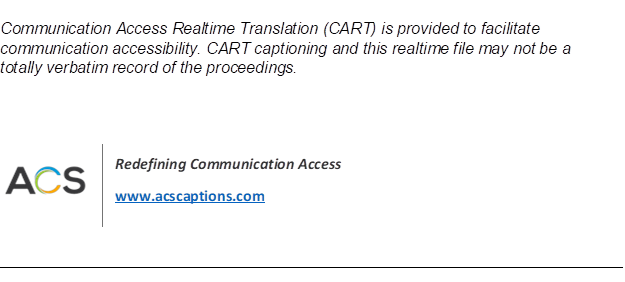
NTIDE

Lunch & Learn Webcast

Friday, January 22, 2021

11:30 a.m. Eastern Time

Remote CART Captioning



>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: For anybody online, we're going to wait a minute to start.

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to today's nTIDE. I'm just going to hit "start," in theory. (Music)

>> Hello and welcome, everybody to the National Transit Disability Employment.

>> Or nTIDE.

>> Lunch and learn series.

>> Just a few housekeeping items before we begin.

>> This webinar is being recorded.

>> We will post an archive of each webinar, each month on our website.

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>> Speakers will review these questions and provide answers during the last section of the webinar.

>> Some questions may be answered directly in the Q&A box.

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>> Or toll free at 866‑538‑9521 for more information.

>> Thanks for joining us.

>> Enjoy today's webinar!

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: All right. Good afternoon, again, everybody. This is Andrew Houtenville from the University of New Hampshire. I'm joined by John O'Neill from Kessler Foundation. Unfortunately, Denise Rozell was unable to join us. I need to update that. We're going to be presenting the December numbers.

It's a joint effort of the University of New Hampshire, Kessler Foundation, and AUCD. This is a special lunch and learn given the unique circumstances of the U.S. economy and the COVID‑19 pandemic. What we'll do today is we'll start with this introduction and then we'll go to the numbers and then we'll have a Q&A session. We'll also hear from John O'Neill who has some information from the field that may be of interest to hear about. One thing to note, let's see. Oh, one thing to note is that we do have an event coming up February 9th‑12th at noontime. So, instead of doing a one‑day conference, we're doing a four‑day string of noontime, at least Eastern, of an hour and 15 minutes and we'll be talking about the latest findings from the compendium and the annual report that we produce and we'll get updates from federal partners and talk a lot about COVID and we'll talk also about intersectionality. So, just registration is now open if you're interested. Today we'll talk a bit about the employment trends. One thing that's different from this presentation from the other nTIDE is we actually use the data from the current population survey raw data. So, on the regular nTIDE, we use statistics. We work with statistics at the Bureau of Labor Statistics post at 8:30 sharp on the first Friday of every month. Around mid month, we get the data files that are used. The survey responses that are used to generate those statistics. This allows us to look at the degree to which people are on furlough, what they call temporary layoff. This has been a big issue with the COVID‑19 pandemic, unlike any other time in U.S. history really. Let's jump into the numbers. I'm going to talk about, I'll point out the recovery from the great recession, some good news, and then COVID hits. So, look at the employment population ratio. That's the percentage of people who are employed. So, the denominator is the population. We're using the population 16‑64. What sometimes is called working age population. And we're going to look at that with and without the trend in the employment to population ratio for people with or without disabilities. Here it is. So, this goes back to 2008 when it first started to, the bureau of labor statistics first started to compile and release data on the population with disabilities. Then you see the great recession. The great recession hits and there's a decline for people with and without disabilities. The bottom line is for people with disabilities. These are on slightly different, these are proportionally, this is a graph that they follow the same proportions, but they cut out the middle part so it could fit on one page. So, we have the recession and then the slow recovery, you know, for people with disabilities. For people without disabilities, the decline continues pretty far into the 2000s and 2010s. And we really don't see an increase start until around 2005‑6. We actually see a nice increase for people disabilities. Actually, if you look at the slope of these two lines, people with disabilities are actually catching up a little bit. We call that the employment gap. And it's the first time I've ever seen the employment gap decline in all the surveys and statistics that I've been involved. That's around the time in when the economy really dipped into what's called full employment. Although, the economy continued into full employment in 2008 and 2019. It really kind of leveled off. And then this brings us up to March. The pandemic, we start seeing a little bit of slippage in the employment of people without disabilities. But, you know, this is a March number. And what I'm going to do is go through and basically click in and overlay the next successive months up until the most recent month of data, which is for December. Here we have the big drop in April. We have the national shutdown starting at the end of March and the beginning of April. This is a big decline for people both with and without disabilities. One thing to note is that people with disabilities didn't actually go below the mid‑2010s, the teens. Didn't go below that number. In part, that shows how severe the great recession was for people with disabilities. These numbers overlap, even though this 63 is below this 31. That's because the blue line is charted on this axis and the green line is charted on the other axis. I'm going to work on fixing that as we move forward. May there's a bit of recovery. We continue to see recovery for people with and without disabilities. By the time January starts rolling around, there's a little bit of softness. Not a big decline for people without disabilities, and actually a small decrease for people with disabilities. And through, all the way to November, we kind of see a tapering off of improvements for people with disabilities and also, you know, we begin to see some slowing down of the improvements for people without disabilities, as well. Let's put in the most recent numbers, December. We see a second decline for people without disabilities and kind of a leveling off for people with disabilities. And so this is really the, these numbers are for two weeks after Thanksgiving. This is right at that Thanksgiving peak when they were doing the survey. And, you know, states started clamping down and employers started responding to either restrictions or concerns about their own safety of their employees and their customers.

