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America's Recovery: Labor Market Characteristics Of People With A Disability

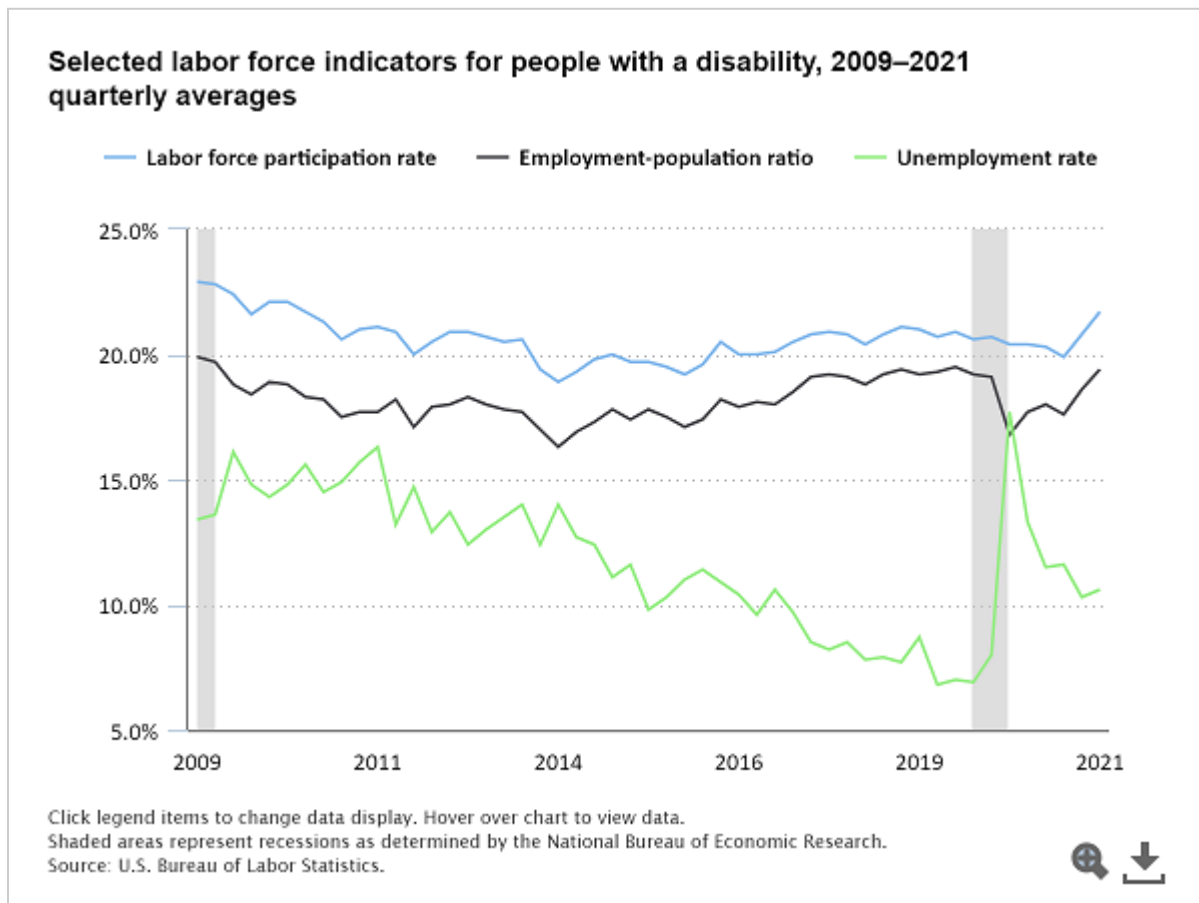
October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and the theme in 2021 is America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion. COVID-19 had a large impact on the labor market for people with and without disabilities. Historical differences between these groups remain largely unchanged during the pandemic and economic recovery.

This Spotlight looks into some of the major labor force characteristics of people with a disability.

Labor market overview for people with a disability

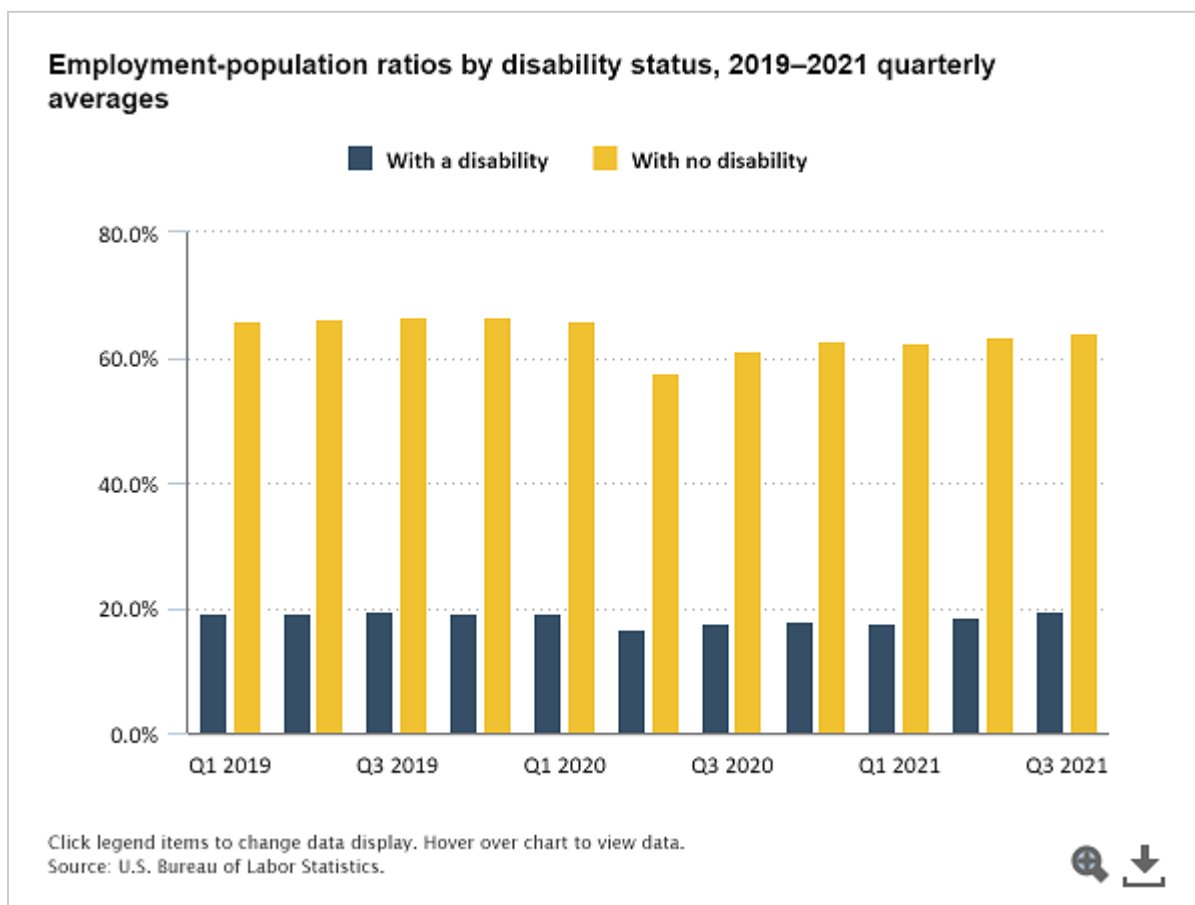
Major labor market indicators show the employment situation for people with a disability has improved since the onset of the pandemic. The unemployment rate for people with a disability hit a new high of 17.7 percent in the second quarter of 2020, more than the prior high of 16.3 percent in the third quarter of 2011.

The labor force participation rate and employment-population ratio for people with a disability have increased in 2021. In the third quarter of 2021, the labor force participation rate was 21.7 percent, the highest rate since 2010. The employment-population ratio, at 19.4 percent in the third quarter of 2021, nearly returned to a pre-pandemic level.



