

Small Business Ownership by People with Disabilities: Challenges and Opportunities

July 28, 2022

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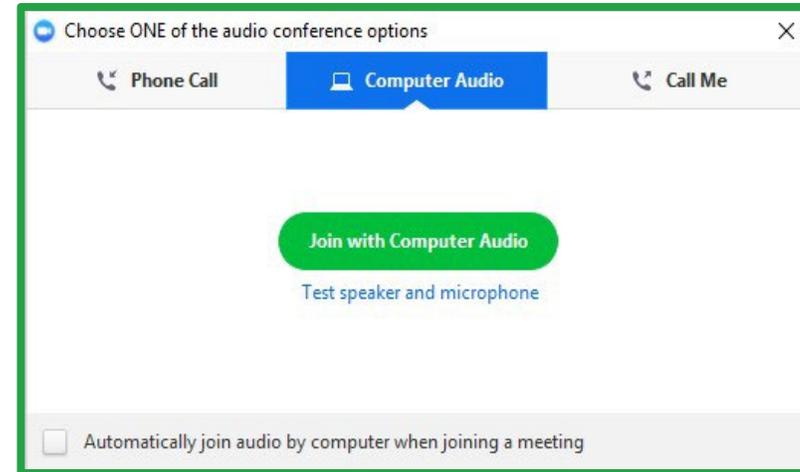
The findings and recommendations reflect
the views of National Disability Institute.



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Nikki Powis, Director of Small Business Programs, NDI



Nikki Powis has worked within the Workforce Development field for over 30 years. She has spent the past six years working for National Disability Institute, dedicated to improving the lives and financial stability of individuals with disabilities through expanding inclusion efforts within private, nonprofit, state and local organizations and businesses. Currently, Nikki is the Director of Entrepreneurial and Small Business programs at NDI.

Nikki is the parent of four children, including one with Autism. When she isn't working, Nikki enjoys the country with her horses.

Agenda

- The rationale behind the report
- Information about NDI
- Research and Findings
- Recommendations and Conclusions
- Panel discussion with business owners with disabilities
- Q and A
- How to connect with us

Elizabeth Daly-Torres

Executive Director, JPMorgan Chase & Co., with the Office of Disability Inclusion



Beth joined JPMorgan Chase's Diversity & Inclusion team in 2010, where she led the establishment of the Office of Disability Inclusion.

Beth works closely with senior leaders across the firm to develop and execute strategies, processes, tools and resources to better support employees with disabilities, those who care for disabled family members and small business founders with disabilities.

Beth received a Master's degree in Comparative Political Science, with a concentration in Public Policy and Social Movements, from the University of Kentucky and a Bachelor of Arts from Wheaton College in Massachusetts.

Beth lives outside of Atlanta, GA, and is the mom of four children, all with special needs – including triplets who were adopted from the foster care system.

The Rationale

- JPMorgan Chase and NDI realized little data exists on the landscape and needs of small business owners with disabilities and partnered to close that gap.
- The result is the report published today – “Small Business Ownership by People with Disabilities: Challenges and Opportunities.”
- There’s a lot of work that needs to be done – JPMorgan Chase looks forward to developing solutions and driving long-overdue, sustainable change in this space.

[Office of Disability Inclusion: JpMorganChase.com/ODI](https://www.jpmmc.com/ODI)

Michael Morris, J.D., Senior Strategic Advisor, NDI



Michael Morris is the founder of National Disability Institute and a Senior Strategic Advisor. He has more than 30 years of experience in and outside of government, pioneering new strategies to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Mr. Morris serves as an advisor and technical expert to multiple federal agencies on policy and systems relationships at federal, state and local levels to advance economic stability, mobility and asset development for persons with disabilities.

Mr. Morris received his undergraduate degree with honors in Political Science from Case Western University in Cleveland, Ohio, and his law degree from Emory University School of Law in Atlanta, GA.

National Disability Institute (NDI)

- For over 16 years, NDI has been driving social impact to build a better economic future for people with disabilities and their families through pioneering research, advocacy, policy development, public education, and innovative demonstration projects.
- This research, supported by JPMorgan Chase & Co., has brought NDI to a new level of engagement with entrepreneurs and small business owners with disabilities, financial institutions, government agencies and community organizations.
- NDI's research and program development efforts continue to put a focus on intersectionality of race, ethnicity and disability, which are also a part of our efforts to support entrepreneurs and small business owners with disabilities who are also Black, Indigenous, Latino and/or part of other underserved communities.

Read the Report

Small Business Ownership by People with Disabilities: Challenges and Opportunities



Ramonia Rochester, PhD, Director of Research, NDI



Ramonia joined the National Disability Institute team in June 2022 as Director of Research. She is a social scientist, educator, and communications practitioner, with over 18 years of experience across research and capacity building in the public health, academic, and business-development spaces. Ramonia is an advocate for policy development and empowerment training for equitable access to program supports for underserved communities. She is particularly passionate about addressing intersecting issues across mental health-related disabilities, homelessness and economic access.

Looking at the Numbers

Statistics	Key considerations
15 percent of the adult population in the U.S. has a disability	Individuals with disabilities have different employment and financial inclusion needs
74 percent of people with disabilities are outside the labor force	Individuals with disabilities need more control, flexibility and adjusted work environments
26 percent people with disabilities are part of the labor force, including self-employment	Individuals with disabilities are natural problem solvers and innovators, which lends itself to entrepreneurship
1.8 million (4 percent) own small businesses	Many entrepreneurs with disabilities are filling a niche or need that has not been addressed
People with disabilities chose self-employment at a higher rate compared to those without disabilities: 17 percent vs. 11 percent	Self-employment is a way for individuals with disabilities to create their own income and gain economic freedom

Primary Research Questions

1. How many people with disabilities own small businesses? What is the size of the market for credit and other supports to facilitate and promote small business ownership by people with disabilities?
2. How do the challenges faced by people with disabilities differ from the challenges faced by other underrepresented groups? How do these differences affect how supports should be structured?
3. What current support services exist and how well do they facilitate small-business development among people with disabilities?

Strategies for Gathering Information for the Research

- Analysis of multiple public data sets
- Interviews and focus group discussions with:
 - Public agencies responsible for employment and small-business development
 - Financial service institutions
 - Business incubators
 - Disability-owned business certifiers
 - Small business owners with disabilities
- Online Survey



Findings From Research Question 1

How many people with disabilities own small businesses? What is the size of the market for credit and other supports to facilitate and promote small business ownership among people with disabilities?

- Small business owners with disabilities participate in similar industries as do people without disabilities:
 - Professional and business services - 21 percent
 - Construction -16 percent
 - Other services - 13 percent
 - wholesale and retail trade - 10 percent
 - Financial activities, leisure and hospitality, transportation, utilities, and agriculture - each between 6 and 7 percent

Findings From Research Question 2

How do the challenges faced by people with disabilities differ from the challenges faced by other underrepresented groups? How do these differences affect how supports should be structured?

- Lessons learned from interviews with disability-owned businesses
 - Experience of Ableism
 - Being a part of a community – disability-specific programs are desired
 - Need for accommodations and specific services
 - Concerns over loss of public benefits
 - Challenges with access to credit



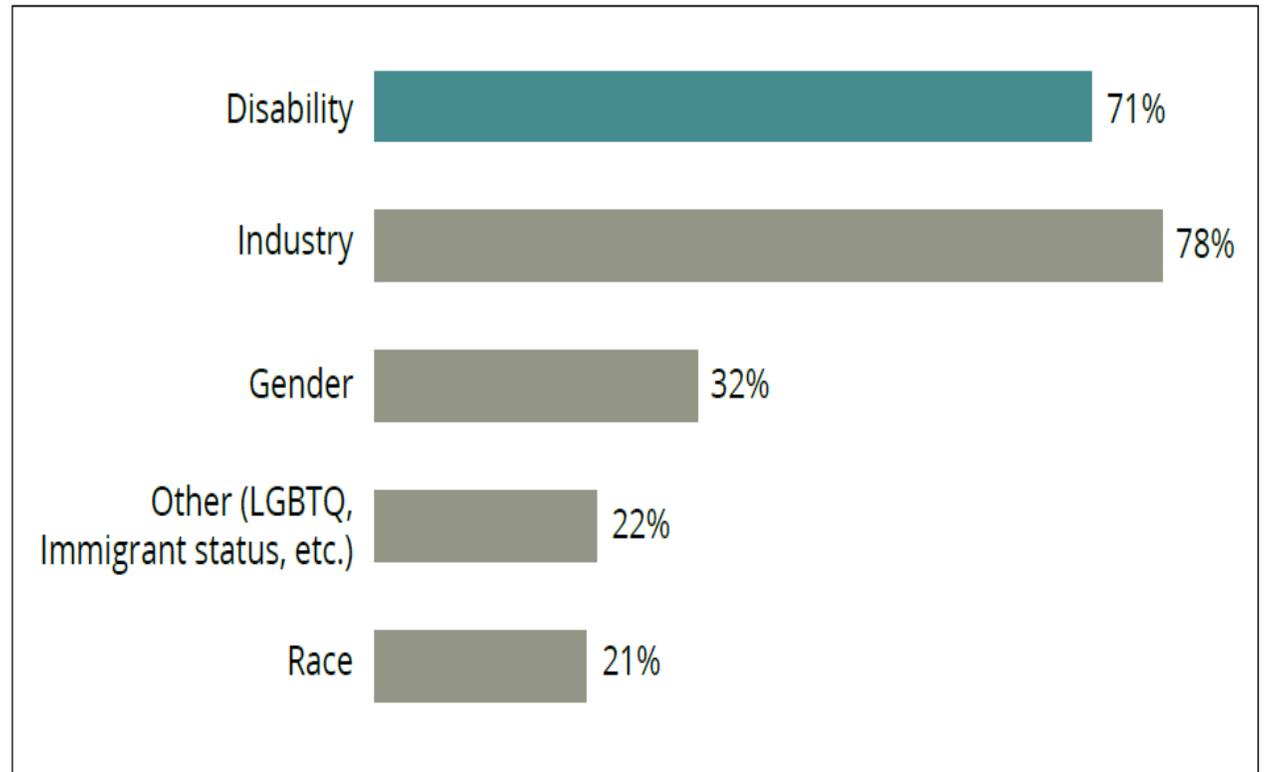
Barriers and Facilitators to Small Business Ownership: Perception of Survey Respondents with Disabilities (Slide 1 of 4)

- Experience of Ableism among investors and customers alike.
- Despite **58% indicate that they have used their disability experience to help them develop and design products and services that others haven't thought of;**
 - 61% indicate they need to demonstrate superior knowledge in order to be taken seriously
 - 39% indicate that people believe they don't not have enough energy to run their business due to their disability
 - 26% indicate that potential customers do not think they can compete on equal footing with business owners without disabilities
 - 16% indicate they have lost customers that prefer to work with business owners without a disability

Barriers and Facilitators to Small Business Ownership: Perception of Survey Respondents with Disabilities (Slide 2 of 4)

Being a part of a community – disability-specific programs are desired.

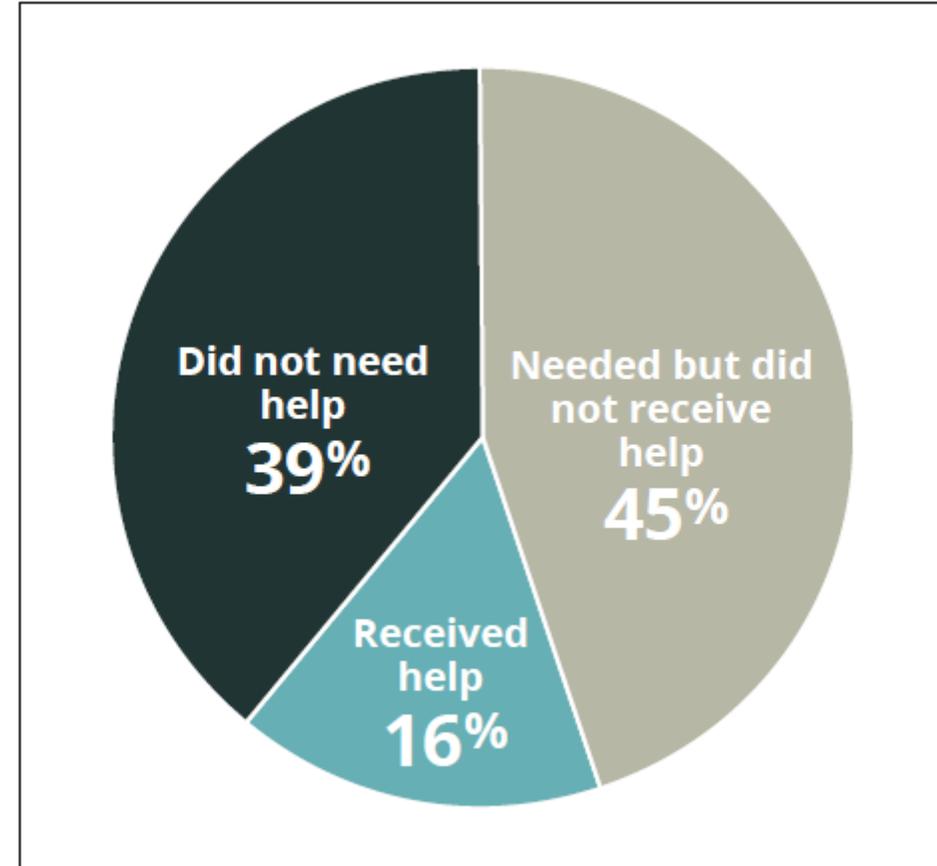
- **29% indicate that networking with business owners without disabilities is challenging because of being treated as though they do not belong.**