So, if we type in last December, we still have not come close to recovering either for people with or without disabilities. Now, let's look at the unemployed. One of the things we can do with the raw data is actually break apart the unemployed and actually get a sense of how many are on furlough. Furlough is a really important aspect because it has some connection of being recalled. Right? You're maintaining your connection with your employer so, tracking the number of people who are on furlough is a really important indicater. Oh, here it is again. Don't forget to register for the compendium. All right, here's the number of unemployed for people with and without disabilities. Here is the without disability. And we basically see a steady decline in the number, this huge jump in April, and then a steady decline throughout. A small rise in December in the number of people without disabilities. For people with disabilities, we see that same increase. A slow kind of recovery, not as stark of a recovery. We see the one‑time jump in November. And again, this is early November. And then we see in December this decline occurring again. This could be due to sampling variation. These are surveys. It's not a complete census of every worker in the United States. This could be related to sampling variation. However, it's this continued decline in the number of people who are employed, for people with and without disabilities. There is a concern this would rise. If I were betting on what January numbers would look like, early January numbers would look like, I would expect both people with and without disabilities, the number of unemployed to rise. I would expect that be largely driven by furloughing of additional workers as various areas across the country start increasing restrictions, particularly on food service and hospitality. All right. So, what we're going to do now is we're going to actually break this into on temporary layoff versus looking for work. If you expect to be recalled, you're considered on temporary layoff. If you're actively looking for work in the last four weeks and you're not on temporary layoff, you're going to be in this top category. I'm going to tap on people without disabilities. You see the employment decline, right? But you also see this unprecedented jump of about 80% of people who were unemployed were on temporary layoff. We see that slow decline in the number on temporary layoff, which we would expect. As employers got better at accommodating, as restrictions were loosened throughout this country that people who were on furlough would likely go back to work. Of course, some of these people may have exited the labor market altogether or moved into the unemployed. This is a snapshot. So, every time we take a snapshot, it's not always clear where people go in the next period. But we see this slight rise in the percentage on furlough for people without disabilities in December. And so that suggests, that likely reflects the pandemic. A very similar story for people without disabilities. We see the one‑time jump in November. But we also see a continuing decline in the number on furlough. But again, in January, I would expect the furlough both as a percentage and a sheer number to rise of the number of people on furlough. All right? This is another look. I'm sorry, that was stark. I probably should have forewarned you. We've been working on an infographic with Kessler Foundation to better portray what's going on. And when you do it this way, you actually start to see a pattern, right? You see a pattern if we took say since June the amount of people that this line that I'm kind of highlighting with my cursor, this line suggests a flattening of the number of people looking for work. So, the dark green is people looking for work. It's kind of been flat. And basically, the improvements in the economy have been in the reduction of people on furlough. And so the improvement of unemployment, I should say, has been through the reduction and furlough. That suggests that some of these individuals in the bottom part of the chart, the people who are looking for work could be actually out of work for quite a long period of time. If we look at the same story for people without disabilities, the same story occurs. All the improvements, all the decline that we see is really due to the change in furlough. That again, since say June, the number of people who are looking for work is basically about the same. Again, here you can see in the other chart, you can see this rise, this slight rise in the number of furloughed among people without disabilities. So, next we're going to look at some good news. I've mentioned this a few times. There is some good news. The labor force participation rate are the percentage of the population, it's really the labor force to population ratio. It's the percentage of the population that's either working, looking for work, or on furlough. And if you're not actively looking for work on furlough, you're considered and you're not working, you're considered to be out of the labor force. This goes back to really ancient statistics from the 30s and the 40s when they were trying to get an idea of how tight the labor market is, how hard it is to find a job. So, people who weren't actively looking for work or on furlough, they didn't want to include, they wanted to include in this statistic. Oh, here it is again. Don't forget to register. So, the labor force participation rate, it follows a similar pattern, it follows the employment to unemployment ratio. We see a really steep decline for people with disabilities, and then a slow recovery and some narrowing and then a tapering off. And this is last March. And so if we put in all the past months since COVID, you see that people with disabilities have really stayed engaged in the labor force, either on furlough or looking for work. And here we see people without disabilities actually have a decline. I forgot to change this number. Oh, there it is. To 77.5%. You know, they haven't really recovered and it's kind of tapered off in the last few months. And if we look at this, you know, for me, this is a really good sign long‑term because it suggests that people are staying engaged. Of course, this could also mean that a lot of people are coming back. Some people could be leaving the labor force, and some people could be coming in the labor force. It could show that they really need to stay engaged in the labor market. Remember, the poverty rate for people with disabilities is about 30%. Right? And you can learn more at the compendium about the poverty rate for people with disabilities. That if you're in poverty, you got to stay engaged. You can't just fall out of the labor market. You may not have the supports or the savings that others may have. And so this is a good story, but it also could be a cautionary tale of why people with disabilities are staying in the labor market because they have to. All right? So, let's see. I'm going to turn it over. We have the Q&A somewhere on your screen you'll have a Q&A button to ask questions. Here are the archive and the feedback survey that you can take. But I'm going to turn it over to John O'Neill at Kessler Foundation. John has been talking to some providers around New York City and the state of New York to get an understanding of what's happening to people with disabilities in their state. John?

>> JOHN O'NEILL: Yes, thank you Andrew.

I had the opportunity this week to speak with an associate executive director for legislative affairs at the Interagency Council of Developmental Disability agencies throughout New York state. And they took the opportunity to survey their membership in terms of what the impact of COVID has been on referrals from the state vocational rehabilitation program, as well as the billing that has occurred. And they've been comparing certain months, basically July through December of 2019, and July through December of this year during the COVID epidemic. And in terms of, and this is preliminary information because they had results in from only about 25% of their providers. But it's interesting in terms of many of these agencies wait for referrals from the state vocational rehabilitation program. And for employment‑related work. And the decline has been meaningful every month since July through December. For example, there was a decline in referrals in July of 33%. And in September, for some reason I don't have August. But there was a decline of 17%. And in October, there was a slight rise of 2%, which was unexplained, but still a slight rise. Then November, they go back to a 31% decline in referrals, and then in December a 27% decline. So, that's referrals. And in terms of billing, these organizations also experience consistent declines in terms of their capacity to bill, sorry. They saw a decline of 49% in July, a decline this year, compared to last year. 53% decline in August. 21% decline in September. 8% decline in October. And then back to about a 30% decline in November and a 26% decline in December. In speaking with the executive director, it was her feeling that it was due to decreased job placements. Also businesses are not hiring. Also, staff who are supporting people in the community, many staff have been afraid to do that. And so there's also been a staff shortage like many folks have themselves, many of the staff have gone on the unemployment rolls themselves. So, I think they will have more complete data in a few weeks and maybe at the next COVID webinar I'll be able to confirm that these statistics are consistent across the state.

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Yeah, John. It's similar to some stories we've been hearing in New Hampshire around individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

That a lot of people are not returning to work; that they're still either on layoff or looking for new jobs or are staying out of the labor force because they are potentially subject to higher rates of COVID infection.

Then we have other conditions. There are a few. And also one issue is that many of them were in the hospitality. So, the food service industry. And a lot of those places are either starting to shut down again or are not going back to full capacity quite yet. So, there are a number of questions in the Q&A box. I'm going to knock off a few of them. John, if you have any thoughts about them, please feel free to chime in.

>> JOHN O'NEILL: Sure.

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: So, the one thing that was just asked is is there any data on the types of labor that had the most layoffs or furloughs? And so there has been work, I know, done on industries and occupations and the affect of the pandemic. I still have yet to be able to open them or put my hands on them. If you go to the Office of Disability Employment Policy, I believe they have some working reports that are posted and they will go a bit more into industries and occupations. Also, certainly with what we see in the data in New Hampshire, it's most likely dependent on the food service industry. So, restaurants, hotels, the hospitality fields. Related to travel and eating out. Joanna asked do these numbers include people in PUA, so, pandemic‑related unemployment insurance programs. Or is it just regular unemployment? So, these aren't based on unemployment claims. These are self‑reports by individuals on the survey. So, it's likely to include people who are receiving unemployment insurance. Because people who are receiving unemployment insurance, whether they're in a pandemic or not, they're in essence not working. So, it's very likely that includes all people on unemployment insurance regardless for the reason of being on unemployment insurance. Another question was a clarifying question. These numbers are people who worked, are looking for work, only for people who had been employed prior to the pandemic. Unfortunately, we don't have data that kind of asks retrospectively were they working before the pandemic. There could be people that are coming in that were previously not working, not actively looking for work, that are reentering the labor force and starting to look for work even though they previously had. So, it's possible that some of those individuals, we just aren't able to tease out. Although there might be a way. There is a way of teasing out new entrants. So, people who reenter the labor force. I have to look at that. I looked at that early on in the pandemic. I haven't looked at that statistic in a while. But that's an interesting idea. Let me write that down. That could be a long‑term positive, but probably a short‑term sign of stress on the families. But you can look at new entrants. It's not quite the same of saying they weren't employed previously, but it could be quite interesting. John just put in the chat box, in the Q&A, if you go to the Q&A, you can see the industry occupation analysis. Thank you, John. I know it's out there. I'm going to click on it. I don't think it's going to share. I don't think people can see it.

Anyway. But in the Q&A box, there's a link to the ODEP report. The ODEP analysis for industry and occupation. All right. Thank you, John. John, there's a question for you in there. A question about the vaccination. Is there a priority for people with disabilities in COVID‑19 vaccination, and if so, how to proceed. It's very state by state which conditions, I believe. This is my understanding and I'm not an expert on the vaccination policies. But I know that it varies by state to state. And that at least in New Hampshire there's a little online tool where you can click yes/no/yes/no. And it will tell you where in line you are, what general group. And so I learned we have, I think, three phases and each phase has two subphases. I'm in phase 2B, not "to be," but number 2, letter B. And that's forecasted to be in April and May. So, how to proceed is to dig around your state's website. I'm not real happy. I'd rather them tell me when I can sign up and where, but in any event.

>> Andrew, there's the question to me from Jen I think you can respond to because you actually have some data on that. And she's asking whether there are any new placements of people with DD in new cleaning jobs?

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Yeah, yeah.

>> JOHN O'NEILL: And you were reviewing some of that this morning for New Hampshire.

