

## YOU HELP PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND FIND WORK

### In-house job training goes 100% virtual with your support.

People who are blind often find it difficult to obtain employment. During the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, it was especially challenging. To make things easier, Kessler Foundation grantee, Visions, transformed work-readiness services from 100% in-person to completely virtual for people who are visually impaired, thanks to your support.

“Once the pandemic took hold, there was a major increase in layoffs and jobs shutting down. But we wanted to ensure our clients remained engaged and fully involved in the job search process, so we moved to more enhanced, online job prep training via Zoom,” says Nancy Miller, Executive Director of Visions. To start, Visions offered clients, “a crash course in technology to show them how to access Zoom,” adds Miller.

With your support, Kessler Foundation helped Visions strengthen and broaden its services.

“We are now able to reach people who otherwise could not have participated in our program,” explains Miller. “We are thankful to Kessler Foundation and its donors who were the catalyst in helping us quickly get a lot of things off the ground for people like Jesus Silva.”

Jesus was determined to find a job. His Visions counselor arranged part-time employment with Amazon. Within three months, he earned the nickname, “The Terminator,” because of his determination. And today,

Jesus is deciding between two full-time managerial positions: ambassador to train others with disabilities or managing 30 people in the trailer-unloading department.

With your support, Jesus is well on his way to building a successful career.



LISTEN TO NANCY MILLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF VISIONS, SHARE INNOVATIVE WAYS TO SERVE JOB SEEKERS DURING A PANDEMIC.

**KESSLER**  
FOUNDATION  
*Strollin' Roll*  
**JOIN the FUN 10.02.22**  
**HYBRID! IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL**

SUNDAY, 11 AM TO 2 PM, IN VERONA PARK  
AND IN OUR OWN NEIGHBORHOODS

To learn more, visit KesslerFoundation.org/SNR  
or scan the QR code below.



Every dollar you give or raise changes lives  
for people with disabilities.

## DEBBIE GROSSER'S SECOND CHANCE

Debbie Grosser's life almost ended when she fell down a steep stairwell and sustained a traumatic brain injury. “A skilled neurosurgeon saved my life,” recounts Debbie, “but the groundbreaking research at Kessler Foundation—supported by donors like you— led to the unparalleled care I received at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation. **Because of your support, I received a second chance and regained a full and independent life.**”

Debbie explains how her accident was a catalyst for change. “Before TBI, I took my life for granted. I was busy with my high-pressure Wall Street career, dependent on alcohol, and constantly pushing my edges, physically and mentally. I forgot to pay attention to what was most important in my life. My accident jolted me awake.”

Debbie spent six weeks in a coma, then several months at Kessler Institute. “From the moment I came out of the coma, my eyes were opened to the people and things I had taken for granted. Despite TBI, my cognitive abilities remained intact, and I quickly realized I was one of the lucky ones. **My focus was clear: I would work hard to live fully again, and I would give back generously, in gratitude for the second chance I had been given.**”

Over the last ten years, Debbie has lived through 21 surgeries to repair her skull and treat other injuries from her accident. During this time, she wrote a memoir, *Never Take for Granted*, and established the **Deborah F. Grosser Foundation** to provide funding for TBI research, so that advancements in critical care for TBI patients can continue.



“I’m pleased that proceeds from my book support Kessler Foundation’s TBI research,” says Debbie. “I will always be grateful to Kessler Foundation donors because your support helped me come back from severe injury. **Like you, donor, I am determined to support Kessler Foundation’s cutting-edge research to ensure that everyone living with TBI gets that second chance.**” ■



LISTEN TO KESSLER FOUNDATION'S BRIAN SANDROFF, PHD DISCUSS IMPROVING COGNITION IN INDIVIDUALS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.



To learn more about Debbie Grosser's story or to purchase her book in support of Kessler Foundation, go to [debbiegrosser.com](http://debbiegrosser.com).

# THE GO-TO SOURCE FOR JOB DATA ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES, MADE POSSIBLE BY YOU

For nearly a decade, Kessler Foundation and the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability have issued a monthly custom report on employment data for Americans with disabilities, National Trends in Disability Employment (nTIDE), now an essential source of information in labor trends.

Seeing the need for reliable and timely employment data for Americans with disabilities, in 2013, Kessler Foundation joined with the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability to issue a monthly report titled, National Trends in Disability Employment (nTIDE).

John O’Neill, PhD, Kessler Foundation’s director of the Center for Employment and Disability Research, and economist Andrew Houtenville, PhD, research director of the University of New Hampshire Institute of Disability, customize the monthly jobs report released by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics to compare employment for working age men and women with and without disabilities. Today, nearly a decade later, nTIDE is recognized as an essential source of information on labor trends by stakeholders in the disability and business communities, policymakers, researchers, and government agencies.

“Kessler’s nTIDE is my go-to source for current employment data for Americans with disabilities,” says Malachy Bishop, PhD, CRC, a disability employment expert at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. “It provides the data and insights I need to understand the current situation and emerging trends in employment for Americans with disabilities. I rely on this resource, as well as the nTIDE Lunch & Learn webinars for the helpful insights, commentary, and observations provided by Drs. O’Neill and Houtenville, and the nTIDE team of professionals.”

Our nTIDE experts followed the patterns of recovery following the Great Recession of 2008-2009, tracking

the re-entry of people with disabilities to the job market. Those patterns were upended in April 2020 by the COVID-19 lockdowns that precipitated widespread furloughs and job losses. To provide insight for the disability employment community, Drs. O’Neill and Houtenville added a mid-month nTIDE COVID Update, looking at month-to-month data to assess the effects of the pandemic on workers with and without disabilities.

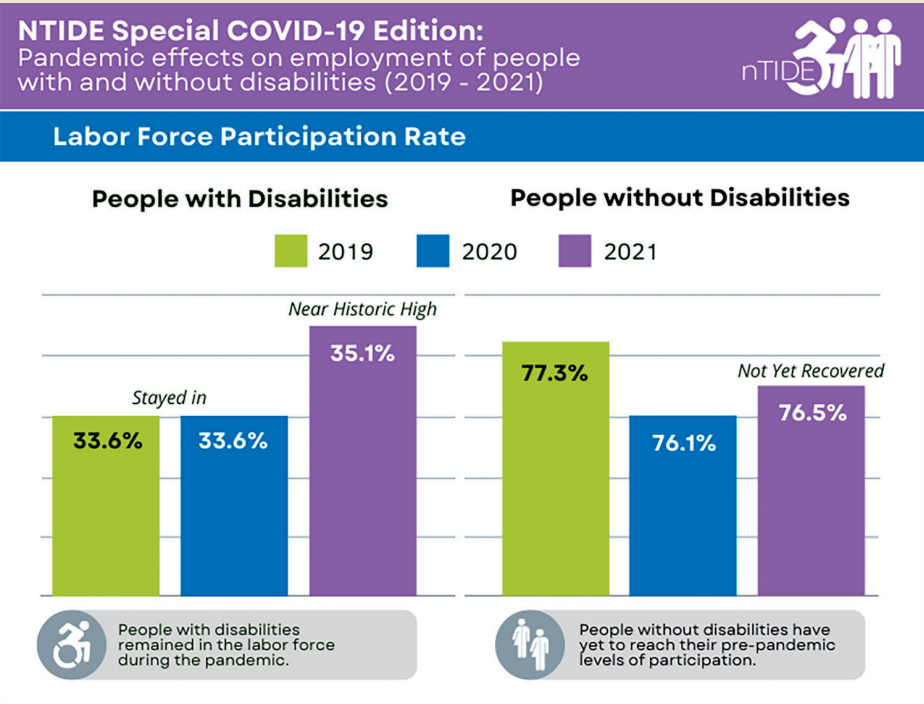
Dr. Bishop comments on the addition of the COVID Updates: “During the extraordinary shifts of the past couple of years, the nTIDE reports have been an extraordinarily helpful means of keeping abreast and understanding the labor market changes and their impact on persons with disabilities.”

Drs. O’Neill and Houtenville are analyzing the pandemic’s impact on employment. Data from 2019 through 2021 for people with and without disabilities shows stark contrasts in their progression from pre-pandemic employment levels of 2019, the impact of 2020 lockdowns, followed by the beginnings of recovery in 2021. In 2019 and 2020, the labor force participation rate remained the same for people with disabilities (33.6%), rising to 35.1% in 2021.

“Despite the disruption of the pandemic, people with disabilities stayed engaged in the labor market, meaning they were working, on furlough, or looking for work,” explains Dr Houtenville.

In 2021, participation rose above pre-pandemic levels to 35.1%, exceeding the historic high seen in 2008 around the start of the Great Recession. “This may be a sign that people with disabilities are taking advantage of new job opportunities in the tight labor market,” adds Dr. Houtenville. “Necessity may also be a factor in sustained participation, as workers with disabilities may be less able to forego their income.” For people without disabilities, labor force participation rates dropped

from 77.3% in 2019 to 76.1% in 2020, rising to 76.5% in 2021, still well below pre-pandemic levels. “They are returning slowly to the labor market,” notes Dr. Houtenville, “And have yet to recover the ground they lost in 2020.”



These stark contrasts are fascinating findings, according to Dr. O’Neill, “It really is a story of true grit. Overall, despite the stresses of the pandemic, people with disabilities stayed in the labor force, a pattern we hope to see continue as the pandemic evolves,” he emphasized. “It’s also crucial that we ensure that the hard-won gains achieved by workers with disabilities are sustainable as people without disabilities continue to return to the labor force. That will require concerted efforts by advocates, workers, employers, vocational rehabilitation professionals, and other stakeholders.”

Each nTIDE release is followed by a live webinar at noon Eastern, hosted by Drs. O’Neill and Houtenville and featuring guest speakers.

“This show of resilience is not surprising. People with disabilities are known for their ingenuity and loyalty, characteristics that are serving them well as they strive to work in a job market roiled by the pandemic.”

—John O’Neill, PhD

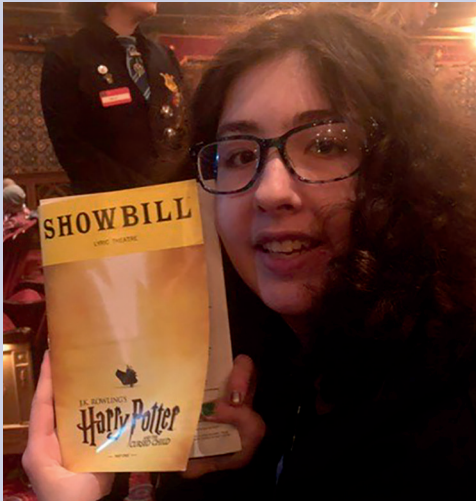


LISTEN TO DRs. O’NEILL AND HOUTENVILLE DISCUSS HOW PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FARED IN THE WORKPLACE DURING 2021.



INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE FROM OUR EXPERTS ABOUT EMPLOYMENT TRENDS? REGISTER FOR UPCOMING NTIDE WEBINARS.

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
*thank you*



Holly Coviello

For 18-year-old Holly Coviello, the typical questions about finding employment have loomed large. Holly lives with autism and though she is transitioning to college, her first job search is not far behind. Holly learned about research led by Dr. Helen Genova, associate director of the Center for Autism Research at Kessler Foundation.

**By joining Dr. Genova’s research, Holly gained valuable skills.** “In the practice sessions, I learned how to answer questions and talk about my strengths,” Holly says. “I’d love to work in musical theater because that’s my passion. **Finding a job is hard, but my chances are better now, thanks to you.**”



LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOUR SUPPORT HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE.



SIGN-UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTER