

## QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS HIGHLIGHTS

People with disabilities represent a large and underutilized component of the United States labor market. Individuals with disabilities have a significantly lower workforce participation rate compared to their non-disabled peers (21% vs. 67%) and have nearly double the unemployment rate (10.1% vs. 5.1%).

One critical barrier to competitive integrated employment and entrepreneurship for people with disabilities is a lack of accessible transportation options. The promise of autonomous vehicles (AVs), particularly Levels 4 and 5, offers a potential transportation solution for many people with disabilities.

This qualitative analysis examined how accessible, affordable, and sustainable AVs could increase employment for people with disabilities and strengthen the broader economy.

### Interview Themes:

Interviewees emphasized AVs would offer them an increase in 1) employment opportunities, 2) entrepreneurship and small business success, 3) personal safety, 4) independence, and 5) health access.

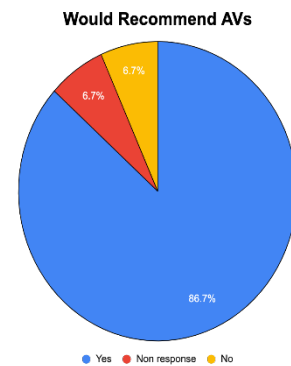
### Community Voices:

**“Transportation is a huge issue for people who are blind. I can say unequivocally that having access to something like [AVs] would open up more career opportunities for people who are blind.” – Participant, Employer**

**“I was doing pop-ups as a vendor at weekend events, and then I had a heart attack. I had all of my stuff in a rolling bag. It was too much strain to take this stuff up the hill, so I couldn’t do it anymore. [An AV] would have come in very handy.” – Participant, Entrepreneur**

**“After a work event, I walked over to my Uber ride and told him I was going to Baltimore, and the driver refused. I had to call two more Ubers before one agreed to take me. I think people forget about the safety element of being stranded. The AVs are going to be a lot more reliable, especially in these sort of late night, early morning situations where safety can be paramount.” – Participant, Professional**

**“One of the largest barriers for employing [the disability community] is transportation. Transportation has been an absolute nightmare for [my] employment program. I feel like I’ve been able to overcome every other challenge in this space except this one.” – Participant, Employer**



These findings suggest that accessible AVs could be a powerful factor in reducing transportation barriers, increasing employment and economic outcomes for many people with disabilities, and ultimately strengthening the economy.

Source: National Disability Institute & ICF. (Dec. 2022). Economic Impacts of Removing Transportation Barriers to Employment for Disabled Individuals Through Autonomous Vehicle Adoption.