



# Employment for Persons with a Disability: Analysis of Trends During the COVID-19 Pandemic (February 2020 – September 2020)

## SUMMARY

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been unprecedented changes in employment for America's workforce. Many businesses ceased or scaled back operations and many state governments issued stay-at-home orders. Using key labor force statistics from the Census Bureau's [Current Population Survey](#) (CPS) researchers with the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy sought to provide insight into the recent changes. This brief expands data published in September and explores changes in employment for people with and without a disability in various occupations and industries.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The **unemployment rate for workers with a disability declined from 18.9 percent in April 2020 to 12.5 percent in September 2020**. The unemployment rate remains higher than the 7.8 percent recorded in January 2020.
- The **unemployment rate for workers without a disability declined from 14.3 percent in April 2020 to 7.5 percent in September 2020**. The unemployment rate remains higher than the 3.8 percent recorded in January 2020.
- **Between February 2020 and September 2020, employment for workers with a disability declined in seven of the twelve industries identified in CPS, but increased in four industries:** Agriculture and Mining; Information; Transportation and Utilities; and Financial Activities. Employment among workers without a disability declined by the greatest amount in Leisure and Hospitality (22.1 percent).
- **Workers with a disability in installation, service, and repair occupations accounted for the largest share of the total decline in employment**, representing a 20.4 percent of the decline from February 2020 to September 2020.
- **Approximately 30 percent of the workforce was employed in jobs assumed to have high telework opportunities in February 2020**, while 28 percent were employed in jobs assumed to have some telework opportunities, and 42 percent in jobs assumed to allow limited telework.
- **Workers with a disability in occupations with “some telework” opportunities and workers without a disability with “limited telework” opportunities experience the greatest percentage decline in employment** from February 2020 to September 2020.
- Workers without a disability in **high contact intensity occupations, including hairstylists, physical therapists, and personal care aides**, experienced a 10.9





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percent decrease in employment, while workers with a disability in the same occupation experienced a 2.2 percent decline in employment.

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