

National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

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# Data Interpretation Guide for State Reports: FAQ

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**NDC**

**National Deaf Center**  
on Postsecondary Outcomes



Office of Special Education Programs  
U.S. Department of Education



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## DATA INTERPRETATION GUIDE FOR STATE REPORTS: FAQs

This FAQ is designed to support users in the interpretation and sharing of data from the state reports. Detailed information about the analyses are found in the Methods section at the end of each state report. Comprehensive national reports about educational attainment and employment are available at [www.nationaldeafcenter.org](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org).

### WHAT DOES THE WORD *DEAF* MEAN IN THESE REPORTS?

NDC uses the word *deaf* as an umbrella term to describe individuals who may identify as Deaf, hard of hearing, hearing impaired, late deafened, and deafdisabled. However, when data addresses specific subgroups, such as those who are deafblind or deafdisabled, NDC will use the relevant term. The U.S. Census does not collect data about levels of hearing loss, identification with the deaf community, or the use of sign languages. The U.S. Census only asks whether people have “hearing difficulties,” which means that all individuals who report hearing difficulties are counted as deaf in our analyses. This is a limitation of the dataset.

### DO WE HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED? OR SIGN LANGUAGE USED?

No. The U.S. Census does not collect data about the type of school deaf people attend or their sign language use. We do not know if the deaf people in this sample were mainstreamed or if they went to deaf schools. The U.S. Census collects data on spoken language use, but does not ask about sign language use. This is also a limitation of this dataset.

### THERE IS INFORMATION ABOUT SSI BENEFITS. WHAT ABOUT SSDI?

We do not have information about SSDI benefits. The U.S. Census only collects information about SSI benefits.

### WHAT DOES “HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION” MEAN IN THESE REPORTS?

The high school completion data in these reports include individuals who have a GED or diploma of any type. Given that our sample population includes individuals ages 25 to 64, the standards for obtaining a high school degree may have varied over time. This is something to consider when interpreting these results.

### WHY WERE SOME RACE AND ETHNICITY GROUPS USED IN SOME REPORTS, BUT NOT IN OTHERS?

Groups of race and ethnicity used in each report depended on the total sample size of deaf individuals for each state. States with larger total sample sizes and/or higher variability in race and ethnicity had large enough sample sizes for more subgroups to be analyzed, compared to states with smaller total sample sizes and/or less variability in race and ethnicity.

## ISN'T EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LINKED TO STRONGER EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR DEAF PEOPLE?

Yes. NDC's national reports on educational attainment and employment outcomes explain the relationship between educational attainment levels, fields of study, and employment outcomes. These reports are available at [www.nationaldeafcenter.org](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org). The gap in employment rates between deaf and hearing people narrows as educational attainment increases. Employment rates and earnings vary widely by field of degree.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING UNEMPLOYED AND NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE LABOR FORCE?

