

# LIVE. WORK. ACHIEVE.

A POLICY BRIEF ON EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IN MISSISSIPPI  
POLICY BRIEF NUMBER 1/SPRING 2014



**It's  
Time**

*Mississippians with disabilities are a largely untapped resource for employers, and in many cases, the hiring of Mississippians with disabilities represents a viable business option that both meets the needs of an employer and provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities to use their strengths and skills; . . . my administration is committed to supporting policies . . . that . . . explore employment in an integrated setting as the first priority option for persons with disabilities who are of working age.*

Governor Phil Bryant  
Executive Order 1335  
January 14, 2014

## Hiring People with Disabilities Is Good Business

**People with disabilities are not being utilized in Mississippi's workforce. This Policy Brief provides employment facts and examines the ways in which Mississippi employers can benefit from hiring youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.**

Since 2010, Mississippians with disabilities have had a significantly lower percentage of employment compared to people without disabilities, often as much as 43%.

The employment percentage of Mississippians with disabilities has been at least 6% less than the national average for people with disabilities.

From 2011 to 2012, the employment rate of Mississippians with disabilities fell to 26.4%, one of the lowest in the nation.

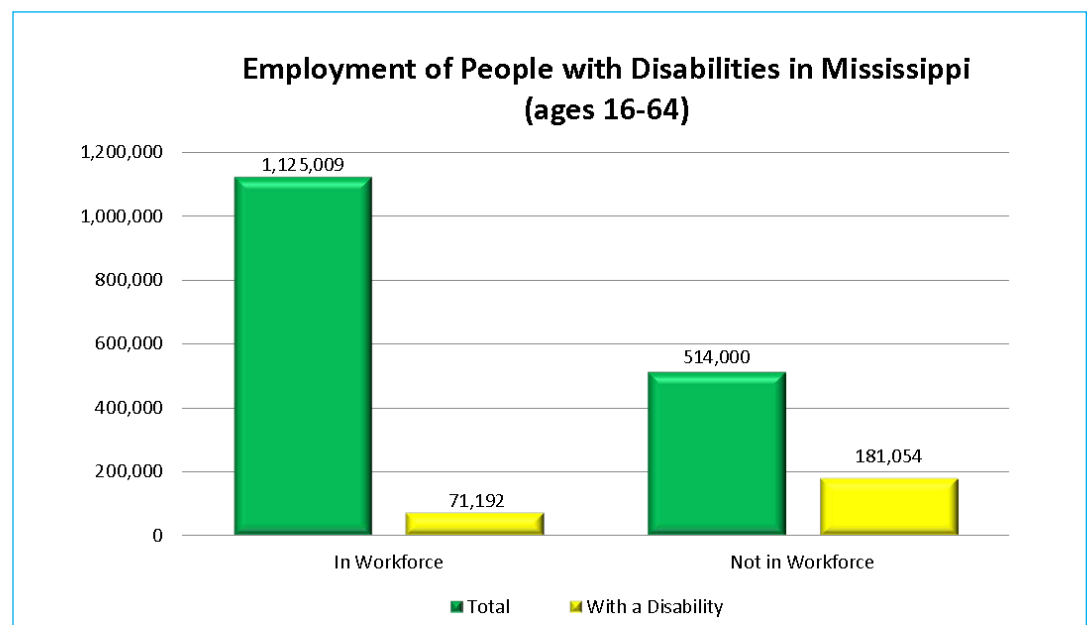
People with disabilities are, in fact, the largest minority in existence. In 2010, approximately 56.7 million people living in the United States had some kind of disability.

Mississippi ranks third among all states in the percentage of people with disabilities at 16.5% compared to the national average of 12.2%.

Most workers with disabilities are loyal and dedicated and will improve a business' bottom line

### **Recommendation #1**

Consider this often untapped population for employment opportunities.



**Table 1. Employment Rate Comparison between People with and without Disabilities (Ages 18-64) in MS and the U.S.**

Year	Item	Mississippi	U.S.
2010	People with Disabilities	27.6%	33.4%
	People without Disabilities	68.8%	72.8%
	Employment Gap (% pts)	41.2	39.4
2011	People with Disabilities	29.3%	32.6%
	People without Disabilities	68.6%	72.8%
	Employment Gap (% pts)	39.2	40.2
2012	People with Disabilities	26.4%	32.7%
	People without Disabilities	69.6%	73.6%
	Employment Gap (% pts)	43.3	40.8

### **Workplace Accommodations Support Employees and Businesses at Low Cost**

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines an accommodation as “any change or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things usually are done” that allows a person with a disability “to apply for a job, perform job functions, or enjoy equal access to benefits available to other individuals in the workplace.”

Workplace accommodations assist people with disabilities to work, impact the worksite in a positive manner, and are often low in cost. According to an ongoing Job Accommodation Network (JAN) Study, employers

- Want to provide accommodations so they can retain valued and qualified employees;
- Report no or low cost for accommodating employees with disabilities;
- Report accommodations are effective;
- Experience multiple direct and indirect benefits after making accommodations, such as keeping a qualified employee, increasing the employee’s productivity, and preventing the cost of training a new employee.

**Employers want to provide accommodations so they can retain valued and qualified employees.**

The findings of the study have indicated that over half the accommodations provided were no cost with most costing \$500 or much less. To learn more about this study and accommodations in general, visit the Job Accommodations Network website at [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org).

**Recommendation #2**  
Provide accommodations for employees with disabilities.

### **Tax Benefits for Employers Hiring People with Disabilities**

Employers may receive tax benefits through the:

- Small Business Tax Credit,
- Architectural/Transportation Tax Deduction, and
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

The Small Business Tax Credit provides small businesses with an annual tax credit for making their businesses more accessible for people with disabilities.

The Architectural/Transportation Tax Deduction is an annual deduction available to businesses for any expenses to remove physical, structural and transportation-related barriers in the work setting for people with disabilities.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program provides tax savings for businesses that hire veterans with disabilities and people with disabilities who were referred by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. To learn more about tax benefits for employers, visit the Office of Employment Policy, Department of Labor website at [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep) or review the Job Accommodations Network Tax Incentives Fact Sheet at <http://askjan.org/media/tax.html>.

#### ***Recommendation #3***

Take advantage of the many tax breaks available to employers.

### ***Employment Important to Everyone***

Blueprint Mississippi 2011 was established through an independent cooperative of organizations and leaders aimed at conducting an objective review of Mississippi's economic opportunities and recommended actions for enhancing employment opportunities for all in Mississippi.

### **The vision of Blueprint Mississippi is to**

***“enable a more prosperous, vibrant and resilient Mississippi, built upon a foundation of economic opportunity for all its citizens.”***

One priority of the Blueprint is focused on the cultivation of a more robust workforce in the state, a goal that may be accomplished through the hiring of people with disabilities. The Mississippi Blueprint through its vision and goals reinforces the need to hire qualified people with disabilities in

Mississippi's workforce. The Blueprint is a dynamic document that is considered a “window to the future” for Mississippi. To learn more about this document and how the hiring of more people with disabilities can and will make Blueprint Mississippi a reality, visit the website at [www.msmecc.com/blueprint-mississippi](http://www.msmecc.com/blueprint-mississippi).

For more information relating to any of these Practice Recommendations, visit the MSPE website at [www.mspeidd.org/empbrief1](http://www.mspeidd.org/empbrief1).

#### ***Recommendation #4***

Commit to hiring people with disabilities as part of participation in the Mississippi Blueprint Project.

MSPE is funded by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

### **References**

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The **Mississippi Partnerships for Employment for Youth and Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MSPE)** consortium was established in June 2011 to develop and direct a state-level collaborative approach to improve employment outcomes for Mississippi youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

The goal of the MSPE project is to build capacity across existing state services for sustainable systems change that improve outcomes for youth and young adults with IDD seeking competitive employment in integrated settings.

Find MSPE Project information, employment resources and more on the MSPE website at [www.mspeidd.org](http://www.mspeidd.org). Managing organizations include the following:



AA/EOE/ADA

