

Research Summary

December 2020

The Resiliency of Employees with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Economic Shutdown: A Retrospective Review of Employment Files

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■ A QUICK LOOK:

Few of the participants of this study experienced any illness. Only four of the 156 employees with IDD took time off for illness or quarantine, and two of those individuals were out for conditions not related to COVID symptoms. Unfortunately though, unlike a third of American workers that have worked entirely from home, none of the employees with IDD included in this study were able to work from home. Unfortunately, those that were not able to work on site were laid off. The month of highest impact was April 2020 where only 41.6% of employees worked on site in essential jobs.

■ KEY FINDINGS:

- But for the month of April, the majority of employees with IDD worked, on-site, as essential workers throughout the pandemic.
- Employees did have reduction in hours worked per month.
- Employees' wages were not affected by the pandemic.
- Employees in healthcare, distribution, and supplies were less affected.
- Employees in food service, retail, and entertainment were more affected.
- Employees who were Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) worked more hours than their White peers.

■ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE:

- In recognizing the contribution of essential frontline workers responding to the pandemic, employees with IDD play a major role.
- Employees with IDD working in essential roles during the pandemic proved their value to society.
- The importance of people with IDD to our economy during this time shows the falsehood of myths that people with disabilities are limited in their ability to contribute to labor force.
- Workers with IDD are essential to the economic health of our country, not only during the pandemic, but in general.

■ MORE ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

Few of the participants of this study experienced any illness. Only four of the 156 employees with IDD took time off for illness or quarantine, and two of those individuals were out for conditions not related to COVID symptoms. Unfortunately though, unlike a third of American workers that have worked entirely from home, none of the employees with IDD included in this study were able to work from home. Unfortunately, those that were not able to work on site were furloughed. The month of highest impact was April 2020 where only 41.6% of employees worked on site in essential jobs. After April, both hours worked monthly and percentage of employees working on site increased. The authors discussed the importance and resilience of workers with IDD to the United States economy.

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