

# WORKFORCE FOCUS

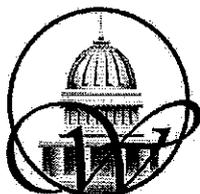
## People with Disabilities

In the coming years, Washington will face an increasing shortage of skilled workers. People with a disability have been an underutilized human resource, and, in the past, have been underrepresented in the workforce at large.<sup>1</sup> Part of the solution to this coming shortage should come from preparing people with disabilities for success in the workplace.

- People with disabilities are more likely to work part time than people without.
- In general, people with disabilities earn less than people without; however, the size of the difference varies by factors such as industry, occupation, education level, and age.

### Report Highlights

- People with disabilities are less likely to be in the labor force<sup>2</sup> than those without one—that is, working or looking for work. Additionally, people with disabilities are less likely to be working.
- Whether with disabilities or without, people with more education are more likely to be in the labor force and working.
- People with disabilities in urban areas are more likely than those in rural areas to be in the labor force and to be working, the same for people without.
- Younger people with disabilities, as well as those without, are more likely than their elders to be in the labor force and working.
- Adults with disabilities participate in workforce development programs at rates lower than their participation in the labor market. Youth with disabilities participate in WIA youth programs in percentages greater than their representation in the state's population.
- People with disabilities are less likely than people without to be working after leaving their workforce development programs.
- People with disabilities who participated in workforce development programs tend to have lower hourly wages than those without in most workforce programs. Secondary career and technical education programs are the exception. High school students with disabilities do as well in hourly wages and annual earnings as their non-disabled counterparts. Most have learning disabilities.



WASHINGTON STATE  
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND  
EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

**People with Disabilities in Washington<sup>3</sup>**

**Eighteen percent of Washington's working-age population of 20-64 year olds has one or more disabilities.** People with disabilities make up 11 percent of the labor force.

**People with disabilities are older and more rural than the non-disabled population.** Forty-three percent of the working-age disabled population is over 50 years of age, compared with 29 percent for the non-disabled. Thirty-two percent of people with disabilities live in rural areas, as compared with 25 percent of the non-disabled.

**Just over 57 percent of working-age people with disabilities have some postsecondary education: 20 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher; 16 percent have an associate's degree or vocational certificate; 21 percent have some college, but no degree; and 43 percent have a high school diploma or less.** Contrast this with people without disabilities: 43 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher; 13 percent have an associate's degree or vocational certificate; 14 percent have some college, but no degree; and 30 percent have a high school diploma or less.

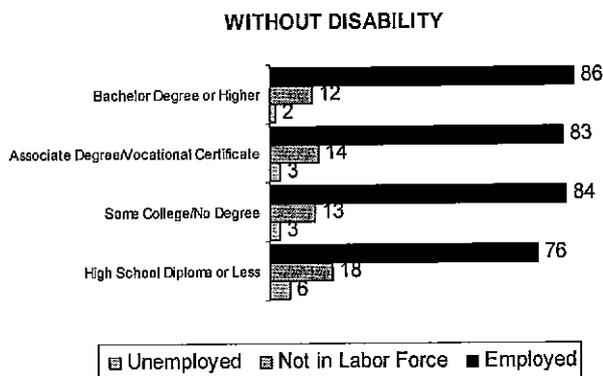
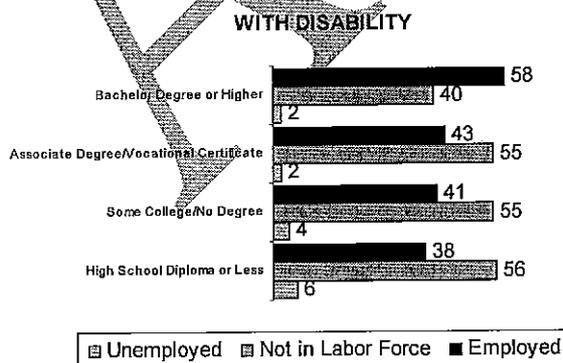
**Ten percent of working-age people with disabilities are in school.** Half are in school full-time and half part-time. This is close to the 11 percent average for the non-disabled population.

**Less than half, 48 percent, of people with disabilities are in the labor force** compared with 86 percent of people without. Of those in the labor force, 91 percent of people with disabilities and 96 percent of people without disabilities are working. Seventy-seven percent of current students are in the labor force, both in the disabled and non-disabled populations.

**The more education people with disabilities have, the more likely they are to be in the labor force and working.** The trends are similar for people without a disability (see Figure 1).

**People with disabilities in urban areas are more likely to be in the labor force than those in rural areas: 48 percent and 46 percent, respectively.** Among those in the labor force with disabilities, 90 percent in urban areas and 92 percent in rural areas are working. People without disabilities are also more likely to be in the labor force in urban than in rural areas: 86 percent and 84 percent, respectively. For those in the labor force without disabilities, 97 percent in urban areas and 95 in rural areas are working.

Figure 1  
**Labor Force Status by Level of Education: Ages 20-64 Not Enrolled in School (Percentage)**



**Participation in the labor force declines with age, but older workers in the labor force are more likely to be working:** 54 percent of those 20-34, 51 percent of those 35-49, and 42 percent of those 50-64 years old are working or looking for work. However, young people in the labor force with disabilities are the least likely to be working: 81 percent of those 20-34 work, as compared with 93 percent of those 35-49, and 94 percent of those 50-64.

**If all working hours are combined, 79 percent of people with disabilities and 84 percent of those without work full time** (35 hours or more per week).

**About 11 percent of working people with disabilities and nearly 10 percent of people without hold more than one job.** Of those with more than one job, most hold two.

Compare this to people without disabilities: 85 percent of those 20-34, 89 percent of those 34-49, and 82 percent of those 50-64 are in the labor force. Like people with disabilities, younger people in the labor force without disabilities are the least likely to be working, but age differences are less pronounced: 93 percent of 20-34 year-olds work as compared with 97 percent of those 35-49, and 98 percent of those 50-64.

**People with disabilities tend to work predominantly in the private sector:** 60 percent work for a private company, 21 percent work in the government sector, 10 percent are self-employed, 6 percent work for a non-profit organization, and 2 percent work for a family business. This differs only slightly from people without disabilities, where 59 percent work for a private company, 21 percent work in the government sector, 10 percent are self-employed, 8 percent work for a non-profit organization, and 2 percent work in a family business.

**FIGURE 2  
Employment in Non-Government Sector: Ages 20-64  
Not in School (percentage)**

*By Industry*

	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY
Services	41	42
Wholesale & Retail Trade	16	14
Manufacturing	12	12
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	9	11
Construction & Mining	10	10
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	8	8
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	4	3

*By Occupation*

	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY
Business & Professional	26	38
Sales & Admin. Support	26	22
Construction, Maintenance, Production, Transportation	26	20
Service	17	12
Management	3	7
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	2	2
Military-Specific	0	1

**Service industries employ more people than other industries, regardless of disability** (see Figure 2).

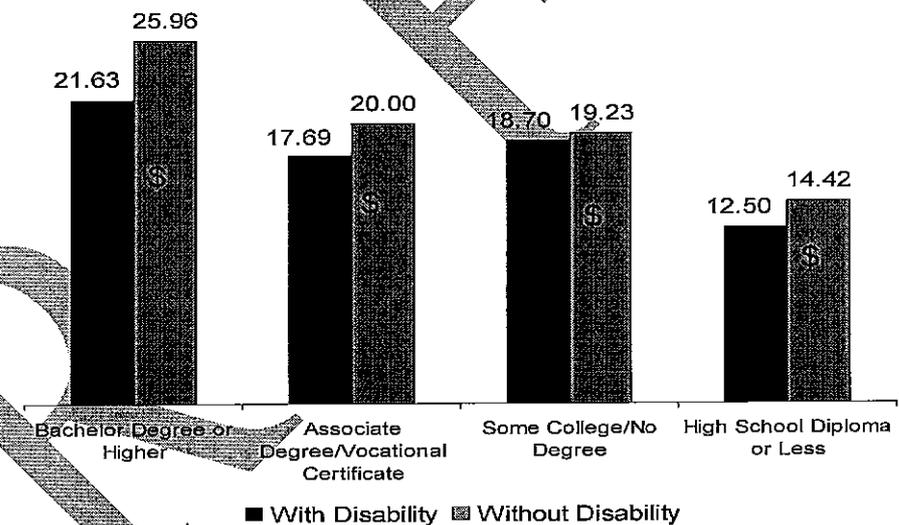
**People with disabilities are less likely to work in business and professional occupations and more likely to work in construction, maintenance, production, transportation, sales, and service occupations than those without disabilities** (see Figure 2).

