



## **BRIDGING THE ECONOMIC DIVIDE FOR AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES**

*National Disability Institute Convenes the  
First Financial Inclusion Summit in Seattle*

**Washington, D.C. (Sept. 16, 2016)** – Today, [National Disability Institute](#) (NDI) assembled a stellar cast of policymakers, stakeholders and thought leaders at City Hall in Seattle, Wash. for a first of its kind *Financial Inclusion Summit*. The *Summit* addressed the financial knowledge and skill gaps of Americans with disabilities and the barriers that prevent their full participation in the economic mainstream.

“Disability in America crosses the dividing lines of gender, race, ethnicity and age. However, the most common characteristic across these dividing lines is living at or below poverty and not making ends meet,” Michael Morris, NDI Executive Director, said. “No group of people in America is subject to more economic disparity than people with disabilities. The *Financial Inclusion Summit* deepens our understanding and commitment to sustainable change at an individual, family, organization and community level.”

Collaborating organizations for the event included Financial Empowerment Network - Seattle-King County, Seattle Commission for People with disabilities, Seattle Office for Civil Rights, Bank On Seattle-King County, the FDIC, Washington Access Fund and Cares of Washington.

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. Two 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 presentation and group discussions.

Findings from the reports include:

- 81 percent of people with disabilities did not have an emergency fund to cover three months of expenses, as compared to 54 percent of people without disabilities;

- 70 percent of people with disabilities responded they could not come up with \$2,000 in an emergency, as compared to 37 percent of people without disabilities;
- Only 18 percent of people with disabilities had determined their retirement savings needs, as compared to 41 percent of people without disabilities;
- Among households headed by working-age persons with disability, nearly one-fifth were unbanked (18 percent) and more than one-fourth were underbanked (28 percent); and
- Households headed by working-age persons with disability were significantly less likely to have a savings account compared to households headed by those without disability. (47 percent vs. 72 percent, respectively).

The overflow crowd at the *Summit* heard from a diverse set of speakers representing both public and private interests and the nonprofit sector. Special guests included: Senator Cyrus Habib (D-Wash.); Linda Preston, Community Affairs Specialist, FDIC; Jack Brummel, Executive Director, Washington Access Fund; Brian Stewart, Vice President and Community Relations Officer, JPMorgan Chase; Jeff Southard, Connect for Success Financial Coach, Cares of Washington; and Mark Adreon, Program and Partnership Development, Washington State Department of Services for the Blind. Each speaker highlighted their own and/or organization's work to help Americans with disabilities build a more financially secure and independent life.

During the morning session, Summit attendees formed working groups to identify pathways to create better economic futures for all individuals with disabilities. The goal was to develop and refine strategies to fulfill the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) "to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities." Following an afternoon break, the working groups gave their reports and recommendations to advance financial inclusion for Americans with disabilities.

As part of the day's program, a proclamation from Seattle Mayor Edward B. Murray was presented by Patricia Lally, Director, Seattle Office for Civil Rights announcing September 16, 2016 as Economic Empowerment Day.

Visit the [Seattle Financial Inclusion Summit webpage](#) for more information. Photographs of the event are available upon request.

The *Financial Inclusion Summit* was made possible through lead 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](http://www.realeconomicimpact.org). Engage with NDI on Facebook: [RealEconImpact](#) or follow NDI on Twitter: [@RealEconImpact](#).*

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