

# Study: A profile of the labour market experiences of adults with disabilities, 2012

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In 2012, 10.1% of Canadians aged 15 to 64—2,338,200 individuals—reported a difficulty or impairment because of a long-term condition or health problem that limited their daily activities.

## Close to half of working-age people with disabilities are employed

Of the 2,338,200 working-age people with disabilities in Canada, 1,057,100 were employed (45.2%), 125,700 were unemployed (5.4%) and 1,155,500 were not in the labour force (49.4%).

Employment rates differed depending on the type of disability. People with developmental, cognitive and mental health-related disabilities face greater employment challenges than people with sensory or physical disabilities.

## Nearly one-third of Canadians with disabilities are potential workers

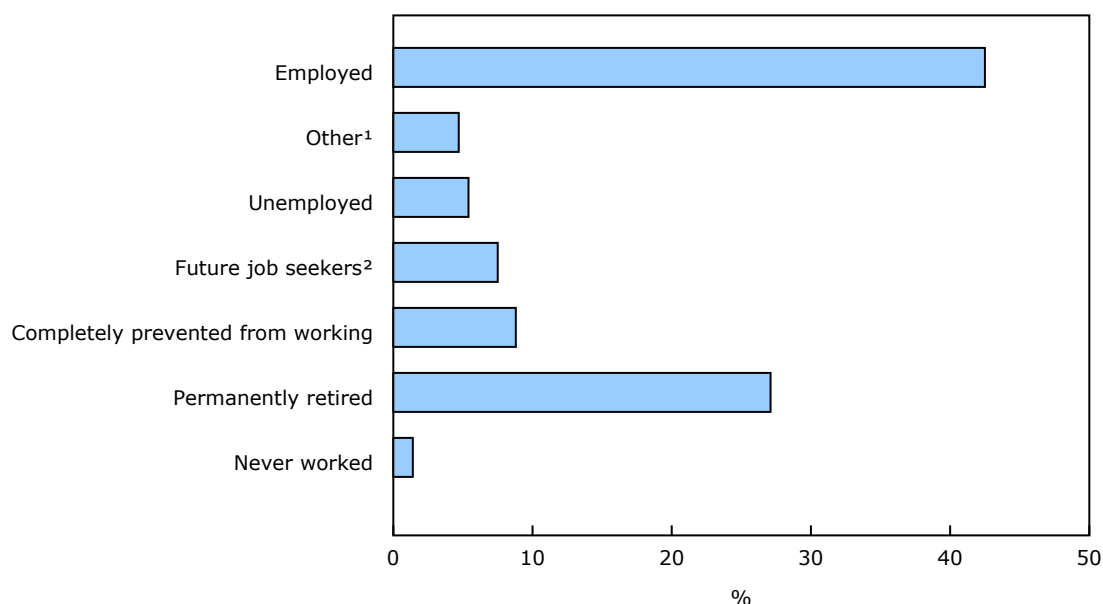
Of the 1,155,500 working-age people with disabilities who were not in the labour force, those who stated they would look for work in the next year, and those who had previously been employed or were students in 2012 were considered as potential workers. Thus, the potential worker population with disabilities was estimated at 411,600, which included unemployed (125,700), future job seekers (175,200) and other potential workers with disabilities (110,800).

Potential workers with disabilities were younger than the employed population with disabilities: 62.7% were younger than 45, compared with 37.1% for those employed.

Potential workers with disabilities were more likely than those employed to have a severe or very severe disability: 54.3% had a severe or very severe disability, compared with 32.1% for those employed.



**Chart 1**  
**Work potential status of people with disabilities, aged 15 to 64, 2012**



1. Includes 22,500 current students who did not fit into other categories and 88,300 others who had previously worked.

2. Will look for work in the next 12 months.

**Note(s):** People included in the "other," "unemployed" and "future job seekers" categories are considered potential workers. People included in the "completely prevented from working," "permanently retired" and "never worked" categories are not considered potential workers.

**Source(s):** Canadian Survey on Disability (3251).

## Over three-quarters of employed adults with disabilities are full-time workers

More than three-quarters (77.7%) of employed adults with disabilities worked full time (30 or more hours per week). Among employed adults with disabilities who worked part time, over one-third (36.0%) indicated that their disability or health condition was the main reason for working less than 30 hours per week, and less than one-quarter (23.3%) stated that they would have preferred to work full time, but were unable to find a position with full-time hours.

## More than half of potential workers with disabilities who are actively seeking employment would be able to work full time

Among potential workers who were actively seeking employment (that is, those who are unemployed), 59.5% indicated that they would not be limited in their ability to work full time, and 71.1% reported they would not be limited in their ability to work part time.

## Most needed accommodation is modified or reduced hours

Less than half (42.3%) of employed people with disabilities reported needing at least one type of workplace accommodation because of their condition compared with 58.6% of potential workers.

The most common workplace accommodation for both employed (22.6%) and potential workers (41.5%) with disabilities was modified or reduced hours.

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## Most accommodations needs met by employers

The majority (79.5%) of employed people with disabilities who require an accommodation reported that at least one of their accommodation needs had been met.

Modified work hours, the most commonly reported need, was also the need most commonly met, with 75.9% of employed people with disabilities who required this accommodation stating they received it. The needs most likely to be unmet were for communication aids, specialized computers, human aids and technical supports, although these were also among the least required aids.

Among employed adults with disabilities aged 15 to 64 who had at least some unmet needs for workplace accommodations, 44.6% said their employer was not aware of the need. The reasons most commonly cited for the employee not asking for the accommodation were that they feared a negative outcome (33.1%) or felt uncomfortable asking (33.0%).

## Employed people with disabilities limited in number of hours they can work

Close to half (46.4%) of employed people with disabilities had at least some difficulty advancing in or changing jobs because of their disability. The most prevalent reason for such difficulties was that their condition limited the number of hours they could work (30.9%), which is noteworthy given that modified/reduced hours was the most needed workplace accommodation.

## Lack of locally available jobs and inadequate training most common barriers

Almost three-quarters (72.6%) of potential workers aged 15 to 64 who were not in the labour force experienced barriers that discouraged them from looking for work. The most common barriers included lack of locally available jobs (32.5%), inadequate training or experience (31.9%) and unsuccessful past attempts obtaining employment (26.0%).

Barriers specific to having a disability were less frequently reported; 17.4% stated they had experienced discrimination in the past, 12.3% had experienced accessibility issues and 9.4% lacked specialized transportation.

Financial barriers also contributed to labour force discouragement. Almost one in five (18.5%) potential workers expected that their income from employment would be less than their current income and 15.3% expected they would lose benefits from support-based programs.

### **Note to readers**

*The findings of this study are based on a combination of data from the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) and 2011 National Household Survey (NHS). The CSD was conducted in 2012 on the basis of a sample of persons who reported an activity limitation in the 2011 NHS.*

*Of the working-age people with disabilities who were not in the labour force, those who indicated that they were completely prevented from working, those who were permanently retired, or had no previous work experience and were not current students were not considered potential workers.*

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3251](#).**

The report "[A Profile of the Labour Market Experiences of Adults with Disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years or older, 2012](#)," which is part of the publication *Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012 (89-654-X)*, is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).