

Americans With Disabilities US Census Information Center

On July 26 in 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed into law the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) [PDF], guaranteeing equal opportunity for people with disabilities in public accommodations, commercial facilities, employment, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications.

Population Distribution

51.2 million

Number of people who have some level of disability. They represent 18 percent of the population. Of all people with disabilities, 32.5 million, or 12 percent of the total population, had a severe disability.

11%

Percentage of children 6 to 14 who have a disability, about 4 million children.

72%

Percentage of people 80 and older with disabilities, the highest of any age group.

20%

Percentage of females with a disability, compared with 17 percent of males. On the other hand, among children younger than 15, boys were more likely than girls to have a disability (11 percent versus 6 percent).

Using or Needing Assistance

10.7 million

Number of disabled people 6 and older who need personal assistance with one or more activities of daily living (such as taking a bath or shower) or instrumental activities of daily living (such as using the telephone). This group amounts to 4 percent of people in this age category.

2.7 million

Number of people 15 and older who use a wheelchair. Another 9.1 million use an ambulatory aid such as a cane, crutches or walker.

Specific Disabilities

1.8 million

Number of people 15 and older who report being unable to see.

1 million

Number of people 15 and older who report being unable to hear.

2.6 million

Number of people 15 and older who have some difficulty having their speech understood by others. Of this number, 610,000 were unable to have their speech understood at all.

14.3 million

Number of people with limitations in cognitive functioning, or a mental or emotional illness that interferes with their daily activities. This includes those with Alzheimer's disease and mental retardation. This group comprises 6 percent of the population 15 and older.

On the Job**11.8 million**

Number of 16- to 64-year-olds who reported a medical condition that makes it difficult to find a job or remain employed. They comprise 6 percent of the population this age.

56%

Percentage of people 21 to 64 having some type of disability who were employed in the past year. The rate ranged from 82 percent of those with a nonsevere disability to 43 percent with a severe disability. For those without a disability, the rate is 88 percent.

44%

Percentage of people with a nonsevere disability who work full time, year-round. This compares with 53 percent without a disability and 13 percent with a severe disability.

Perceived Health Status**33%**

Percentage of people 25 to 64 who have a nonsevere disability and report their health as being "very good" or "excellent." This compares with 13 percent of those with a severe disability and 73 percent of those without a disability.

Income and Poverty**\$22,000**

Median earnings for people with a nonsevere disability. This compares with \$25,000 for those with no disability and \$12,800 for those with a severe disability.

18%

Percentage of people with a nonsevere disability with household incomes of \$80,000 or more. By comparison, 26 percent of people without a disability had household incomes of \$80,000 or more, with the same being true of 9 percent of those with a severe one.

11%

The poverty rate for people 25 to 64 with a nonsevere disability. This compares with 26 percent for those with a severe disability and 8 percent of those without a disability.

Living Arrangements

60%

Percentage of people 25 to 64 with a nonsevere disability who live in married-couple families. The corresponding rates are 68 percent for those without disabilities and 50 percent for people with severe disabilities.

23%

Percentage of people with a nonsevere disability who live alone or with nonrelatives. This compares with 28 percent of those with a severe disability and 19 percent without a disability.

Education

33%

The percentage of people 25 to 64 who had a nonsevere disability and were college graduates. This compares with 43 percent with no disability and 22 percent with a severe disability.

2.2 million

The number of undergraduates with a disability, as of the 2003-04 school year. These students represented 11 percent of all undergrads. See Table 275 at <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>.

Plugged In

36% and 29%

Percentages of people 15 to 64 with a severe disability who use a computer and the Internet at home, respectively. The respective figures for those without a disability are 61 percent and 51 percent.

Serving Our Nation

2.6 million

Number of veterans who received compensation for service-connected disabilities as of 2005. Their compensation for 2005 was \$24.5 billion. See Table 510 and Table 511 at <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>.

Accommodations

98%

Percent of transit buses that were ADA lift- or ramp-equipped, as of 2004. This represents an increase from 62 percent in 1995. See Table 1094 at <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>.

Source: Unless otherwise indicated, all the data are from the Americans with Disabilities: 2002 report at http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/aging_population/006809.html.