**In general, people with disabilities earn less than people without.** The median hourly wage for people with disabilities in their primary job is \$16.83, compared to \$20.24 for those without disabilities. On an hourly basis, people with disabilities earn about 83 percent of what people without can earn. The wage differences vary depending on the industry and occupation of employment (see Figure 3).<sup>5</sup> Age differences and the geographic distribution of disabled and non-disabled worker probably affect earnings patterns as well.

**FIGURE 3  
Hourly Wages of Employment**  
(median based on main job)

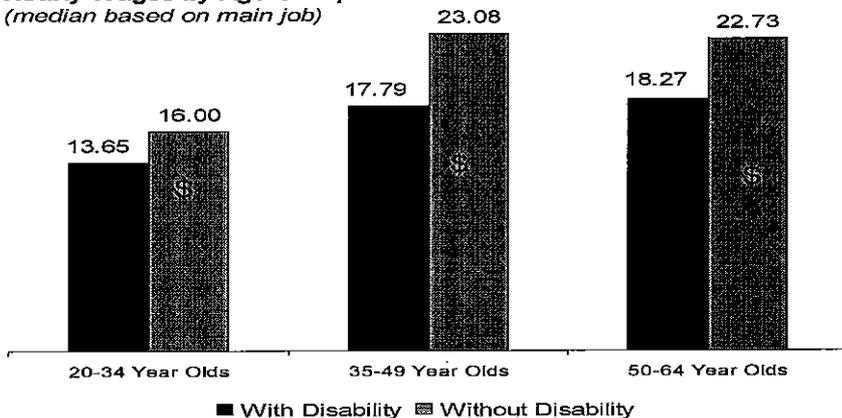
By Industry	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY	By Occupation	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY
	Transportation, Communication, Utilities	\$19.23		\$25.64	Business & Professional
Manufacturing	\$28.37	\$22.19	Construction, Maintenance, Production, Transportation	\$16.83	\$18.60
Services	\$14.62	\$18.75	Sales & Admin. Support	\$16.78	\$16.03
Wholesale & Retail Trade	\$12.00	\$14.82	Service	\$10.47	\$12.50

**Figure 4  
Hourly Wages by Level of Education**  
(median based on main job)



**People with disabilities who have a bachelor's degree or higher, or some college but no degree, earn the highest median hourly wages—\$21.62 and \$18.70 respectively.** However, people with disabilities tend to earn less on an hourly basis than people without (see Figure 4).

**Figure 5**  
**Hourly Wages by Age Group**  
*(median based on main job)*

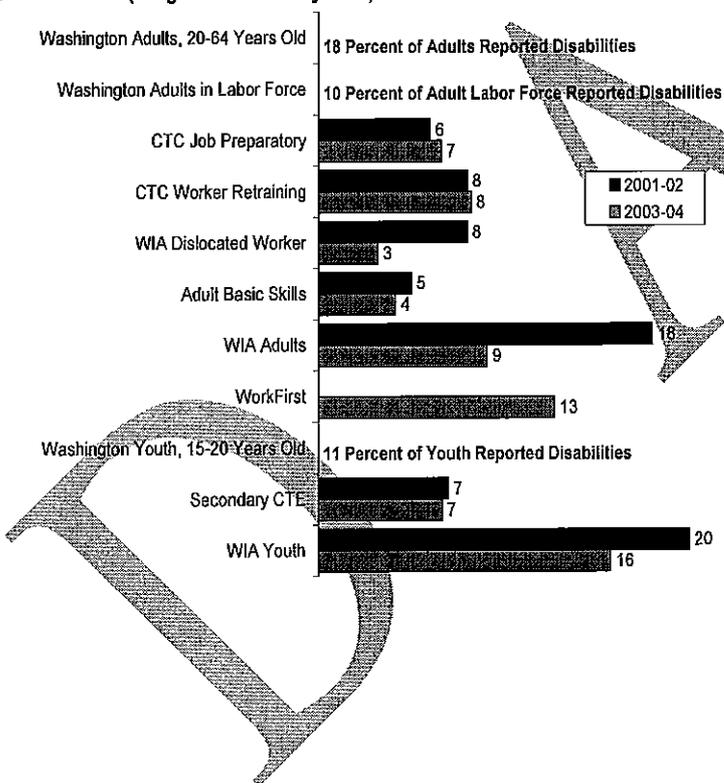


People with disabilities earn the most between the ages of 50-64. Earnings for the non-disabled population are higher, but are highest among 35-49 year-old group than among the older group (see Figure 5).

