



Disability in the Chicago Region

Disability is a natural part of the human experience making it one of the fastest growing segments of the population. A strong region requires the equal opportunity, inclusion, and full participation of all residents.

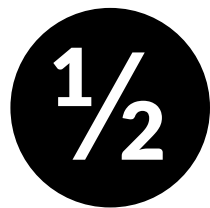
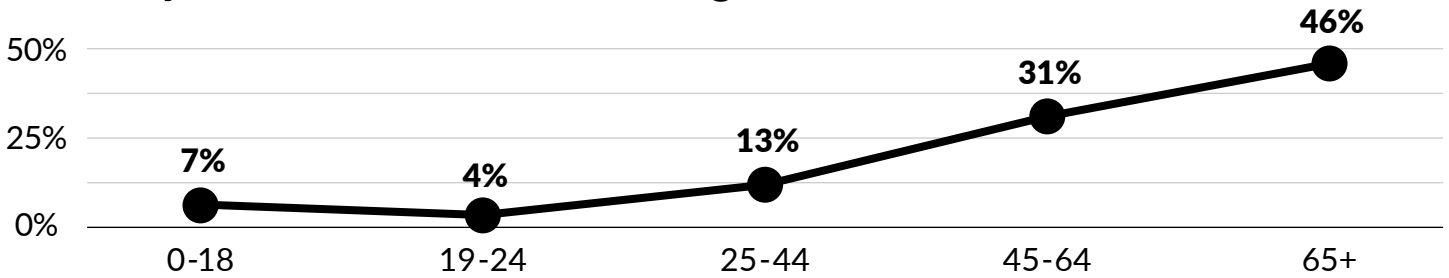
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Disabilities are both **visible** and **invisible**.

We are greater together.

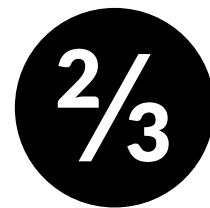
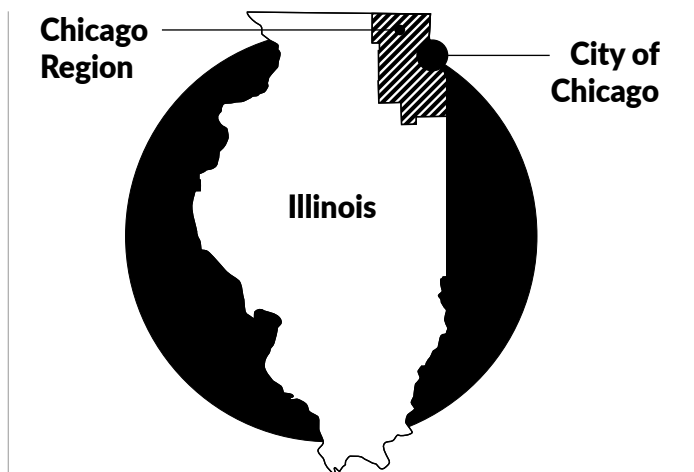
Disability Impacts All Communities

Throughout the Chicago region's 7 counties,* people with disabilities are our family, friends, neighbors, doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Over **800,000** residents – **approximately 10%** of the population – report having a disability. As our population ages, the numbers will continue to grow.

Disability Prevalence Increases with Age



In the Chicago region, **almost half** of people with disabilities are people of color.



In the City of Chicago, **almost two thirds** of people with disabilities are people of color.

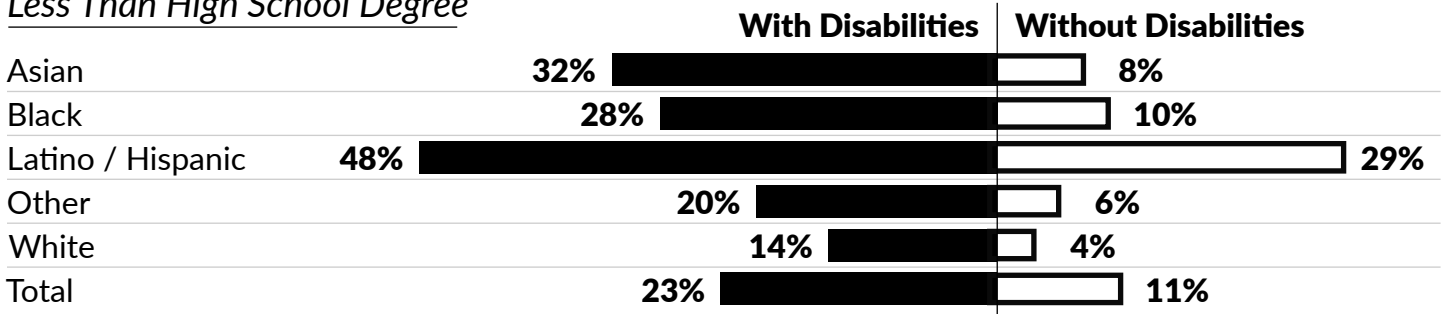
Yet, people with disabilities continue to have the lowest educational attainment and lowest employment rates of any minority group. As a result, the poverty rate is **twice** as high for people with disabilities compared to people without disabilities. **Creating a more thriving, vibrant region will not happen if we do not fix our systems to support and include people with disabilities.**

Education System Failures

Higher educational attainment is linked to long-term success in terms of income and employment. Students with disabilities make up a large share of Chicago’s potential workforce. For example, in Chicago Public Schools alone, there are **57,000** students with disabilities – **14%** of total enrollment. Yet, in the Chicago region, **half** of people with disabilities either do not finish high school or only have a high school degree.

Lower Educational Attainment for People with Disabilities (18 and above)

Less Than High School Degree



Together, our region can thrive.

Employment Gaps

While mounting evidence demonstrates that hiring this overlooked talent pool can increase productivity and reduce costly turnover, barriers persist both when seeking employment and while on the job. In addition to **low educational attainment**, barriers include **lack of transportation access**, **lack of employer knowledge** about how to provide specific accommodations at the job location, and **stigma**.

Lower Employment Rates for Working Age People with Disabilities (15 to 64)



Your Next Step: Inform and Act.

Take disability into account. For alternate formats and a list of resources that can help expand empowerment, promote equal opportunity, and increase the inclusion and full participation of all residents with disabilities, **visit disabilitiesfund.org**.

* The Chicago region includes the Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Will, and McHenry counties. All the information presented is based on the Chicago region, unless stated otherwise. For more information regarding the original source material for the data presented, visit cct.org/disabilitiesfund. ADA-PARC research produced by the Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement.