October 10, 2024

Disability Status and Work Employment Trends in the US, 2024

Key Findings

- Members with disabilities are less likely to have a current job listed than members with no disabilities. This gap has grown slightly over time and currently stands at 3.2 percentage points.
- Workers with disabilities have lower one-year firm retention rates. 72.8% of new hires in 2023 that had disabilities were still at the firm one year later, compared to 81.9% for members without disabilities. These disparities also exist across all workers (instead of new hires).
- Members with disabilities are less likely to work in leadership positions. While both workers with and without disabilities see an increase in the share of people working in leadership positions, if we look across workers in 2024, 15.9% of those with disabilities are in leadership positions compared to 18.9% of those without disabilities.
- These gaps between those with and without disabilities are smaller for younger generations. For the examined outcomes—those not working, retention rates, and those in leadership positions, the gaps are smaller for younger generations than for older workers. In some cases, such as for leadership, the gap between workers with and without disabilities is substantively smaller than the gap between younger and older workers.
- Members with disabilities have different representation across industries and occupations. Compared to workers without disabilities, members with disabilities are more likely to work in consumer services, government administration, and education industries, as well as occupation groups such as military and protective services, community and social services, and education.
- Members with disabilities are over 10 times as likely as members without disabilities to work in accessibility occupations. Additionally, there has been a large increase over time in the share of workers in accessibility occupations, both among workers with disabilities and workers without disabilities.
- Overall, while disparities in several employment outcomes between people with and without disabilities persist, the gaps are shrinking with younger generations.

Linked in Economic Graph

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Understanding how individuals who have disabilities experience the labor market differently from individuals without disabilities is a critical aspect of building knowledge about overall disparities. In this research note, we examine labor outcomes of LinkedIn members in the US who have opted to self-report their disability status, which includes around 10 million individuals. We examine outcomes around occupation, industry, leadership, and retention. For the outcomes examined, in addition to measuring the gaps between members with and without disabilities overall, we will also examine the same gaps by age generation.¹ This provides some insights into the extent to which the outcomes differ for younger and older workers at this time.

Note that there are two crucial points to consider before moving forward. First, despite the data being measured from LinkedIn members' profiles and self-reported disability status, the disparities we note are indicative of existing labor market differences between individuals with and without disabilities in the US. In other words, these disparities are not caused by the people's use of the LinkedIn platform. Second, our analysis focuses on a subset of US members who have disclosed their disability status, which may not be fully representative of LinkedIn's US user base or the broader US economy. Despite this, the data—derived from millions of self-identified LinkedIn members in the US—can still provide valuable insights.

Proportion of Members with no Job Listed

We start by examining the share of LinkedIn members with no job listed for a given month in the past, over time. Note that there are many potential reasons for someone to not have a job at a certain time. They could be unemployed and looking for work, or out of the labor force and not trying to look for work. Disability status can impact the ability of people to work. Figure 1 presents the trend over time, among members who have been in our sample since 2018.² In every month, members who report having a disability have a higher share of individuals with no current job listed than members who report not having a disability. That gap has grown slightly over time, and currently stands at 3.2 percentage points (13.1% of members with disabilities do not have a job listed, whereas 9.9% of members with no disabilities do not have a job listed). We also observe that the two groups follow a similar trend line—decreasing rates of non-employment between 2018 until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, wherein both groups experienced an increase in the rate. After the spike up, the rate proceeded to fall again until mid-2022, after which both groups have been trending upwards again.

¹ We use the Pew generation definitions: Baby boomers (birth years 1946-1964); Gen-X (birth years 1965-1980); Millennial (birth years 1981-1996); Gen-Z (birth years 1997-2012).

² Limiting the sample to individuals in our data since 2018 allows us to isolate changes in the outcome (e.g., share of members not working) distinct from changes in the group of people in our data such as young individuals entering the workforce.

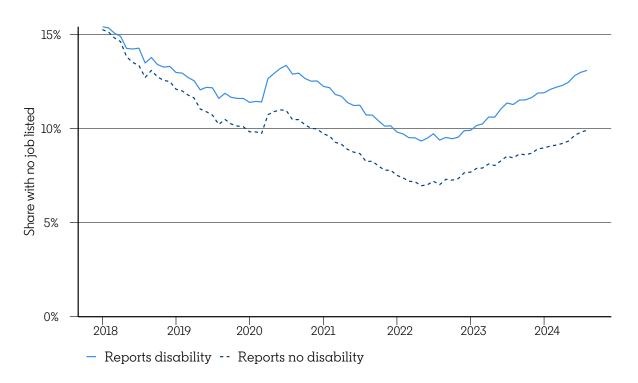


Figure 1: Share of Individuals with No Job Listed over Time

Figure 2 reports the share of individuals with no job listed over time, by generation. Unsurprisingly, Gen-Z had substantially higher rates of not having a job in 2018 and the subsequent few years, representing years when many of them were in schooling such as college (in 2018, the oldest Gen-Z members were 21 years old). Appendix Table A.1 presents the values from the most recent date (August 2024). In both absolute and relative terms, the gap in the share with no job listed between those with disabilities and those without disabilities is smaller for younger generations and larger for older generations. For example, if we examine all members who have self-reported disability status as of August 2024 (including those who entered our data after January 2018), we estimate among Gen-Z members that 18.1% of those with disabilities do not have a job recorded on LinkedIn, compared to 16.4% of Gen-Z members who do not have a disability, for a gap of 1.7 percentage points (pp). Among Millennials, 13.9% of those with disabilities and 11.0% of those without disabilities do not have a job listed compared to 10.3% of those without a disability (a gap of 3.8 pp—over twice the size gap of Gen-Z).³

³ The comparison of the relative gaps across generations is even more stark. Among Gen-Z, members with disabilities are 10.2% more likely to not have a job listed than members without disabilities (18.1/16.4-1=0.102). The relative gap increases to 26.7% for Millennials, 37.1% for Gen-X, and 25.3% for Baby Boomers.

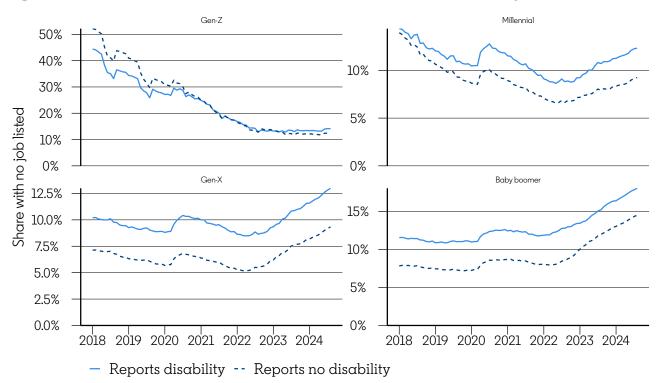


Figure 2: Share of Individuals with No Job Listed over Time, by Generation

Proportion of New Hires Retained Over One Year

We next examine the proportion of new hires at a company that, one year later, are still working at the same company (whether or not they remain in the same position). Figure 3 presents these results. Given this is rarer and hiring is seasonal, we aggregate this data to the annual level instead of the monthly level as above.

Two key findings arise when examining this outcome. First, there has been slight increases in retention rates between 2017 and 2023 (the most recent year we can examine, given we need to examine one year after to observe the outcome). Second, workers with disabilities have lower retention rates one year later than workers with no disabilities, a gap that has been growing over time. In 2023, 72.8% of new hires who had disabilities were still at the firm one year after starting, while 81.9% of new hires without disabilities were retained over the same period, a gap of 9.1 percentage points (see Appendix Table A.2). In Appendix Figure A.1, we present a similar chart of retention over one year, but do not limit the sample to new hires, but to all workers at the firm. The trends are very similar.

Linked in Economic Graph

Disability Status and Work: 2024

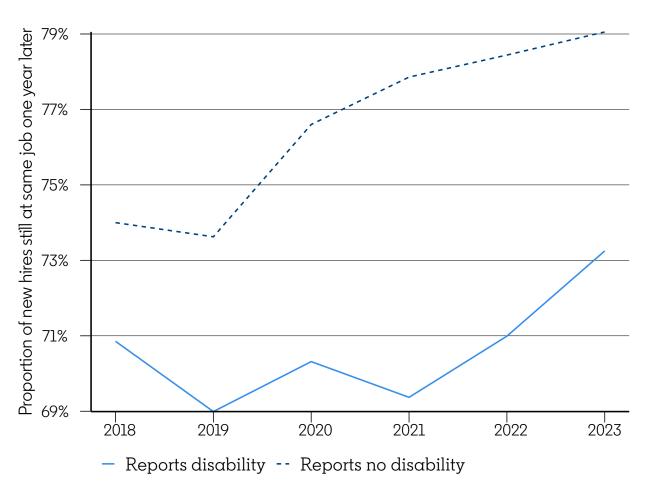


Figure 3: Proportion of New Hires Who are Still at the Company One Year Later

We next examine the same retention rates disaggregated by generation as shown in Figure 4. We find the same gap (with workers who have disabilities having lower retention rates than workers who do not have disabilities), but they are smaller for younger generations, as shown for the gap for not holding a current job. For example, in the balanced sample, among Gen-Z workers, there is a 2.8 percentage point gap in retention between those with disabilities and those without disabilities. That same disparity grows to 6.8 pp for Millennials and Gen-X, and 8.4 pp for Baby boomers. Appendix Figure A.2 shows the one-year retention rate amongst all workers (not just new hires), by generation.

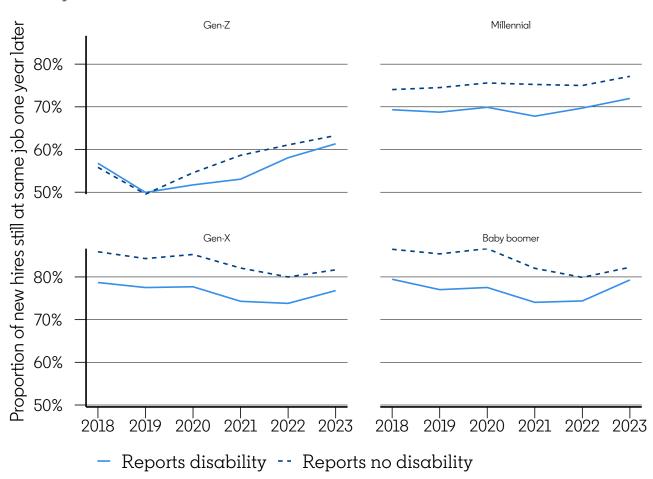


Figure 4: Proportion of New Hires who are Still at the Company One Year Later, by Generation

Employment in Leadership Positions

Members with disabilities are less likely to work in leadership positions than members who do not have disabilities. Figure 5 presents the trends over time amongst workers in our data since 2018. As we would expect, overall, a larger share of members works in leadership positions over time as they become more experienced in the workforce. This is true for both members with disabilities and those without disabilities. However, the increase in the share working in leadership positions between 2018 and 2024 is smaller than the gap between members with disabilities and those without disabilities. In other words, after six years of additional time accruing work experience and job seniority, members with disabilities still have a smaller share in leadership positions than members without disabilities had six years prior with the accompanying less experience. Among individuals in the workforce since 2018 (the sample for Figure 5), 20.0% of workers with disabilities are in leadership positions, and 25.5% of workers without

disabilities are.⁴ If we examine all workers in 2024 (not just those who have been in the sample over these several years), these numbers include newer workers, and we find 15.9% and 18.9% of workers with and without disabilities are in leadership positions.

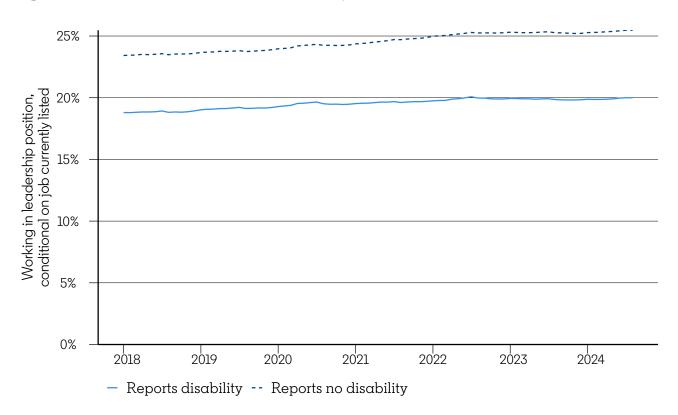


Figure 5: Share of Workers in Leadership Positions

Figure 6 presents the leadership gap by generation. Baby boomers have been slightly decreasing in their share in leadership positions. Millennials have seen the most gains over time. As seen when examining the share without a job position, we again find that younger generations have smaller disparities between those with and without disabilities than older generations. Appendix Table A.3 presents the current values.

⁴ Values for the most recent year are reported in Appendix Figure A.3

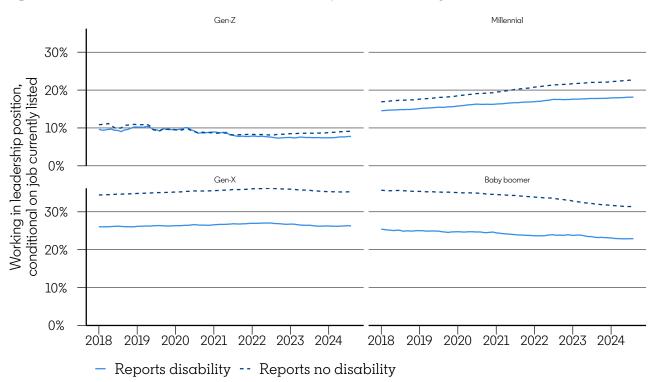
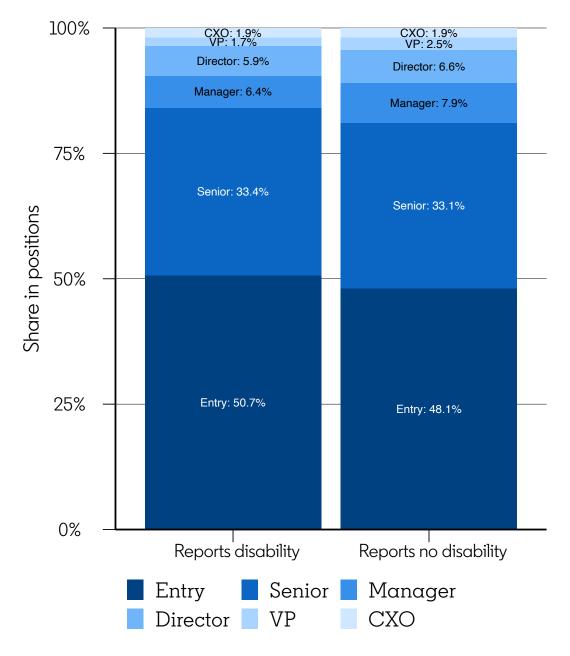


Figure 6: Share of Workers in Leadership Positions, by Generation

We next disaggregate leadership and non-leadership positions into their various levels, as shown in Figure 7. Workers with disabilities have lower representation in each of the leadership levels (manager, director, VP, and CXO) compared to workers with no disabilities, while they have higher representation in non-leadership positions (senior and entry-level). Further, Appendix Table A.4 presents the same statistics, but broken out by generation. For each generation, the same general trends tend to hold— members with disabilities are overrepresented in entry and senior non-management positions and underrepresented in higher levels. And similar to Figure 6, the gaps are smaller for younger generations. However, it also highlights the fact that, while the disability status gap persists, it is smaller than the intergenerational gaps. Take for example a comparison of Gen-Z and Gen-X workers. Members with disabilities are 2.1 percentage points more likely to work in entry-level positions among Gen-Z workers, and 6.5 pp for Gen-X. So real, meaningful gaps, which are larger for older generations. But consider members with no disabilities, Gen-X vs. Gen-Z. 66.1% of Gen-Z workers with no disabilities are in entry-level positions, compared to 32.6% of Gen-Z, a disparity that is substantially larger than the disability status gaps. Similar findings exist for other seniority levels and representation.

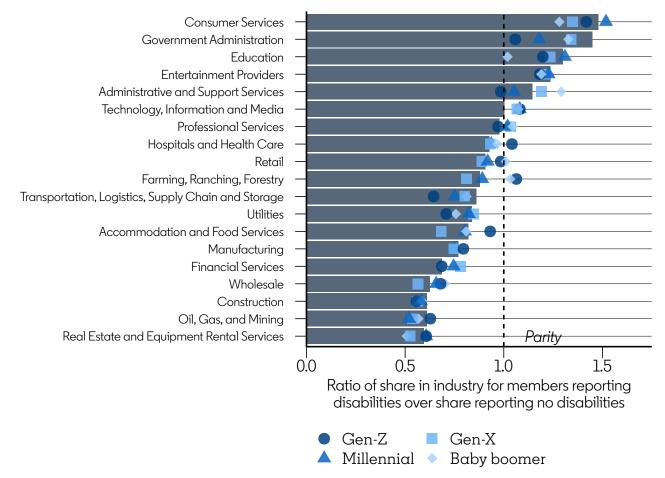




Differences in Industries of Employment

LinkedIn members who report having disabilities are more likely to work in some industries than members who report not having disabilities. Figure 8 presents the relative probability of members with disabilities working in a given industry compared to members without disabilities. For example, for consumer services with a ratio value of around 1.4, members with disabilities are 1.4 times as likely to work in the consumer services industry compared to members without disabilities. The figure also presents the relative probabilities for members in each of four generation groups: Gen-Z, Millennials, Gen-X, and Baby Boomers. The relative probability values in each industry, both overall and for each generation group, are presented in Appendix Table A.5.

Figure 8: Relative Probabilities of Working in Industries



The industry where members with disabilities are most overrepresented relative to members without disabilities is consumer services at 1.4. Members with disabilities are also 1.2 times as likely to work in the Government Administration, Education, and Entertainment Providers industries compared to members with no disabilities. On the other hand, there are several industries they are less likely to work in. These

include Oil, Gas and Mining; construction, and real estate and equipment rental services (0.6 times as likely for each).

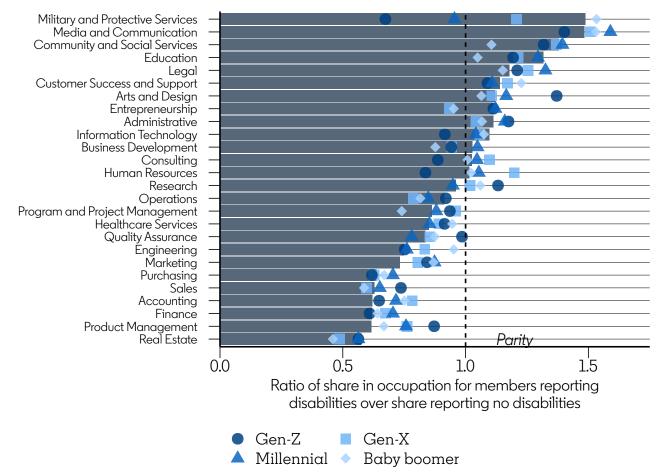
These industry representation differences are not necessarily consistent across generations, as shown by Figure 7. While some industries have very similar relative probabilities across generation as demonstrated by the four generations' symbols being tightly clustered in a given industry (such as the construction industry or Oil, Gas, and Mining), other industries have wider variation. The highest variation is for the administrative and support services industry, where among the youngest workers, members with disabilities are actually slightly less likely to work in the industry than members without disabilities (0.98x), while older workers are more likely (1.19x for Gen-X, 1.29x for Baby Boomers). There is a similar trend within the Government Administration industry, where Gen-Z members with disabilities are 1.06x as likely to work in the industry to work in the industry than members with disabilities are over 1.3x as likely to work in the industry than members in the same generation but without disabilities. Meanwhile, the education sector also has a wide variation across generations, but in the industry compared to their peers in the same generation without disabilities.

Differences in Occupation Groups

Members with disabilities also demonstrate differences in which occupation groups they work in. Figure 9 presents the relative probabilities of working in each occupation group, comparing those with and those without disabilities.

Compared to members without disabilities, members with disabilities are much more likely to work in military and protective services (1.5 times as likely), media and communication (1.5x), community and social services (1.4x), education (1.3x) and legal (1.2x). They are less likely than members without disabilities to work in real estate (almost half as likely, at 0.6x), as well as product management, finance, accounting, sales, and purchasing (each at around 0.6x as likely). Additional statistics are reported in Appendix Table A.6.

Figure 9: Relative Probabilities of Working in Occupation Groups



Certain occupation groups display significant variation in the relative representation of members with disabilities by generational age. In military and protective services (e.g., security officers, police officers)—where the highest relative representation of people with disabilities is observed—there are notable differences among age groups. For instance, Baby Boomers with disabilities are over 1.5 times more likely to work in this field than members with disabilities, compared to a 1.2x likelihood for Gen-X, nearly no difference for Millennials, and a lower representation (0.7x) for those with disabilities among Gen-Z. The Human Resources occupation group (e.g., recruiters, human resource managers) also exhibits a similar age disparity; Gen-X workers with disabilities have a 1.2x higher probability than those without disabilities, whereas Gen-Z shows lower representation at 0.8x. Conversely, fields like Arts and Design, Community and Social Services, and Education demonstrate higher relative representation of younger generations with disabilities compared to older generations.

We also can look specifically at employment in one group of occupations—those in the accessibility space (e.g., accessibility specialist, manager, advocate, consultant, engineer, etc.). Figure 10 presents the trend over time. Unsurprisingly, only a small portion of the US workforce are in accessibility

occupations, among the cohort of workers who had been working at least since 2018.⁵ First, members with disabilities are over ten times as likely to work in accessibility occupations than members without disabilities (see Appendix Figure A.3 for the trend in this relative ratio). Among members with disabilities, 0.05% of them (or 1 out of every 2,000) work in an accessibility-focused job. The second clear finding is that there has been a large increase over time in how many workers are in accessibility careers, both among those with and those without disabilities. For example, among those with disabilities, in 2018 there were fewer than 0.02% (1 out of every 5,000) of members with disabilities in an accessibility career. That has more than doubled since then to 0.05%.

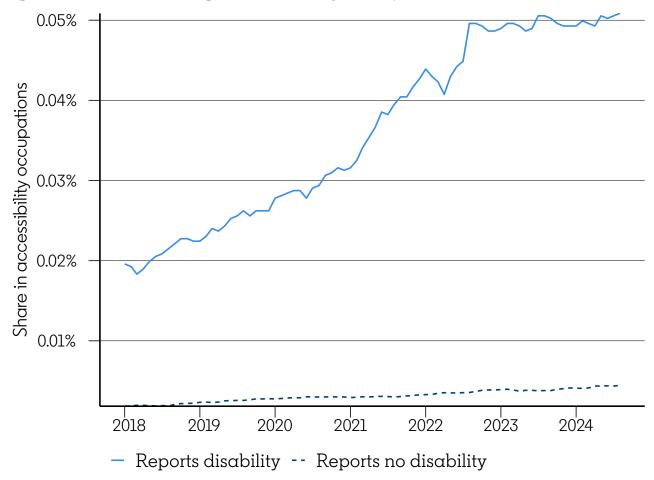


Figure 10: Share Working in Accessibility Occupations

Figure 11 repeats the analysis from Figure 10, but by generation. Here, we have noisier data when examining a relatively rare occupation divided further by generational classifications. Nonetheless, what we do see is that the increase in representation in accessibility occupations shown in Figure 3 when we pool age groups remains true for each age group examined. Additionally, Millennials with disabilities

⁵Note that the results are not substantively different if we include new entrants to the workforce; the sample used in this chart allows us to focus on changes in people's employment instead of additionally capturing changes in the group of people in the data.

have the highest rate of working in accessibility careers, at over 0.06%, while Gen-Z have the lowest rates.

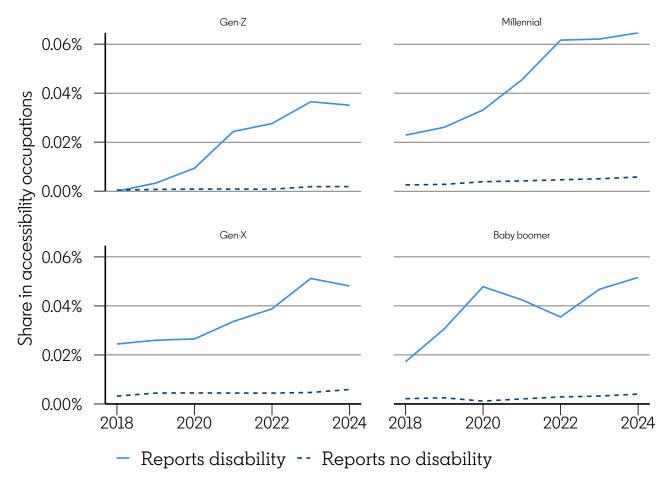


Figure 11: Share Working in Accessibility Occupations, by Generation

Conclusion

In this research note, we examine labor outcomes for LinkedIn members in the US who self-identify whether or not they have a disability. We find that compared to those who report not having disabilities, members who report having disabilities are less likely to be currently working, less likely to still be at the same firm one year after being hired, less likely to be in leadership positions, and more likely to be in leadership positions. Encouragingly, these gaps tend to be smaller—or in some cases, non-existent—for younger generations of workers compared to older generations. Workers with disabilities also have different likelihoods to be employed in certain industries and occupation groups. In particular, they are over ten times as likely to work in the rapidly expanding groups of occupations focused on accessibility. Continued research tracking the labor market disparities for workers with disabilities is warranted to help continue to identify gaps, their drivers, and potential mitigation policies.

Acknowledgements

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Methodology

This body of work represents the world seen through LinkedIn data, drawn from the anonymized and aggregated profile information of LinkedIn's 1 billion+ members around the world. As such, it is influenced by how members choose to use the platform, which can vary based on professional, social, and regional culture, as well as overall site availability and accessibility.

In publishing these insights from LinkedIn's Economic Graph, we want to provide accurate statistics while ensuring our members' privacy. As a result, all data show aggregated information for the corresponding period following strict data quality thresholds that prevent disclosing any information about specific individuals.

For the analysis, we limit attention to non-restricted, active accounts. Disability status is derived from members' self-identification (see https://members.linkedin.com/equal-access). As individuals self-select into identifying their demographics, our sample is not a random sample representative of all US LinkedIn members, let alone the underlying US workforce population. All results should be interpreted with this caveat in mind. Nonetheless, the analysis is based on millions of US members who have opted to self-identify, and thus represents a meaningful sample of interest to contrast outcomes between groups.

Supplementary Tables and Figures

	Gen-Z	Millennial	Gen-X	Baby	All
				boomer	
Balanced sample					
Reports disability	14.1%	12.3%	13.0%	18.1%	13.1%
Reports no disability	12.5%	9.3%	9.3%	14.5%	9.9%
Gap	1.7 pp	3.1 pp	3.7 pp	3.6 pp	3.2 pp
Unbalanced sample					
Reports disability	18.1%	13.9%	14.2%	19.3%	15.3%
Reports no disability	16.4%	11.0%	10.3%	15.4%	12.8%
Gap	1.7 pp	2.9 pp	3.8 pp	3.9 pp	2.5 pp

Table A.1: Proportion of sample with no current job listed on LinkedIn

Table A.2: Proportion of workers who are still at the same firm one year later

	Gen-Z	Millennial	Gen-X	Baby	All
	0.0.1		0.01171	boomer	
		New Hires			
Balanced sample					
Reports disability	66.7%	70.7%	71.1%	64.2%	72.8%
Reports no disability	71.1%	77.5%	78.0%	72.5%	81.9%
Gap	-4.4 pp	-6.8 pp	-6.8 pp	-8.4 pp	-9.1 pp
Unbalanced sample					
Reports disability	64.6%	69.9%	70.4%	63.7%	71.1%
Reports no disability	67.4%	76.7%	77.6%	72.3%	79.4%
Gap	-2.8 pp	-6.8 pp	-7.2 pp	-8.7 pp	-8.3 pp
		All workers			
Balanced sample					
Reports disability	62.0%	72.1%	78.1%	76.3%	73.7%
Reports no disability	62.1%	76.6%	81.1%	81.7%	78.0%
Gap	0.0 pp	-4.4 pp	-3.0 pp	-5.4 pp	-4.3 pp
Unbalanced sample					
Reports disability	60.9%	71.5%	77.2%	75.0%	68.9%
Reports no disability	60.2%	75.8%	81.1%	81.7%	70.5%
Gap	0.7 рр	-4.3 pp	-3.9 pp	-6.7 pp	-1.6 pp

	Gen-Z	Millennial	Gen-X	Baby	All
				boomer	
Balanced sample					
Reports disability	7.8%	18.1%	26.3%	22.9%	20.0%
Reports no disability	9.1%	22.6%	35.3%	31.4%	25.5%
Gap	-1.3 pp	-4.5 pp	-9.0 pp	-8 . 5 pp	-5.5 pp
Unbalanced sample					
Reports disability	6.4%	16.0%	24.3%	21.7%	15.9%
Reports no disability	7.4%	19.6%	32.7%	30.1%	18.9%
Gap	-1.0 pp	-3.6 pp	-8.4 pp	-8.4 pp	-3.0 pp

Table A.3: Proportion of individuals working in a leadership position

Table A.4: Proportion of individuals in each seniority level

		Reports	Reports no	
Generation	Seniority level	disability	disability	Gap
All	Entry	50.7%	48.1%	2.6%
All	Senior	33.4%	33.1%	0.4%
All	Manager	6.4%	7.9%	-1.5%
All	Director	5.9%	6.6%	-0.7%
All	VP	1.7%	2.5%	-0.7%
All	CXO	1.9%	1.9%	0.0%
Gen-Z	Entry	68.3%	66.1%	2.1%
Gen-Z	Senior	25.3%	26.4%	-1.1%
Gen-Z	Manager	3.5%	4.3%	-0.8%
Gen-Z	Director	1.9%	1.9%	0.0%
Gen-Z	VP	0.4%	0.6%	-0.1%
Gen-Z	CXO	0.6%	0.7%	-0.1%
Millennial	Entry	48.6%	44.1%	4.5%
Millennial	Senior	35.4%	36.3%	-0.9%
Millennial	Manager	7.0%	9.2%	-2.1%
Millennial	Director	6.0%	6.9%	-0.9%
Millennial	VP	1.5%	2.2%	-0.6%
Millennial	CXO	1.4%	1.3%	0.0%
Gen-X	Entry	39.1%	32.6%	6.5%
Gen-X	Senior	36.6%	34.8%	1.9%
Gen-X	Manager	8.1%	10.4%	-2.3%
Gen-X	Director	9.4%	12.4%	-3.0%
Gen-X	VP	3.3%	5.6%	-2.3%
Gen-X	CXO	3.5%	4.2%	-0.7%
Baby boomer	Entry	40.6%	33.7%	6.9%
Baby boomer	Senior	37.7%	36.2%	1.4%
Baby boomer	Manager	6.1%	7.9%	-1.9%
Baby boomer	Director	7.1%	9.9%	-2.9%
Baby boomer	VP	2.8%	5.3%	-2.5%
Baby boomer	СХО	5.8%	6.9%	-1.1%

Table A.5: Ratio of share of members with disabilities divided by the share of members with no disabilities in each industry, by generation

