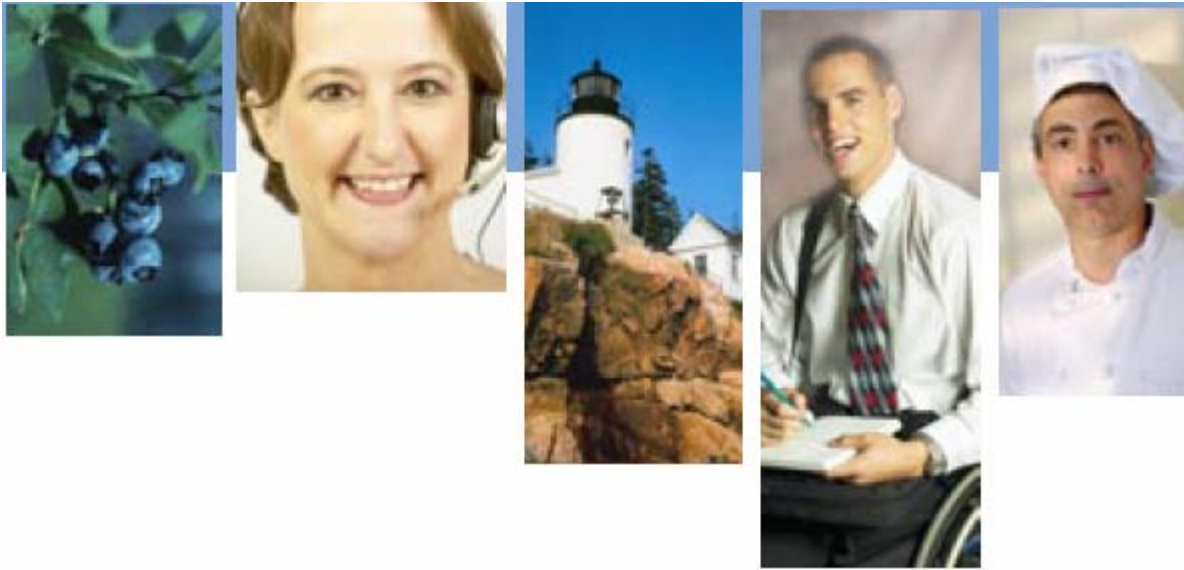


Snapshot 2006:

Maine Workers with Disabilities



*An annual publication of
Maine's Commission on Disability and Employment
and the CHOICES CEO Project*

- **How many workers in Maine have a disability?**
- **Has the number of workers with disabilities increased in recent years?**
- **What services are being used by Maine workers with disabilities?**

Snapshot 2006 provides the data that answers these and other questions on employment and disability specific to the state of Maine.

This document is available on the Internet, in several formats at
<http://www.choicesceo.org/datasnapshot.htm>

Available in alternative formats upon request by calling (207) 228-8031;
toll-free TTY (866) 783-6461; or email lpohl@usm.maine.edu

Snapshot 2006:

Maine Workers with Disabilities

*An annual publication of
Maine's Commission on Disability and Employmentⁱ
and the CHOICES CEO Projectⁱⁱ*

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ⁱ The Commission on Disability and Employment is named in statute as one of four standing subcommittees of the Maine Jobs Council. Its mission is to advise, consult and assist the executive and legislative branches on activities of state government that affect the employment of individuals with disabilities.

ⁱⁱ The CHOICES CEO (Comprehensive Employment Opportunity) project is funded by a grant (#11-P-92409/1-02) from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, which runs through 2008 to help Maine develop and implement a strategic plan to maximize the employment of workers with disabilities. All research and development activities for this project are provided out of the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. For more information visit <http://www.choicesceo.org>.

Introduction



- **How many workers in Maine have a disability?**
- **Has the number of workers with disabilities increased in recent years?**
- **What services are being used by Maine workers with disabilities?**

Snapshot 2006 provides the data that answers these and other questions on employment and disability specific to the state of Maine.

Members of the Maine disability community have expressed concerns that there is a lack of state-specific information.* Nationwide estimates are sometimes cited to describe the situation in Maine; however, these potentially mask the important differences between Maine and the rest of the country. Furthermore, Maine-specific estimates are often unreliable because they are based on small sample sizes. **Snapshot 2006** addresses some of these data shortfalls. We hope that people with disabilities, advocates, policymakers and other stakeholders will find the information that follows useful to their efforts.

Additional information on the strengths, limitations and controversies associated with the referenced sources is provided in the second part of this booklet, “Discussion of Data Sources.” This discussion will help readers choose the most appropriate information for their purpose. Please visit our website for continually updated resource listings (<http://www.choicesceo.org>).

* Note: **Snapshot 2006** provides a view of the “state of the state” and should not be used for comparison across the government and other service agencies. Since every agency has a distinct population, mission, budget and data collection process, their employment placement rates are not directly comparable.

Defining Disability ¹

Who are we talking about when we say, “workers with disabilities?” The answer is not as straightforward as you might think because there is no universal definition of disability. However, there are two conceptualizations of disability that most definitions fit into: *impairment* and *activity limitation*.

Impairment is a broad concept. It is defined as a physical or mental loss or condition that limits a person’s ability to function. Examples of impairments include hearing loss or loss of a limb.

¹ This discussion is drawn from: Burkhauser, R.V., Houtenville, A.J., & Wittenburg, D. (2003). “A user guide to current statistics on the employment of people with disabilities,” in R. V. Burkhauser & D. Stapleton (Eds.), The Decline in the Employment of People with Disabilities: A policy puzzle. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

Activity limitation is a narrower concept of disability; not everyone with an impairment has an activity limitation. An activity limitation is an impairment that leads to an inability to perform, or a limitation in performing, roles and tasks such as reading, talking on the phone or cooking dinner.

To illustrate, a worker with deafness would have a disability under the impairment definition. However, the worker would not have a disability under the activity-limitation definition if he or she was accommodated with a TTY machine that facilitated telephone use.

Differences in the definition of disability exist within government laws and regulations.

The Americans with Disabilities Act uses an impairment definition of disability:

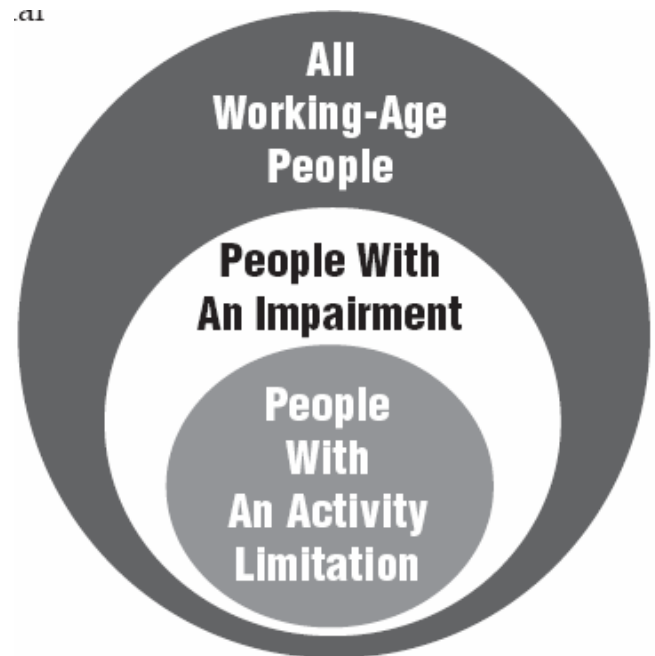
“...a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.”

Whereas, the Social Security Administration uses a more restrictive activity-limitation definition of disability in determining benefits eligibility:

“The inability to engage in [gainful employment] because of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment(s):

- That can be expected to result in death; or
- That has lasted, or that we can expect to last, for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.”

Using the impairment definition always leads to more people being reported as having a disability than in instances when the activity-limitation definition is used.



Defining Employment

Like disability, employment has varied definitions. The sources cited in this booklet each define and measure employment a little differently. In general, a person is considered employed if he or she is working for pay and is being paid directly by his or her employer. Detailed employment definitions are included in the discussion of data sources (page 16).

Effect of the Maine Economy

Most of the information presented in **Snapshot 2006** is from the years 2003 through 2005. This was a time of slow growth for the Maine economy. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate over these years averaged 4.8 percent. After rapid job growth in the late 1990s — when an average of 14,000 new jobs were created in each year from 1996 to 2000 — job growth slowed considerably. Between 2000 and 2005, an average of only 2,500 new jobs were created each year.²

The national recession during this period had a lesser impact on the Maine economy than on the United States as a whole. However, this recession led to revenue shortfalls in both the state and federal governments, which in turn led to budget cuts. These budget cuts affected some of the agencies referenced, and may be reflected in both the number of people served and the resulting levels of employment.

² Maine State Planning Office. MaineGraph. <http://www.state.me.us/spo/economics/economics/megraph.php>
Retrieved August 29, 2006.

Employment Participation

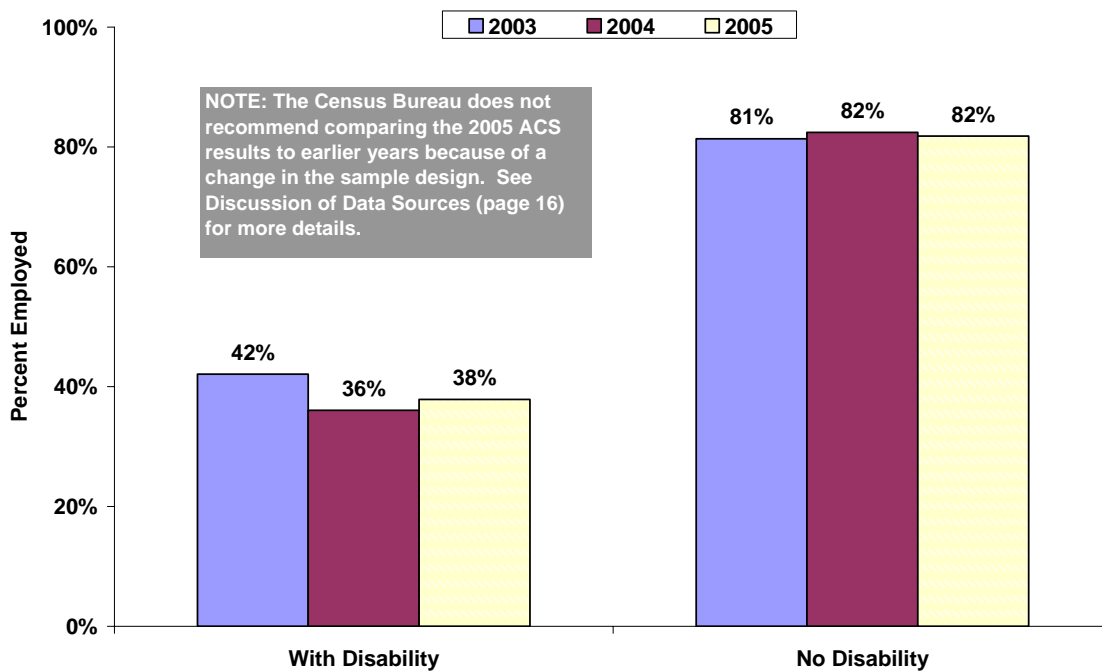
People with disabilities are an untapped resource for the state of Maine. There are many people with disabilities who want to work but who are unemployed, under-employed, or who have been unable to enter the job market. There are several programs in Maine — including the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and One-Stop Career Centers and the CHOICES CEO project — that share a common goal of supporting people with disabilities who work or who would like to work. This section outlines several markers of employment participation that we would like to see increase.

Chart I. Employment Participation of Working-age Adults in Maine by Disability Status

In 2005, there were about 121,000 working-age adults with a disability living in Maine. Of these, 46,000 were employed. The employment rate of people with disabilities is about one-half the rate of those with no disability. This is true in both the state of Maine and the country as a whole.

In 2005, 38 percent of adults with disabilities were employed — compared to 82 percent of adults without a disability. The estimated employment rate fell for people with disabilities from 2003 to 2005, but did not change for people without a disability.

Chart I. Employment Participation of Working-age Adults Ages 21 - 64 by Disability Status, 2003 - 2005
State of Maine

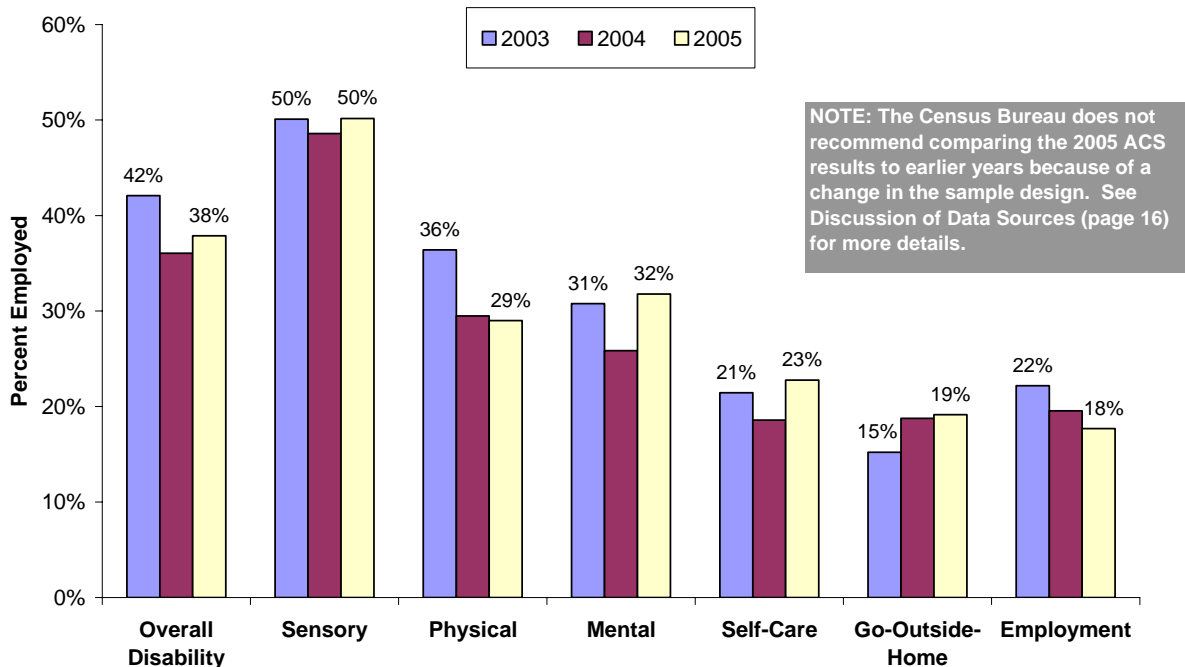


Source: Muskie School of Public Service calculations using the 2003 – 2005 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)

Chart II. Employment Participation of Working-age Adults in Maine by Disability Type

In general, employment participation is highest among adults with sensory disabilities and lowest among those with self-care, go-outside-the-home, and employment disabilities (see definitions on page 17). The drop in the estimated employment rate of people with disabilities over this three-year period was due largely to a decline in employment among people with physical disabilities. Thirty-six percent of adults with physical disabilities were employed in 2003; by 2005, this number fell to 29 percent.

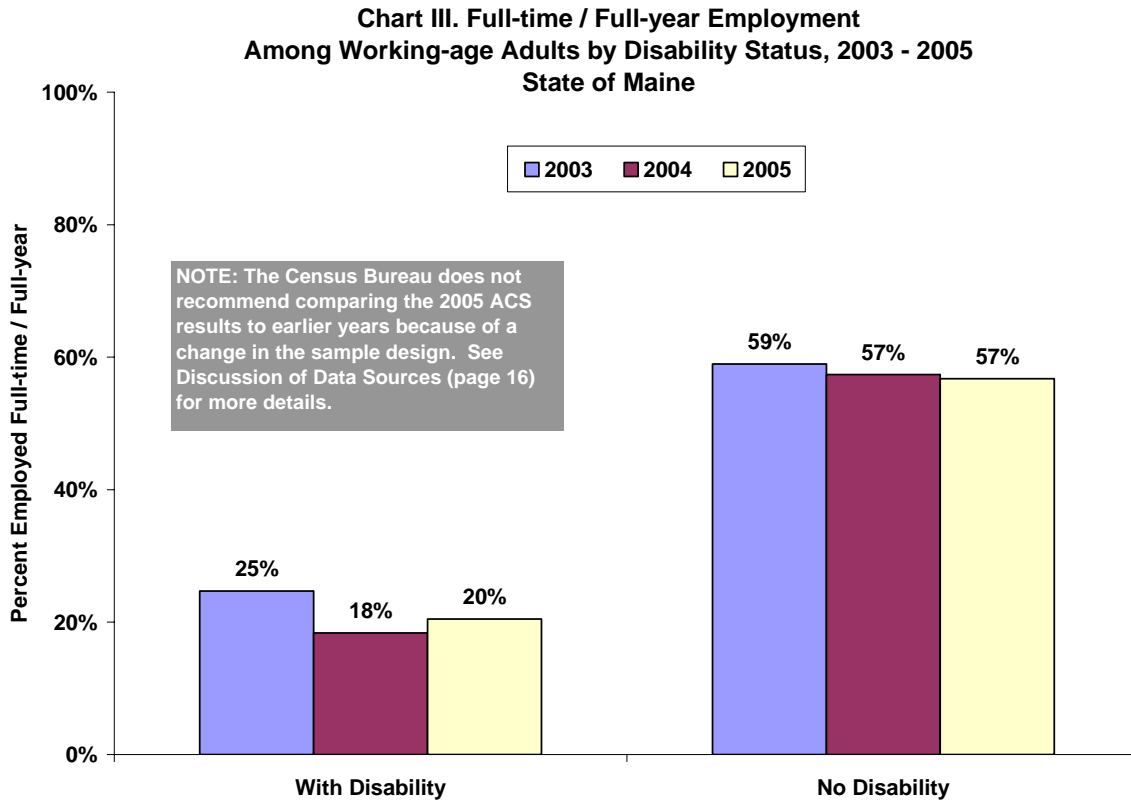
**Chart II. Employment Participation of Working-age Adults by Disability Type, 2003 - 2005
State of Maine**



Source: Muskie School of Public Service calculations using the 2003 – 2005 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)

Chart III. Full-time/Full-year Employment

In 2005, fewer than one in five working-age adults with disabilities were employed for more than 35 hours per week (full-time) and worked for more than 50 weeks (full-year). The proportion of adults with disabilities working full-time/full-year fell from 25 percent in 2003 to 20 percent in 2005. The rate of full-time/full-year work among adults with disabilities is less than half of that for adults without a disability.



Source: Muskie School of Public Service calculations using the 2003 – 2005 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)

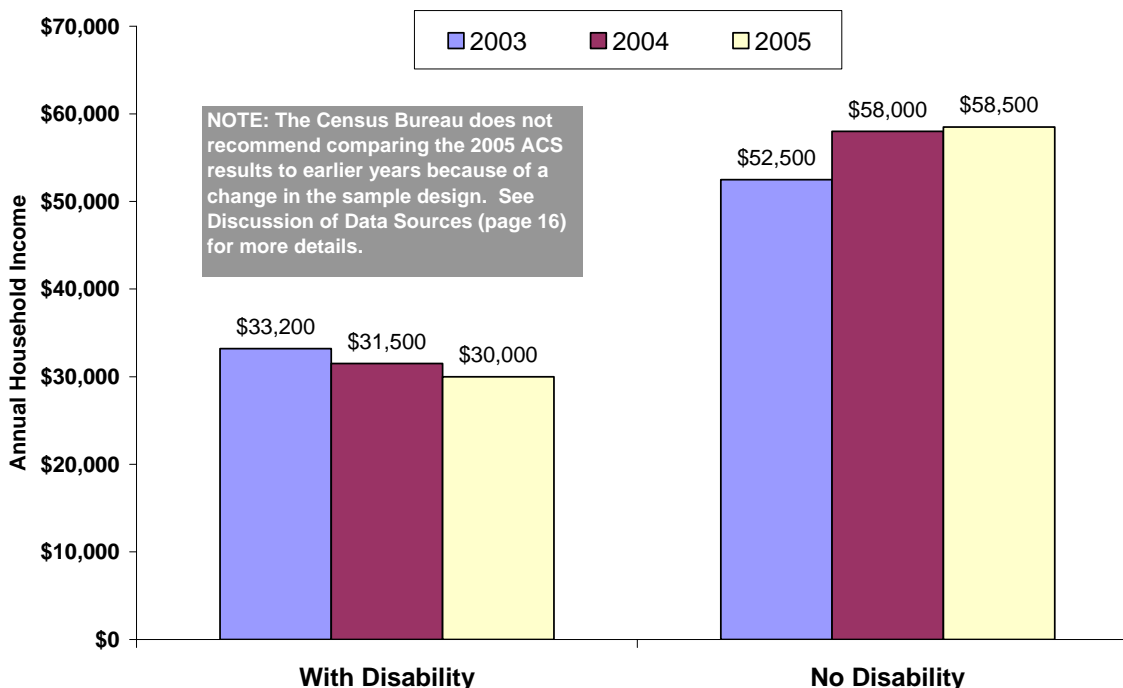
Economic Well-Being

One of the principal benefits of employment is getting paid. Because a majority of people with disabilities do not work, those without other resources must rely on government programs such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to meet their basic needs. Cash payments provided by SSI, and most payments from SSDI, are not sufficient to lift a household out of poverty. This section looks at household income and poverty rate. We expect that as people with disabilities gain better access to employment household incomes will rise and poverty rates will fall.

Chart IV. Median Household Income of Working-age Adults in Maine by Disability Status

People with disabilities tend to live in households that have much less income than people without a disability. In 2005, the median household income for a working-age person with a disability was \$30,000. This number is about half the household income of those without a disability. Moreover, estimated median household income fell by more than \$3,000 among people with disabilities from 2003 to 2005, while median household income rose by \$6,000 for those without a disability.

Chart IV. Median Household Income Among Working-age Adults by Disability Status, 2003 - 2005



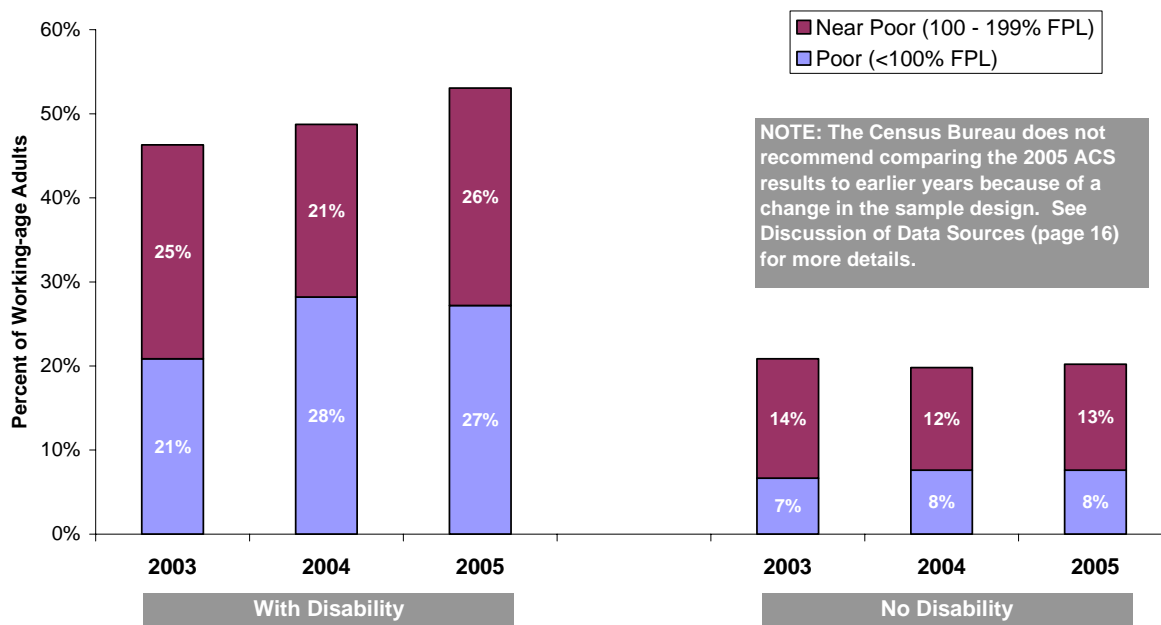
Source: Muskie School of Public Service calculations using the 2003 – 2005 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)

Chart V. Poverty Status of Working-age Adults in Maine

In 2005, one quarter of all working-age adults with a disability were living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). More than half were near-poor, which means they had incomes below 200 percent of the FPL. While estimated poverty and near-poverty rates remained constant from 2003 to 2005 among people without a disability, both rates rose by more than six percent among adults with a disability.

Note: The FPL for an individual in 2005 was \$9,570 per year, or \$798 per month.

**Chart V. Poor and Near Poor Working-age Adults
by Disability Status, 2003 - 2005
State of Maine**



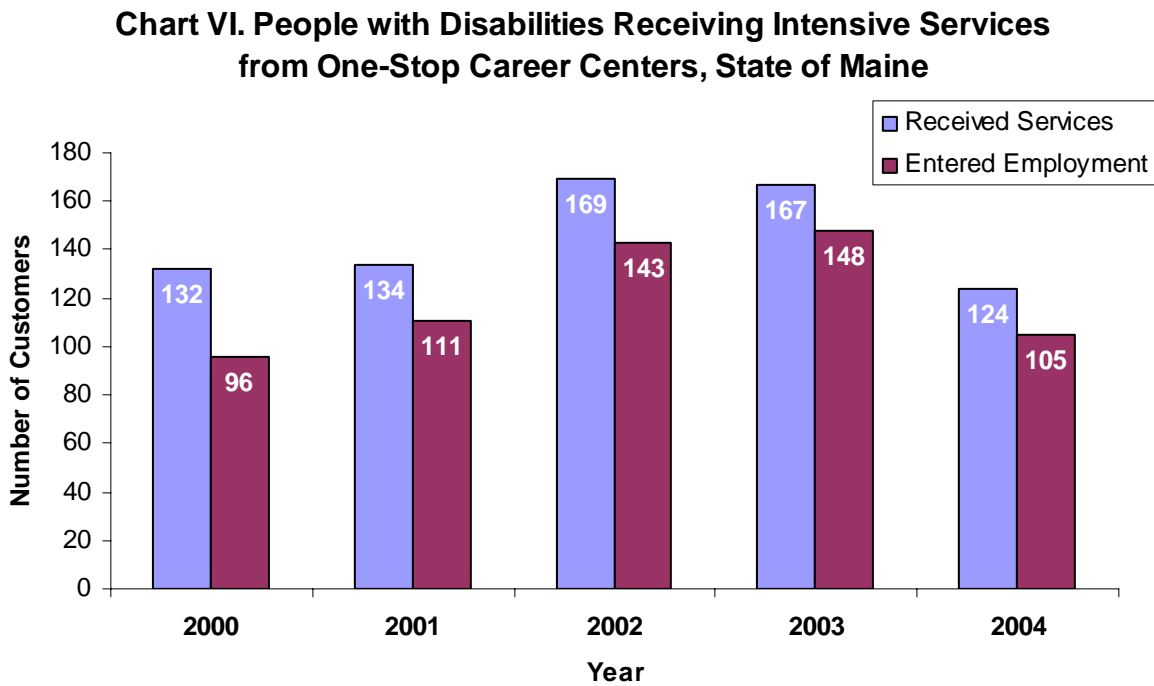
Source: Muskie School of Public Service calculations using the 2003 – 2005 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)

Employment Services

Maine has several programs that help people with disabilities prepare for work, find a job, or keep their cash benefits or health coverage when they return to work. This section highlights information on the use and outcomes of these services.

Chart VI. People with Disabilities Receiving Intensive Services from Maine One-Stop Career Centers³

One-Stop Career Centers provide services to job seekers the general population. The centers reported serving 124 people with disabilities in the Adult and Dislocated Workers programs in 2004. Of those, 105 (85 percent) entered employment.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, WIA National Performance Report

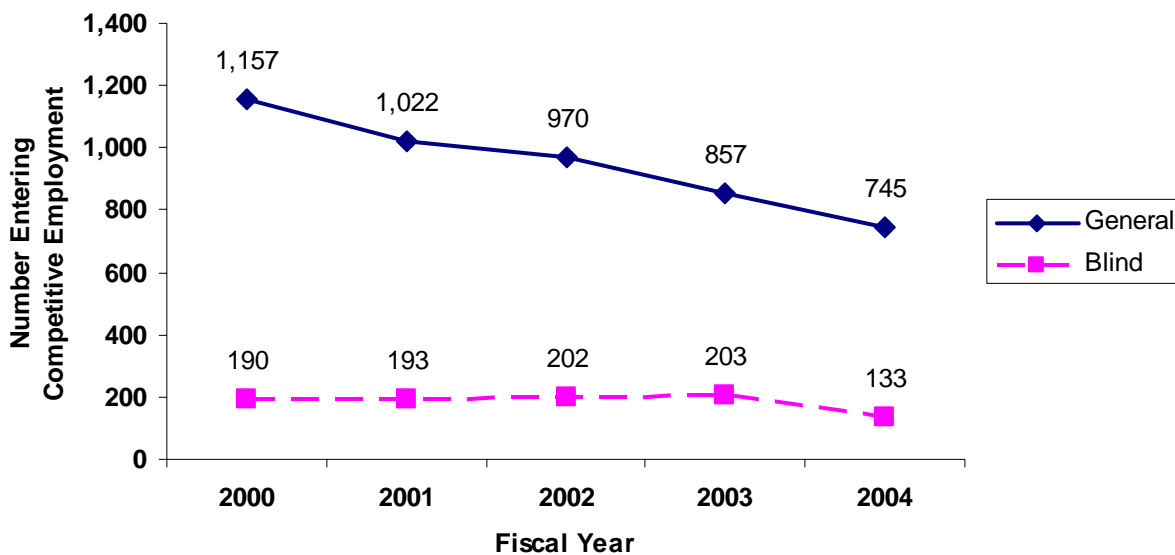
³ These figures do not include everyone who received services at a Career Center; they include only those people with a reported disability who received services under the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

Chart VII. Number Entering Competitive Employment: Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) provides people with severe disabilities a variety of services to help them get or keep a job. These services include job development and placement, job training, and rehabilitation technology. In fiscal year 2004, 878 people with severe disabilities entered competitive employment and stayed employed for a minimum of 90 days after receiving BRS services. Of those, 745 were served by the General Vocational Rehabilitation program, and 133 were served by the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

On average, people who got jobs in 2004 after participating in the General Vocational Rehabilitation program worked 29 hours per week and earned \$10 per hour.

**Chart VII. Number Entering Competitive Employment
Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services**

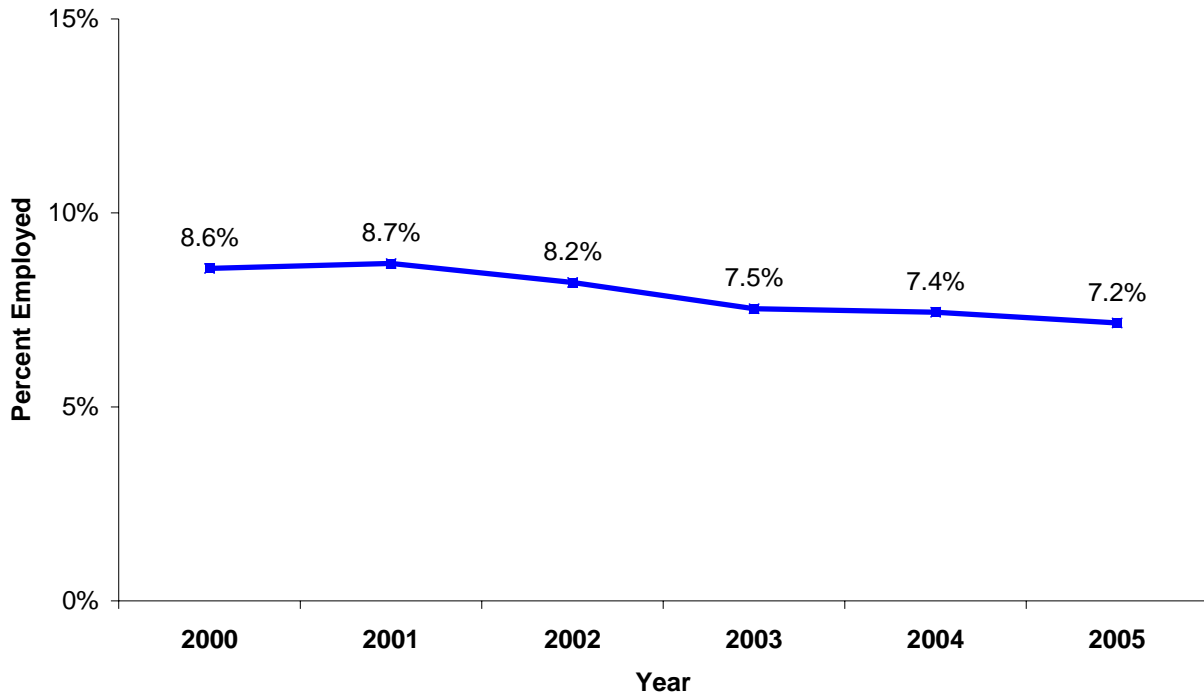


Source: RSA 911 Data (www.statedata.info)

Chart VIII. Employment Rate of Individuals on Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal program that gives cash support to very poor people with severe disabilities. In 2005, 7.2 percent of SSI recipients in Maine were working. The percent of SSI recipients who work has fallen every year since 2001. The use of SSI work incentives was also very low. Work incentives are special rules that make it possible for SSI beneficiaries to work and still receive monthly payments. Of 30,165 blind or disabled SSI recipients statewide, only 38 had a “Plan for Achieving Self-Support” and only 30 took advantage of the “Impairment-related Work Expenses” income exclusion.

Chart VIII. Employment Rate of Individuals on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in Maine

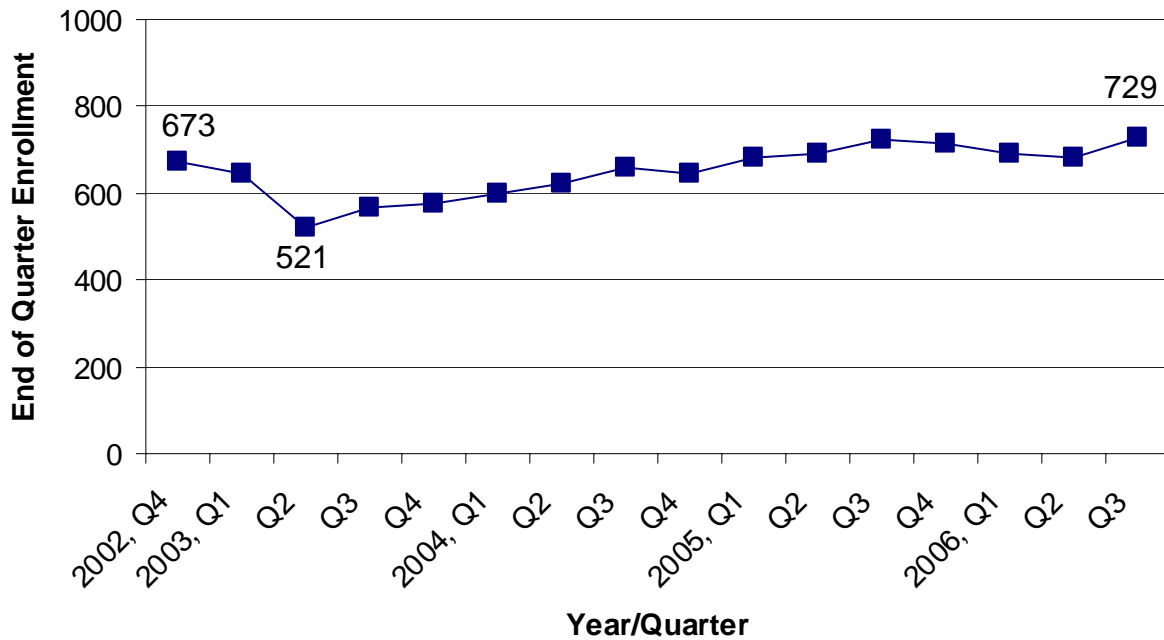


Source: Social Security Administration

Chart IX. Enrollment in the MaineCare Workers with Disabilities Option

The MaineCare Workers with Disabilities Option (WWD Option) allows low-income people with disabilities in Maine's Medicaid program to earn more by working while keeping their health coverage. From 2003 to 2006, the number of people enrolled in the WWD Option went down and then climbed up again — from a low of 521 in the second quarter of 2003 back up to a high of 729 as of September 2006.

Chart IX. Enrollment in MaineCare Workers with Disabilities Option, 2002 to 2006



Source: MaineCare Eligibility Data

Discussion of Data Sources

This section discusses the data sources for some of the previous charts.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Used in:

- *Chart I. Employment Participation of Working-age Adults in Maine by Disability Status*
- *Chart II. Employment Participation of Working-age Adults in Maine by Disability Type*
- *Chart III. Full-time/Full-year Employment*
- *Chart IV. Median Household Income of Working-age Adults in Maine by Disability Status*
- *Chart V. Poverty Status of Working-age Adults in Maine by Disability Status*

Overview

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey that provides communities a fresh look at how they are changing. It is a critical element of the Census Bureau's reengineered census.

The decennial census has two parts: 1) a short form that counts the population; and 2) a long form that obtains demographic, housing, social, and economic data. Information from the long form is used for the administration of federal programs and the distribution of billions of federal dollars. Since the census is conducted only once every 10 years, the long-form information becomes out-of-date after a few years. The ACS is a way to provide long-form-type information each year instead of once every ten years. This ongoing survey will replace the long form in future censuses.⁴

Year of most recent available data: 2005

Definition of Disability

The U.S. Census Bureau uses an activity-limitation definition of disability. It defines a disability as: "...a long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition. This condition can make it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning, or remembering. This condition can also impede a person from being able to go outside the home alone or to work at a job or business."⁵

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office. ACS – A Handbook for State and Local Officials. <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS04HSLO.pdf> Retrieved August 1, 2005

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office. 2003 Subject Definitions. <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/Def.htm>. Retrieved August 1, 2005.

The ACS identifies six different types of activity limitations by using the six questions below. People aged 16-64 are classified as having a disability if they report at least one of these conditions.

Disability Definitions from the 2003 -2005 American Community Survey

Census Term	Question
	Q15. Does this person have any of the following long-lasting conditions:
Sensory Disability	a. Blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment?
Physical Disability	b. A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying?
	Q16. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 6 months or more, does this person have any difficulty in doing any of the following activities:
Mental Disability	a. Learning, remembering, or concentrating?
Self-care Disability	b. Dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home?
	Q17. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 6 months or more, does this person have any difficulty in doing any of the following activities:
Go-Outside-the-Home Disability	a. Going outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor's office?
Employment Disability	b. Working at a job or business?

Source: Weathers, Robert. 2005. *A Guide to Disability Statistics from the American Community Survey. Table 1a.* Cornell University, Employment & Disability Institute.

<http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/edicollect/129>

Definition of Employment

This category includes all civilians 16-years-old and older who were either:

- 1) ***At work*** — this includes those who did any work during the reference week as paid employees, within their own business or profession, on their own farm, or as unpaid workers on a family farm or in a family business for 15 hours or more; or
- 2) ***With a job but not at work*** — this includes those who did not work during the reference week but had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent due to illness, bad weather, industrial dispute, vacation or other personal reasons.

Those who are not classified as “employed” include people on active duty in the United States Armed Forces;⁶ people whose only work activity consisted of work around the house or unpaid volunteer work for religious, charitable, and similar organizations; and all institutionalized people.

Statistical Reliability and Validity Considerations

Every year, the Census surveys over 500,000 people nationwide for its ACS. From 2000 to 2004, Maine had between 3,800 and 5,000 adult respondents to the ACS. In 2005, the Census increased the ACS sample. This resulted in Maine having more than 7,000 respondents. The growth of the sample means the estimates given by the ACS have been getting more precise over time.

In 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau introduced changes to some of the disability questions on the ACS. As a result, the Census Bureau does not recommend comparing 2003 disability items to prior years. For more information, visit:

http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/ACS_disability.pdf

Looking at Trends in the ACS

In 2005, the ACS moved out of its development phase and into full implementation. Changes to the sample design were made during this transition. These changes may have created a “seam” in the data between 2004 and 2005. Consequently, the Census Bureau does not recommend using the ACS to compare 2005 results to earlier years.⁷

An example of one of these changes is that estimates are now available for smaller locations — areas with populations of 65,000 people or more rather than areas with populations over 250,000. Prior to 2005, some parts of Maine were not included in the sample. Since 2005 the entire state has been represented

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics. (2005). 2005 Disability Status Reports. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University. www.disabilitystatistics.org

In preparing **Snapshot 2006**, we chose to include results from 2003 and 2004 as a point of reference. However, it is important to keep in mind that, strictly speaking, the 2005 estimates are not directly comparable to estimates from 2003 or 2004. Increases or decreases in population from these years may be the result of sampling design changes rather than actual shifts in Maine's population. Looking ahead, the 2005 data will be comparable to 2006 data and beyond. This will allow for more accurate tracking of trends in future years.

Internet Site for Further Information:

<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/index.html>

Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration, RSA 911 Data

- *Used in Chart VII. Number Entering Competitive Employment: Bureau of Rehabilitation Services*

Overview

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services operates Maine's state vocational rehabilitation program, in partnership with the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). RSA provides the majority of the funding to BRS. To receive these funds, BRS is required to collect and submit data on consumer services, demographics and outcomes to RSA on a regular basis. The RSA 911 is a publicly-available database with aggregate information submitted by all states.

Year of most recent available data: 2004

Definition of Disability

To be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, a person must have a "disability that keeps them from getting or keeping a job and need VR services to find or keep a job."⁸

Definition of Employment

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) closes active cases when the client has entered competitive employment and has stayed employed for a minimum of 90 days after receiving services. BRS defines competitive employment as, "...employment in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting, and for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage-level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled."⁹

⁸ http://www.state.me.us/rehab/dvr/dvr_vr.htm Retrieved 8/3/05

⁹ Code of Federal Regulations: 34 CFR 361.5(b)(11)

<http://www.washingtonwatchdog.org/documents/cfr/title34/part361.html#361.5> Retrieved August 4, 2005

Internet Sites for Further Information

<http://www.statedata.info>

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html>

Source: Social Security Administration

Used in Chart VIII. Employment Rate of Individuals on Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Year of most recent available data: 2004

Definition of Disability

The Social Security Administration (SSA) defines disability as:

“The inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity (SGA) because of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment(s):

- That can be expected to result in death; or
- That has lasted, or that we can expect to last, for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

If your impairment is other than blindness, earnings averaging over \$830 a month (for the year 2005) generally demonstrate SGA. If you are blind, earnings averaging over \$1,380 a month (for the year 2005) generally demonstrate SGA.”¹⁰

In addition to meeting the SSA definition of disability, eligibility for SSI is also limited to those with little or no work experience and limited income and resources.

Internet Sites for Further Information:

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/index.html>

¹⁰ Social Security Administration. 2005 Red Book. <http://www.ssa.gov/work/ResourcesToolkit/redbook.html>
Retrieved August 4, 2005

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