Barriers and Facilitators to Small Business Ownership: Perception of Survey Respondents with Disabilities (Slide 3 of 4)

Concerns over loss of public benefits:

- **61% indicate concern that the income from their business will affect access to disability benefits or services**



Barriers and Facilitators to Small Business Ownership: Perception of Survey Respondents with Disabilities (Slide 4 of 4)

Challenges with access to credit:

- **45%** - indicate that they are uncomfortable taking out a loan because of their disability



Quote from small business owner: “It’s easier to build a satellite and send it to space than it is to raise money.”

Reasons Disability-Owned Businesses Eschewed Loans

- Apprehension about providing personal guarantees and using personal assets as collateral due to health issues and not wanting to worry about debt;
- Will not qualify due to bad credit – medical bankruptcies and high medical costs means poor credit;
- Will not qualify due to lack of assets or due to benefits-related issues, such as asset limits and limited working hours;
- Difficult loan process, for example, for those with cognitive challenges, such as brain injury, those who are hard of hearing, or the legal jargon which can be inaccessible to lay persons in general.

Impact of COVID-19 on Disability Owned Businesses

- Negatively or positively affected based on the type of product or service they were providing:
 - Some closed completely while others were able to successfully pivot. 65% did not close their businesses.
 - Accessibility consulting and software businesses saw decline.
 - 2020 was a good year for businesses that provide market research services and artificial intelligence.
 - 50% received assistance from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loan or grant, mainstream lending programs, or other state, local government or non-profit grants:
 - 20% received PPP loans
 - 38% believed they would not qualify
 - 28% found program process to be too confusing
 - 16% were unaware of the program.

Findings From Research Question 3 (Slide 1 of 2)

What current support services exist and how well do they facilitate small-business development among people with disabilities?

- **Mentors**
 - 40% of respondents said they had a mentor. Over half found a mentor through a program they were participating in, and others asked family, friends and acquaintances;
 - SBA SCORE program supports 250 chapters across 1,500 communities.
- **Small Business Administration**
 - Provides support to multiple organizations, including over 1,000 small-business development centers and women's business centers. However, to date, these entrepreneurial support organizations have not received technical assistance in serving individuals with disabilities.

Findings From Research Question 3 (Slide 2 of 2)

What current support services exist and how well do they facilitate small-business development among people with disabilities?

- **Incubators or Accelerators provide essential resources and skills development programs such as marketing assistance, market research and analytics tools and accounting professionals, access to loan facilities or grant programs and legal advice;**
 - 1,400 nation-wide
 - Several for disabled Veterans
 - 1 for broader population of people with disabilities
- **Supplier Diversity, Small Business Set-asides and DOBE Certifications;**
 - Provide access to markets, federal and state governments
 - Certification program for Disability Owned Business Enterprises (DOBEs)
 - Education and business development

NDI's Recommendations

- Infusion of capital and access to credit specifically targeted to disability-owned businesses.
- Establishment of additional business incubators exclusively for individuals with disabilities.
- Expansion of certification for disability-owned businesses to increase supplier diversity.
- Banks to utilize CRA funds to support expansion of programs supporting entrepreneurship through the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies.
- Support a variety of Public Policy recommendations that expand business opportunities, access to capital, and support services for disability-owned businesses.
- Increase public and private data collection and reporting to track the growth and status of disability-owned small businesses.

Conclusion

- No single strategy can respond to the historic economic inequality confronted by generations of individuals with disabilities.
- Despite significant attitudinal, technical and policy challenges, many entrepreneurs with disabilities have succeeded as small business owners.
- Small-business ownership is a viable way for people with disabilities to achieve employment, self-sufficiency and financial well-being.
- Entrepreneurs with disabilities face unique barriers that are unmet due to a lack of funding and professional support specifically targeted to the population.
- There is an opportunity for banks, federal, state and local small business and economic development agencies to lead the way toward the empowerment of entrepreneurs with disabilities that parallels the commitment made to Veterans, women, Black, Latino and other underserved small-business owners.

Stories from Disability-Owned Businesses



Anthony Reynolds II

Associate, Office of Disability Inclusion, JPMorgan Chase & Co



Anthony Reynolds is the newest member of the Office of Disability Inclusion Small Business and Entrepreneurship team at JPMorgan Chase.

Anthony is a former Co-Founder of a technology company where he went from personally filling orders to managing a rapidly expanding business. Anthony has been a featured speaker at Startup Week Columbus, Cleveland, and was a board member of the START Fund, an investment fund that focused on making investments to nonprofits in the central Ohio community.

Anthony is a military Veteran of the United States Air Force, where he was a part of the Intelligence Community and awarded the Air Force Achievement Medal. He was deployed to Afghanistan, Kuwait and Qatar in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He is a native of Columbus, Ohio, where he lives with his family.

Alvaro Silberstein, co-founder of Wheel the World



[WheelTheWorld.com](https://www.WheelTheWorld.com)

Alvaro is a passionate disability advocate. He created Wheel the World in 2018 to empower millions of people to explore the world without limits.

Silberstein works closely with businesses to offer fully accessible travel experiences, making it possible for people with disabilities to enjoy destinations such as Machu Picchu, Easter Island and Patagonia. Silberstein has also served as an advisor to the Chilean government for the development of the national strategy for the social inclusion of people with disabilities in Chile.

Alvaro received his undergraduate degree in information technology engineering from Universidad Católica de Chile and has an MBA from the University of California Berkeley Haas School of Business.

Chioma Oruh, PH.D., founder of Chi Bornfree and FixPat



DrChiBornFree.com

As a mental health self-disability advocate and a proud mother of two brilliantly autistic sons, Dr. Chioma Oruh is a first-generation Nigerian-American and proud Washingtonian.

Chioma is the founder and principal consultant of Chi Bornfree, Inc., which is a family-centered advocacy firm that provides coaching, consulting research, and policy-driven work, and the Founding Director of FixPat, Inc., the nonprofit sister organization for Chi Bornfree, and co-founder and Chairperson of the board of FixPat, a non-profit organization that promotes wellness products and services for neurodivergent pregnant mothers and families of children from birth to 8 years old with disabilities.

Chioma is civically engaged via serving on several public and private boards and commissions. She holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and has taught at the Department of Political Science of Howard University.

Chioma lives in the historic Takoma neighborhood in Ward 4 of Washington, D.C.

Tiffani Martin, founder and CEO of Jancynco and Visiotech



[Jancynco.com](https://www.jancynco.com)

Tiffani is a strategist, author, branding extraordinaire and the founder and CEO of Jancynco and Visiotech. After losing her sight at the age of 28 due to diabetic retinopathy, Tiffani began to realize how limiting society's resources were for those with disabilities. She longed to bridge the gap between technological brands and the community often ostracized in product development—people like her.

Tiffani has worked with some of the nation's top brands, developing their personal and unique marketing identities, and thrusting them into a new realm of recognition. She is the author of “Branding the Heart: A Guide to Digital Engagement for Non-Profit Organizations” and co-author of “Be prolific: Do Success Different.”

Tiffani is a fierce believer that although she may have lost her sight, she has not lost her vision. With over 15 years of digital strategy experience, she is determined to use Jancynco as a catalyst to inspire others to reach beyond their disability.

Tiffani holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of North Texas in business entrepreneurship, is happily married and resides in Dallas, TX.

Questions



National Disability Institute Small Business Initiatives



Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP)



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A photograph of a man in a wheelchair wearing a headset, sitting at a desk and pointing at a computer monitor. The background is a dimly lit office.

Helping Small Business is Our Job.

If you are an aspiring entrepreneur or existing business owner with a disability and live in DC, Maryland or Virginia, we can help you **START, BUILD and GROW** your business.

[GET STARTED](#)

For organizations wishing to participate with us, [click here.](#)

DisabilitySmallBusiness.org

Disability Owned

The Disability Business Enterprise Channel

- Streaming TV Channel providing entrepreneurs with disabilities information they can use to plan, start, and grow a business.
- Coming Soon.

Thank You

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