Industry	Gen-Z	Millennial	Gen-X	Baby	All
				boomer	
Accommodation and Food Services	0.93	0.802	0.684	0.811	0.783
Administrative and Support Services	0.982	1.052	1.193	1.288	1.109
Construction	0.558	0.58	0.562	0.586	0.58
Consumer Services	1.42	1.517	1.349	1.284	1.432
Education	1.199	1.309	1.234	1.022	1.193
Entertainment Providers	1.182	1.228	1.211	1.189	1.173
Farming, Ranching, Forestry	1.057	0.893	0.813	1.011	0.931
Financial Services	0.686	0.745	0.781	0.69	0.756
Government Administration	1.058	1.18	1.343	1.331	1.213
Hospitals and Health Care	1.041	0.937	0.931	0.965	0.972
Manufacturing	0.794	0.75	0.747	0.76	0.774
Oil, Gas, and Mining	0.629	0.521	0.538	0.571	0.577
Professional Services	0.971	1.019	1.034	1.045	1.027
Real Estate and Equipment Rental Services	0.606	0.607	0.526	0.509	0.6
Retail	0.984	0.919	0.886	1.011	0.904
Technology, Information and Media	1.081	1.082	1.065	1.072	1.092
Transportation, Logistics, Supply Chain and Storage	0.645	0.75	0.804	0.811	0.769
Utilities	0.709	0.822	0.849	0.759	0.822
Wholesale	0.68	0.658	0.563	0.706	0.654

Table A.6: Ratio of share of members with disabilities divided by the share of members with no disabilities in each occupation group, by generation

Occupation group	Gen-Z	Millennial	Gen-X	Baby	All
				boomer	
Accounting	0.65	0.72	0.78	0.75	0.62
Administrative	1.17	1.16	1.04	1.07	1.11
Arts and Design	1.37	1.17	1.11	1.06	1.12
Business Development	0.94	1.05	0.94	0.88	1.03
Community and Social Services	1.32	1.39	1.37	1.10	1.38
Consulting	0.89	1.05	1.10	1.01	1.02
Customer Success and Support	1.09	1.11	1.17	1.23	1.14
Education	1.19	1.29	1.22	1.05	1.32
Engineering	0.75	0.76	0.83	0.95	0.75
Entrepreneurship	1.11	1.12	0.93	0.95	1.11
Finance	0.61	0.70	0.67	0.64	0.62
Healthcare Services	0.91	0.85	0.89	0.95	0.85
Human Resources	0.84	1.05	1.20	1.02	1.02
Information Technology	0.92	1.04	1.06	1.08	1.10
Legal	1.21	1.32	1.26	1.15	1.18
Marketing	0.84	0.87	0.81	0.87	0.73
Media and Communication	1.40	1.59	1.51	1.53	1.48
Military and Protective Services	0.67	0.96	1.21	1.53	1.49
Operations	0.92	0.85	0.79	0.82	0.91
Product Management	0.87	0.76	0.76	0.67	0.62
Program and Project Management	0.94	0.88	0.96	0.74	0.86
Purchasing	0.62	0.70	0.63	0.67	0.64
Quality Assurance	0.99	0.78	0.85	0.88	0.84
Real Estate	0.56	0.56	0.49	0.46	0.57
Research	1.13	0.95	1.02	1.06	0.96
Sales	0.74	0.65	0.60	0.59	0.63

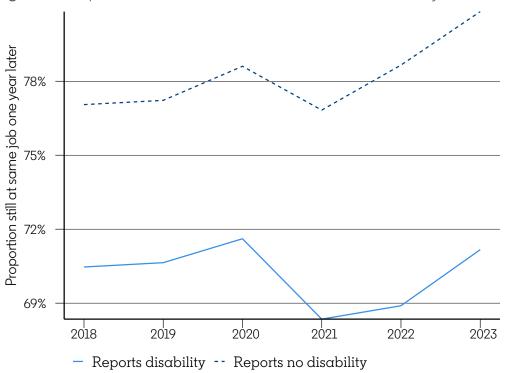


Figure A.1. Proportion of all workers who are still at the same firm one year later

Figure A.2. Proportion of all workers who are still at the same firm one year later, by generation

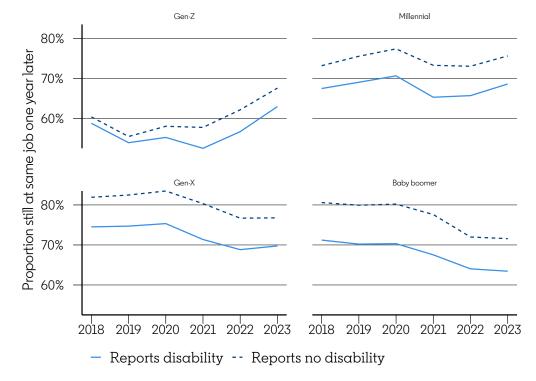


Figure A.3. Ratio of share of members with disabilities divided by the share of members with no disabilities in accessibility occupations

