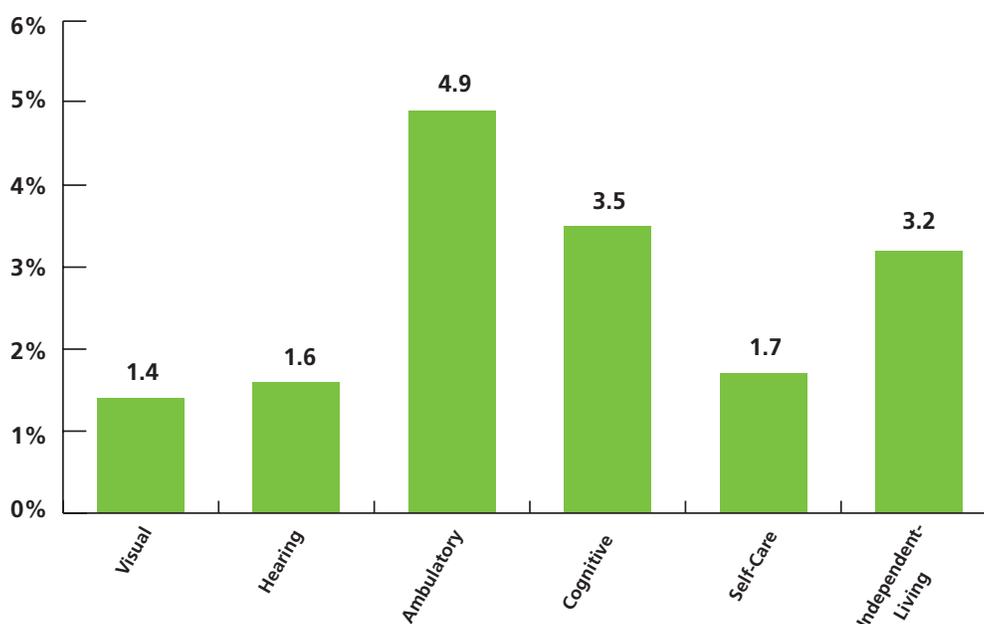
Disability prevalence increases substantially with age with 4.7 percent of transition age youth (16-24 years old) reporting a disability, compared with 16.6 percent of individuals age 55-64 (see **Exhibit 1**). The prevalence of disability among working-age people is likely to rise in the coming years, as the population ages.⁶

Exhibit 1. Disability Prevalence in New York State, by Age Group

Age Group	Disability Prevalence
16-24	4.7%
25-34	4.9%
35-44	6.4%
45-54	11.1%
55-64	16.6%

Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, 2009 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Estimates are for New York State working age (21-64) civilian noninstitutionalized population.

While the prevalence of disability among men and women is similar (9.1%), it varies significantly across racial and ethnic groups: 8.7 percent of Whites reported at least one disability compared with 18.5 percent of American Indians/Native Alaskans, 11.8 percent of African Americans/Blacks, 4.3 percent of Asians, and 11.2 percent of people who indicated another race or two or more races. Approximately, 8.8 percent of Non-Hispanics reported at least one disability, compared with 10.4 percent of Hispanics.

Exhibit 2. Disability Prevalence, by Disability Type

Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, 2009 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Estimates are for New York State working age (21-64) civilian noninstitutionalized population.

Exhibit 2 presents the prevalence of the six disability types. The most commonly reported disability types are ambulatory disabilities (4.9%) followed by cognitive disabilities (3.5%) and independent living disabilities (3.2%). Of people who reported a disability, nearly half (44.8%) reported more than one disability type.

Another subpopulation of interest is veterans, particularly those with a service-connected disability.⁷ In New York State, there are 513,700 veterans, of whom 72,900 (14.2%) have a service-connected disability.

Employment Situation

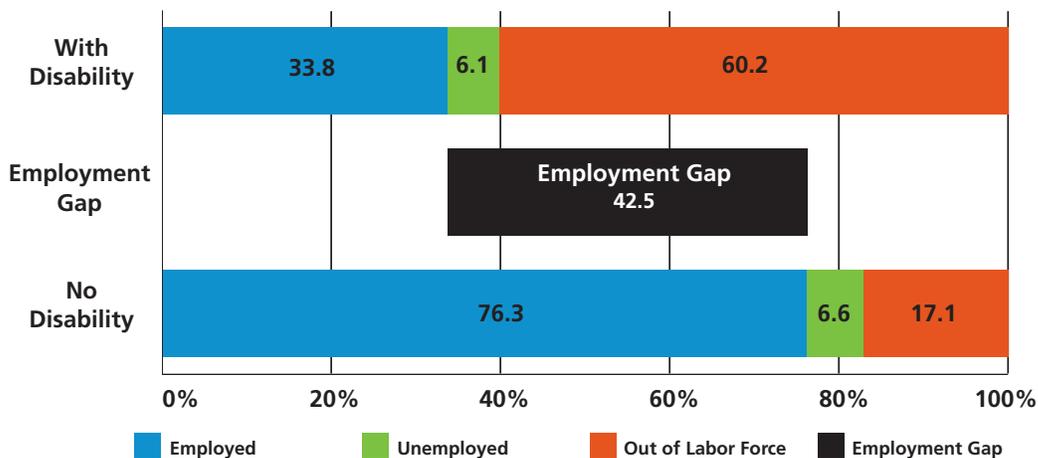
With a better understanding of the prevalence of disability and the demographic characteristics of people with disabilities, we now explore how the employment situation of people with disabilities differ from that of their peers without disabilities.

Employment Rates

The employment rate for people with disabilities in New York State is 33.8 percent, compared with 76.3 percent for people without disabilities, a gap of 42.5 percentage points.⁸ Exhibit 3 presents the employment rates (in blue) and highlights the employment gap, which is the difference in the employment rates between people without and with disabilities. The corresponding national employment rates are 35.8 percent and 76.6 percent, respectively, resulting in a gap of 40.8 percentage points.

Exhibit 3 also indicates that people with disabilities are far more likely than people without disabilities to be out of the labor force (i.e., not working and not actively looking for work) -- 60.2% vs. 17.1%, respectively. An estimated 63,000 people with disabilities are unemployed, that is, not working but actively looking for work.⁹ Among people who are not working, people with a disability were less likely to have worked at some point in the previous 12 months (10.5%) than people without a disability (29.7%).

Exhibit 3. The Employment Situation of New Yorkers, by Disability Status

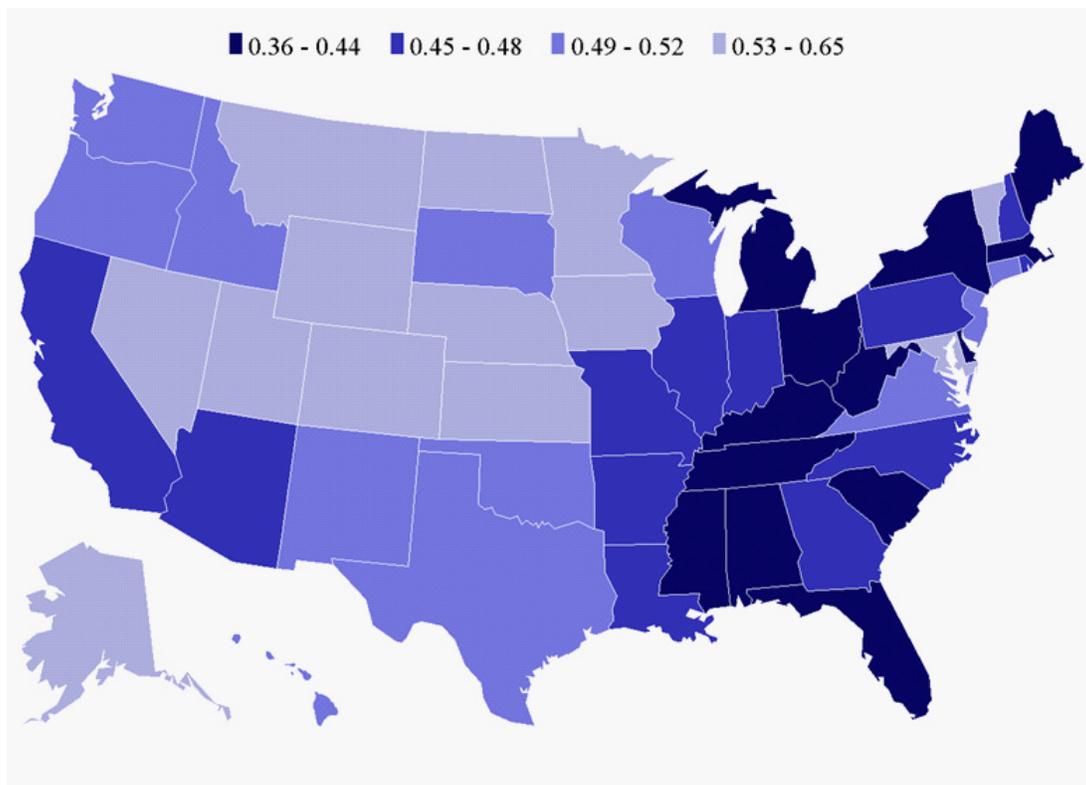


Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, 2009 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Estimates are for New York State working age (21-64) civilian noninstitutionalized population.

The employment ratio¹⁰ is another way of comparing the employment rates of people with and without disabilities. It is calculated by dividing the employment rate of persons with disabilities by that of persons without disabilities. An employment ratio of less than 1.0 means that persons with disabilities are employed at a lower rate than those without disabilities. The smaller the number, the larger the discrepancy between the two employment rates.

Working-age New Yorkers with disabilities are employed at less than half the rate (0.44) of their non-disabled peers. Exhibit 4 provides the nationwide distribution of state-wide employment ratios, showing that New York is in a group of states that fare poorly in terms of relative employment of people with disabilities.

Exhibit 4. Employment Ratios by State



Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, 2009 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Estimates are for New York State working age (21-64) civilian noninstitutionalized population.

In general, regardless of disability status, employment rates for women tend to be lower than for men. This difference holds in New York State: the employment rate for women with disabilities is 32.5 percent compared with 35.2 percent for men with disabilities. Employment rates are lower for racial/ethnic minorities with disabilities, with 29.6 percent employed compared with 36.9 percent of White, non-Hispanics. Employment rates among people with disabilities also vary across race/ethnicity minority categories: 31.8 percent for American Indians/Native Alaskans, 27.3 percent for African Americans/Blacks, 38.3 percent for Asians, and 30.3 per-

cent for people who indicated another race or two or more races, and 29.4 percent for Hispanics (regardless of race).

The employment rate varies a great deal by disability type, as **Exhibit 5** shows. In New York State, the employment rate is highest for people with a hearing disability (51.2%) and lowest for people with an independent-living disability (16.6%). People with multiple disabilities (two or more of the six disability types) had an employment rate of 18.6 percent.

Exhibit 5. Employment Rates, by Disability Type

Disability type	Employment Rate
Visual	37.1%
Hearing	51.2%
Ambulatory	26.9%
Cognitive	21.9%
Self-Care	16.8%
Independent-Living	16.6%
Two or more disabilities types	18.6%

Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, 2009 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Estimates are for New York State working age (21-64) civilian noninstitutionalized population.

We complete this section on employment rates by looking at two subpopulations of interest -- transition aged youth and veterans with service-connected disabilities. The transition from school to work life is a critical time for young people; engagement of this group in school and work is vital, as it may have an important impact on their future success. Among New York youth (ages 16-24) with disabilities, 67.3 percent are working or in school, compared with 87.6 percent of youth without disabilities.¹¹ The employment rate of veterans with a service connected disability is 54.5 percent compared with 71.2 percent among veterans without a service connected disability.

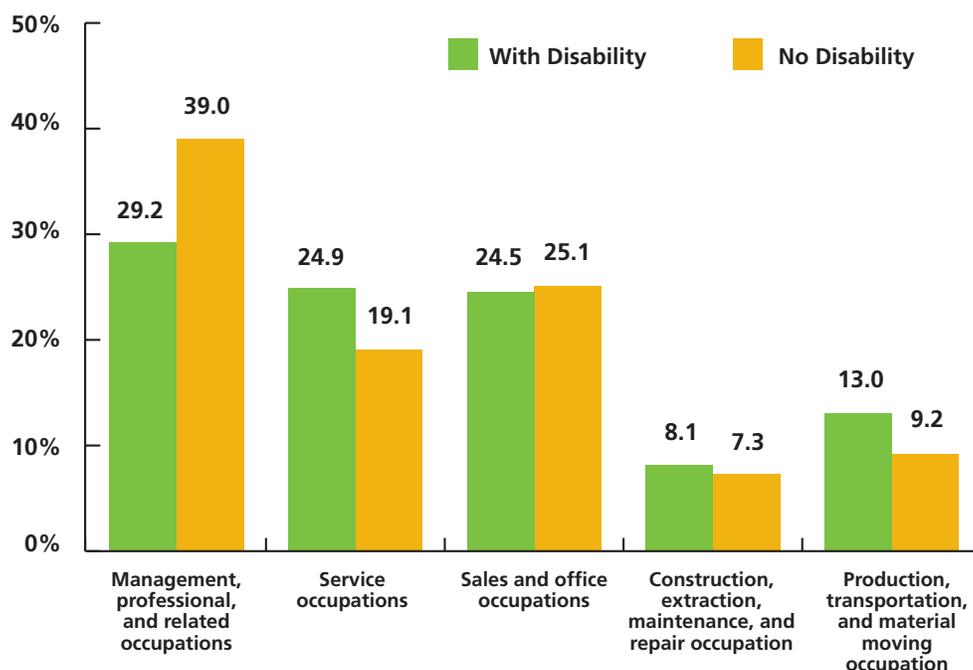
People Who are Working

There are also important differences between people with and without disabilities in their employment situations. People with disabilities are more often working part-time or are not consistently employed throughout the year. Of people with disabilities who are employed, only 62.8 percent work full-time/full-year, compared with 75.0 percent of employed people without disabilities.¹²

The disability rate of the New York State workforce overall (the fraction of the workforce ages 16 and over with at least one disability) is 4.6 percent.¹³ This varies by industry, with New Yorkers with disabilities representing 3.3% of the workforce in finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing, 3.5% of the workforce in informa-

tion, 4.8% of the retail trade workforce, 5.1% in educational services, healthcare, and social assistance – to a high of 5.9% of “other services, except public administration.”

Exhibit 6. Occupations of Working People, by Disability Status



Source: American FactFinder, Data Set: 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates S1811: Selected Economic Characteristics for the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population By Disability Status. Geographic Region: New York. Available at: <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>. Estimates based on workers age 16 and over.

