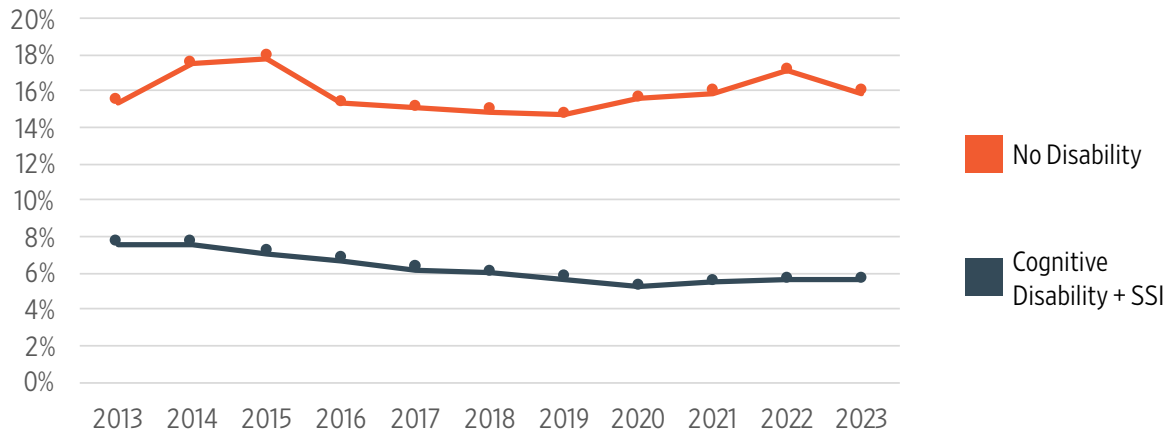


VULNERABILITY TO POVERTY DURING GLOBAL & FINANCIAL CRISES VARIES FOR PEOPLE WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES

By Ryan Wedeking

Data Source: American Community Survey (2023)

Figure 1. Poverty Rate for Employed People with No Disability vs Cognitive Disabilities Receiving SSI



This Data Note examines poverty rate over time for selected disability populations from the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS). We specifically examine two populations: 1) people with cognitive disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) who are employed, and 2) people without disabilities who are employed.

In the past 10 years, the overall poverty rate has decreased for people with cognitive disabilities receiving SSI who are employed. The decrease in poverty rate also appears in employed people with no disabilities over the past decade. However, this downward trend in the poverty rate for people with cognitive disability receiving SSI is more volatile compared to the poverty rate for people with no disability who are employed and has seen no major improvement since 2019.

People with cognitive disabilities receiving SSI appear to be more vulnerable to rising poverty rates during global and financial crises. During the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022), the poverty rate for employed individuals with cognitive disabilities receiving SSI rose 1.5% from 15.6% to 17.1% while the poverty rate for employed people with no disabilities increased only 0.4% from 5.2% to 5.6% in the same time span (Figure 1). This is consistent with a study on financial challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic that found that people with disabilities were 2.78 times more likely to experience financial hardship compared to people with no disabilities. Nearly half of their sample of people with disabilities had a cognitive disability as identified by the ACS (Friedman, 2022).

It is worth noting the increase in poverty rate in 2014 for people with cognitive disabilities receiving SSI. From 2013–2014, the poverty rate for people with no disabilities remained constant, while the poverty rate for people with cognitive disabilities receiving SSI increased by 2%. More research is required to understand the cause of this, but it further illustrates the volatility of the poverty rate for this population.

Reference

Friedman, C. (2022). Financial hardship experienced by people with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Disability and Health Journal*, 15(4), 101359.

Funding

This Data Note is a product of ThinkWork! at the Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston, supported in part by the Administration on Disabilities, Administration for Community Living, US Department of Health and Human Services, under cooperative agreement #90DNPA0007. The opinions contained in this report are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the funders.

Suggested Citation

Wedeking, R. (2025). Vulnerability to poverty during global & financial crises varies for people with and without disabilities. [Data Note Series, Data Note 98.] University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion.