



Employment Among Working-Age People with Disabilities: What the latest Data Can Tell Us

Synopsis

We review the recent evidence on the employment experiences of the working-age population with disabilities gained from four large representative samples of the United States population: the Current Population Survey-Annual Social and Economic Supplement, American Community Survey, the National Health Interview Survey, and the Survey of Income and Program Participation linked to Social Security Administration records. Using a consistent conceptualization of disability we put the employment patterns of the working-age population with disabilities captured in these data within a coherent framework. We conclude that the patterns we find cannot be explained by differences in underlying impairment across time, states or within these populations at a given time or place. Rather we argue that the work environment, rehabilitation opportunities, and individual responses to these external factors by those with a given level of impairment are likely to be as important in explaining these employment patterns as differences as health-related factors.

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