

## Definition of Disability for Government Data on Employment

Government data on the employment of people with disabilities rely on a definition of disability developed for the [American Community Survey](#) (ACS). ACS collects data from a sample of 3 million residents on a continuing basis.

The employment data is collected through the [Current Population Survey](#) (CPS). The CPS is a monthly survey of 60,000 households.

The CPS collects disability data based on the ACS' six dichotomous ("yes" or "no") disability-related questions which comprise a function-based definition of disability. The six questions are:

- 1) Is this person deaf or does he/she have serious difficulty hearing?
- 2) Is this person blind or does he/she have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?
- 3) Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
- 4) Does this person have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
- 5) Does this person have difficulty dressing or bathing?
- 6) Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?

This definition of disability is significantly more limited than the definition of disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Under the ADA, individuals with a wide range of physical or mental conditions are covered. For example, people with illnesses that significantly affect the heart, respiratory, neurological, gastrointestinal, immune function or any other major bodily function are considered people with disabilities. Moreover, in determining whether a condition significantly impairs a bodily function, one does not take into account any mitigating measures (*e.g.*, medication or aids), that treat the impairment. Thus, the number of people with disabilities as defined under the ADA is significantly higher than the number of people captured by the six questions above.