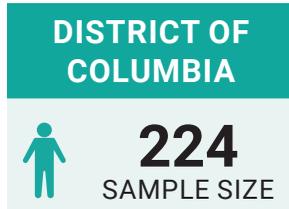
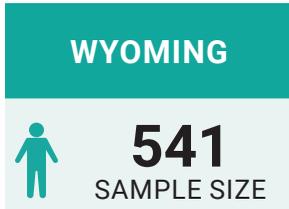
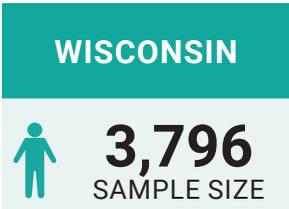
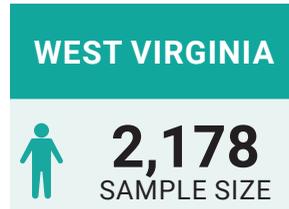
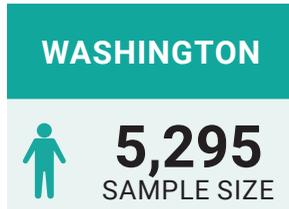
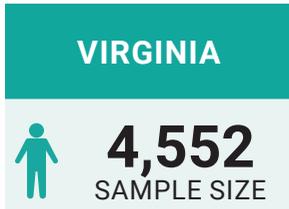
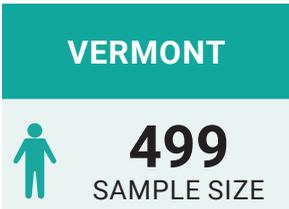
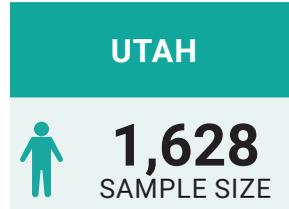
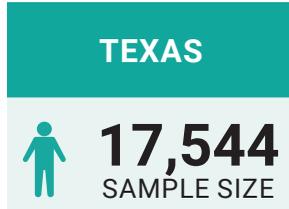
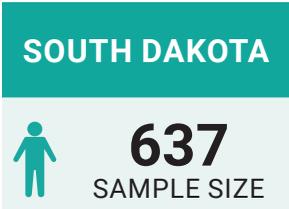
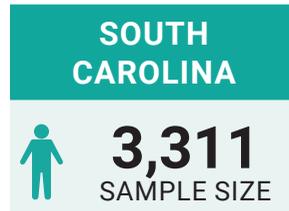
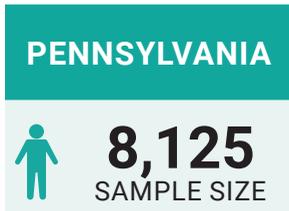
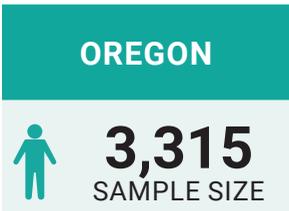
The distinction between "unemployed" and "not participating in the labor force" is important. When people look at employment rates, they often assume that everyone who is not employed is unemployed. That is not the case. The federal government recognizes that people who are not employed may not be currently looking for work. People who are not employed include students, retirees, or people taking care of family members, for instance. If individuals state that they do not currently have a job, the U.S. Census asks if they are actively looking for work. If they are, the U.S. Census considers them to be in the labor force and currently unemployed. If they are not actively looking for work, they are not considered part of the labor force.

## HOW MANY DEAF INDIVIDUALS WERE PART OF THE DATA FOR MY STATE?

More than 38,000 deaf individuals in the United States were counted in the U.S. Census 5-year estimates. The sample size varied for each state. All state sample sizes are shown in this table.

<b>ALABAMA</b>  <b>3,992</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>ALASKA</b>  <b>810</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>ARIZONA</b>  <b>4,207</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>ARKANSAS</b>  <b>2,707</b> SAMPLE SIZE
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>  <b>17,771</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>COLORADO</b>  <b>3,416</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>CONNECTICUT</b>  <b>1,725</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>DELAWARE</b>  <b>458</b> SAMPLE SIZE
<b>FLORIDA</b>  <b>10,865</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>GEORGIA</b>  <b>6,104</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>HAWAII</b>  <b>767</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>IDAHO</b>  <b>1,344</b> SAMPLE SIZE

<b>ILLINOIS</b>  <b>6,731</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>INDIANA</b>  <b>5,192</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>IOWA</b>  <b>2,103</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>KANSAS</b>  <b>2,199</b> SAMPLE SIZE
<b>KENTUCKY</b>  <b>4,083</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>LOUISIANA</b>  <b>3,603</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>MAINE</b>  <b>1,194</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>MARYLAND</b>  <b>2,749</b> SAMPLE SIZE
<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>  <b>3,412</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>MICHIGAN</b>  <b>7,093</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>MINNESOTA</b>  <b>3,611</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>MISSISSIPPI</b>  <b>2,459</b> SAMPLE SIZE
<b>MISSOURI</b>  <b>5,077</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>MONTANA</b>  <b>883</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>NEBRASKA</b>  <b>1,321</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>NEVADA</b>  <b>1,935</b> SAMPLE SIZE
<b>NEW HAMPSHIRE</b>  <b>881</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>NEW JERSEY</b>  <b>3,559</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>NEW MEXICO</b>  <b>1,750</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>NEW YORK</b>  <b>9,315</b> SAMPLE SIZE
<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>  <b>6,352</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>  <b>531</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>OHIO</b>  <b>7,948</b> SAMPLE SIZE	<b>OKLAHOMA</b>  <b>3,914</b> SAMPLE SIZE





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