**People With Disabilities in Washington's Workforce Development Programs<sup>6</sup>**

The percentage of people in workforce development programs with disabilities varies—they are most highly represented in WIA youth, Workfirst and adult programs (see Figure 6).<sup>7</sup> Participation recorded in WIA programs dropped between 2001-2002 and 2003-2004. Some of this drop may be due to changes in recordkeeping designed to protect the confidentiality of disability information in the WIA management information system.<sup>8</sup>

**FIGURE 6**  
**Percent of Workforce Program Participants With Disabilities (Program Records by Year)**

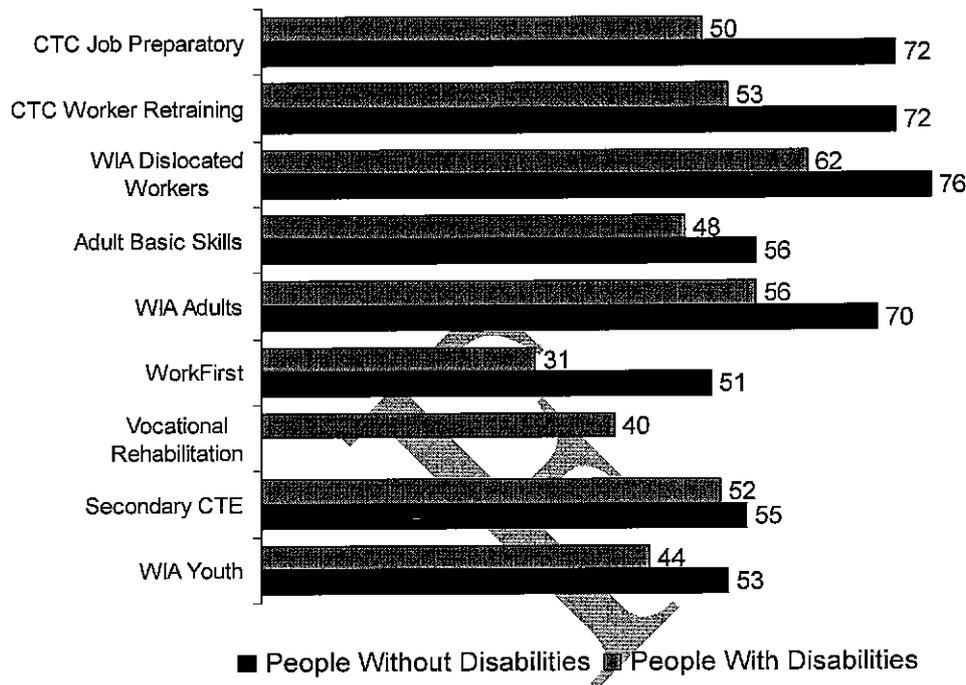


The majority of Adult Basic Skills and Secondary CTE participants with disabilities had learning disabilities. Other programs did not track type of disability.

Fewer people with disabilities are working after leaving their programs than those without (see Figure 7). Results may depend on the availability of non-work income from retirement, SSI, or public assistance.

People with disabilities who participate in workforce development programs tend to have lower hourly wages than participants who do not report disabilities. Annual earnings show a more pronounced trend, indicating that people with disabilities work fewer hours than the non-disabled. Secondary CTE is an exception to this pattern (see Figure 8).

