



CID-NY

Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York

ADA at 25: Many Bridges to Cross

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Table of Contents

Forward	3
Executive Summary	4
Education	6
Employment	7
Income & Poverty	8
Health Coverage & Access	9
Food	10
Housing	10
Marriage & Family	11
Transportation	12
Recommendations	13
Who Are People with Disabilities in New York	14
The Rate of Disability Varies Across New York City	15
Disability Rates by Borough	15
Disability Rates by Kind of Disability	16
Disability Rates by Age and Gender	18
Disability Rates by Race and Ethnicity	20
Education	21
High School Diploma	22
College Diploma	23
Recommendations	24
Employment	25
Employment Rate/Gap	26
Race/Ethnicity	28
Gender	29
Disability	30
Income and Poverty	32
Median Equivalized Household Income (MEHI)	33–34
Poverty Rate	35
Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity	36
Employment, Income & Poverty Recommendations	37
Health	38
Health Rate	39
Health Coverage and Access Recommendations	40
Food	41–42
Recommendations	43
Housing	44
Ownership	45
Rent Burdened	46–47
Recommendations	48
Marriage & Family	49
Married People	50–51
Recommendations	52
Transportation	53
Public Transportation	54
Walk to Work	55
Recommendations	56
Methodology	57–59
Acknowledgements	60
About CIDNY	61



Forward

Disabilities are a normal part of life. Having a disability is something most of us can look forward to as a part of birth, accident, disease, environmental hazard or simply the process of aging. People with disabilities are young and old. We are of all races and ethnicities. We live in every community. Our disabilities may be evident or invisible. We are a heterogeneous community—but what we have in common is that we experience barriers, physical, communications-related or attitudinal, that impede our access to what life has to offer. Sometimes the very laws and institutions that are designed to help us are an impediment to our progress.

Segregation and exclusion of people with disabilities have contributed to gross inequalities. People with disabilities experience lower educational attainment, lower levels of employment and wages, greater social isolation, worse health outcomes and greater levels of poverty than their nondisabled counterparts. These outcomes are not an inevitable result of disabilities, they are the result of legal and social barriers that have yet to be removed. It is in everyone's interest to take down these barriers.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed twenty-five years ago to change the pervasive pattern of discrimination in our society. It was brought about by community organizing, coalition efforts, civil disobedience, litigation, settlements, negotiation, public education, and legislative strategy. We now look back and ahead to see both how far we have come and how many bridges we have yet to cross to reach equality.



Executive Summary

We have a lot to celebrate. The ADA, our Civil Rights Act, has made a significant difference in the lives of people with disabilities. It has given us a tool to use to bring about equal opportunity through legal challenges and voluntary compliance. It has empowered us to challenge the unequal status quo, to identify and eliminate disparities. As a result, in New York City, many things have changed:

- People using wheelchairs can navigate the aisles and checkout lines at some drug stores and groceries;
- Live theaters and movie theaters are more accessible for people with disabilities who are Deaf;
- People who are Blind or have low-vision must be able to get written materials in alternate formats;
- A government employment program must provide reasonable accommodations for people with mental disabilities;
- Emergency planners must provide for evacuation, transportation, shelter, communication and canvassing for all people with disabilities pursuant to a landmark civil rights court decision resulting from a suit brought by CIDNY and others;
- A State-proposed health care rationing scheme that discriminated against people with disabilities was prevented from taking effect;
- Students with disabilities can obtain reasonable accommodations when they are sitting college entrance exams;
- Polling sites must be physically accessible on election day pursuant to a court decision resulting from more than a decade of CIDNY's documentation of voting rights discrimination;
- Some subway stations are accessible, some corners have curb cuts, and half of the New York City taxi fleet must be accessible by 2020;
- Hospitals must provide interpreters for people who are Deaf and accessible equipment for people with physical disabilities;
- Programs exist to remove architectural barriers in housing;
- People with all disabilities living in institutions must be able to receive services in the most integrated setting;
- Some public libraries, courtrooms and other government services have been made more accessible;
- Some sports and recreation facilities have provided reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities;
- People who use wheelchairs can access the top of the Empire State Building;
- People who use wheelchair can use the Staten Island ferry and other ferries;
- People with autism can attend an Autism-Friendly Broadway show;
- People with various disabilities have been able to access more community-based housing opportunities as opposed to nursing homes and other institutions;

- People with disabilities have more access to higher education opportunities given the requirement to accommodate in higher education institutions as well as during entrance examinations;
- More playgrounds are being built that are accessible to all children;
- More parks are being made accessible to all;
- Cruise ships are more accessible to people with disabilities.

The ADA has increased our awareness of discrimination and the need to level the playing field. Public officials and private businesses have become more aware of barriers to full participation by people with disabilities. People with disabilities have come forward to demonstrate the impact of discrimination on their lives and to propose constructive solutions to continued segregation and exclusion that are too often accepted as normal and necessary.

We have traveled far down the road to equality. Still, we have far to go. Across the nation, in New York State and New York City, gross disparities between people with and without disabilities persist as a result of continued institutional discrimination and attitudinal barriers. In fact, in New York City, people with disabilities are significantly worse off than their counterparts in New York State and nationally, according to the major indicators tracked in this report.

The major indicators of well-being we looked at for this report include: Education, Employment, Income & Poverty, Health Coverage & Access, Food, Housing, Marriage & Family and Transportation.

Along with those indicators, it is important to note that there are myriad other important issues that must be addressed in the next 25 years of ADA implementation. Among these are:

- The school to prison pipeline for youth with disabilities;
- The relationship between the police and people with disabilities;
- Health disparities between people with and without disabilities;
- The need for continued focus on deinstitutionalization;
- Media representation of disability;
- The philanthropic community's lack of engagement with issues deemed to be disability issues;

New York City is home to over 8 million people and welcomes millions of tourists each year. We pride ourselves on our diversity and our openness to all who want to come here. However, if New York City is to be the world class city it claims to be, it will have to address the obvious physical inaccessibility of an old-build city in office buildings and public accommodations. Too many New York City programs, services and recreational events take place in buildings with revolving door entries, without entry ramps, without accessible bathrooms and without accessible halls and pathways.

As this report shows, the work we need to do to fulfill the promise of the ADA remains unfinished. To continue to progress towards equality, New York needs to embrace concrete goals for ADA compliance in order to remediate the inferior status of people with disabilities.



Executive Summary — Education



Education: People with disabilities continue to face discriminatory barriers in public education. There are disparities between people with and without disabilities in diploma rates that have an impact on the likelihood of employment and adequate household income. In New York City, there is a 17.1 percent high school education gap and a 16.4 percent college graduation gap. These gaps are wider than the gaps at the State or national level.

- In New York City, the percentage of people with disabilities who have a high school diploma or equivalent is 66.4 percent. In contrast, the diploma rate for people without disabilities is 83.5 percent.
- The diploma gap in New York City (17.1%) is wider than the diploma gap at the national level (12.7%) or the State level (14.9%). In Manhattan, the diploma gap is 21.7 percent. The gap exists for all people with any disabilities.
- The education gap widens at the college level. The diploma rate for people with no disability (34.9%) is more than double the diploma rate for people with disabilities (16.4%).
- People with any cognitive disabilities (e.g. “because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions”) are more severely disadvantaged than others.
- Women with disabilities are less likely than men with disabilities to have college degrees.
- People with disabilities who are Black or Hispanic are more severely disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment.



Executive Summary — Employment



Employment: In New York City, there is an employment rate gap of 41.2 percent between people with and without disabilities. The gap is wider for people with some disabilities. People with disabilities are largely segregated into very low-wage occupations. The employment gap is wider in New York City than at the State or national level.

Educational achievement gaps contribute to, but do not entirely explain, dramatic employment rates gaps between people with and without disabilities. Increased educational attainment decreases the disparity in employment and earnings between people with and without disabilities, but even with a college education, a wide employment gap persists. Why? In 2004, one in five working age adults with disabilities described experiencing job discrimination. Lack of education about the ADA's employment protections and persistent employment discrimination and lack of reasonable accommodations and necessary supports have a significant impact on the lives of people with disabilities. Disability employment rates differ by "severity" of disability, gender, race/ethnicity, type of disability and marriage. It is evident that people who experience a "double burden" of discrimination face worse employment odds.

- In New York City, the employment rate for people with any disability is 29.1 percent and the employment rate for people without disabilities is 70.3 percent.
- The employment gap between high school graduates with disabilities and high school graduates without disabilities is 39 percent.
- The employment gap for college graduates with and without disabilities is 34.4 percent.
- The employment rate for women with disabilities in New York City (29.3%) is essentially the same as at the State level (30.7%) or national level (31.8%). Both are significantly below their non-disabled counterparts.
- Wages for women with disabilities are 85.2 percent of wages for men with disabilities.
- People with Cognitive, Self-care and Independent Living disabilities are less likely to have jobs than people without disabilities. (Self-care and Independent Living disabilities are considered markers for the "severity" of disability.)
- The top 10 occupations for people without disabilities include teachers, managers, accountants and auditors. For people with disabilities, the top 10 occupations include janitors, building cleaners, maids, housekeepers and child care workers.



Executive Summary — Income & Poverty



Income and Poverty: Income is lower for people with disabilities and poverty is higher in New York City than it is at the State or national level. In New York City, there is a poverty gap of 19.9 percent between people with and without disabilities.

Income

- In the United States, people with no disability take in \$14,950 more in median equivalized household income than people with disabilities. The income gap is wider in Manhattan than it is in any region of New York State or nationally.
- The gap in income is widest between people with disabilities (\$21,702) and people without disabilities (\$61,894) in Manhattan.
- In New York City, women with disabilities have lower median equivalized household incomes (\$18,950) than do women without disabilities (\$36,745).
- All people with disabilities experience wide earnings gaps—they are wider for people with Cognitive disabilities (e.g. “because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions”) than any other group. However, wide gaps exist for people with Ambulatory or Independent Living disabilities. Gaps are greater for those with multiple disabilities.
- Citywide, the income of people with disabilities who are Hispanic (\$14,891) is lower than the income of people who are Hispanic with no disability (\$27,289).

Poverty

- The poverty rate for people with disabilities in New York City (36.5%) is double the poverty rate of people without disabilities (16.6%).
- People with disabilities in New York City are more likely to be living in poverty than they are at the State level (32.5%) or the national level (30.5%).
- The poverty rate for people with Cognitive disabilities is 40.6% in New York State.
- In New York City, people with disabilities who are employed rely on SNAP (21.2%) at a much higher rate than people without disabilities who are employed (12.5%).



Executive Summary — Health Coverage & Access



Health Coverage and Access: Uninsurance persists for people with disabilities. There is a gap in private insurance coverage between people with and without disabilities that may reflect in part discrimination in benefit design or network design. Continued violations of the ADA are evident in barriers to health care access that persist in both hospitals and community-based settings, resulting in health disparities for people with disabilities.

In New York State, despite having achieved near universal coverage for people with disabilities (89.2%), passage of the ADA, our open enrollment and community rating insurance law, development of standards for access to health care settings and services and litigation over the failure to provide accessible health services, people with disabilities continue to experience significant health disparities and have significant unmet health needs.

In private insurance, discrimination in benefit design persists—for example, until recently New York’s insurers only offered one prosthetic per lifetime for individuals who purchase their own coverage or have employer coverage. Although standards have been promulgated for accessible diagnostic medical equipment, few facilities have considered their obligation to provide for them pursuant to the ADA. People who are Deaf report inability to obtain interpreters in community-based medical settings; provider offices listed as accessible in health plan directories are found, upon examination, to be inaccessible; materials on health topics in alternate formats are largely unavailable. People experience stigma when they seek medical services.

- In New York City, people with disabilities have a higher coverage rate (89.3%) than their non-disabled counterparts (79.4%).
- However, people with disabilities have a lower rate of coverage by private insurance (39.2%) than people without disabilities (77.3%).
- There are 46,334 people with disabilities in New York City who have no insurance and nearly 106,000 people with disabilities who have no insurance in New York State.
- The rate of uninsurance is highest in Queens. People with disabilities remain uninsured even when working because of the prevalence of low wage part-time employment available to people with disabilities. The highest incidence of uninsured working people with disabilities is also in Queens.



Executive Summary — Food/Housing



Food

Food: People with disabilities are more reliant on SNAP (food stamps) to have adequate nutrition than are people without disabilities. In New York City, working people with disabilities are 8.7 percent more reliant on SNAP to make ends meet than are people without disabilities in New York City. The gap between working people with and without disabilities is wider in New York City than it is at the State or national level.

Every \$5 of SNAP benefits bring \$9 into the economy of low-income communities—these benefits are also critical to the households of people with disabilities whose rent burdens are unaffordable. The higher SNAP participation rate of working people with disabilities reflects the disparities in occupations and wages that are available to people with disabilities.



Housing

Housing: People with disabilities are more likely to be homeless or insecurely housed than are people without disabilities because they are unable to afford their rent and cannot find accessible housing. In New York City, people with disabilities are 8.7 percent less likely to own homes and are 9.3 percent more likely than people without disabilities to pay more than 50 percent of their income for rent.

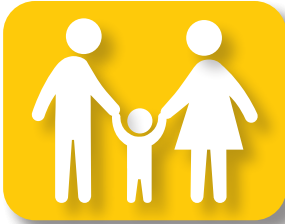
The ADA and the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision interpreting the law tell us that people with disabilities have a right to live in the most integrated setting. In New York City, the most significant barrier to community integration for people with disabilities is the lack of affordable and accessible housing. In addition, housing discrimination against people with disabilities persists. Despite the inaccessibility of New York City's shelter system, nearly half of the people who are homeless are people with disabilities. There is a wide gulf between people with and without disabilities' ability to be housed in New York City. People with disabilities are disproportionately reliant on public housing supports and subsidies for housing.

Elimination of discrimination in housing is an imperative given the limited supply of affordable and accessible housing. Additional subsidies for housing affordability are more critical for people with disabilities than for people without disabilities.

- People with disabilities are more likely to be insecurely housed. Over 35 percent (35.2%) of people with disabilities are paying more than 50 percent of their income for rent, compared to 25.9 percent of people without disabilities.
- People with disabilities are significantly less likely to own their own homes (25.7%) than people without disabilities (34.4%).



Executive Summary — Marriage & Family



Marriage and Family: People with disabilities are less likely than people without disabilities to be married and have a spouse present. In New York City, the “spouse gap” between people with and without disabilities is 11.9 percent.

The ability to marry and form a family is an indicator of the status of people with disabilities. Marriage is a social tie and affects health and well-being. It is also an economic indicator; marriage is associated with more hours of work and higher earnings. People with disabilities who are single are more likely to be living in poverty than people with disabilities who are married. Poverty is also a great contributor to marital breakup.

Historically, marriage laws restricted/prohibited marriage and procreation by people with some disabilities. We still see the impact of these restrictions.

- In New York City, people with disabilities are less likely to be married with a spouse present (25.2%) than people without disabilities (37.1%). There is a “spouse gap” of 11.9 percent.
- Lower rates of marriage exist for people with any disability. However, people with Cognitive disabilities are only half as likely to be married with a spouse present as people without disabilities. There is a married with spouse present rate in New York City of 15.8 percent for people with Cognitive disabilities as compared to the married with spouse present rate of 37.1 percent for people without disabilities.
- People with disabilities are two times more likely to be separated or divorced (20.9%) than people without disabilities (10.6%).



Executive Summary — Transportation



Transportation: The inaccessibility of the New York City subway system has resulted in a transportation gap for people with some disabilities. At the same time, the lack of or inadequacy of curb cuts impedes sidewalk access.

The ADA prohibits discrimination by public transportation systems, including subway systems. The ADA requires the accessibility of sidewalks, street crossings and pedestrian routes that make up public right-of-way. Much has been achieved by making buses accessible. However, gaps persist that influence the ability to be employed and to engage in the community. A survey of curb cuts in lower Manhattan done by CIDNY shows that over 68 percent of curb cuts had barriers for people with disabilities and over 22 percent of the street corners surveyed had no curb ramp at all. At the same time, during bad snow and/or ice storms, access to bus lifts is nearly impossible for people who use wheelchairs because bus stops and curb cuts are not adequately cleared and kept clear, creating an insurmountable barrier for people with disabilities.

- In New York City, people with disabilities use public transportation (bus or subway) to get to work at a slightly lower rate (52.6%) than people without disabilities (54%).
- However people with disabilities are much less likely to use the subway (34.9%) than people without disabilities (41.8%). This may be a consequence of the fact that according to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority website, only 86 of the 468 subway stations (18%) throughout the five boroughs of New York City have elevators and are accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.
- People with Ambulatory disabilities use the subway to get to work at a rate of 30.5 percent, a significantly lower rate than for people without disabilities, whose rate is 41.8 percent.
- People with Ambulatory disabilities walk/wheel to work at a lower rate (8.06%) and people with Vision disabilities walk to work at a lower rate (8.7%) than people with no disabilities (10.2%).



Executive Summary — Recommendations

- Reduce disparities in educational attainment at the high school and college levels. Eliminate access barriers and provide services that enable students to succeed. Emphasize higher education for students with disabilities. Teach educators and students about disability rights.
- Narrow the economic gaps between people with disabilities and people without disabilities in employment, earnings and poverty rate. Government can use economic development and purchasing power to achieve better employment outcomes. It must raise the minimum wage.
- Expand access to fresh food for low-income communities and make these options accessible for people with all disabilities. Eliminate barriers to pantries, soup kitchens, food shops and green markets that make them unusable or difficult to use for people with disabilities.
- Increase the availability of integrated accessible housing options for people with disabilities who have extremely low incomes and who are now severely rent burdened and at risk of homelessness, living insecurely doubled up with elderly family members, in homeless shelters or trapped in institutions. Preserve existing affordable housing.
- Decrease barriers to public and private insurance and increase network adequacy so that people with disabilities are ensured adequate insurance products and health outcomes. Health care organizations receiving public funds, particularly those serving low-income communities, must be required to become compliant with the ADA.
- Policymakers need to scrutinize legislative initiatives and administrative procedures to ensure that government policies do not encourage discrimination against people with disabilities by impeding marriage.



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Who Are People with Disabilities in New York





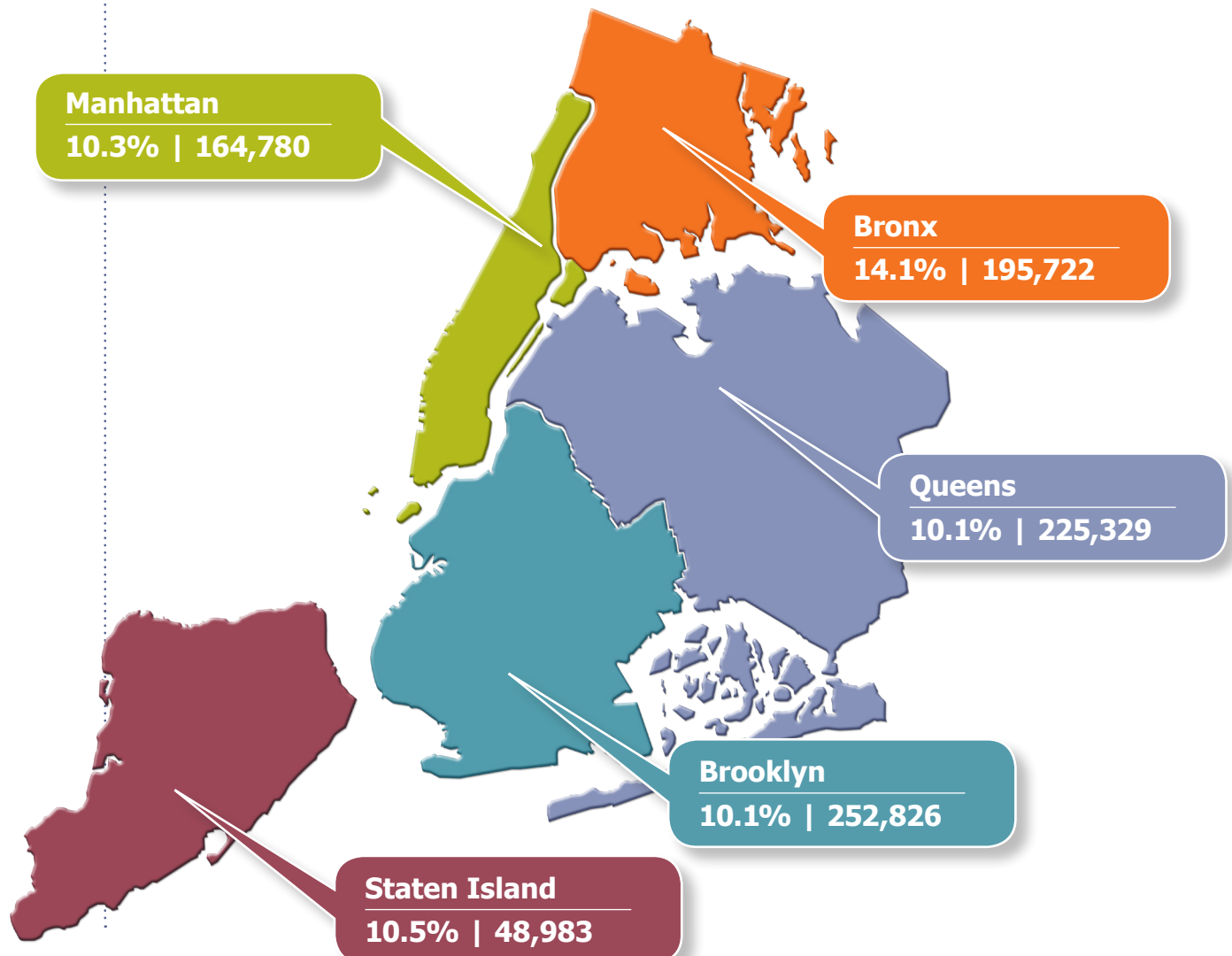
The Rate of Disability Varies Across New York City

Disability Rates by Borough

The American Community Survey of the U.S. Census asks questions that identify who has a disability. There are six questions that focus on identifying disabilities. They ask about hearing, seeing, thinking, feeling, walking and climbing, taking care of oneself, and doing errands alone. People are asked to self-identify, and may choose not to.

Disability prevalence is a way of talking about how common disability is in the population. The rate of disability in the population varies by community, type of disability and number of disabilities, age, race and ethnicity, and gender.

There are 38,827,632 people with disabilities in the United States. The disability prevalence rate in the U.S. is 12.6 percent. It is slightly lower in New York State: 11.5 percent or 2,043,585 people with disabilities. It is lower in New York City at 10.8 percent, where 887,640 people with disabilities live. In New York City, the highest rate of disability is in the Bronx, where 14.1 percent or 195,722 people with disabilities live. The largest concentrations of people with disabilities in New York City live in Brooklyn (252,826) and Queens (225,329).





Disability Rates by Kind of Disability

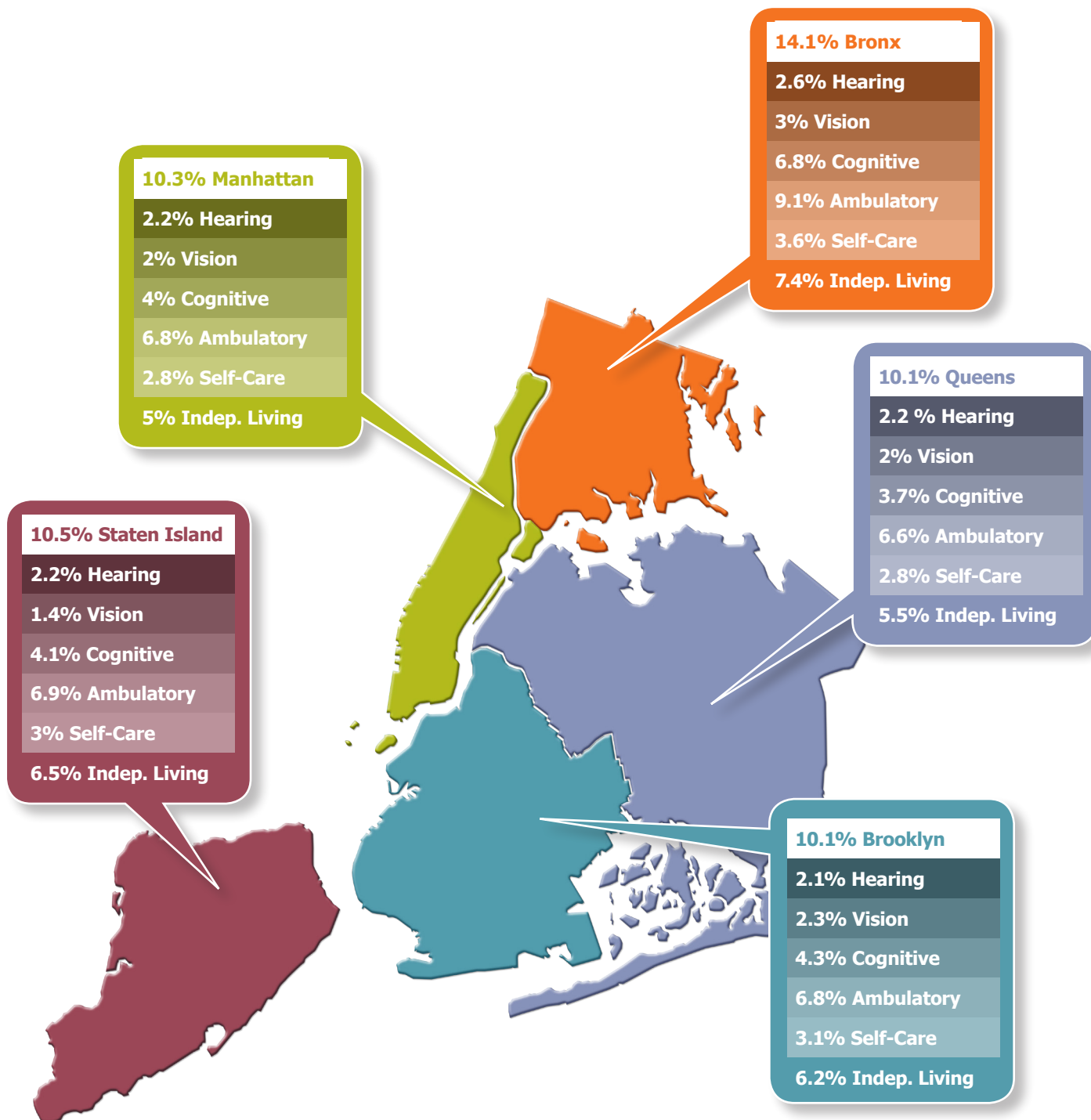
Some disabilities are more common in the population than others. Most people with disabilities have more than one disability.

In New York City, people with disabilities identify in the following ways:

- 2.3% Deaf/Hearing difficulties (185,378);
- 2.3% Blind/Difficulty seeing (184,886);
- 4.5% Cognitive (344,136);
- 7.1% Ambulatory (547, 593);
- 3% Self-Care Difficulties (232,531);
- 6% Independent living (383,658).

The highest rate of Hearing disabilities (2.6%) is in the Bronx. The rate of Ambulatory disability is highest in the Bronx (9.1%) and lowest in Queens (6.6%). The highest rate of Independent Living disability is in the Bronx (7.4%), and the lowest rate is in Manhattan (5%).

The majority of people with disabilities have multiple disabilities. Self-care and Independent Living categories are sometimes thought of as markers of more severe disability.





Disability Rates by Age and Gender

Women have higher rates of multiple disabilities. People are more likely to have multiple disabilities as they age—by age 25, two in five people with disabilities have multiple disabilities.

In New York State, 50.3 percent of people with disabilities say that they have more than one kind of disability.

Women are more likely than men to have multiple disabilities: 54.5 percent of women have from 2–6 disabilities, compared to 45.5 percent of men who have from 2–6 disabilities.

The rate of multiple disabilities goes up with age. Only 26.4 percent of young children have multiple disabilities. At age 25, 41.8 percent of people with disabilities have multiple disabilities. By age 50, 46.6 percent of adults have multiple disabilities. By age 78, 61.1 percent of adults have disabilities.

Rates of multiple disability do not vary significantly by race and ethnicity; however, there are small variations.

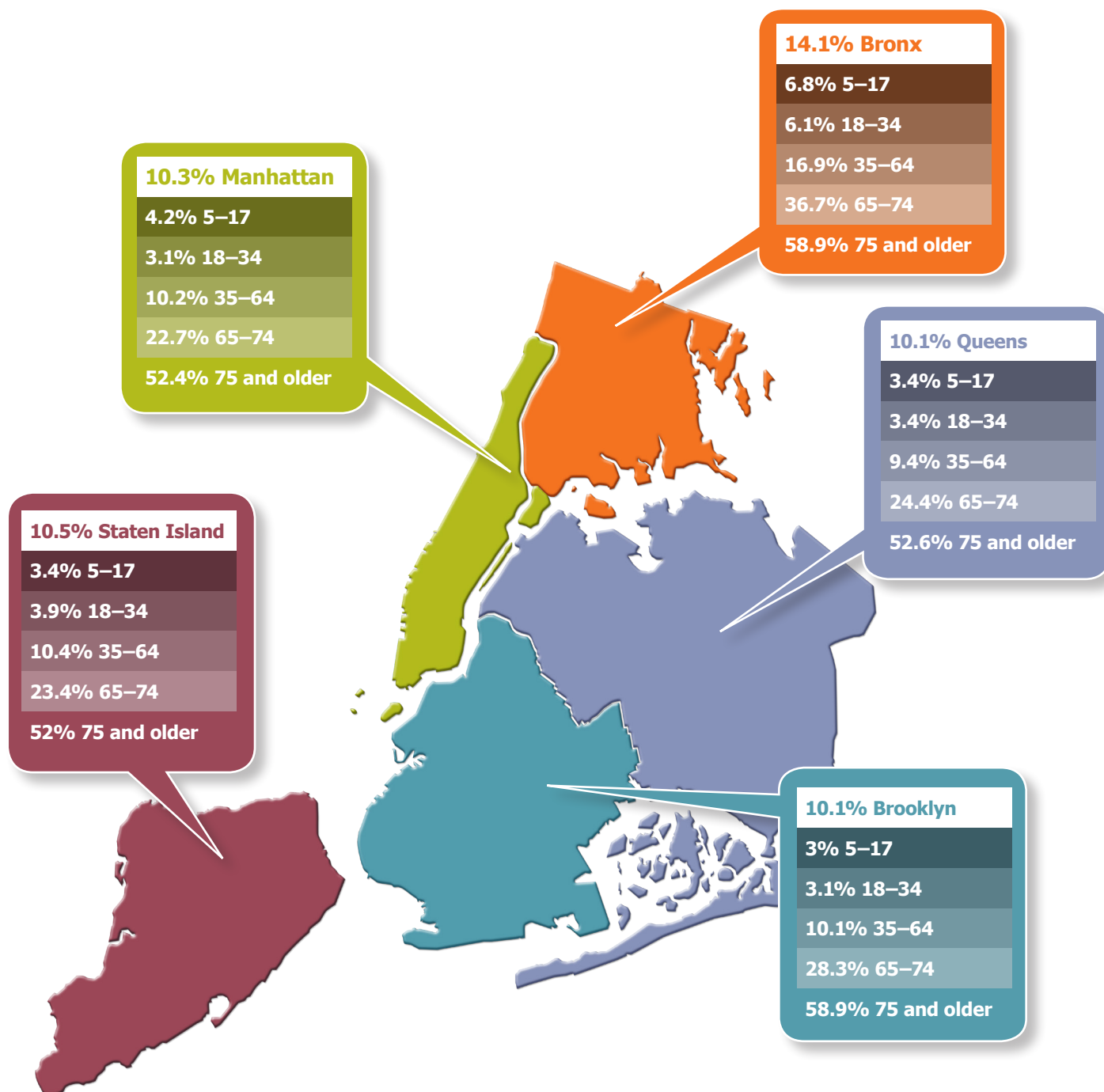
People of all ages have disabilities. People are more likely to have disabilities as they get older.

In New York City, the following are rates of disabilities by age group:

- 4.1 percent of youth ages 5–17 (50,870);
- 3.7 percent of young adults ages 18–34 (83,650);
- 11 percent of adults ages 35–64 (348,410);
- 27 percent of older adults ages 65–74 (145,147);
- 55.3 percent of older adults ages 75 and older (256,159).

The rate of disability among youth ages 5–17 is highest in the Bronx (6.8% or 17,875 youth) and Manhattan (4.2% or 6,601 youth). The lowest rate of children and youth with disabilities is in Brooklyn (3% or 12,379 youth).

The highest rate of disability among working age adults is in the Bronx (23% or 108,116 individuals). The lowest rate of disability among working age adults is in Queens (12.8% or 104,619 people). The rate of disability among people who are 75 and older is greatest in the Bronx (58.9% or 38,876 people) and Brooklyn (58.9% or 79,922 people). In Queens, the prevalence rate is 52.6 percent and there are 71,502 people over age 75 with disabilities.



