



**BRIDGING THE ECONOMIC DIVIDE:
LAWMAKERS, FEDS AND FINANCIAL HEADS JOIN FORCES
TO ADVANCE NEEDS OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES**

*National Disability Institute Convenes
First Economic Advancement and Financial Inclusion Summit*

Washington, D.C. – July 22, 2015 – In advance of the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), [National Disability Institute](#) (NDI) assembled a stellar cast of policymakers, stakeholders and thought leaders at the first *Economic Advancement and Financial Inclusion Summit* to address the financial status of Americans with disabilities and the barriers that prevent their full participation in the economic mainstream.

A quarter century has passed since former President George H.W. Bush signed ADA into law. Unfortunately, little progress has been made in that time to ensure persons with disabilities equal access to the traditional financial services and products available to many of their nondisabled peers or the ADA assurance of “economic self-sufficiency.”

As the nation’s first nonprofit dedicated exclusively to improving the financial health and future of all people across the spectrum of disability, NDI has long documented the unique financial challenges and hurdles individuals with disabilities face everyday. Two recently issued NDI reports, [The Financial Capability of Adults with Disabilities](#) and [The Banking Status and Financial Behaviors of Adults with Disabilities](#), provided critical data and research which served as catalysts for today’s event.

“Disability in America crosses the dividing lines of gender, race, ethnicity and age,” Michael Morris, NDI Executive Director, said. “However, the most common characteristic across these dividing lines is living at or below poverty and not making ends meet.” Morris continued, “The *Economic Advancement and*

Financial Inclusion Summit deepens our understanding and commitment to change this sobering reality.”

As part of the day’s program, the Federal Reserve Board, for the very first time, released new findings from the [Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households](#) that examined the financial differences between individuals with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. Highlights include:

- Persons with disabilities were nearly **three times** more likely to have an annual income of \$40,000 or less, as compared to persons without disabilities (**66 percent vs. 26 percent**);
- Individuals with disabilities were **2.5 times less likely** to have saved money over the course of the previous year (**66 percent vs. 27 percent**); and
- **9 in 10 people** with disabilities expressed the desire to want to live independently, yet cannot afford to do so.

During the Summit, the overflow crowd heard from a diverse set of speakers representing both public and private interests and the nonprofit sector. Special guests included: Senator Robert Casey Jr. (D-Penn.); Congressman Ander Crenshaw (R-Fla.); former Senator Tom Harkin (Iowa); Michael Gruenberg, Chairman, FDIC; Lex Frieden, ADA architect and internationally known disability advocate; Naomi Gendler Camper, Managing Director and Head, Office of Nonprofit Engagement, JPMorgan Chase; and David Buchholz, Assistant Director, Division of Consumer and Community Affairs, Federal Reserve Board. Each speaker highlighted their own and/or organization’s work to build a society where Americans with and without disabilities can take the much-needed steps to build a more financially secure and independent life. Kelvin Boston, Host, *PBS Moneywise*, served as the Summit’s emcee.

Following an afternoon break, Summit attendees formed working groups to identify pathways to create better economic futures for all individuals with disabilities. The goal was to hone and develop strategies to fulfill the ADA promise of “economic self-sufficiency” within the next five years - the 30th Anniversary of ADA.

For more information on the Economic Advancement and Financial Inclusion Summit, please visit: <http://realeconomicimpact.org/pages/ada-event>. Photographs of the event are available upon request.

National Disability Institute's *Economic Advancement and Financial Inclusion Summit* was made possible through funding from [JPMorgan Chase](#).

About National Disability Institute

[National Disability Institute](#) (NDI) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to building a better economic future for people with disabilities. The first national organization committed exclusively to championing economic empowerment, financial education, asset development and financial stability for all persons with disabilities, NDI affects change through public education, policy development, training, technical assistance and innovative initiatives. NDI and its [Real Economic Impact \(REI\) Network](#) have helped more than 2.3 million people with disabilities receive nearly \$2.3 billion in tax refunds and credits. To learn more, visit www.realeconomicimpact.org. Engage with NDI on Facebook: [RealEconImpact](#) or follow NDI on Twitter: [@RealEconImpact](#).

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