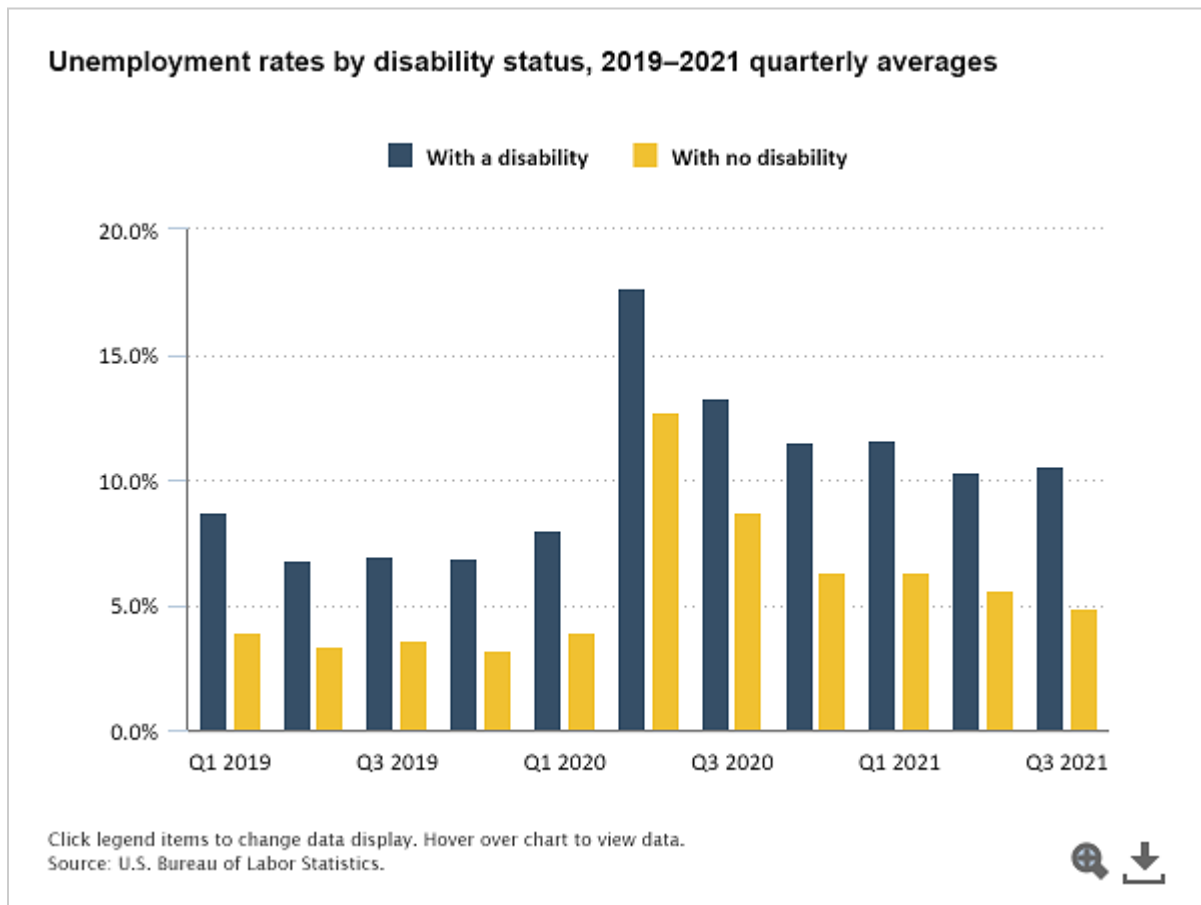
Employment-population ratio for people with a disability is lower than for people with no disability

In the fourth quarter of 2019, 19.2 percent of workers with a disability were employed compared with 66.6 percent of workers with no disability. Both groups saw a decrease in their employment-population ratio in 2020, followed by a slight increase through the third quarter of 2021. The lower ratio among people with a disability reflects, in part, the older age profile of people with a disability. Older people, regardless of disability status, are less likely to be employed.



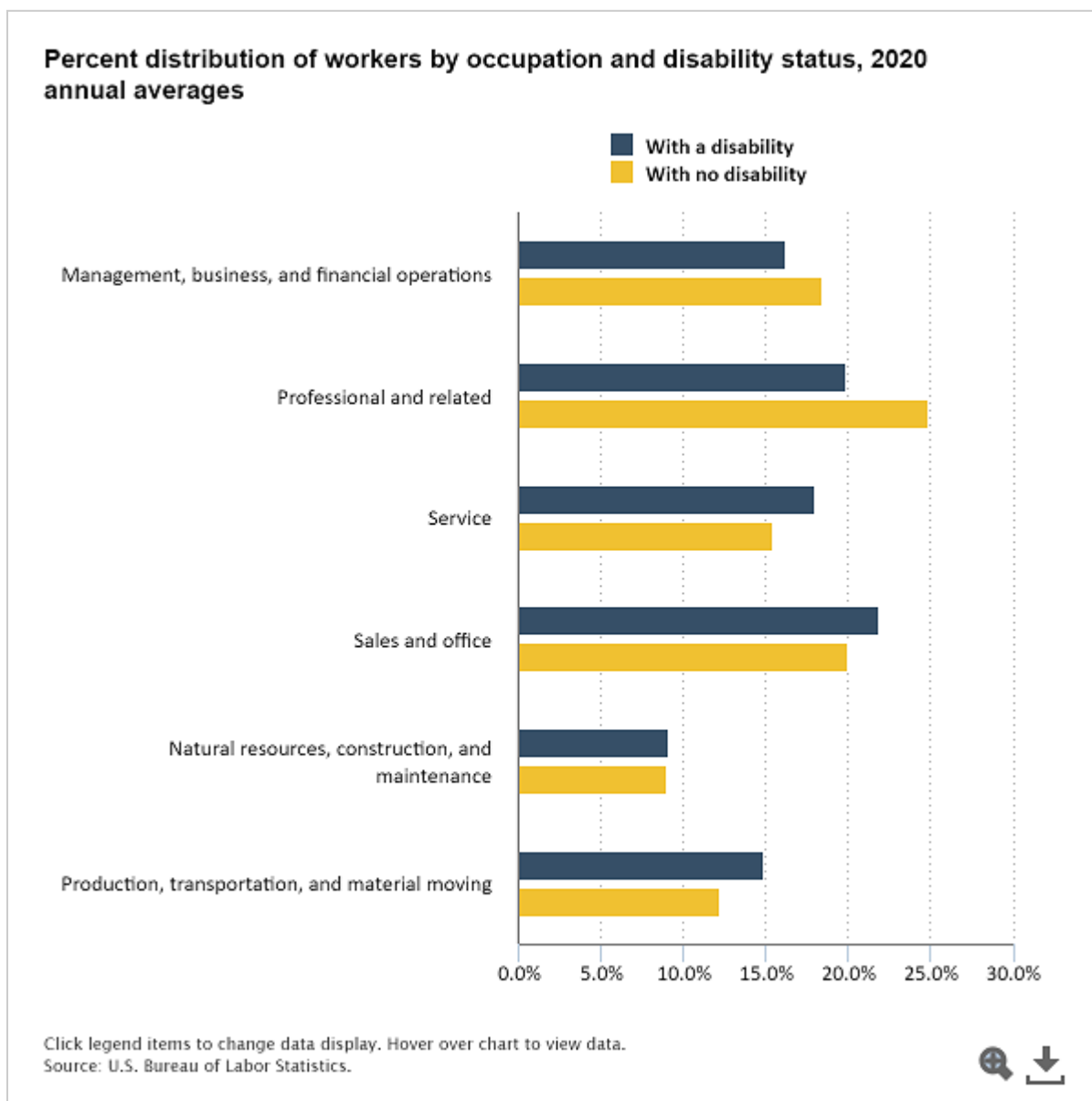
Unemployment rate for people with a disability more than double that of people with no disability

As the economy recovered in 2021, the unemployment rates for people with a disability and those with no disability declined from their highs in 2020. However, the unemployment rate for people with a disability was more than twice that of people with no disability in the third quarter of 2021, 10.6 percent compared with 4.9 percent.



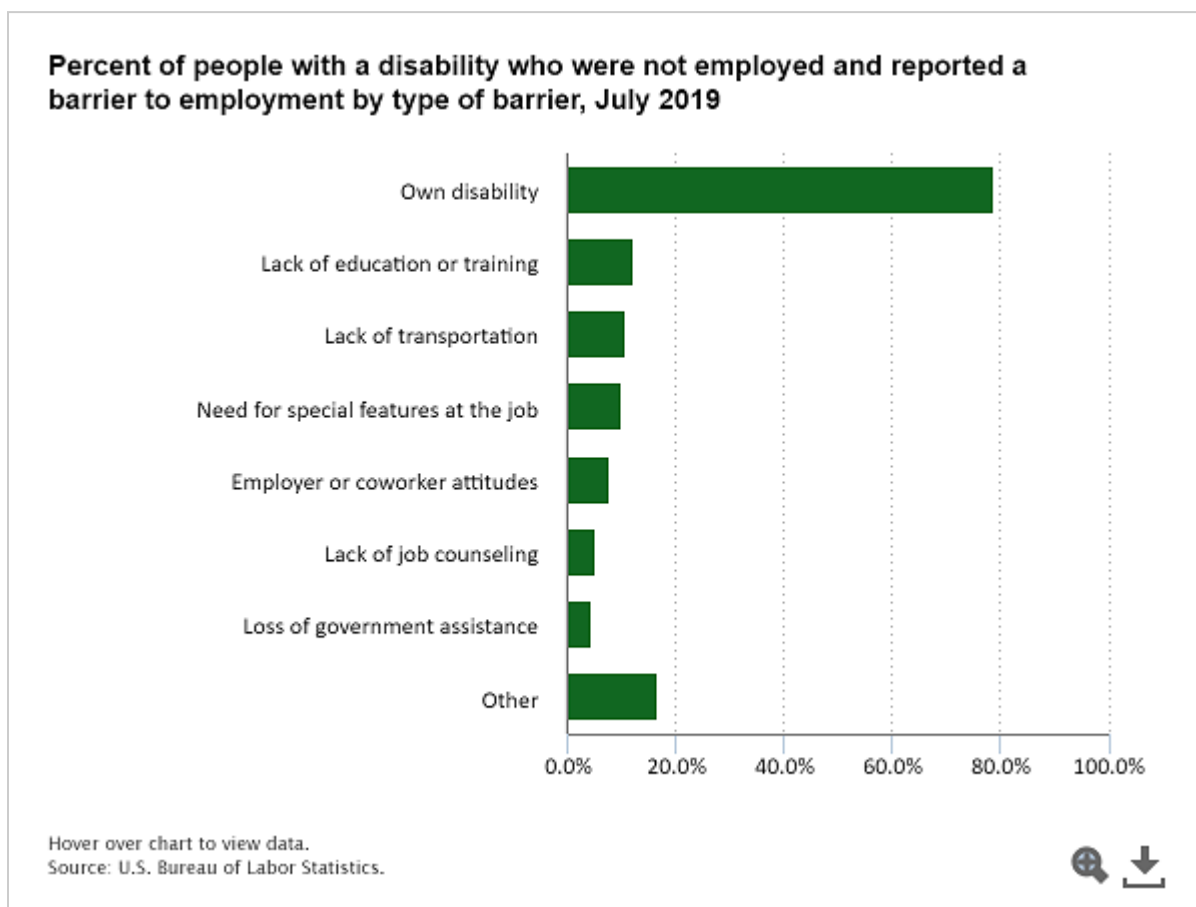
Workers with a disability are more concentrated in service occupations than those with no disability

In 2020, people with a disability were more concentrated in service occupations than those with no disability (18.0 percent compared with 15.4 percent). Workers with a disability were also more likely to work in production, transportation, and material moving occupations than those with no disability (14.9 percent, compared with 12.2 percent). People with a disability were less likely to work in management, business, and financial operations occupations than those without a disability (16.2 percent compared with 18.4 percent).