Exhibit 6 presents information about the occupations of people with and without disabilities. When comparing the occupations of employed people (ages 16 and over) with and without disabilities, fewer people with disabilities (29.2%) are in management or professional occupations as compared with people without disabilities (39.0%). People with disabilities are more likely to be employed in service occupations than their non-disabled peers. The rate of self-employment among employed people with disabilities (11.4%) is similar to that of people without disabilities (9.7%).¹⁴

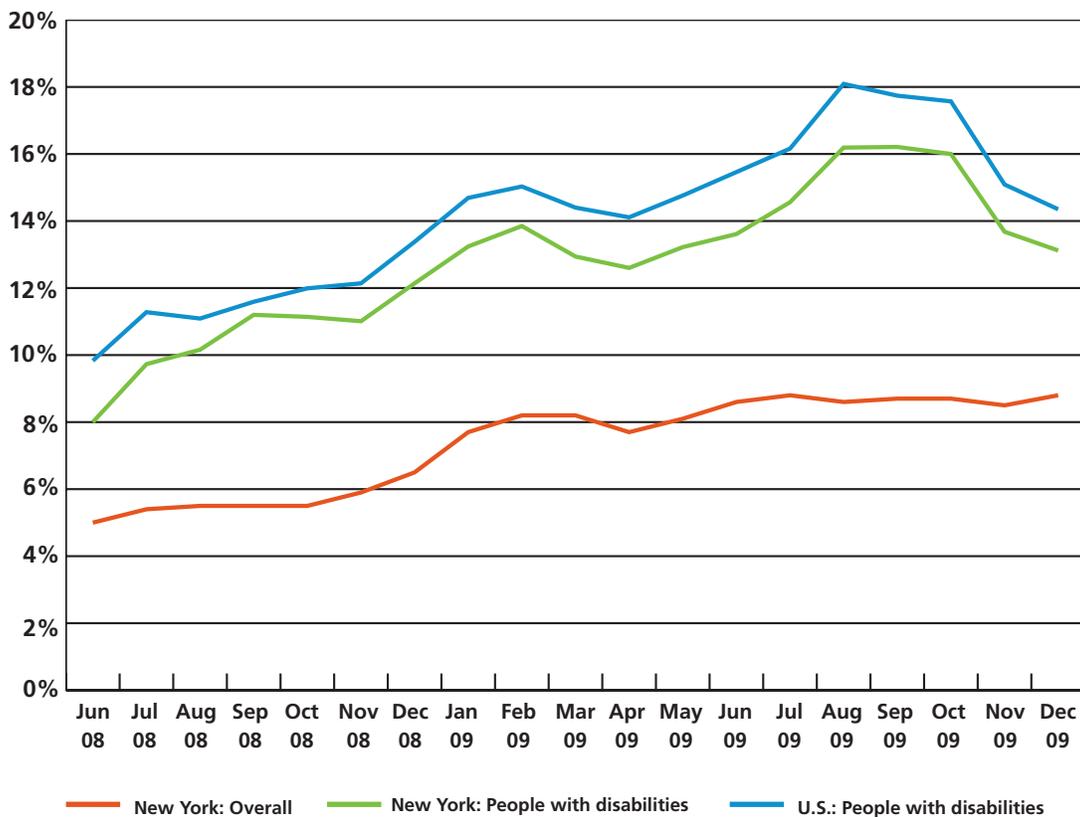
Factors that May Influence Employment Outcomes for People with Disabilities

There are several possible explanations for the employment disparities highlighted in the previous section. We will focus on a few of these factors: the current economic climate, disparities in educational attainment, the presence of discrimination in the workplace, lack of access to transportation or workplace accommodations, work incentives and disincentives and utilization of public programs focused on increasing the employment of people with disabilities.

Economic Situation

The current financial crisis has caused the economic situation in New York State to deteriorate. From September 2008 to September 2009 there was a 4.2 percent decrease in total employment in New York State.¹⁵ While the recession has had a damaging impact on the job outlook of New Yorkers in general, the impact seems to have been worse for people with disabilities.¹⁶ In 2009, New Yorkers with disabilities were more likely to be dissatisfied (70.2%) with the quality and availability of jobs in their community compared with their non-disabled peers (55.4%).¹⁷ Nearly one in four (23.6%) of people with disabilities thought employment was the most important issue facing their community, compared with 18.2 percent of people without disabilities.

Exhibit 7. Unemployment Rates: June 2008- June 2010



Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute. Data from the BLS-provided national unemployment rate for people with disabilities, by age and gender, BLS-provided Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Census Bureau-provided Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI), Employment and Training Administration-provided (ETA) series of state-specific data series about the characteristics of the insured unemployed.¹⁸ Estimates based on the civilian noninstitutionalized population, ages 16-64.

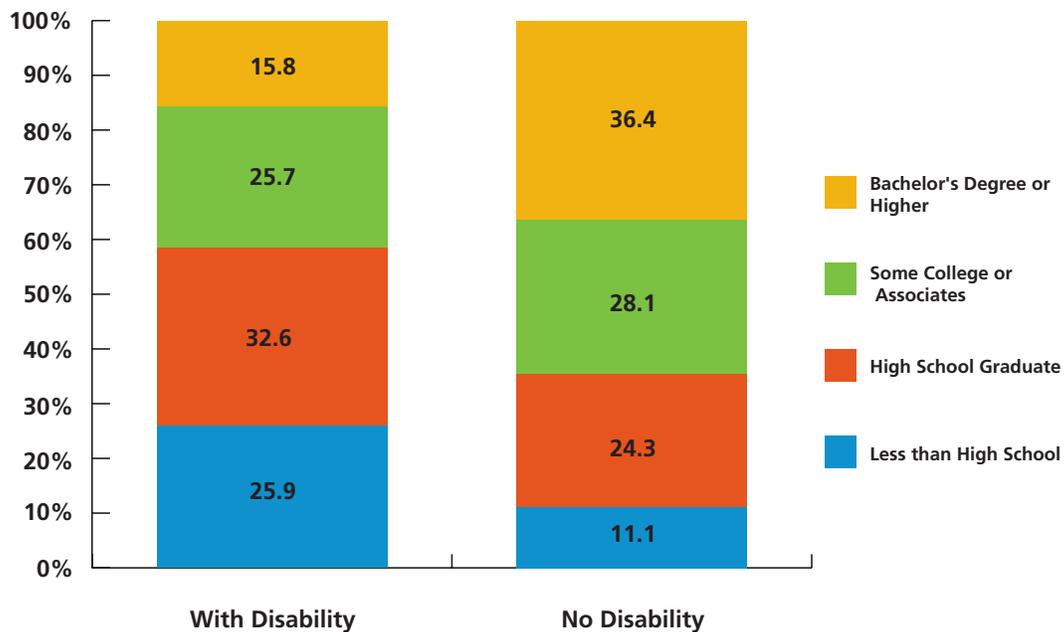
Exhibit 7 presents the overall unemployment rates from June 2008 through December 2009 for New York State in general, for people with disabilities in New York, and for people with disabilities nationwide.¹⁹ The overall unemployment rate in New York State (in red) increased from June 2008 to June 2009, and subsequently lev-

eled off. The unemployment rate has consistently been greater (both in New York and nationwide) for people with disabilities than for the overall population. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities in New York (in green) increased more than eight percentage points from June, 2008 to the peak in September, 2009.

Educational Attainment

Employment and earnings are both related to educational attainment; that is, people with higher educational attainment are more likely to be employed, earn more, and escape poverty.²⁰ Therefore, it is important to be aware of differences in educational attainment that might affect employment rates. As can be seen in **Exhibit 8**, only 15.8 percent of people with disabilities have Bachelors' degree or higher, compared with 36.4 percent of people without disabilities. Among people with disabilities, 58.5 percent have only a high school diploma or less, compared with 35.4 percent of people without disabilities.

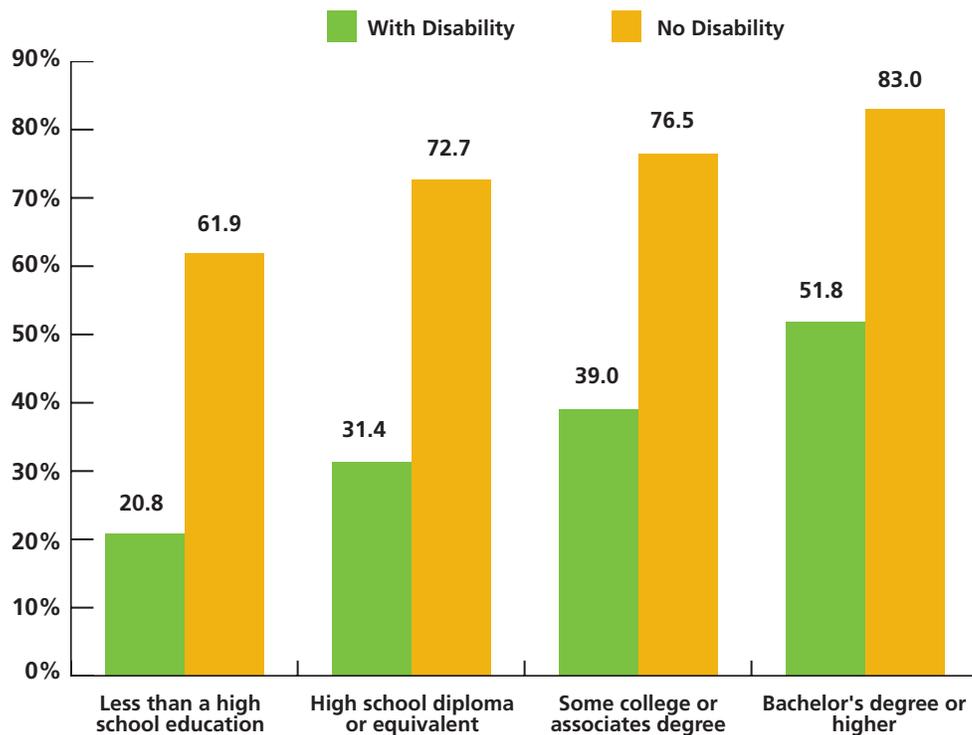
Exhibit 8. Educational Attainment, by Disability Status



Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, 2009 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Estimates are for New York State working age (21-64) civilian non-institutionalized population.

Exhibit 9 presents employment rates by educational attainment. As educational attainment increases, the employment rate increases, but the disparity between people with and without disabilities persists. Among New Yorkers with less than a high school degree, 20.8 percent of people with disabilities are employed, compared with 61.9 percent without a disability. For those who have a bachelor's degree or higher the employment rates are 51.8 percent and 83.0 percent, respectively.

Exhibit 9. Employment Rates, By Educational Attainment and Disability Status



Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, 2009 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Estimates are for New York State working age (21-64) civilian non-institutionalized population.

While higher educational attainment is associated with better employment outcomes for all youth, there seem to be key features of the transition from school to work that lead to better outcomes for youth with disabilities.²¹ Participation in paid work during school, having postsecondary goals in their Individual Education Plans, and receiving services from collaborating agencies have all been found to increase the likelihood of employment outcomes. Youth in New York State were twice as likely to be engaged in work compared with their peers in the national sample after controlling for socio-demographic variables. Educational engagement and participation in structured transition to adulthood program are positive drivers of employment for New York State youth.²²

Workplace Discrimination

Another key factor that may keep people with disabilities from fully engaging in employment is workplace discrimination. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) tracks charges of employment discrimination filed under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Aggregations of these charge data can provide some useful information about where in the employment process people with disabilities are perceiving discrimination. Recent data presented in **Exhibit 10** show the most common specific issues cited New York State charges were (in descending

order): discharge, terms and conditions, reasonable accommodation, harassment, and hiring. The most common types of specific impairments cited were (in descending order) orthopedic/structural back, other psychiatric disorders, heart/cardiovascular, diabetes, paralysis and cancer.²³

Exhibit 10. Ten Most Commonly Cited Issues and Impairments on New York State Employment Discrimination Charges: 2000-2007

Top 10 specific issues cited on NYS ADA charges	Percent of charges citing issue		Top 10 specific impairments cited on NYS ADA charges	Percent of charges citing impairment	
	NY	US		NY	US
Discharge	60.2	57.2	Orthopedic structural back	11.3	10.1
Terms and Conditions	24.2	19.5	Other psychiatric disorder	10.2	3.3
Reasonable Accom.	19.1	26.3	Heart/cardiovascular	4.7	3.5
Harassment	6.8	13.2	Diabetes	3.7	4.2
Hiring	6.0	7.3	Paralysis	3.4	0.7
Promotion	3.9	3.3	Cancer	2.9	2.7
Discipline	3.5	6.0	Nonparalytic orthopedic	2.8	7.4
Wages	3.2	2.8	Depression	2.3	6.2
Benefits	2.3	1.5	Hearing	2.3	3.1
Benefits - Insurance	1.5	0.8	Visual	2.0	2.3

Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, using the EEOC IMS files, 2000–2007. Note: Non-specific issue and basis categories (e.g. “other”) were not reported. More than one issue or impairment can be cited on a single charge.

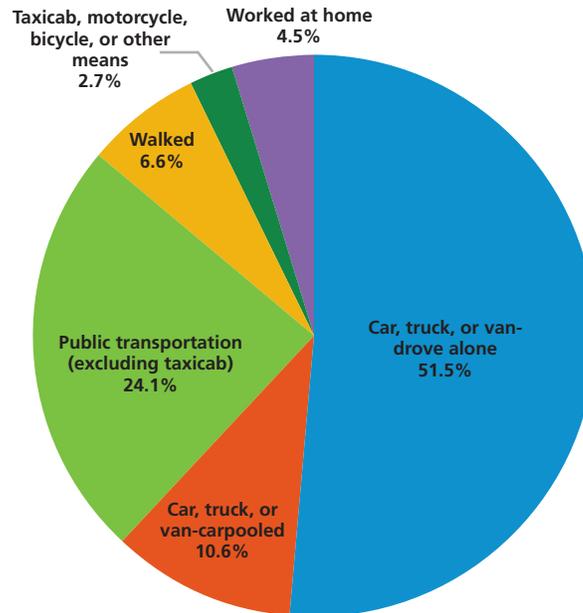
Access to Workplace Accommodations and Transportation

As noted in the previous section, failure to provide a reasonable accommodation is one of the most commonly cited issues in charges of employment discrimination under the ADA. Among employed New Yorkers with disabilities, 32.5 percent reported that their employer had provided them with some type of accommodation; and 66.7 percent of working people without a disability reported that their employers provided accommodations for workers with disabilities or health problems.²⁴

Among people with disabilities, lack of transportation is often noted as a barrier to employment.²⁵ Access to public transportation may reduce the transportation barrier. In New York State, 24.1 percent of people with disabilities take public transportation to work compared with 26.8 percent of people without disabilities. Having the option to work from home can also lessen transportation issues for people with disabilities. Approximately, 4.5 percent of working people (ages 16 and over) with disabilities work from home, compared with 3.8 percent without disabilities.²⁶

Exhibit 11 presents a further breakdown of how working people with disabilities get to work. The average travel time to work for New Yorkers both with and without disabilities is approximately one half hour (31 minutes).²⁷

Exhibit 11. How Workers with Disabilities in New York Commute to Work



Source: American FactFinder, Data Set: 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates S1811: Selected Economic Characteristics for the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population By Disability Status. Geographic Region: New York. Available at: <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>. Estimates based on workers age 16 and over.

Utilization of Programs for People with Disabilities

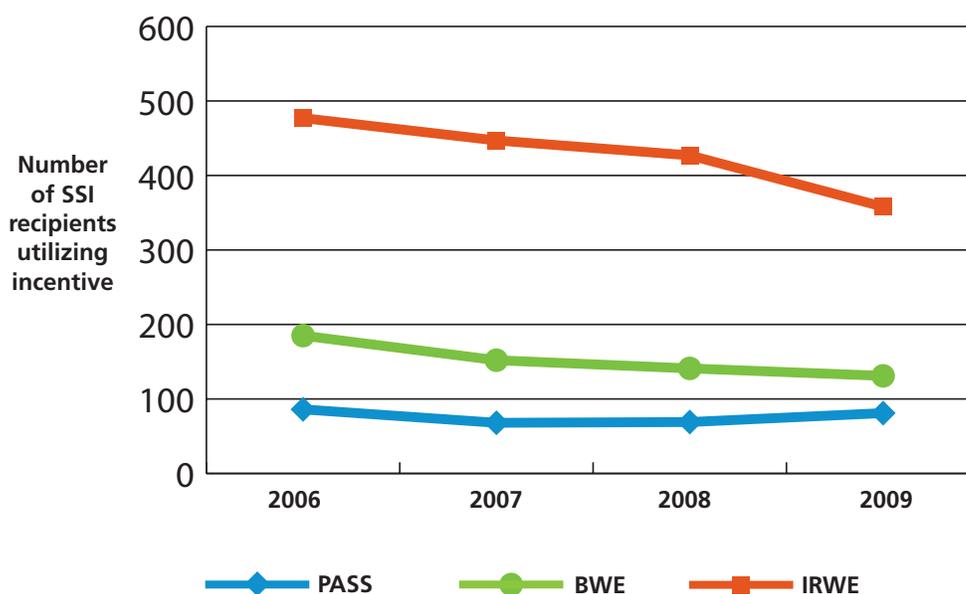
When people with disabilities are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the decision to return to work can be more difficult, as it may mean the loss of not only cash benefits but also of Medicaid or Medicare-provided health insurance. One of the goals of the New York Makes Work Pay project is to increase access to work incentives planning and health care for people with disabilities who would like to work.²⁸ In this section we present information about the use of the employment services offered by several of New York State agencies that serve people with disabilities.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

SSI is an important source of income for many working age New Yorkers with disabilities; nearly one in four (23.3%) receive it.²⁹ Across all SSI recipients in New York (not limited to working age), there was a slight decline over the last four years in the percent working, from 6.2 percent in 2006, to 6.0 percent in 2007 and 5.9 percent in 2008. Of the 543,535 SSI recipients with disabilities in New York State

in 2009, 30,304, or about 5.6 percent, worked.³⁰ During this time period there was also a decrease in utilization of Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)³¹ and Blind Work Expense (BWE) incentives, which encourage SSI recipients to work by allowing specific expenses to be deducted from the earnings used to calculate one's SSI benefit (see **Exhibit 12**). The Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS), an SSI work incentive that allows one to use income or assets to help reach work goals, had a modest increase (from 69 participants to 81) in utilization from 2008 to 2009.³²

Exhibit 12. Number of SSI Recipients Utilizing Work Incentives: 2006-2009



Source: Social Security Administration, SSI Annual Statistical Report, 2006-2009

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

In 2009, approximately 4.2 percent of the working age (18-64) population received SSDI.³³ This percent has consistently increased over the last four years, from 3.8 percent in 2006, to 3.9 percent in 2007, to 4.0 percent in 2008.³⁴ The majority of SSDI recipients are workers (as opposed to family members), with 470,786 NY workers (of any age) receiving SSDI in 2009.³⁵ From 2006 to 2009, the percent of SSDI workers who successfully returned to work decreased somewhat, while the percent of SSDI workers who had benefits withheld because of substantial work remained fairly stable.³⁶

Exhibit 13. SSDI utilization and percent with benefits withheld or terminated because of return to work

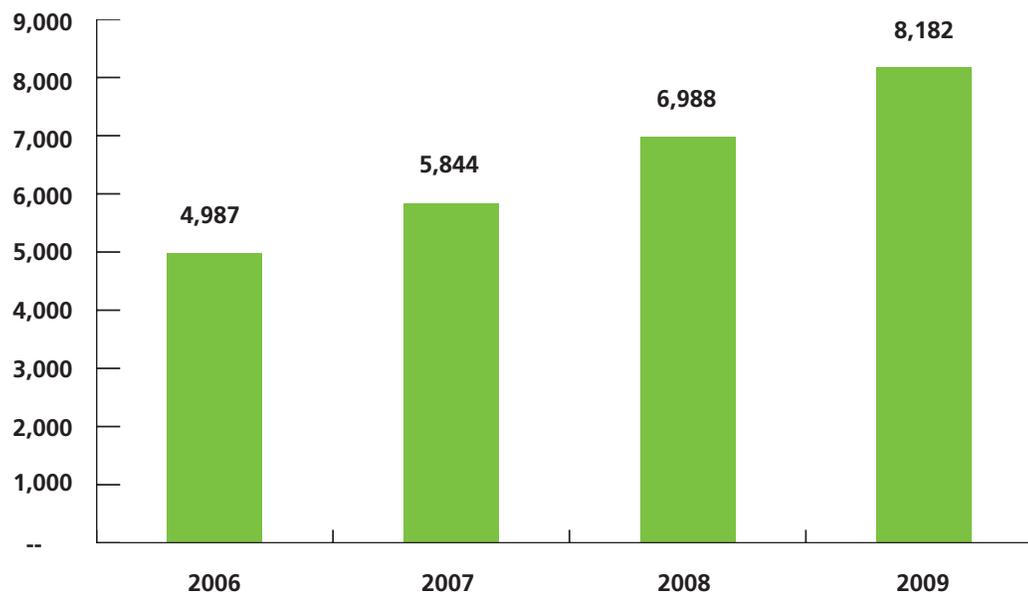
	Total SSDI recipients	Number SSDI workers	Percent of SSDI workers with benefits withheld because of substantial work	Percent of SSDI workers with benefits terminated because of successful return to work
2006	486,631	416,955	0.7	0.7
2007	503,927	433,320	0.7	0.6
2008	529,195	453,315	0.7	0.6
2009	550,468	470,786	0.7	0.4

Source: Social Security Administration, Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, 2006-2009.

Medicaid Buy-In Program for Working People with Disabilities (MBI-WPD)

Health insurance coverage has been linked to the quality of care individuals receive;³⁷ and lack of access to health care services may make life more difficult for people with disabilities. Approximately 90.0 percent of working age New Yorkers with disabilities have health insurance coverage compared with 83.5 percent of people without disabilities. However, far more people with disabilities have public health coverage (e.g., Medicaid or Medicare) (57.8%) than their non-disabled peers (12.9%). To address the concern that individuals who receive Medicaid or Medicare will lose their health insurance when they work, the MBI-WPD program allows a working person with a disability to obtain health care coverage under Medicaid.³⁸

In New York State, an estimated 369,000 people ages 16-64 are potentially eligible for this program, of whom 55,500 have no health insurance coverage.³⁹ **Exhibit 14** demonstrates that utilization of this program has been increasing over the last four years, with more than 8,100 enrollees at the end of 2009.⁴⁰

Exhibit 14. MBI-WPD Enrollment: 2006-2009

Source: Department of Health (DOH) eMedNY Data Warehouse, provided by William Armstrong, DOH. Data represent enrollments in MBI-PWD as of December 31 of each year.

Utilization and Coordination of State Agency Vocational Programs

Several New York State agencies serve people with disabilities, and while employment is not the primary mission of all of these agencies it is a component in many of their efforts. Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES-VR) and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) are the primary agencies providing or contracting for vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. The Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the Office of Mental Health (OMH), the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASAS), Department of Labor (NYSDOL) and several other state agencies also support the employment goals of people with disabilities through a variety of work/employment programs.

In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2009, ACCES-VR (formerly VESID) served more than 105,000 individuals with disabilities,⁴¹ and CBVH served 3,875 individuals with blindness or visual impairments.⁴² As of June 2008, OPWDD served over 21,600 people with developmental disabilities in work programs.⁴³ In SFY 2009, OMH served 3,643 individuals with psychiatric disabilities in ongoing integrated supported employment.⁴⁴ Over 13,000 people received some type of work related activity (e.g., vocational evaluation, training, job preparation, education, etc.) through OASAS while in treatment; and approximately 8,200 OASAS clients were employed for the first time in SFY 2009/2010.⁴⁵ The NYSDOL serves individuals with disabilities at local One-Stop Centers through two primary funding streams: the Weyser Payton Act (serving

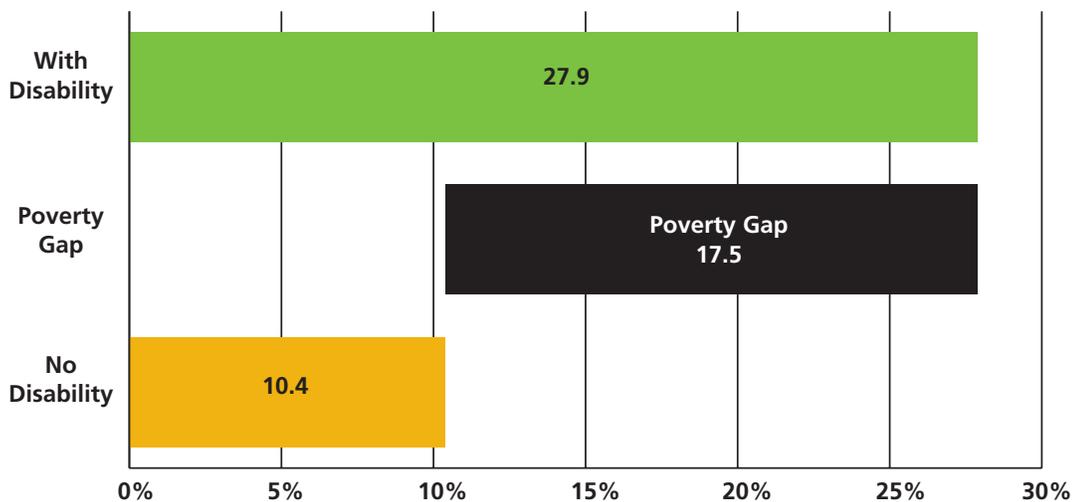
31,123 people with disabilities in program year 2008)⁴⁶ and the Workforce Investment Act (serving 15,674 adults with disabilities and 4,642 dislocated workers with disabilities in program year 2008).⁴⁷

In 2011, an exciting new cross-agency initiative, a re-designed common employment data system, will be phased in. It has the potential to improve the coordination of employment services across these agencies, as well as to provide unique benefits to job seekers with disabilities, service providers, businesses. The system will use the NYS Department of Labor’s One-Stop Operating System as a platform, tailoring this system to better serve the needs of all agency stakeholders.

Why Employment Matters – Financial Security and Independence

With economic uncertainty continuing into 2009, it is not surprising that many people do not feel financially secure. More than half (50.5%) of New Yorkers with disabilities polled in 2009 felt they were worse off financially now as compared with a year ago, a number not so different from the 46.3 percent of people without disabilities. Similarly, when looking ahead, about a third of persons with and without disabilities thought they would be better off financially in a year than they were now.⁴⁸ Examining specific indicators such as poverty rates demonstrates that people with disabilities are not enjoying the same level of financial security as their non-disabled peers.

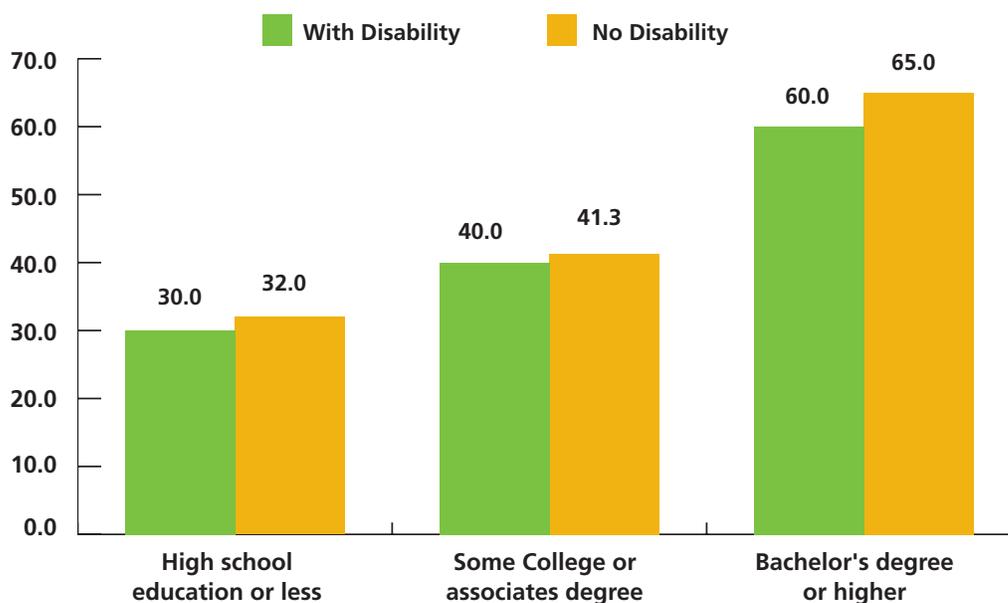
Exhibit 15. Poverty Rates, by Disability Status



Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, 2009 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Estimates are for New York State working age (21-64) civilian noninstitutionalized population.

Despite the existence of public supports such as SSI and SSDI, working age people with disabilities are 2.7 times more likely to live in poverty than their non-disabled peers. **Exhibit 15** shows that 27.9 percent of people with disabilities in New York State have an income that falls below the federal poverty level.⁴⁹ This compares to the national poverty rate for people with disabilities of 26.5 percent. The poverty rate varies across different types of disability. The highest New York poverty rate is among people with a cognitive disability (36.1%) and the lowest poverty rate is among people with a hearing disability (19.0%); poverty rates for other disability types are 30.0 percent for ambulatory disability, 31.3 percent for self-care disability, 30.2 percent for visual disability and 33.0 percent for an independent living disability. As suggested by the poverty rates presented, the median annual household income for households that include a person with a disability is lower (\$38,800), than for households that have no people with disabilities (\$66,000).

Exhibit 16. Median Income (in 1,000s of dollars) for Full-Time/Full-Year Workers by Educational Attainment



Source: Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, 2009 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Estimates are for New York State working age (21-64) civilian noninstitutionalized population.

People with disabilities are far less likely to be working full-time and full-year (21.4%) than people without disabilities (57.6%), and this likely contributes to income disparities. However, even when only people who are working full-time/full-year are included, the median income for people with disabilities is lower (\$40,000) than for people without disabilities (\$46,000). As shown in **Exhibit 16**, median income increases with educational attainment, but the disparities between people with and without disabilities remain. Among New Yorkers with a high school diploma or less, median earnings are \$30,000 for people with disabilities compared with \$32,000 for people without a disability. For those with a bachelor's degree or higher, median earnings are \$60,000 and \$65,000, respectively.

Asset accumulation is another area where people with disabilities lag behind their non-disabled peers. For example, SSI recipients are required to limit their assets, and in general, the under/unemployment of many people with disabilities makes saving difficult. The typical New Yorker without a disability reports household savings (including retirement) of \$200 per month, while the typical New Yorker with a disability reports no monthly household savings.⁵⁰ Home-ownership is a goal of many Americans, and people with a disability are less likely to live in a house that is owned by someone in the household (48.7 percent, either with a mortgage or without) as compared with people living in households without a working age person with a disability (54.5%). More than a third (35.3%) of people with disabilities live in a household where more than 40 percent of their household income is spent on housing, compared with 23.8 percent of people without disabilities.⁵¹

We have presented information from a variety of sources to demonstrate the current status of disability and employment in New York State, including information on disability prevalence and employment rates, as well as factors that may influence the employment situation, and utilization of various programs aimed at persons with disabilities. Finally, we present some information on how the financial security of people with disabilities lags behind their non-disabled peers. Improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities is key to improving the financial independence of New Yorkers with disabilities. Armed with this relevant and current information on disability and employment in New York, stakeholders will be better equipped to guide policy designed to improve the outcomes and quality of life for New Yorkers with disabilities.

Endnotes

¹ von Schrader, S., Erickson, W., Vilhuber, L., & Golden, T.P. (2010). New York State Disability and Employment Status Report - 2010. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute on behalf of New York Makes Work Pay Comprehensive Employment System Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. January, 2011.

² Except where noted, this report presents one year estimates the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS) for the civilian, non-institutionalized working age (21-64) population.

³ The 2009 ACS definition of disability is based on six questions. A person is coded as having a disability if he or she or a proxy respondent answers affirmatively for one or more of these six categories.

- Hearing Disability (asked of all ages): Is this person deaf or does he/she have serious difficulty hearing?
- Visual Disability (asked of all ages): Is this person blind or does he/she have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?
- Cognitive Disability (asked of persons ages 5 or older): Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
- Ambulatory Disability (asked of persons ages 5 or older): Does this person have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
- Self-care Disability (asked of persons ages 5 or older): Does this person have difficulty dressing or bathing?

For more information on the ACS see the following website: <http://www.census.gov/acs/>

⁴ Disability prevalence is the percentage of people reporting a disability

⁵ All comparisons (i.e., X is greater than Y; X is lower than Y; or X is similar to Y) presented in the text are based on a statistical test (with results of significantly higher, lower or no significant difference, respectively) conducted at 0.05 significance level.

⁶ Toossi, M. (November, 2009). Labor force projections to 2018: older workers staying more active. Monthly Labor Review. p. 30–51. Retrieved from the Bureau of Labor Statistics website: http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_pub_labor_force.htm

⁷ A Veteran Service Connected Disability differs from the definition of disability used elsewhere in the report and is defined as: A disease or injury determined to have occurred in or to have been aggravated by military service. A disability is evaluated according to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities in Title 38, CFR, and Part 4. Extent of disability is expressed as a percentage from 0 percent (for conditions that exist but are not disabling to a compensable degree) to 100 percent, in increments of 10 percent. This information was determined by the following two part question:

1. Does this person have a VA service-connected disability rating?
Yes (such as 0 percent, 10 percent, 20 percent, ... , 100%)
No SKIP to question 28a
2. What is this person's service-connected disability rating?

Responses included: 0 percent; 10 or 20 percent; 30 or 40 percent; 50 or 60 percent; 70 percent or higher

⁸ The employment rate is the percentage of the population that is employed. A person is considered employed if he or she is either:

1. "at work": those who did any work at all during the reference week as a paid employee (worked in his or her own business or profession, worked on his or her own farm, or worked 15 or more hours as an unpaid worker on a family farm or business) or

2. Were "with a job but not at work," : had a job but temporarily did not work at that job during the reference week due to illness, bad weather, industrial dispute, vacation or other personal reasons. The reference week is defined as the week preceeding the date the questionnaire was completed.

⁹ A person is defined as not working but actively looking for work if he or she reports not being employed but has been ACTIVELY looking for work during the last four weeks.

¹⁰ The relative employment ratio is the percent of people with disabilities that are employed, divided by the percent of people without disabilities that are employed. It expresses the relative likelihoods of being employed.

¹¹ A United Way indicator of "Productive and engaged youth"

¹² A person is considered employed full-time/full-year if he or she worked 35 hours or more per week (full-time) and 50 or more weeks per year (full-year).

¹³ American FactFinder, Data Set: 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates S1811: Selected Economic Characteristics for the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population By Disability Status. Available at: <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>

¹⁴ Self employment as reported combines the categories of: Self-employed in own incorporated business workers and Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers.

¹⁵ Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW State and County Map. Available at: <http://bit.ly/b22Ezf>

¹⁶ For a national perspective on the differential impact see: Kaye, H.S (October,2010). The impact of the 2007-2009 recession on workers with disabilities. Monthly Labor Review. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2010/10/art2full.pdf> and Fogg, N.P., & Harrington, P.E., (2010). Disability and the Great Recession The Labor Market Impacts of the Economic Recession on Persons with Disabilities. Available at: http://adaptiveenvironments.org/neada/ada_neu_research/dis_great_recession.pdf

¹⁷ Empire Poll 2009 <http://sri.cornell.edu/sri/esp.introduction.cfm>

- Every community has good points and bad points about living within it.

Thinking about availability, cost, quality, and any other considerations important to you, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you the following aspects of your community? Are you very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, satisfied, or very satisfied with ... Employment (quality and availability of jobs)

¹⁸ The Bureau of Labor Statistics does not release state-specific unemployment rates for people with disabilities. Several data sources in the US statistical system that allow us to compute this a rate. Full details of the methodology are available by emailing the Employment and Disability Institute at sv282@cornell.edu.

¹⁹ The use of unemployment is problematic for people with disabilities as a person who is not working nor actively looking for work are excluded from the unemployment calculation. The unemployment rate is the percentage of persons in the labor force who do not have a job:

$$\text{Unemployment Rate} = \frac{(\text{Number of persons who do not have a job but are actively looking for work})}{(\text{Number of persons in the labor force})} \times 100,$$

The number of persons in the labor force only includes people who have a job, are on layoff, or who actively searched for work in the last four weeks. The unemployment rate excludes "discouraged workers" - people who have given up trying to find work. People with disabilities who are not working may often fall into this category; unemployment figures may therefore exclude many persons with disabilities.

²⁰ For example, "Education Pays..." report at http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm.

²¹ A comparative analysis of transition to work for youth in New York State and a national sample drawn from the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 demonstrated that NY State efforts of engaging schools and the vocational rehabilitation system resulted in better work-related outcomes.

²² Karpur, A., Brewer, D., and Golden, T. (2010). Comparison of transition to adulthood employment outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities in New York State and the National Longitudinal Transition Study – 2. Unpublished research report produced as part of the New York Makes Work Pay Project.

²³ From 2000-2007, there were approximately 14,400 employment discrimination charges filed under the ADA in New York State and over 240,000 charges filed nationwide. For a further description of the methods used to construct the data files used for analysis, please see: Bjelland, M.J., Bruyère, S.M., von Schrader, S. Houtenville, A.J., Ruiz-Quintanilla, A. and Webber, D.A. (2009). Age and disability employment discrimination: occupational rehabilitation implications. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, published online 14 August 2009. Full text available at: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/g4503070w2x75028/>. The statistics reported in these materials are derived from data files obtained under this agreement from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The findings and their interpretation do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government (Edgar, 75.620 (b)). Summaries of data are based on our aggregations and do not represent the EEOC's official aggregation of the data.

²⁴ Empire Poll 2009 <http://sri.cornell.edu/sri/esp.introduction.cfm> [if individual has a disability and is employed] Because of your health problem or disability, does your main employer (or you if you are self-employed) do anything to assist you so that you can work more efficiently?

[if employed, no disability] To the best of your knowledge, does your main employer (or you if you are self-employed) do anything to assist workers with health problems or disabilities (i.e., flexible hours, more breaks, special equipment) so they may work more efficiently?

²⁵ For example, Livermore, Goodman, Wright, 2007, Schmidt and Smith, 2007; Magill-Evans, Galambos, Darrah, and Nickerson, 2008

²⁶ Source: American FactFinder, Data Set: 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates S1811: Selected Economic Characteristics for the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population By Disability Status. Geographic Region: New York. Available at: <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>

²⁷ Average travel time to work is calculated only for people who do not work at home. Source: one year estimates the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS) for the civilian, non-institutionalized working-age population and individuals of working age are defined as 21-64 years old.

²⁸ A series of publication on these issues are available at: <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/nymakesworkpay/m-resources.cfm>

²⁹ According to the ACS in 2009, 246,900 (22.8%) working age (18-64) New Yorkers with disabilities received SSI; this number is lower than the official number reported by the Social Security Administration, which reported 353,900 recipients ages 18-64. There are several possible explanations for this including: the ACS disability questions likely do not capture some of the people determined by the SSA to have a disability. ACS information on SSI is based on self- or proxy-report, not administrative data.

³⁰ Source: Social Security Administration, SSI Annual Statistical Report, 2006-2009. Table 41 in 2007-2009 and Table 9 and 29 in 2006. Available at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/>

³¹ Source: Social Security Administration, SSI Annual Statistical Report, 2006-2009. Table 53 in 2007-2009, Table 30 in 2006. Available at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/>

³² For more information on SSI and work incentives in general, see: http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/nymakesworkpay/docs/mig_newsletter_4.pdf, or for more information about PASS see: http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/nymakesworkpay/docs/mig_newsletter_2009summer.pdf

³³ For more information on SSDI and work, see: http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/nymakesworkpay/docs/MIG_Newsletter_3.0.pdf

³⁴ Source: Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, 2006-2009. Table 8. Available at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/>

³⁵ Source: Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, 2006-2009. Table 9. Available at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/>

³⁶ Source: Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, 2006-2009. Table 56. Available at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/>

³⁷ Institute of Medicine. (2004, January). *Insuring America's Health: Principles and recommendations*. Washington DC: IOM. Retrieved July 10, 2007 <http://www.iom.edu/Object.File/Master/17/732/Uninsured6-EnglishFINAL.pdf>

³⁸ For more information on the MBI-WPD program see: http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/nymakesworkpay/docs/MIG_Newsletter_SP09.pdf

³⁹ MBI-WPD program is limited to persons age 16-64 with a disability who are US citizens, are not SSI beneficiaries, and live in households at 250 percent or less of the poverty level. Calculations by Cornell University, Employment and Disability Institute, 2009 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS).

⁴⁰ DOH eMedNY Data Warehouse, provided by William Armstrong. Data represent enrollments in MBI-PWD as of December 31 of each year.

⁴¹ State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Supplement for Supported Employment Services Program, Attachment 4.11(b) Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served and Costs of Service. Available at: http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/adult_vocational_rehabilitation_services/state_plan/about.htm

⁴² Chapter 515 Annual Tables, 2009 Draft, provided by Frank Coco and John R. Wiechec, NYSED/VESID, previous published report available at: <http://bit.ly/cJzDWo>

⁴³ Chapter 515 Annual Tables, 2009 Draft, provided by Frank Coco and John R. Wiechec, NYSED/VESID, previous published report available at: <http://bit.ly/cJzDWo>

⁴⁴ Chapter 515 Annual Tables, 2009 Draft, provided by Frank Coco and John R. Wiechec, NYSED/VESID, previous published report available at: <http://bit.ly/CJzDWO>. This utilization number represents data for community providers (not state operated programs) who are either funded to provide ongoing integrated supported employment (the extended supports to those who have completed ACCES-VR (formerly VESID) funded intensive services) or receive support via the OMH PROS programs. Individuals who participate in assisted competitive employment, transitional employment, affirmative businesses, enclaves, mobile work crews, or sheltered workshops are not included (personal communication, Nov. 4, 2010 Douglas Ruderman, OMH).

⁴⁵ Personal communication, William A. Carpenter, OASAS-Bureau of Treatment and Practice Innovation, Oct 27, 2010.

⁴⁶ Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services State by State PY 2008 Performance. Available at: http://www.doleta.gov/Performance/results/wagner-peyser_act.cfm

⁴⁷ The adult and dislocated worker numbers represent program “exiters” -- those who have not received services for 90 days or have reported that they are exiting. The numbers also do not include individuals who received only self- and informational services. PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book New York, Prepared by: Social Policy Research Associates. Available at: <http://bit.ly/c2jEwr>

⁴⁸ Empire poll 2009 -- <http://sri.cornell.edu/sri/esp.introduction.cfm>

-We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you (and your household) are better off, worse off, or just about the same financially as you were a year ago?

-Now looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you (and your household) will be better off financially, worse off, or just about the same as now?

⁴⁹ The poverty measure is computed based upon the standards defined in Directive 14 from the Office of Management and Budget. These standards use poverty thresholds created in 1982 and index these thresholds to 2009 dollars using poverty factors based upon the Consumer Price Index. They use the family as the income sharing unit and family income is the sum of total income from each family member living in the household. The poverty threshold depends upon the size of the family; the age of the householder; and the number of related children under the age of 18.

⁵⁰ Median values are reported. A non-parametric significance test (Mann-Whitney) indicates that people without disabilities in general save more than people with disabilities. Access to these data was provided by Dr. Qiang Xu, New York State Department of the Budget. Empire poll 2009 -- As far as you know, on average how much does your household save each month, including savings for your retirement? <http://sri.cornell.edu/sri/esp.introduction.cfm>.

⁵¹ An indicator used by the United Way to measure financial status and independence.

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Partnering Organizations

New York State Office Of Mental Health
Employment and Disability Institute (Cornell University)
Burton Blatt Institute (Syracuse University)

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