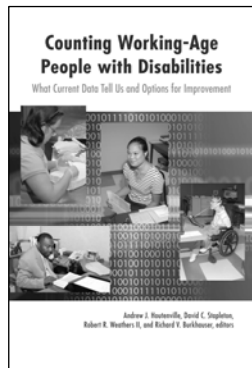




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## Counting Working-Age People with Disabilities

**What Current Data Tell Us and Options for Improvement**

Andrew J. Houtenville, David C. Stapleton,  
Robert R. Weathers II, and Richard V. Burkhauser, Editors

April 29, 2009

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—U.S. government agencies compile a thorough set of statistics on populations defined by age, race, ethnicity, and marital status—but not by disability status. Therefore, working-age people with disabilities are often overlooked in discussions of the latest statistics on employment, income, poverty, and other measures of status of a particular population.

A new book from the W.E. Upjohn Institute helps remedy this situation. ***Counting Working-Age People with Disabilities: What Current Data Tell us and Options for Improvement*** offers a systematic review of what current statistics and data on working-age people with disabilities can and cannot tell us, and how the quality of the data can be improved. The book provides an overview of the costly yet not well coordinated efforts to collect data on this population, both through surveys and through administrative data systems. One conclusion that arises is that better coordination of these independent efforts is critical for improving current data. The authors argue that this can be accomplished by the use of common disability-related questions on existing survey data sets; expansion and improvements to the matching of administrative records across agencies; and easier access to matched data to the broader research community. Adopting these recommendations, it is argued, would produce a more cost-effective method of advancing our knowledge about the working-age population with disabilities than adding another new and expensive survey.

Two audiences will find this book to be of interest. The first are those who are interested in what current statistics can tell us about working-age people with disabilities and their socioeconomic status, but who are dissatisfied with the statistics currently available. This book offers them the best available statistics on levels and trends in their employment, income, poverty, and health and functional status. The second audience consists of those involved with making or influencing policy decisions—academics, advocates, government policymakers, and service providers who rely on reliable information to make evidence-driven policy and administrative decisions. For them, the contributors examine how robust the “facts” are across data sets, consider the strengths and weaknesses of the data as a whole, describe current efforts to improve the data, and offer options to advance this process. Included are:

- **Purpose, Overview, and Key Conclusions**, David C. Stapleton, Andrew J. Houtenville, Robert R. Weathers II, and Richard V. Burkhauser
- **The Disability Data Landscape**, Robert R. Weathers II
- **Disability Prevalence and Demographics**, Andrew J. Houtenville, Elizabeth Potamites, William A. Erickson, and S. Antonio Ruiz-Quintanilla
- **Employment**, Robert R. Weathers II and David C. Wittenburg
- **Household Income**, Richard V. Burkhauser, Ludmila Rovba, and Robert R. Weathers II
- **Poverty**, Richard V. Burkhauser, Andrew J. Houtenville, and Ludmila Rovba
- **Health and Functional Status**, Gerry E. Hendershot, Benjamin H. Harris, and David C. Stapleton
- **Survey Data Collection Methods**, Janice Ballou and Jason Markesich
- **Program Participants**, David C. Stapleton, David C. Wittenburg, and Craig Thornton
- **The Group Quarters Population**, Peiyun She and David C. Stapleton
- **Options for Improving Disability Data Collection**, David C. Stapleton, Gina A. Livermore, and Peiyun She

This book is based on material first presented at a StatsRRTC-sponsored conference held in October 2006 in Washington, DC. For more on StatsRRTC visit <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/EDI/p-srrtc.cfm>.

The Editors: Andrew J. Houtenville is a senior research associate at New Editions Consulting. David C. Stapleton is the director of the Center for Studying Disability Policy at Mathematica Policy Research. Robert R. Weathers II is an economist with the Social Security Administration. Richard V. Burkhauser is the Sarah Gibson Blanding Professor of Public Policy and professor of economics at Cornell University.

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***Counting Working-Age People with Disabilities: What Current Data Tell Us and Options for Improvement***, Andrew J. Houtenville, David C. Stapleton, Robert R. Weathers II, and Richard V. Burkhauser, editors, is published by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. May 2009. 447 pp. \$45 cloth 978-0-88099-347-0 • \$22 paper 978-0-88099-346-3. Opinions expressed are solely those of the authors. We encourage you to request a review copy of this book. Contact: Richard Wyrwa.

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