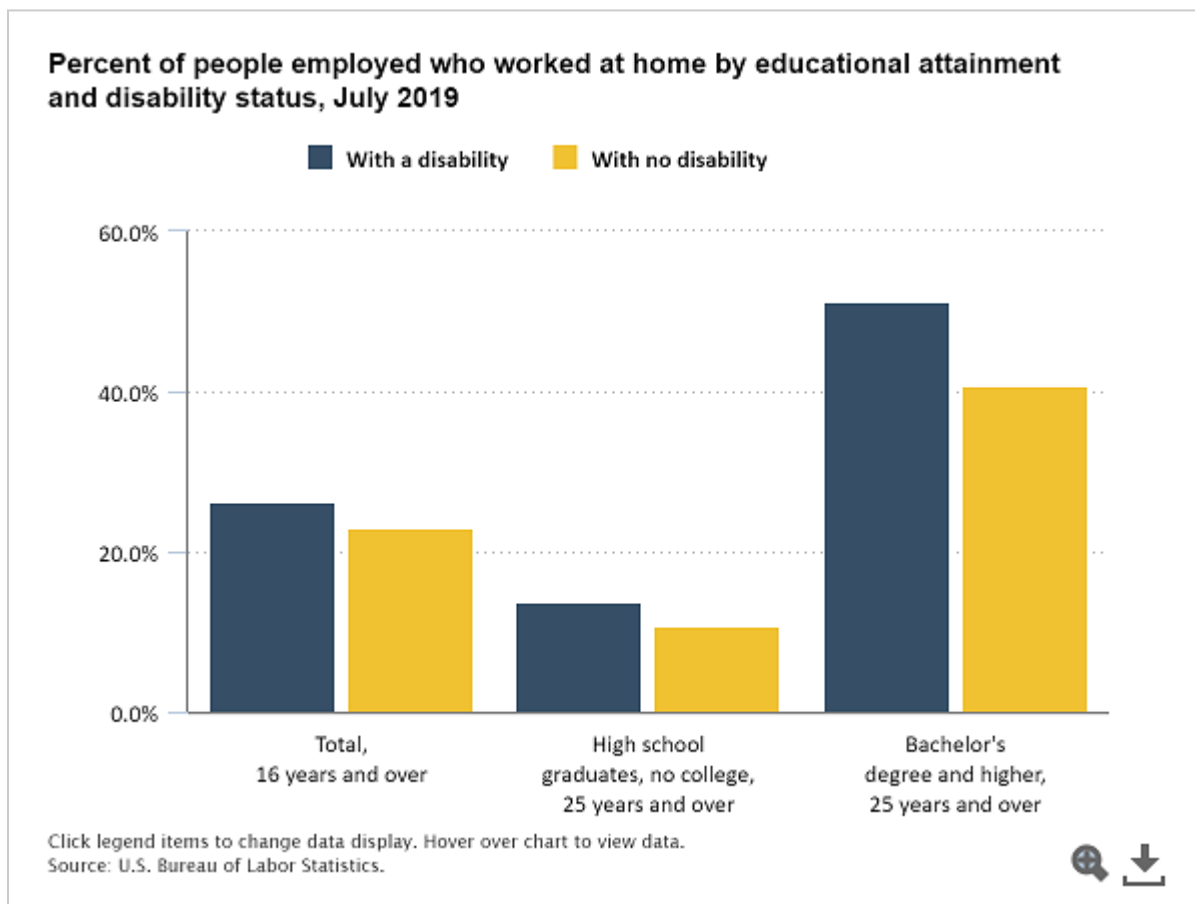
Barriers to employment for people with a disability

To understand labor market indicators for people with disabilities, it is important to understand the barriers to employment. Among people with a disability who were not employed in July 2019, 10.6 percent cited lack of transportation as a barrier to employment.



Workers with a disability are more likely to work from home

Working from home can be one option to overcome the transportation barrier to employment. In July 2019, 26.3 percent of people employed with a disability reported working from home, compared with 23 percent of people employed without a disability. Among people with a disability age 25 and over, those with a bachelor's degree and higher were more than 3 times as likely to do some work at home than those with less than a high school diploma (51.2 percent and 13.7 percent, respectively).



More information

This Spotlight on Statistics contributes to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' observance of the National Disability Employment Awareness month. [Find out more about National Disability Employment Awareness from the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.](#)

The data presented in this Spotlight on Statistics are from the Current Population Survey, a monthly nationwide sample survey of approximately 60,000 households. With support from the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, questions to identify people with a disability were added in June 2008. We have [more information about people with a disability.](#)

The unemployment rate is the percentage of the labor force that is unemployed. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the population who are working or looking for work. The employment-population ratio is the percentage of the population who are employed.