**FIGURE 7**  
**Employment Rates of People With Disabilities and Without After Workforce Development Programs**  
*(employed during the third quarter after leaving the program)*

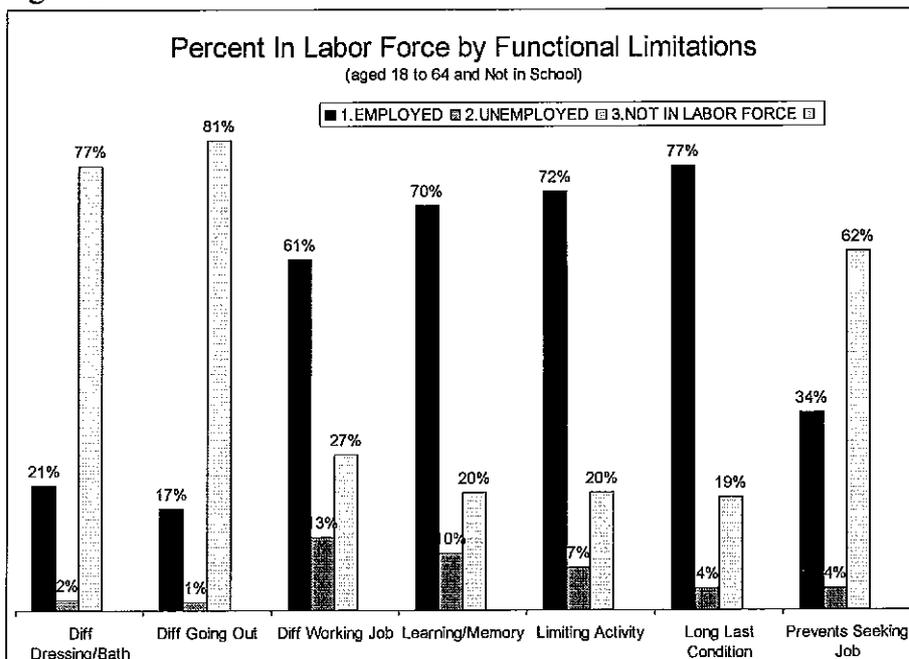


**FIGURE 8**  
**Earnings of People With Disabilities and Without After Workforce Development Programs**  
*(median based on the third quarter after leaving the program)*

Program	Hourly		Annually	
	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY
CTC Job Preparatory	\$10.89	\$13.17	\$16,292	\$22,486
CTC Worker Retraining	\$12.30	\$13.70	\$19,316	\$23,756
WIA Dislocated Workers	\$13.32	\$14.87	\$23,008	\$27,914
Adult Basic Skills	\$8.72	\$9.76	\$10,029	\$15,403
WIA Adults	\$10.00	\$11.01	\$16,601	\$18,420
WorkFirst	\$8.84	\$9.08	\$8,072	\$11,171
Vocational Rehabilitation	\$9.43	n/a	\$11,039	n/a
Secondary CTE	\$8.71	\$8.49	\$9,368	\$8,402
WIA Youth	\$8.00	\$8.43	\$7,052	\$8,671

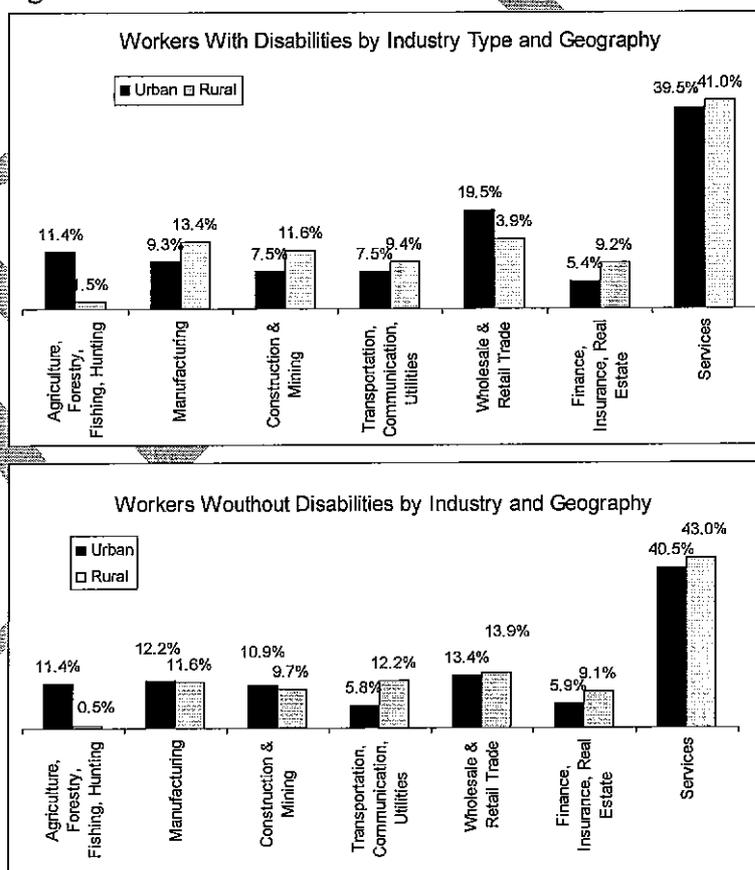
Of those having disabilities the highest percentage (81 percent) cited difficulty going outside as a reason for not being in the labor force. Those citing having a long lasting condition had the highest percentage (77 percent) working. Figure nine shows the percent of disabling conditions cited by people having disabilities and their labor force status. (Note: Respondents may have selected multiple functional limitations).

Figure 9



Workers in rural areas who have disabilities are more likely to be working in the manufacturing, construction and service industries. Those without disabilities in rural areas are more likely to be working in the transportation, finance and service industries. (see figure 10)

Figure 10



## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The identification of people with disabilities is based on self-reports, with the exception of individuals who participated in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

<sup>2</sup> In this paper, the term “labor force” refers to those who are currently working (either full-time or part-time) or who are actively looking for work. It is further defined as civilian noninstitutional and therefore excludes those who live in nursing homes, prison, or military barracks.

<sup>3</sup> The information on working-age people with disabilities in Washington is based on data from the 2006 State Population Survey (SPS). The SPS asked a series of six questions; answering positively to one identified a person as an individual with a disability. The SPS asked if the individual have a physical, mental; or emotional condition lasting six months or more that made it difficult to perform certain activities. The four activity activities are: (a) learning, remembering, or concentrating (mental disability); (b) dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home (self-care disability); (c) going outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor’s office (going outside the home disability); and (d) working at a job or business (employment disability). Two additional questions about having a long lasting condition are asked. These conditions are (i) blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing condition, and (ii) condition that limits activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying. Unless otherwise indicated, all of the employment and education information references a point in time—spring 2006. Further, the employment and earnings information are based on those who are ages 20-64 and who indicated they were not in school at the time of the survey.

<sup>4</sup> Urban and rural areas are defined using the SPS regions. The urban areas include the following regions: King County, Other Puget Metro, Clark County, and Spokane County. The rural areas include the following regions: North Sound, West Balance, Yakima-Tri Cities, and East Balance.

<sup>5</sup> The sample sizes for people with disabilities in industries and occupations not included in the figures are too small on which to base reliable wage estimates.

<sup>6</sup> Based on participants exiting programs between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004. For data sources, methodology, and program descriptions see *Workforce Training Results 2006* from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. We caution against making comparisons among the programs or with the state’s population at-large: the populations served, the types of services provided, and lengths of training vary substantially from program to program.

<sup>7</sup> Data on people in the state with disabilities ages 20-64 are from Washington’s Office of Financial Management’s 2006 State Population Survey. Data on people in the state with disabilities ages 15-19 are from Washington’s Office of Financial Management’s 2004 State Population Survey.

<sup>8</sup> The Skills, Knowledge and Information Exchange System (SKIES) was implemented in May 2002. It combined job matching labor exchange functions with case management functions for WIA adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Advocates for people with disabilities became concerned that information on disabilities recorded by case managers could limit the access of people with disabilities to job placements. In some cases, this could have led staff to report people with disabilities as non-disabled and could have led to some of the apparent reduction in participation by people with disabilities in those programs.

Demographic information is collected at the beginning of WIA participation, so almost all information on disabilities collected on participants who completed WIA services in 2001-2002 would have been collected before SKIES was implemented. Much of the information on disability for participants who completed WIA services in 2003-2004 would have been collected after SKIES implementation.

**Workforce Training and  
Education Coordinating Board**

**Our Vision**

Washington's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is an active and effective partnership of labor, business, and government leaders guiding the best workforce development system in the world.

**Our Mission**

To fulfill this Mission, the Board will:

- Advise the Governor, Legislature, and other policymakers on workforce development policy and innovative practices.
- Promote a seamless workforce development system that anticipates and meets the lifelong learning and employment needs of our current and future workforce.
- Advocate for the training and education needed for success in the 75 to 80 percent of jobs that do not require a baccalaureate degree.
- Ensure quality and accountability by evaluating results, and supporting high standards and continuous improvement.

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