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Data Note PLUS: Federal Data Snapshot of Puerto Rico on Individuals with Disabilities

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Federal Data Snapshot of Puerto Rico on Individuals with Disabilities

By Daria Domin and Jean E. Winsor

Prior to 2012, four data projects funded by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD)—Access to Integrated Employment, Family and Individual Information Systems Project, Residential Information Systems Project, and the State of the States in Developmental Disabilities—only collected data from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. However, a 2012 Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) from AIDD requested that applicable AIDD data projects include the five U.S. Territories (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands) in their data collection and analysis efforts. This Data Note represents an expansion of our data collection activities.

Since the mid-1980s, the Institute for Community Inclusion has collected disability data to describe trends in day and employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This data is featured on www.StateData.info. The website includes data from state IDD agencies, as well as vocational rehabilitation (VR) outcomes and services from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The site also contains data from the Social Security Administration, state mental health agencies, the U.S. Census, and the U.S. Department of Labor. The statedata.info goal is to be a one-stop shop for disability employment outcome data.

This data note is the second in a series on the territories produced by the Access to Integrated Employment project, focusing on the secondary data analysis of federal data sets. The data sources in this Data Note are ones that are typically analyzed for individual U.S. states.

The purpose of this Data Note is to describe the employment outcomes of adults with disabilities in the territory of Puerto Rico, drawing from a variety of data sources that mirror what statedata.info displays for U.S. states. The expectation is



that this data collection effort will increase opportunities for self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration of people with IDD into their communities in the U.S. Territories.

Demographic Information

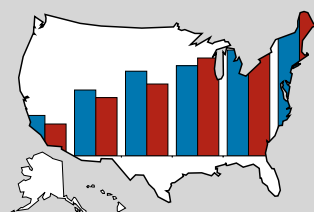
Puerto Rico has an unemployment rate of almost 14%.

The population of Puerto Rico in 2014 was estimated at 3,548,397 (U.S. Census). Seventy-six percent of residents of Puerto Rico identified their race as white and 12.4% identified as black. Regardless of race, 99% identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2014b). It is interesting to note that the Hispanic population of Puerto Rican origin in the 50 states and D.C. grew by more than one million between 2000 and 2010, and there are more people of Puerto Rican origin who live in the 50 states and D.C. than on the island of Puerto Rico (Lopez & Valesco, 2011). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate in Puerto Rico in 2014 was 13.9%¹.

American Community Survey

Individuals with cognitive disabilities in Puerto Rico have the highest unemployment rates and lowest earnings of all Puerto Rican subgroups.

Puerto Rico participates in the decennial United States Census, as well as the annual Puerto Rican Community Survey, a version of the Census Bureau's American



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Community Survey, customized for Puerto Rico. Table 1 displays data for the working-age population in Puerto Rico with and without disabilities.

Similar to the mainland, individuals with cognitive disabilities in Puerto Rico have the highest unemployment rate, the lowest mean annual earnings (almost \$8,300 less than individuals with no disabilities), and the lowest weekly hours worked of all population subgroups examined. This is also the group with the highest percentage of citizens living below the poverty line.

Figure 1: Percentage of People Employed by Disability Type, 2013 ²

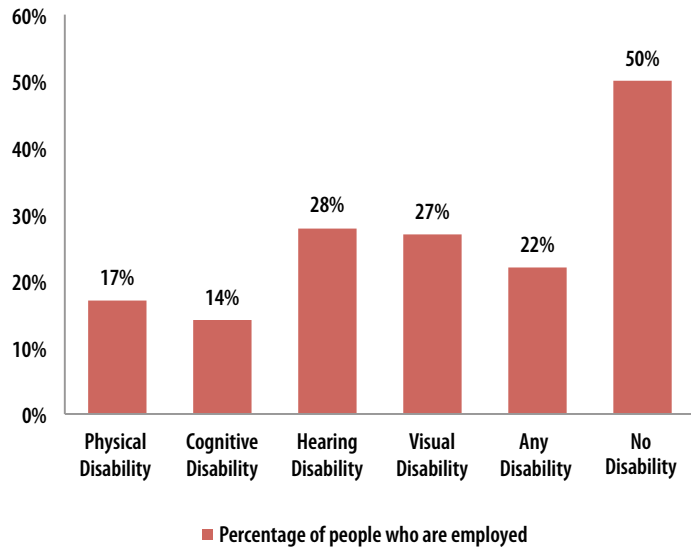


Table 1: Employment Participation and Outcomes for Working-Age Puerto Ricans (Ages 16-64) in 2013

	Physical Disability	Cognitive Disability	Hearing Disability	Visual Disability	Any Disability	No Disability
Number of people	196,112	190,848	54,269	101,064	397,030	1,891,718
Number of people employed	34,265	26,010	15,081	26,915	85,409	950,101
Mean annual earnings from work	\$20,748	\$15,654	\$21,495	\$19,772	\$19,586	\$23,945
Mean weekly hours worked	35	32	35	35	34	36
% of people living below the poverty line	50%	55%	45%	54%	52%	41%

Rehabilitation Services Administration

Rehabilitation rate for individuals with ID is at its lowest since 2005.

Rehabilitation Services Administration 911 database (RSA-911) is a public access database that captures individual characteristics, services provided, and employment outcomes at the point of closure from vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. Records are at the individual level and cover approximately 600,000 case closures per year nationally.

In Puerto Rico, as Table 2 indicates, 2013 saw the lowest number of closures for people with ID into an employment setting since 2005. Another notable finding is the 17% decline in the total number of closures between 2011 and 2013, and an even sharper decline for individuals with ID. The rehabilitation rate is the percentage of people who gained employment out of the total number of people who received services. In 2013, the rehabilitation rate of people with ID was 58.8%, the lowest since 2005; however, it was still higher than the U.S. national average of 50.8% (Butterworth et al., 2015).

Table 2: VR Case Closures and Employment Outcomes in Puerto Rico, 2005-2013

	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Total number of closures	7,023	7,382	8,185	8,063	6,652
Total number of closures with ID	585	531	573	686	380
Closures into an employment setting	2,767	2,590	2,435	2,711	3,026
Closures with ID into an employment setting	257	211	211	229	183
Closures with an IPE but no employment outcome	861	720	897	1,030	1,310
Closures with ID and an Individual Plan for Employment but no employment outcome	101	102	114	147	128
Closures with supported employment as a goal	205	198	213	259	231
Closures with ID and supported employment as a goal	130	110	121	147	117
Rehabilitation rate for all closures with an IPE	76.3%	78.2%	73.1%	72.5%	69.8%
Rehabilitation rate for all closures with ID	71.8%	67.4%	64.9%	60.9%	58.8%
Percentage of all closures into employment	39.4%	35.1%	29.7%	33.6%	45.5%
Percentage of closures with ID into employment	43.9%	39.7%	36.8%	33.4%	48.2%

Wagner-Peyser

The number of registered job seekers in Puerto Rico has fluctuated greatly over the last eight years.

The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 established a nationwide system of public employment offices, known as the Employment Service. In 1998, the act was amended by the Workforce Investment Act, and the Employment Service became part of the One-Stop workforce system. The mission remains the same: to assist job seekers in finding jobs and employers in finding qualified workers³.

The number of registered job seekers (this includes individuals with and without disabilities) in Puerto Rico has fluctuated since 2005, while the number of registered job seekers with a disability has remained rather steady since 2007. The number of registered job seekers more than doubled from 2009 to 2011. In fact, the number of job seekers with disabilities increased only slightly during this time.

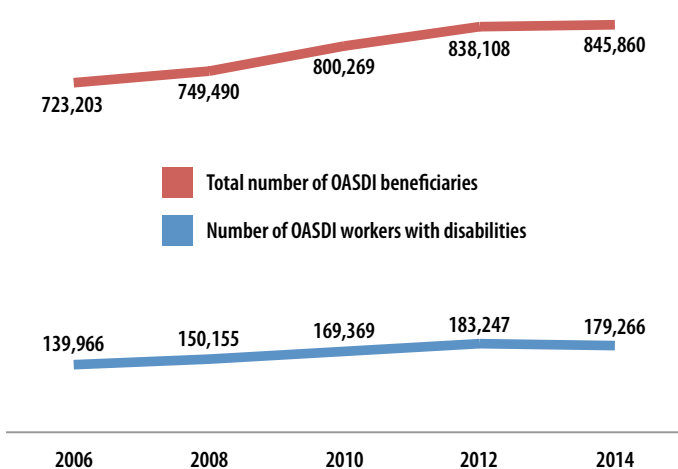
Table 3: Total Active Job Seekers in Puerto Rico, 2005-2013

	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Number of registered job seekers	177,758	61,493	45,604	97,967	129,990
Number of registered job seekers with a disability	5,209	1,793	1,387	1,412	1,749
Percentage of registered job seekers with a disability	2.9%	2.9%	3.0%	1.4%	1.3%

Old Age Survivor and Disability Insurance

Old Age Survivor and Disability Insurance (OASDI)⁴ is a comprehensive federal benefits program that provides benefits to retirees, people with disabilities, and their survivors. The most recent data available for Puerto Rico is from 2014⁵. As Figure 2 shows, since 2006 there has been a steady increase in the number of OASDI beneficiaries. While there has been a steady increase in OASDI workers with disabilities since 2006, a slight decline occurred between 2012 and 2014.

Figure 2: Number of OASDI Workers with Disabilities, 2006-2014



In summary, trend data show that 2013–2014 saw a decline in employment outcomes for people with disabilities compared to previous years presented here. In 2013, individuals with ID had the lowest rehabilitation rate (RSA-911). That same year saw the lowest percentage of registered job seekers with a disability since 2005 (Wagner-Peyser), and 2014 saw a decline in OASDI workers with disabilities. With high unemployment and economic woes plaguing the island, workers with disabilities, especially those with IDD, are having a more difficult time accessing the job market. The expectation, however, is that disability employment outcome data on U.S. Territories presented in this Data Note series can inform policy makers, advocates, and employment providers to effect policy change in the arena of integrated employment of individuals with IDD.

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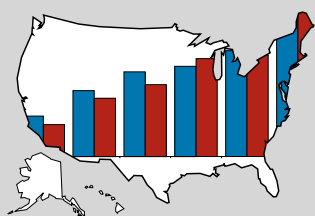
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Endnotes

- ¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics: www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/srgune_03042015.htm
- ² Puerto Rican Community Survey
- ³ U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services
- ⁴ OASDI is administered by the Social Security Administration. SSA data that is available on statedata.info for U.S. states is missing for Puerto Rico because individuals living in Puerto Rico are not eligible for Supplemental Security Income.
- ⁵ U.S. Social Security Administration; Office of Retirement and Disability Policy; Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics. OASDI Beneficiaries by State and County, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2014.

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