KEY FACTS

A January 1994 Harris Poll survey reported that the vast majority of nonworking persons with disabilities wanted to work, but they were prevented from working by numerous obstacles. These obstacles represent the remaining challenges to be met as we strive to achieve equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities. Following are some facts that help to outline some of these challenges.

EMPLOYMENT
The latest figures (1992) from the U.S. Census Bureau show that there are now 49 million Americans with disabilities. The 1990 Census of the United States concluded that over 60% of all working-age Americans with disabilities are NOT participating in the work force either full- or part-time. Further, 76% of all Americans with severe disabilities do NOT work either full- or part-time. Among individuals with disabilities who do work, the average earnings are a full 35% LESS than earnings for workers without disabilities.

According to the last three Census Reports, the employment rate of persons with disabilities has declined over the last 20 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the labor force</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of the labor force</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

According to a January 1994 Harris Poll, 79% of those persons with disabilities who are not working want to work! Eight out of ten of those surveyed expressed their belief that they would have the kind of job they desire if they did not have a disability.

MINORITIES
Studies show that 78% of all African Americans with disabilities do NOT participate in our nation’s labor force either full- or part-time. African Americans with disabilities who do work earn a full 38% LESS than all other African Americans. Seventy-seven percent of Hispanic Americans with disabilities do NOT participate in the work force. Hispanic Americans with disabilities who work earn 29% LESS than Hispanic Americans without disabilities. (Source: March 1988 Current Population Survey)

ACCOMMODATIONS/UNIVERSAL DESIGN
The December 1994 Annual Report of the President’s Committee’s Job Accommodation Network (JAN) reported that the actual costs of job accommodations for workers with disabilities are:
- $0 - $300 = 68%
- $301 - $5,000 = 27%
- $5,001 or more = 5%

The 1994 JAN Survey of employers regarding company savings resulting from accommodating employees with disabilities yielded the following data:
- saved $1 - $5,000 = 38%
- saved $5,001 - $20,000 = 34%
- saved $20,000 - $200,000 = 23%

ECONOMICS OF DISABILITY
Each year, the federal government spends 40 times more money to support people with disabilities NOT working than it spends to assist them to prepare for or find employment. The lack of labor force participation of people with disabilities costs our nation’s economy over $200 billion annually.

HEALTH CARE
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly half of the 24 million people with severe disabilities in this country lack health insurance. Access to adequate health care coverage is a primary consideration for many people with disabilities in deciding whether to accept employment. Many more individuals with disabilities are deterred from changing employment due to health care coverage. (Source: Health Insurance Task Force, ADA Summit)

PAS (PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES)
While over 74% of the general population is employed on a full- or part-time basis, only 21% of the population needing personal assistance services (PAS) is employed. (Source: World Institute on Disability and Rutgers University. Report, 1994)

MENTAL HEALTH
At least 60 million Americans will have a psychiatric disability at some time during their lifetime. We know from various sources that 85% of people with severe psychiatric disabilities do NOT participate in the labor force. Stigma and accommodation issues keep them out of employment. (Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness)

Source: The President’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, 1995