

## SIDEBAR

### Defining Persons with at Least One Disability

The Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) uses a series of yes-or-no questions to ask about six disability types: hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, and independent living difficulty. The questions include the following:

- Do you have difficulty dressing or bathing?
- Are you deaf or do you have serious difficulty hearing?
- Are you blind or do you have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?
- Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?
- Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
- Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?

Respondents who report having any one of the six disability types are considered to have a disability.

For more information about how disability data are collected from the CPS, see [Guidance for Disability Data Users](#) and [How Disability Data Are Collected from the Current Population Survey](#).

The six-item set of questions used on the CPS is one way to gauge disability. This report also presents disability data from the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) surveys: the National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG), the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED), and the Survey of Doctoral Recipients (SDR). These NCSES surveys assess functional limitations by asking respondents to indicate the usual degree of difficulty they have with the following five activities:

- Seeing words or letters in ordinary newsprint (with glasses or contact lenses, if you usually wear them)
- Hearing what is normally said in conversation with another person (with a hearing aid, if you usually use one)
- Walking without human or mechanical assistance or using stairs
- Lifting or carrying something as heavy as 10 pounds, such as a bag of groceries
- Concentrating, remembering, or making decisions because of physical, mental, or emotional condition

To allow for consistent use of the data on disabilities across multiple data sources, this report considered an individual with a disability to have answered yes to any of the six CPS disability questions or to have responded with "moderate," "severe," or "unable to do" degree of difficulty to the activities listed on the NCSES surveys. Despite this attempt to provide comparable definitions, caution should be used when comparing the data on disabilities presented from CPS and NCSES sources.