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Yeah. I wouldn't say it's strong evidence, because again these are snapshots. We don't know how many new versus old. There could be a lot of new, but a lot of other people in old placements left. So, we can't really tell what's new versus old. But it did look like the job cleaning, people that are in job cleaning in maintenance‑related positions were not as subject to layoff. Right? The percentage on layoff was smaller than say the food service industry or the manufacturing industries. And my thought, and it's kind of implicit in your question, that it could be related to the deep cleaning that really has sprouted up as an industry that's increased over time with the pandemic. Here's a question, Maryland has seen a decrease in VR referrals and billing. Something you mentioned this morning, John, is a decrease in vocational counselors, that staffing is difficult. That was true, you mentioned, for New York. You know, I think that there will be a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot of work done looking back in time at some of the service delivery persons. Service delivery systems and how they were strained. You know? Particularly with, you know, families. Many people who were involved in disability‑related services have themselves or have family members with disabilities that may put them at risk of COVID infection due to secondary conditions or other issues. It's likely that there's a lot of stress put on families because of living with loved ones that are at risk or themselves being at risk. So, the service‑related systems, it would be interesting to see. Denise isn't on the line, but Denise could say a little bit about as additional stimulus money or support from federal programs comes in, we'll see, we'll see.

>> JOHN O'NEILL: In terms of service delivery, I do have one anecdote. The Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation is working with the state rehabilitation program in New Jersey. And they're making referrals prior to COVID. There could be a delay of a month or a couple of months from the time of first being referred to actually being accepted. During the COVID period, even though there have been fewer referrals, those referrals have been completed within a matter of a couple weeks.

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: That's good.

>> JOHN O'NEILL: Just because of the remote capabilities that the state vocational rehabilitation program put in place fairly quickly.

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Interesting. What you're saying, just let me repeat. That tells a slightly different story in that when there is a referral, it's likely to be filled faster in part because of this, you know, the ability to have remote work. That's an interesting idea because it suggests that some of this could be more on the program capacity and not on the placement side. Right? That it's really the supply of services as opposed to the demand or the success of those services if they do engage. That would be interesting. Boy. That would be really interesting.

>> And they've actually approved, in some cases, they've approved a verbal consent on the VR plan. That may be questionable in terms of legality, quote, unquote, but it has moved the process along for these few folks who have been referred.

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Yeah. Let me just review a couple of the comments or questions. Someone talked about New York City has begun vaccinating people with intellectual disabilities and staff supporting them in congregate setting ins group homes. So, I think that's true in a number of states that group homes are part of the congregate setting early on vaccination in the queue. There was a question about how have sheltered workshop environments fared during the pandemic. Certainly, once again, this is one of the e‑mail streams I've been involved in, but I haven't been able to check up on lately. There was a great deal of concern about those industries, those employers, during the beginning of the shutdown and the ability to maintain socially distanced work during that time. And also transportation systems, as well. To be able to maintain their productivity of that company. And I have not seen the results. There was going to be, there was a group that was going to do a survey. I'm not sure if the survey results, John have you followed that at all? Or anybody else?

>> JOHN O'NEILL: No, I have not.

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Yeah, there was going to be a survey. And I'm not quite sure if it's been completed. So, anonymous attendee, e‑mail us, and perhaps we'll have an answer. But it's one of those e‑mail streams that I haven't been able to keep up with. So, any other questions out there? John, any other thoughts?

>> JOHN O'NEILL: No. Oh, we're getting one other question.

>> ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Louisiana started giving vaccines to people with IDD and their staff members. That's a good sign. I'm glad to hear that. You know, the social isolation that's occurred in small group homes with families not being able to visit, staff, you know, a nephew of mine is the manager of a small group home in Massachusetts. And it's been very difficult, especially with family members not being able to visit. Family members passing away because many of these are adult individuals who have older parents that are passing away. It's been quite a long haul. And, you know, with the rising numbers of deaths in the United States, you know, this is going to impact the systems quite a bit for quite a long time. You know, with families struggling with child care. It's going to be interesting. Well, not interesting. But it will be important to pay attention to. All right. So, I'm going to pull this to a close, John. And, you know, I think as we move forward, Maryland is giving vaccines to group homes with CVS and Walgreens. Oh, they're now facing shortages of vaccine in the state. Yeah. That's really fascinating. Unbelievable. Some states have to hold back supply of new people getting vaccines in order to make sure that everybody who had their first vaccine gets their second vaccine. It's really quite a time. That's for sure. All right. I'm going to draw to a close before I say something I regret or start blabbing too much. All right, thanks, everybody! Stay tuned for nTIDE, the regular nTIDE on the first Friday of next month. And we'll talk later. Thank you!