

Overview of Disabilities – Status and Data

July 25, 2012 was the 22nd anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act that was designed to provide equal opportunity for people with disabilities in public accommodations, commercial facilities, employment, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications. Disability issues are important because they affect all sectors of society. The aging population will increase the need for assistive services. In addition, there are many benefits to removing remaining barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

The U. S. Census Bureau provides these 2010 data highlights about people who have disabilities:

- 57 million people in the U. S. have a disability, equivalent to 19%.*
- 8% of children under age 15 have disabilities.*
- 17% of people aged 21-64 have disabilities.*
- 50% of people 65 and over have disabilities.*
- Among people 15 and older, 8 million have a hearing difficulty; 31 million have difficulty walking or climbing stairs; 4 million used a wheelchair and 12 million used a cane, crutches or walker.*

The U. S. Census Bureau recently released *Americans With Disabilities: 2010 – Household Economic Studies* that provides details about the role of people with disabilities and their contributions to the marketplace and roles in government policies. It explains that they make up a significant market share, with more than \$200 billion in discretionary spending. It also indicates that programs for working-age people with disabilities represent about 12% of total federal expenditures. The report explains the complexity of definitions as to whether a person does or does not have a disability, pointing out that a person may meet the criteria for having a disability under some definitions, while the same person may not meet the criteria for definition of having a disability in another. The report categorizes types of disabilities in specific domains.

Communicative Domain

1. Blind or had difficulty seeing.
2. Deaf or had difficulty hearing.
3. Had difficulty having their speech understood.

Mental Domain

1. Learning disability, an intellectual disability, developmental disability or Alzheimer's disease, senility, or dementia.
2. Some other mental or emotional condition that seriously interfered with everyday activities.

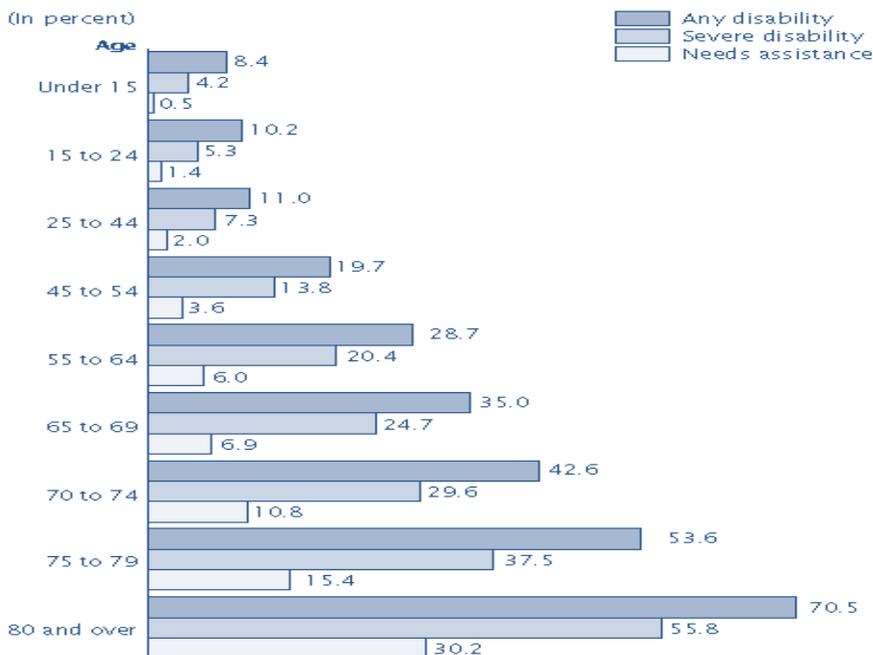
Physical Domain

1. Used a wheelchair, cane, crutches, or walker.
2. Had difficulty walking a quarter of a mile, climbing a flight of stairs, lifting something as heavy as a 10-pound bag of groceries, grasping objects, or getting in or out of bed.
3. Listed arthritis or rheumatism, back or spine problem, broken bone or fracture, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, head or spinal cord injury, heart trouble or atherosclerosis, hernia or rupture, high blood pressure, kidney problems, lung or respiratory problem, missing limbs, paralysis, stiffness or deformity of limbs, stomach/digestive problems, stroke, thyroid problem, or tumor/ cyst/growth as a condition contributing to a reported activity limitation.

Americans With Disabilities: 2010 – Household Economic Studies identifies disabilities as severe (uses wheelchair/cane/walker or Alzheimer’s disease or similar dementia) or nonsevere (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, limited in the amount or kind of housework).

The report compared nationwide data from 2005 with that from 2010, with most findings very similar. In both 2005 and 2010 for all ages, 18.7% were reported to have a disability. In 2005, 12.0% had a severe disability, very similar to the 12.6% in 2010. There was an overall decrease in the percentage of people with disabilities, particularly those aged 21-64. However, there was a decrease for those who had no disability of 4.4%, similar to the decrease of 4.5% of those who had a disability who were employed. The chart below shows that the prevalence of disability and the need for assistance both increase with age.

Disability Prevalence and Need for Assistance, by Age Category



U. S., May-August 2010 Survey of Income and Program Participation, U. S. Census Bureau

Note: The need for assistance with activities of daily living was not asked of children under 6 years.

The report provided detailed information about the populations affected, and the types of disabilities they experience. It explained that federal efforts have included an approach that both assists in reducing or eliminating workforce barriers and provides benefits to those who experience material hardship resulting from the remaining barriers. Specific economic characteristics findings included:

- At the time of the survey, less than half of the people aged 21-64 with disabilities were employed, compared to 79.1% of those without disabilities.
- People with communicative domain disabilities were more likely to be employed (73.4%) than the 40.8% in the physical domain and 51.9% in the mental domain. Disabilities in multiple domains reflect decreased likelihood of employment.
- Of people 16-64 with severe disabilities, 55.5% reported that their disability prevented them from working; 28.7% said they were limited in the type or amount of work but not prevented from working.
- While 28.6% of people aged 15-64 with severe disabilities were in poverty, 27.9% with nonsevere disabilities and 14.3% with no disability were in poverty.

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p70-131.pdf>

Increased Prevalence of Physical Limitations in Aging (Nationwide)

In 2009, *Aging Differently: Physical Limitations Among Adults Aged 50 Years and Over* explained that disadvantaged groups such as minorities and the poor are more likely to report limitations in physical functioning at earlier ages than those who are more advantaged. It noted that, “The social and economic costs of earlier onset of functional decline in segments of an aging society and the subsequent need to provide supportive services at an earlier age, and perhaps for a longer period of time, imposes heavy burdens on the individual, the family, and society.”

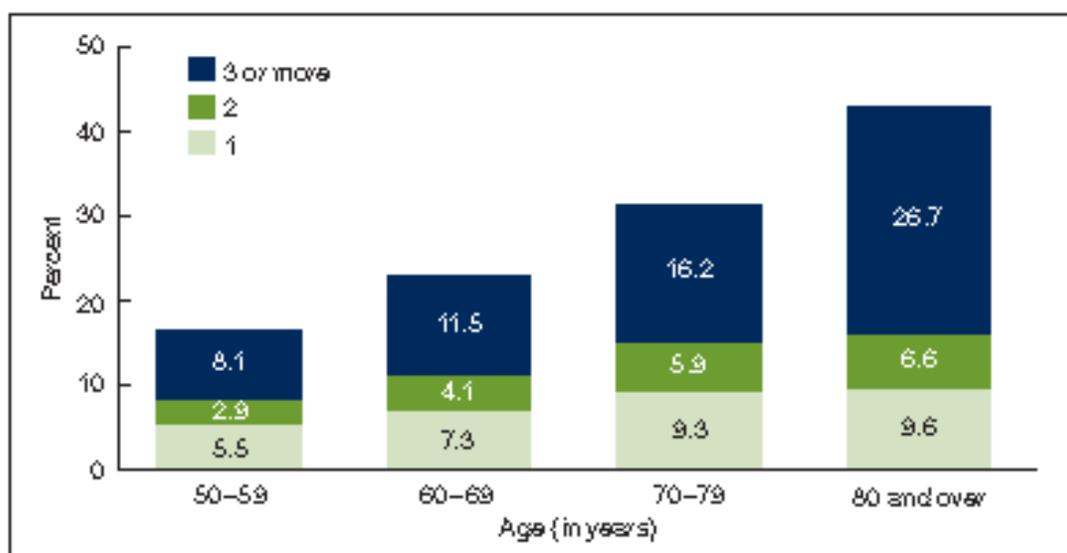
This report from the CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics found that:

- The prevalence of physical limitations increases with age.
- The number of physical limitations is higher among adults aged 50 and over.
- Black or African American adults over 50 have higher rates of physical limitations than White or Caucasian adults.
- In each racial group, women are more likely than men of the same age to have one or more physical limitations, with the gap growing with increasing age.
- Adults over 50 with less than a high school education have higher rates of physical limitations than those with at least a high school diploma.

A physical limitation is defined as a response that (without assistance or special equipment) an individual cannot perform any of eight specific activities or that the person would experience great difficulty in performing them. The activities include walking ¼ mile; walking up 10 steps without resting; standing for two hours; sitting for two hours; stoop, bend or kneel; reach overhead; use fingers to grasp small objects; lift or carry something up to 10 pounds.

The chart below shows that the prevalence of physical limitations increases with age. For those aged 80 and over, 43% have physical limitations, with about 27% having at least three physical limitations.

Percentage of Adults Aged 50 Years and Over, By Age and Number of Physical Limitations
U. S., 2001-2007 (National Health Interview Survey)



NOTE: The sum of the stacked sections in the bar for each age group represents the total percentage of adults in that age group with one or more physical limitations.

DATA SOURCE: CDC/NCHS: National Health Interview Survey

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db20.pdf>

In 2008, the National Center for Health Statistics of the CDC issued *Disability and Health in the United States, 2001-2005*, which examined health-related differences between disabled and nondisabled noninstitutionalized persons 18 years of age and older. They used respondent-reported difficulties with movement, or sensory, emotional or cognitive functioning associated with some health problem. They also used a complex activity limitation measure of activity limitations in self-care tasks (activities of daily living or ADL), instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), as well as limitations on work or full participation in social activities. The report analyzed populations with and without disabilities with regard to sociodemographic characteristics and personal resources (education, income, employment), health status, access to care, and clinical preventive services.

The report described disability as “a multidimensional and dynamic concept that involves both individual and environmental factors.” Highlights of the 2001-2005 data include:

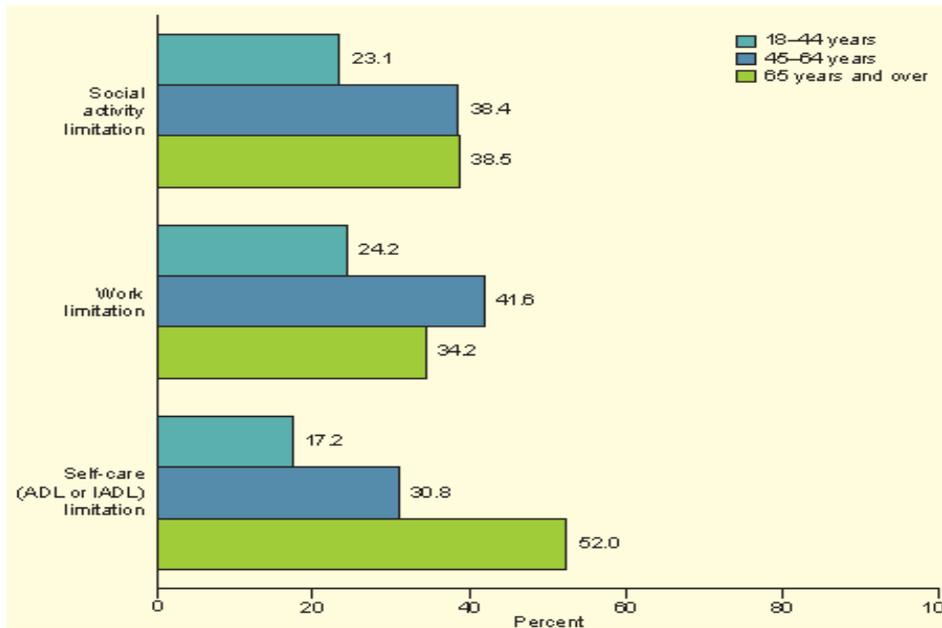
- Among all adults, almost 30% of the population had basic actions difficulty (reporting at least some difficulty with basic movement or sensory, cognitive, or emotional difficulties).
- More than 20% of adults reported difficulty with basic movement actions such as walking, bending, reaching overhead, or using their fingers to grasp something.
- Regarding other difficulties, about 13% of the adult population reported vision or hearing difficulties (without the use of hearing aids). Only 3% of the population reported emotional difficulties, and 3% reported cognitive difficulties.
- At 12%, work limitation was the most commonly reported complex activity limitation, with 7% reporting social limitation and 4% reporting self-care limitation.
- Adults under 65 years of age made up 64% of those with complex activity limitation and 67% of those with difficulty with basic actions.
- 52% of noninstitutionalized adults with self-care limitations were aged 65 years and over, and about half of the adults with emotional difficulties were under age 45.
- Half of the adults with complex actions difficulty and about 40% of those with basic actions difficulty, reported family income below 200% of the federal poverty threshold, compared with only about ¼ of nondisabled adults.
- Among adults aged 18–64 years, employment was much lower among those with difficulty in basic actions (42% reported working for pay in the past week) compared with adults with no disability (75% reported working during the past week).
- Adults were more likely to report fair or poor health status if they had cognitive difficulty (64%) or self-care limitations (65%) than adults with other types of basic actions difficulty or complex activity limitation.
- Almost one-third of adults with complex activity limitation and 30% of adults with basic actions difficulty were obese (based on self-reported height and weight) during the 2001–2005 period, compared with 19% of adults with no reported disability.
- About 40% of adults, aged 18–44 years with either complex activity limitation or basic actions difficulty reported currently smoking, compared with 22% of nondisabled adults in this age group.
- About 15% of adults with complex activity limitation reported engaging in regular physical activity, compared with 21% of adults with basic actions difficulties and 35% of adults with no disability.

As the population ages, particularly the Baby Boomers, age distribution alone would result in greater prevalence of people with disabilities. It is predicted that increasing obesity rates could result in diabetes, arthritis or other conditions that would further increase the prevalence of

disability. It is important to identify which types of disability are more associated with increasing age and which types are not, such as the incidence of emotional difficulties.

The chart below shows the age distribution among adults with complex activity limitation by type of limitation.

Complex Activity Limitation, By Age Category and Type of Limitation
U. S., 2001-2005



The report also provides details about sociodemographic characteristics, health behaviors and risk factors, access to health care, preventive services, etc.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/misc/disability2001-2005.pdf>

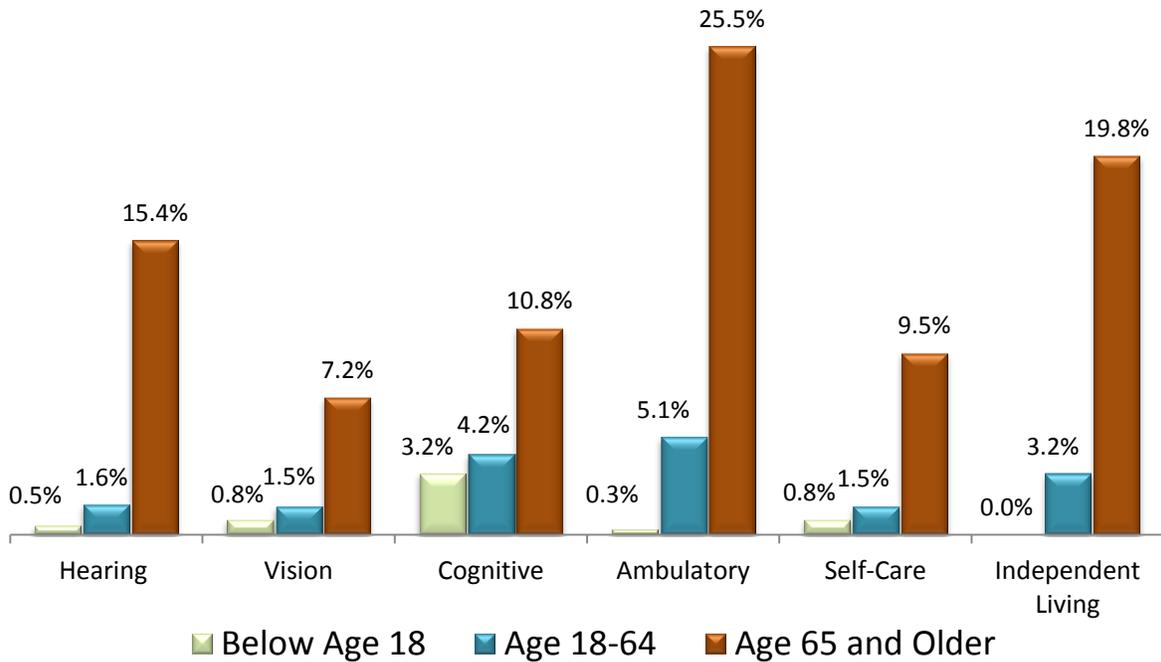
Davidson County Demographic Information

Data from the U. S. Census Bureau's 2008-2010 American Community Survey was analyzed to compare the U. S., Tennessee and Davidson County. There were minor variations, including the total population with one or more of the difficulties identified being 11.1% for Davidson County, compared to 12% for the U. S. and 15% for Tennessee.

While most data was very similar, the prevalence of people with an independent living difficulty was higher at 19.8% in Davidson County, compared to 16.4% for the U. S. and 18.6% in Tennessee. The chart below shows an increase in the prevalence of hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care and independent living difficulties with increasing age. For example, the rate of ambulatory difficulty for persons age 65 or older is five times as high as for people ages 18-24.

Prevalence of Difficulty, By Type, By Age Category

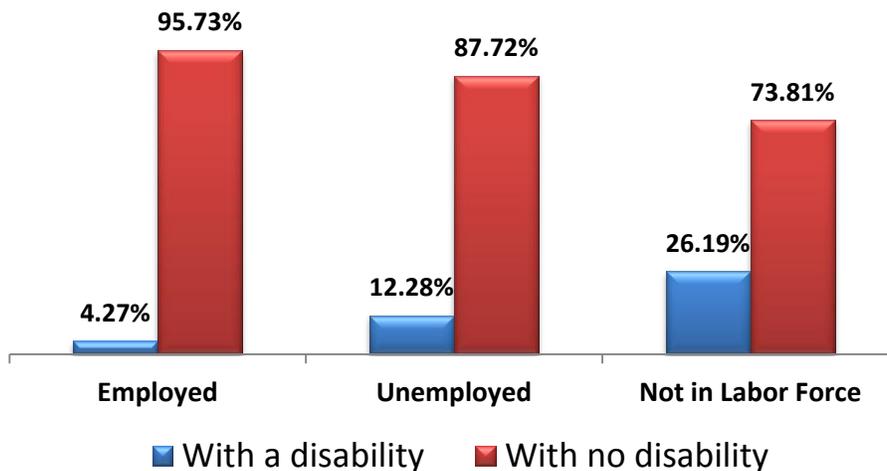
Davidson County, Tennessee
2008-2010 American Community Survey, U. S. Census Bureau



According to the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, in Davidson County, there were 298,267 employed. As the chart below shows, 4.27% of them had a disability while 95.73% did not have a disability. Of those who were unemployed, 12.28% had a disability.

Percentage Employed, Unemployed or Not in Labor Force, By Disability Status

Davidson County, 2008-2010 American Community Survey

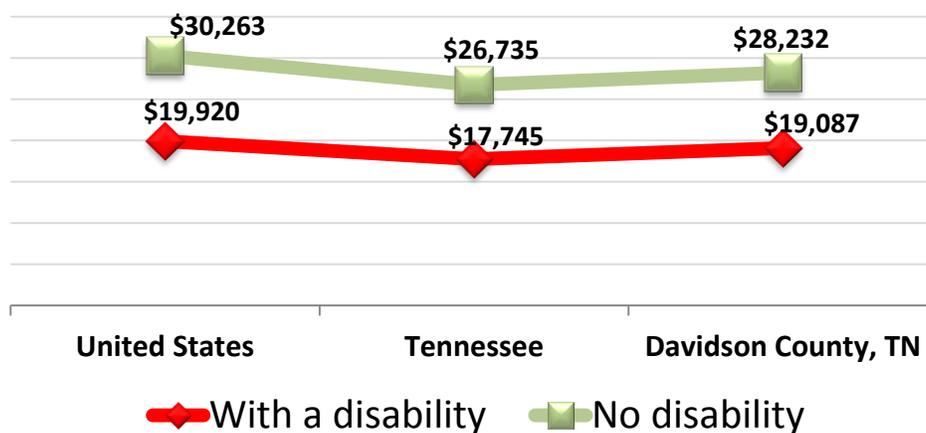


The Census Bureau defines someone who was not in the labor force as a person “who did not work last week, was not temporarily absent from a job, did not actively look for work in the previous 4 weeks, or looked but was unavailable for work during the reference week; in other words, a person who was neither employed nor unemployed.” There are various reasons that someone might be not in the labor force, such as full-time students in college or other educational programs, retired people, disabled (and unable to work), parents staying home with children.

People who work and have a disability have lower median incomes than those who do not have a disability, as shown in the chart below.

Median Earnings, By Disability Status

U. S., Tennessee, Davidson County, 2008-2010 American Community Survey, U. S. Census Bureau



Metropolitan Social Services – Planning & Coordination

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<http://www.nashville.gov/sservices/planningcoordination/index.asp>

