

Disability Statistics Abstract

Number 6

Disability in the States

by Mitchell P. LaPlante and Juliana K. Cyril

Disability is highly related to social and environmental conditions.¹ The 50 states and the District of Columbia differ widely in the wealth, educational attainment, racial and ethnic composition, and social beliefs of their populations, as well as in their built and natural physical environments. In response to some of these differences, the rate of disability can be expected to vary by region and from state to state.

The Census

Statistically, the census is the most precise source of state data on disability. It is better than any major national survey in approximating the true range of variation between states in rates of disability. The 1980 and 1990 censuses provide estimates on work disability in the 50 states and the District of Columbia (hereafter

called the "states"). The 1990 census also provides estimates of the number of people with mobility or self-care difficulties for states.

Work Disability

The census measures work disability, due to a physical, mental, or other health condition that has lasted at least six months, in the following categories: (1) limitation in the kind or amount of work a person can do (nonsevere work disability); (2) prevention from working at a job (severe work disability); and (3) any work disability (either 1 or 2).

In 1990, 12.8 million Americans aged 16 to 64 had a work disability, 6.6 million could not work at all, and 6.2 million could work but were limited in the kind or amount of work they could do. In 1990, the five states with the highest rates of work limitation were West Virginia, Kentucky, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana (Table 1). From 1980 to 1990, rates declined for 30 states, mainly in the South, and increased for 21 states, mainly in the Midwest and West. Disabil-

ity rates increased substantially in Alaska, Montana, and Wyoming, for example, while rates decreased substantially in the District of Columbia, Georgia, and Florida during the same ten year period.

From 1980 to 1990, national rates for both severe and nonsevere work disability decreased (by 3.9% and 4.7% respectively). However, severe work disability remained a consistent problem for states that had high rates in 1980. None of the five highest ranking states in terms of severe work disability ranks high in terms of nonsevere work disability, which suggests that different factors may influence rates of severe and nonsevere work disability.

Mobility and Self-Care Difficulty

The 1990 census is the first to provide estimates of outside mobility limitation (any difficulty going outside the home alone) and self-care limitation (any difficulty taking care of personal needs, such as bathing, dressing, or getting around inside the home).

Disability Statistics Program,
University of California,
San Francisco

Published by U.S. Department of Education,
National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation
Research (NIDRR)

Number 6, May 1993.

TABLE 1. Rate of Work Disability per Thousand People Aged 16 to 64 in 1980 and 1990 and Percent Change, by Severity and State

State	Code	With a work disability						Nonsevere work disability						Severe work disability					
		1980		1990		Change (%)	Rank	1980		1990		Change (%)	Rank	1980		1990		Change (%)	Rank
		Rate per 1,000	Rank	Rate per 1,000	Rank			Rate per 1,000	Rank	Rate per 1,000	Rank			Rate per 1,000	Rank	Rate per 1,000	Rank		
United States		85.2	—	81.5	—	-4.3	—	41.6	—	39.6	—	-4.7	—	43.6	—	41.9	—	-3.9	—
West Virginia	WV	123.4	2	126.2	1	2.3	18	44.2	22	42.5	21	-3.7	27	79.2	1	83.7	1	5.7	16
Kentucky	KY	113.9	4	114.3	2	0.4	21	45.5	16	41.5	26	-8.7	39	68.4	4	72.8	2	6.4	15
Arkansas	AR	127.3	1	111.7	3	-12.2	48	54.0	2	45.9	9	-14.9	49	73.3	2	65.8	4	-10.2	43
Mississippi	MS	117.6	3	109.8	4	-6.6	38	47.0	9	39.0	35	-16.9	51	70.6	3	70.8	3	0.3	26
Louisiana	LA	95.6	15	102.9	5	7.6	8	41.2	35	39.0	38	-5.6	32	54.4	9	64.0	5	17.6	5
Oklahoma	OK	107.6	5	101.6	6	-5.6	35	53.4	3	51.4	6	-3.8	28	54.1	10	50.2	9	-7.4	38
Maine	ME	97.5	14	101.5	7	4.2	12	47.9	8	53.0	3	10.7	2	49.6	14	48.5	10	-2.1	29
Oregon	OR	98.5	11	100.1	8	1.6	20	58.4	1	59.4	1	1.7	18	40.1	26	40.7	24	1.5	24
Tennessee	TN	103.7	7	97.3	9	-6.2	36	43.2	26	39.0	36	-9.7	43	60.6	6	58.4	7	-3.6	31
Montana	MT	81.4	28	97.0	10	19.3	2	49.0	6	51.7	5	5.5	6	32.4	37	45.3	16	40.1	1
Alabama	AL	105.9	6	96.8	11	-8.6	42	43.6	23	37.7	43	-13.7	48	62.2	5	59.1	6	-5.0	34
South Carolina	SC	98.1	12	91.1	12	-7.2	40	42.3	31	37.8	42	-10.6	45	55.9	8	53.3	8	-4.6	33
Washington	WA	87.6	20	90.9	13	3.7	14	51.1	5	51.9	4	1.6	19	36.5	31	39.0	25	6.8	14
Michigan	MI	92.8	16	90.4	14	-2.5	29	46.9	10	43.9	14	-6.5	34	45.8	17	46.6	15	1.6	23
Idaho	ID	87.4	21	90.4	15	3.4	15	52.1	4	53.1	2	1.9	17	35.3	34	37.3	30	5.7	17
Ohio	OH	88.0	19	90.1	16	2.4	17	42.5	29	42.4	22	-0.3	22	45.6	18	47.8	12	4.9	18
Georgia	GA	103.6	8	88.4	17	-14.6	50	45.6	15	40.0	33	-12.3	47	58.0	7	48.5	11	-16.4	48
New Mexico	NM	81.7	27	88.3	18	8.1	7	39.4	42	41.5	28	5.3	8	42.3	23	46.8	14	10.8	11
North Carolina	NC	97.5	13	87.3	19	-10.4	45	44.6	19	39.8	34	-10.7	46	52.9	12	47.5	13	-10.1	42
Florida	FL	99.3	9	86.6	20	-12.8	49	45.3	17	42.7	19	-5.7	33	54.0	11	43.9	19	-18.8	51
Rhode Island	RI	86.3	22	85.8	21	-0.6	23	41.8	33	42.9	18	2.6	12	44.5	20	42.9	21	-3.6	30
Missouri	MO	91.3	17	85.4	22	-6.5	37	45.1	18	41.5	27	-8.0	38	46.2	16	43.9	20	-5.1	35
D.C.	DC	98.8	10	84.0	23	-15.0	51	46.0	13	39.0	37	-15.4	50	52.8	13	45.1	17	-14.6	46
Nevada	NV	78.0	32	83.4	24	7.0	9	46.7	12	47.8	7	2.3	16	31.3	39	35.7	32	14.0	7
Arizona	AZ	90.7	18	83.1	25	-8.4	41	46.0	14	41.8	25	-9.1	40	44.8	19	41.4	22	-7.6	39
Pennsylvania	PA	84.7	24	82.6	26	-2.5	28	38.2	44	38.2	39	0.0	21	46.5	15	44.4	18	-4.6	32
Indiana	IN	79.8	30	79.0	27	-1.0	24	42.3	30	40.3	32	-4.8	31	37.5	29	38.7	26	3.3	21
Vermont	VT	85.1	23	79.0	28	-7.2	39	43.6	24	44.7	12	2.4	15	41.5	24	34.3	35	-17.3	50
Colorado	CO	72.3	42	78.4	29	8.3	5	43.6	25	45.8	10	5.1	9	28.7	43	32.5	38	13.3	8
South Dakota	SD	75.6	36	78.1	30	3.4	16	46.9	11	45.8	11	-2.3	25	28.7	44	32.3	39	12.7	9
Delaware	DE	79.1	31	77.4	31	-2.1	27	41.0	36	42.0	24	2.4	14	38.1	28	35.4	33	-7.0	37
Texas	TX	76.3	34	76.0	32	-0.4	22	39.7	41	37.9	41	-4.6	30	36.7	30	38.1	28	4.0	20
Iowa	IA	72.4	41	75.8	33	4.8	11	42.7	28	43.8	15	2.5	13	29.6	40	32.0	40	8.0	12
Virginia	VA	84.4	25	75.4	34	-10.6	46	40.1	39	37.0	45	-7.8	37	44.3	21	38.5	27	-13.1	45
New York	NY	76.8	33	74.3	35	-3.2	31	33.2	50	33.3	50	0.3	20	43.6	22	41.0	23	-5.9	36
California	CA	81.9	26	74.2	36	-9.5	43	40.5	38	36.7	46	-9.3	42	41.5	25	37.4	29	-9.7	41
Minnesota	MN	70.4	43	73.9	37	4.9	10	44.4	21	47.4	8	6.6	4	26.0	47	26.5	49	2.0	22
Wisconsin	WI	67.6	46	73.2	38	8.2	6	38.4	43	40.4	30	5.4	7	29.3	41	32.8	36	11.9	10
Utah	UT	75.4	37	72.9	39	-3.3	32	48.1	7	44.5	13	-7.6	36	27.3	46	28.5	48	4.3	19
Wyoming	WY	61.4	49	72.7	40	18.4	3	39.8	40	42.7	20	7.3	3	21.6	50	30.1	44	38.9	2
New Hampshire	NH	75.1	38	72.7	41	-3.2	30	41.9	32	43.5	16	3.7	10	33.1	36	29.2	46	-11.9	44
Massachusetts	MA	72.9	39	72.0	42	-1.2	25	36.8	46	36.2	47	-1.6	24	36.1	32	35.8	31	-0.8	28
Kansas	KS	76.1	35	72.0	43	-5.4	34	44.6	20	40.5	29	-9.2	41	31.5	38	31.5	41	-0.1	27
Nebraska	NE	70.1	44	71.4	44	1.8	19	42.8	27	42.3	23	-1.4	23	27.3	45	29.2	47	6.9	13
Maryland	MD	80.0	29	70.5	45	-11.9	47	41.0	37	37.9	40	-7.5	35	39.0	27	32.6	37	-16.5	49
North Dakota	ND	67.0	47	69.7	46	4.0	13	41.8	34	40.3	31	-3.5	26	25.2	49	29.3	45	16.4	6
Illinois	IL	72.6	40	68.9	47	-5.0	33	37.4	45	33.6	49	-10.3	44	35.1	35	35.3	34	0.6	25
Alaska	AK	54.0	51	66.3	48	22.8	1	35.7	48	43.2	17	20.8	1	18.3	51	23.1	51	26.7	3
Hawaii	HI	59.2	50	65.9	49	11.4	4	33.7	49	35.7	48	6.1	5	25.5	48	30.2	43	18.4	4
Connecticut	CT	65.1	48	63.8	50	-1.9	26	36.1	47	37.3	44	3.3	11	29.0	42	26.5	50	-8.4	40
New Jersey	NJ	68.6	45	61.8	51	-10.0	44	32.7	51	31.3	51	-4.1	29	36.0	33	30.5	42	-15.3	47

Sources: 1980 Census: Bowe, F. (1984). U.S. Census and Disabled Adults: The 50 States and the District of Columbia. (Report #1250). Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, University of Arkansas; U.S. Bureau of the Census (1983). 1980 Census of the Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics. (PC80-1-C). Washington, DC: U.S. GPO. 1990 Census: Unpublished tabulations from the U.S. Bureau of the Census; U.S. Bureau of the Census (1993). 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics. United States. (CPH-5-1). Washington, DC: U.S. GPO.

Note: Civilian noninstitutional population.

TABLE 2. Rate of Difficulty in Mobility or Self-care per Thousand People Aged 16 and Older, by Age Group and State: 1990 Census

	Ages 16+							Ages 16-64							Ages 65+						
	Popu- lation (1,000s)	Mobility or Self Care		Self Care		Mobility		Popu- lation (1,000s)	Mobility or Self Care		Self Care		Mobility		Popu- lation (1,000s)	Mobility or Self Care		Self Care		Mobility	
		Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank		Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank		Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank
U.S.	186,887	70.4	—	47.7	—	43.2	—	157,324	45.9	—	34.2	—	21.9	—	29,564	201.0	—	119.2	—	156.0	—
State																					
MS	1,864	104.1	1	71.9	1	65.2	2	1,558	70.1	2	52.8	2	34.4	2	307	276.9	1	169.3	1	221.5	1
AL	3,029	95.3	2	65.0	3	59.9	4	2,530	61.8	4	46.5	5	29.8	5	500	264.7	2	158.5	2	212.1	2
WV	1,385	94.7	3	58.1	8	67.8	1	1,127	58.4	6	38.5	9	35.6	1	258	253.7	3	143.8	5	208.5	3
DC	484	94.4	4	71.8	2	47.5	12	411	70.8	1	58.8	1	25.9	9	72	228.6	11	145.9	4	170.2	13
AR	1,756	89.5	5	58.5	7	59.5	5	1,426	54.6	8	38.9	8	29.0	6	330	240.6	7	143.3	7	191.4	8
LA	3,022	89.5	6	62.5	4	54.2	7	2,582	61.9	3	47.2	4	29.9	4	439	251.3	4	152.6	3	197.5	6
SC	2,564	87.0	7	61.5	5	50.3	8	2,183	61.3	5	47.6	3	27.0	8	380	234.5	9	140.8	8	184.3	10
KY	2,763	85.8	8	53.0	12	60.5	3	2,321	54.5	9	36.7	14	32.6	3	442	250.1	5	138.8	9	207.0	4
NY	13,895	81.6	9	58.6	6	46.5	15	11,656	57.0	7	44.5	6	25.0	10	2,239	209.5	15	131.7	12	158.3	17
FL	10,102	79.9	10	54.1	9	48.8	11	7,810	50.2	12	37.1	13	24.0	14	2,292	181.1	30	111.8	28	133.2	34
TN	3,709	79.7	11	51.2	13	54.3	6	3,123	49.7	13	34.8	16	27.5	7	586	239.6	8	138.3	10	197.1	7
NC	5,004	78.2	12	53.0	11	48.9	10	4,244	50.6	11	38.0	11	24.2	13	761	232.4	10	136.9	11	186.3	9
GA	4,781	78.2	13	53.3	10	47.0	13	4,161	53.0	10	39.9	7	24.5	12	620	246.8	6	143.5	6	198.4	5
OK	2,320	73.9	14	47.3	19	49.8	9	1,923	44.6	21	31.2	25	24.5	11	397	215.4	13	125.1	14	171.9	11
PA	9,204	73.3	15	48.0	16	46.5	14	7,474	43.5	23	31.6	22	21.9	18	1,729	201.9	18	118.9	18	152.8	22
NJ	6,015	72.2	16	50.6	14	41.2	21	5,030	47.6	15	37.2	12	20.3	25	985	198.0	22	119.1	17	148.2	24
MO	3,843	71.9	17	46.9	20	46.1	16	3,172	43.2	25	31.1	26	21.9	19	671	207.6	16	121.6	16	160.7	15
OH	8,182	70.0	18	45.1	24	44.9	17	6,861	44.4	22	31.6	24	23.0	16	1,321	203.1	17	115.5	23	158.1	18
IL	8,613	69.9	19	47.7	17	41.8	20	7,262	45.5	19	34.7	17	20.8	23	1,351	201.4	20	117.7	19	154.8	20
RI	780	69.3	20	45.4	23	43.1	19	639	41.5	28	30.1	29	21.1	22	141	196.0	24	114.8	25	143.1	29
MI	6,980	69.2	21	46.0	22	43.6	18	5,925	45.7	18	33.3	20	23.1	15	1,055	201.7	19	117.4	20	158.5	16
CA	22,150	67.8	22	48.5	15	38.2	30	19,164	48.7	14	38.0	10	21.3	21	2,986	190.0	25	115.9	22	147.2	25
TX	12,311	67.5	23	46.7	21	41.0	22	10,696	45.1	20	34.0	19	21.3	20	1,616	215.8	12	131.0	13	171.3	12
MD	3,629	67.3	24	47.4	18	37.2	32	3,137	46.4	16	36.6	15	18.5	32	491	200.7	21	116.8	21	156.5	19
NM	1,084	66.3	25	44.6	25	40.8	23	928	46.3	17	34.1	18	22.5	17	157	184.2	29	106.6	30	149.2	23
IN	4,160	66.0	26	43.3	29	40.7	24	3,510	41.7	26	30.5	28	19.9	27	650	197.1	23	111.9	27	152.8	21
DE	505	64.8	27	44.2	26	38.8	29	429	43.3	24	33.1	21	19.9	26	77	185.5	28	106.5	31	144.6	28
VA	4,594	64.6	28	43.4	28	39.8	27	3,967	41.5	27	30.8	27	19.5	30	627	210.6	14	123.3	15	168.6	14
MA	4,712	62.4	29	40.8	31	40.3	26	3,945	37.7	32	26.9	33	19.8	29	767	189.6	26	112.2	26	146.1	26
AZ	2,720	62.2	30	40.6	32	39.1	28	2,256	41.2	29	29.7	30	20.4	24	463	165.0	43	93.4	42	130.3	39
CT	2,554	61.8	31	42.9	30	36.0	34	2,137	37.3	33	28.8	31	16.4	37	417	187.3	27	115.1	24	136.7	31
HI	794	60.9	32	43.7	27	33.1	39	673	40.2	30	31.6	23	16.4	36	121	175.7	32	111.4	29	126.3	42
ME	927	59.0	33	36.2	36	40.6	25	773	35.0	34	23.7	35	19.9	28	154	180.3	31	98.9	33	144.9	27
IA	2,083	58.4	34	37.8	35	36.7	33	1,691	31.7	38	22.8	36	15.7	40	392	173.5	33	102.6	32	127.6	41
KS	1,814	58.1	35	38.3	33	36.0	35	1,495	33.9	35	25.5	34	15.6	41	318	172.0	34	98.5	34	131.8	35
OR	2,156	56.5	36	35.6	37	38.1	31	1,781	32.8	36	22.8	37	18.1	33	375	169.1	37	96.3	37	133.3	33
NV	913	56.5	37	38.0	34	33.0	40	788	39.2	31	28.7	32	18.5	31	124	166.4	39	96.7	36	125.2	43
WI	3,659	53.5	38	34.5	38	34.7	36	3,054	31.3	40	22.1	39	16.9	35	605	165.3	41	96.9	35	124.8	44
WA	3,623	52.2	39	32.8	39	34.6	37	3,077	32.0	37	21.9	40	17.5	34	546	165.7	40	94.0	41	131.2	36
NE	1,155	50.6	40	32.7	40	32.2	43	950	29.1	42	21.3	41	14.3	46	205	150.3	47	85.5	45	115.5	49
CO	2,446	49.4	41	31.6	42	31.4	44	2,134	31.6	39	22.5	38	16.2	39	311	171.0	35	94.2	40	135.5	32
MN	3,256	49.0	42	31.6	41	31.2	46	2,753	27.8	44	20.1	43	14.1	47	504	165.1	42	94.8	39	124.5	45
SD	498	48.9	43	30.1	43	32.5	42	404	29.3	41	20.9	42	15.5	43	94	133.0	51	69.4	51	105.2	50
MT	584	48.8	44	29.7	44	33.8	38	485	28.7	43	19.8	44	16.3	38	99	147.2	49	78.4	49	119.3	48
NH	843	47.1	45	29.5	45	30.8	47	726	27.6	45	18.9	45	14.7	44	117	167.9	38	95.1	38	130.8	38
ID	714	46.3	46	27.6	47	32.9	41	599	26.7	47	17.8	47	15.6	42	115	148.1	48	78.5	48	122.8	46
UT	1,135	45.4	47	28.2	46	29.6	48	991	27.1	46	18.9	46	13.9	48	144	170.9	36	92.2	43	137.3	30
ND	460	43.7	48	26.7	48	29.2	49	377	23.6	50	15.9	51	12.6	50	83	134.8	50	75.4	50	104.5	51
VT	428	42.4	49	25.5	49	31.3	45	366	23.9	49	16.0	49	14.5	45	62	152.0	46	82.0	47	131.0	37
WY	323	40.7	50	25.1	50	27.0	50	279	23.0	51	16.0	50	12.0	51	44	152.3	45	82.1	46	121.3	47
AK	364	32.7	51	21.8	51	19.6	51	343	25.0	48	17.6	48	12.8	49	21	156.9	44	90.5	44	129.8	40

Sources: Unpublished tabulations from the U.S. Bureau of the Census; U.S. Bureau of the Census (1993). 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics. United States. (CPH-5-1). Washington, DC: U.S. GPO.
 Note: Civilian noninstitutional population.

About 13.2 million Americans aged 16 and over have some difficulty in outside mobility or self care. The prevalence of outside mobility difficulty is slightly lower than self-care difficulty (8.1 versus 8.9 million). About 29% of the 13.2 million people who experience mobility or self-care difficulty have both types of limitation.

At ages 65 and over, the rate of difficulty in outside mobility or self care is 20.1%, over four times higher than the rate at ages 16 to 64 (4.6%). Though the rate of mobility difficulty and, to a lesser extent, self-care difficulty increases with age, age does not account for much variation in rates of mobility or self-care difficulty across states.²

The rate of self-care difficulty exceeds the rate of mobility difficulty for ages 16 to 64. As might be expected, the opposite is true at ages 65 and over, due to the high rate of increase in mobility difficulty with age. It is notable, however, that about 43% of people with a mobility difficulty are aged 16 to 64, and 60% of people with a self-care difficulty are aged 16 to 64. Thus, the majority of people experiencing self-care difficulty are nonelderly.

The states that rank the highest on the rate of mobility and self-care difficulty are Mississippi, Alabama, West Virginia, District of Columbia, and Arkansas (Table 2). As with work disability, southern states rank highly on rates of mobility and self-care difficulty.

Notes

1. This Abstract is summarized from: LaPlante, M.P. (1993). *State Estimates of Disability in America. Disability Statistics Report (3)*. Washington, D.C.: National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.
2. The correlation between rates of mobility and /or self-care limitation at ages 16 to 64 and ages 65 and above is $r=0.899$, $p<.001$.

Credits

The Disability Statistics Abstract series is produced by the Disability Statistics Program, Institute for Health & Aging, School of Nursing, University of California, Box 0612, San Francisco, CA 94143-0612, with funding from NIDRR. Layout assistance by Janet C. Smith.

This abstract is one of a series presenting statistical information on disability in the U.S. Statistics presented have negligible sampling error but nonsampling error may arise. Comparisons and relationships discussed may be affected by other unanalyzed factors.