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Individuals Living with a Disability: An Underserved Population Living in Poverty

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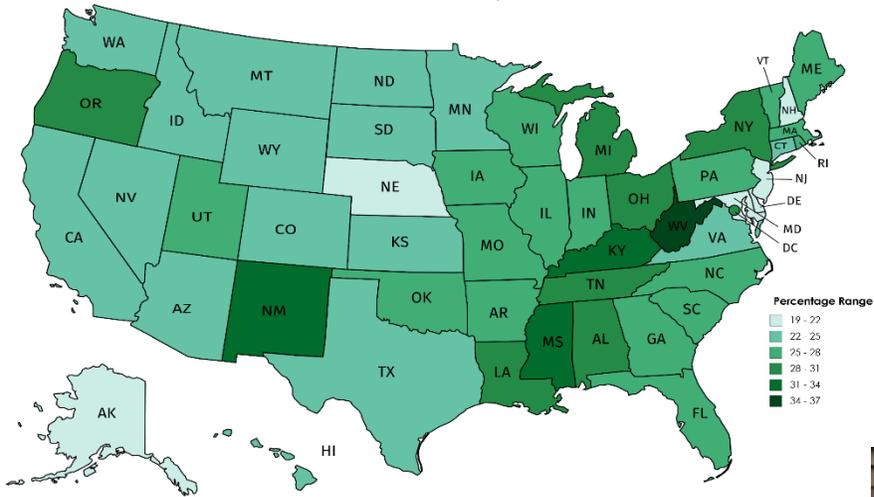
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Individuals Living with a Disability: An Underserved Population Living in Poverty

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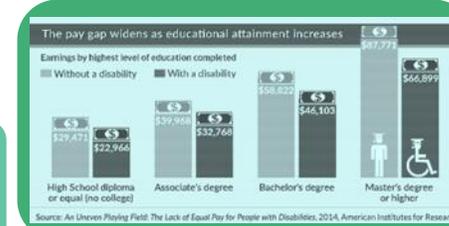
Percentage of Persons 21 – 64 Years with a Disability Who Were Living Below the Poverty Line in 2017



In the United States 26.1% of Persons 21 – 64 Years with a Disability Were Living Below the Poverty Line in the United States.

Disability is both a cause and consequence of poverty.

People with disabilities are much more likely to experience material hardships than people without disabilities at the same income levels.



“Language endorsing the antiquated practice of paying the blind and other workers with disabilities less than the federal minimum wage, which is based on the fallacious premise that disabled workers cannot be productive and do the same work as their non-disabled peers, has no place in legislation designed to increase competitive work opportunities for workers with disabilities,” - Dr. Marc Maurer, president of the National Federation of the Blind

Even with education, individuals with disabilities experience the wage gap. 31% of workers with disabilities have a high-school or equivalent degree, 7% have a bachelor’s degree, and 3% have a master’s degree. 59% of workers with a disability do not have a formal education.

Community advocacy: People are speaking out on the injustices towards those with disabilities. These injustices are resulting in the rise of poverty within the population of those with disability. The percentage of those with a disability living below the poverty line increased from 25.3% in 2008 to 26.1% in 2013.

“Job training” programs advertise that those who attend will learn a skill in a safe environment that will eventually lead them to a real job. However, it is said that as soon as the worker becomes proficient and ready to graduate, the program then changes that person’s task.

Employment Rates

Without Disability: 65
With Disability: 27

The employment rate of those without a disability is much higher than those with a disability.

Fair Labor Standards Act 1938

Authorizes employers to pay wages that are less than the Federal minimum wage to workers with a disability.

Wage Gap

Without Disability: \$1
With Disability: 63¢

For every \$1 that an individual without a disability makes, an individual with a disability makes 37 cents less.

How Social Workers Can Help

Advocacy

- Educate the community with the goal of lessening the stigma that rests on those who are labeled with a disability.

Policy

- Write /call government officials, asking for new laws protecting the disabled population.

Intervention

- Work with clients to not allow their disability to define who they are.
- Educate clients on how to advocate for themselves.

Are Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income a solution (SSI)?

SSDI and SSI both rule that the individual is unable to work. Many individuals living with a disability are able to work, the issues are not being able to find work, or when they do, not being paid the proper amount.

