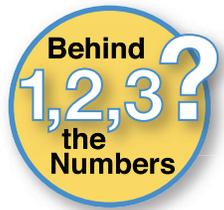


Behind the Numbers

For a look at more data and discussion, go to pages 29, 48, 57, 58 and 64-66.



Disabilities and Poverty

Under the Economic Self-Sufficiency (ESS) Outcome the FCFC is tracking three indicators. For two of them, “Unemployment” and “Per Capita Effective Buying Income”, the historical trend is not in the desired direction; for the third one, “People Receiving Public Assistance”, the historical trend is flat. Clearly, there is much to do in order to turn the curve on these indicators.

To help make that happen the ESS Outcome Team has been focusing on promoting self-sufficiency for low income adults and children with a special emphasis on those who are in poverty or at risk of poverty. (See their report, pages 58 - 60.) Elsewhere in this report we took a look “behind the numbers” at the employment status of people with disabilities. (See page 48.) Here we continue that examination, keeping in mind the recent observation that “taking disability into account is essential to reducing income poverty and expanding economic inclusion.”¹

According to one report from the Census Bureau, about 1 in every 7 Montgomery County residents has a disability, slightly more than the rates for Ohio and the nation. Of the people who have a disability, over 1 in 5 is considered to be in poverty.² (See Table 1.)

But when we look at some additional data we find out that the rates of disability and poverty may actually be higher. For example, a different national survey conducted by the Census Bureau, one which uses what has been called “the most extensive set of questions on disability,”³ has

	Percent of people with a disability	Percent of people with a disability who are in poverty	Percent of people without a disability who are in poverty
Montgomery County	14.6%	22.0%	11.5%
Ohio	13.1%	21.8%	10.0%
U.S.	12.1%	20.6%	10.3%

Table 1. The poverty rate for people with a disability is approximately twice as high as the poverty rate for people without a disability. See the text for a discussion of data suggesting even higher rates. Note: these data are for people 16 years old and older. (Source: American Community Survey)

determined that 18.7% of the population has some level of disability⁴ instead of the 12.1% shown in Table 1. In addition, using an alternate measure of poverty (based on median adjusted disposable income and adjusted for price differences), the U.S. has a higher poverty rate for people with disabilities (> 45%) than the 20.6% shown in Table 1. (See Figure 1.)

What these figures suggest is that the proportion of people who have a disability may be more than 50% greater than the national rate in Table 1, and that the poverty rate for people who have a disability may be more than twice as large as the national rate in Table 1.⁵ Additional analysis of these sets of data reveals the following:⁶

- Almost half of working-age adults who experience poverty for at least a 12-month period have one or more disabilities.
- Nearly two-thirds of working-age adults who experience consistent poverty – more than 36 months of poverty during a 48-month period – have one or more disabilities.

By continuing to look “behind the numbers” we can see that any serious effort to reduce poverty must take people with disabilities into account.

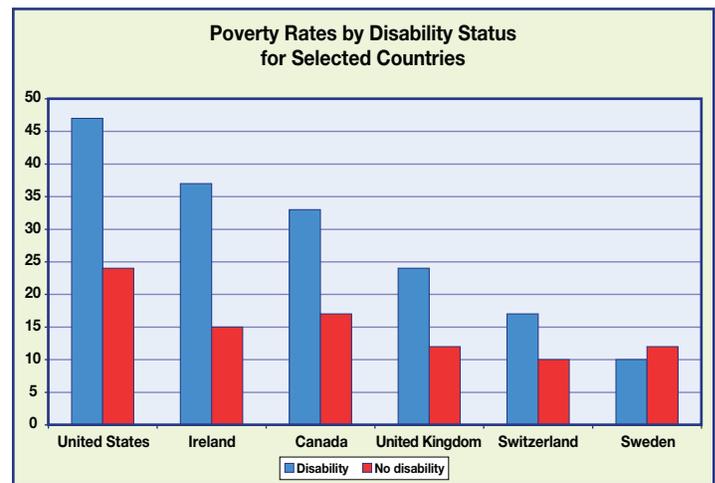


Figure 1. People with a disability are at greater risk of living in or near poverty. For this analysis, the poverty rates are the percentages of people in households with less than 60% of the median adjusted disposable income.⁷

¹ Shawn Fremstad, “Half in Ten: Why Taking Disability into Account is Essential to Reducing Income Poverty and Expanding Economic Inclusion,” Center for Economic and Policy Research, September 2009, <http://www.cepr.net/index.php/publications/reports/half-in-ten/>.

² 2008 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Tables S1810 and S1811.

³ Fremstad, op. cit., describing the Survey of Income and Program Participation.

⁴ “Americans with Disabilities: 2005,” Census Bureau, December 2008; cited by Fremstad.

⁵ $18.7 / 12.1 = 1.55$; $45 / 20.6 = 2.18$

⁶ Fremstad, op. cit.

⁷ Source: These data are derived from Figure A2.6 in *Sickness, Disability and Work: Keeping on Track in the Economic Downturn – Background Paper*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009