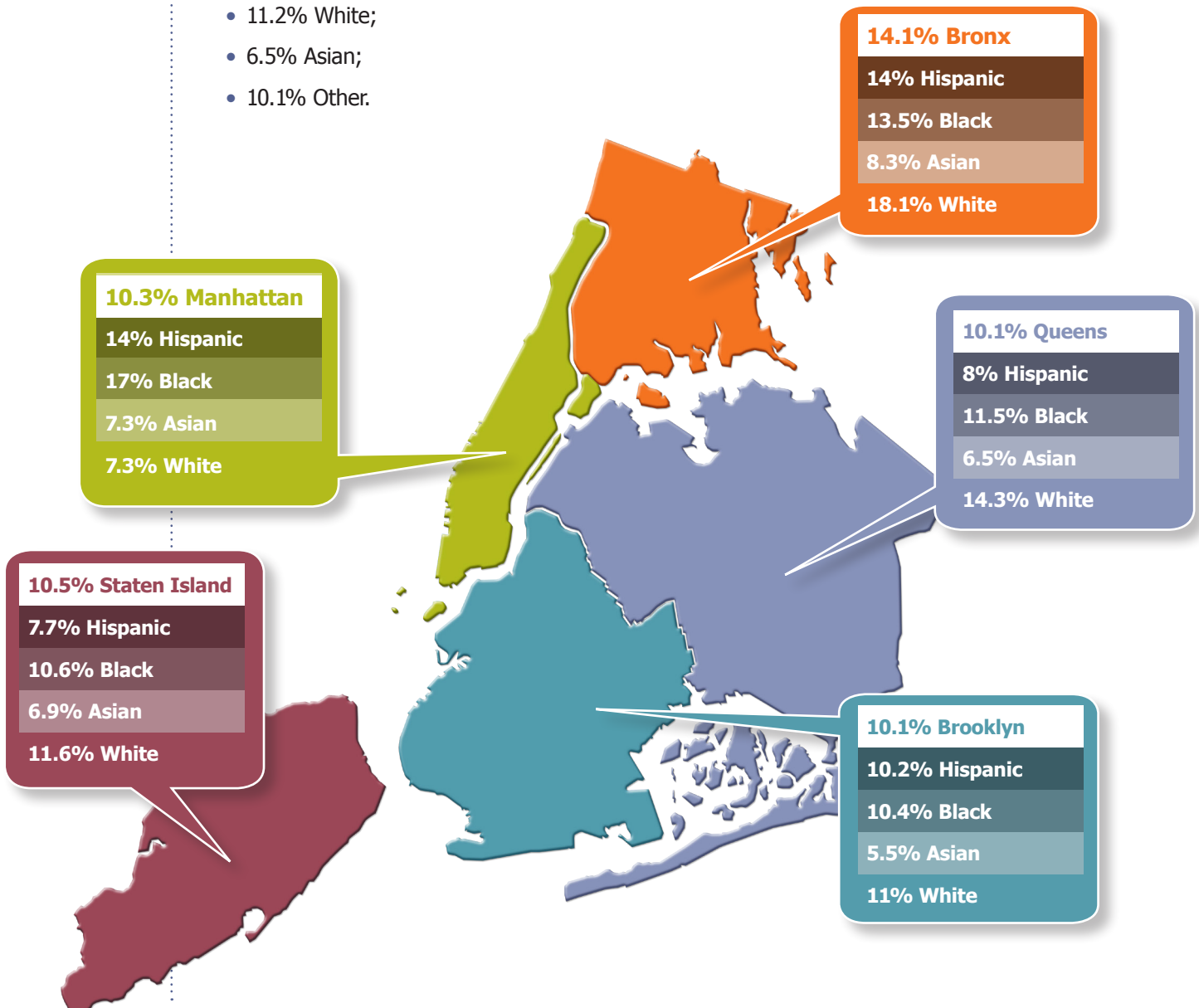


Disability Rates Vary by Race and Ethnicity

Disability prevalence rates differ by race and ethnicity. Within specific ethnicities, disability prevalence rates tend to vary as well. For example, among people who are Hispanic, the rate of physical disability is somewhat higher among Mexican-American seniors. Among people who are Asian, rates of Cognitive disability are higher among people who are Vietnamese-American.

Rates of disability within a racial or ethnic group also vary across the City and State. The prevalence of disability is higher among Hispanics in New York City when compared to Hispanics in other parts of the state. Citywide, the prevalence of people with disabilities of different races and ethnicities is:

- 12% Black or African-American;
- 11.4% Hispanic;
- 11.2% White;
- 6.5% Asian;
- 10.1% Other.





CID-NY



Education





Education — High School Diploma



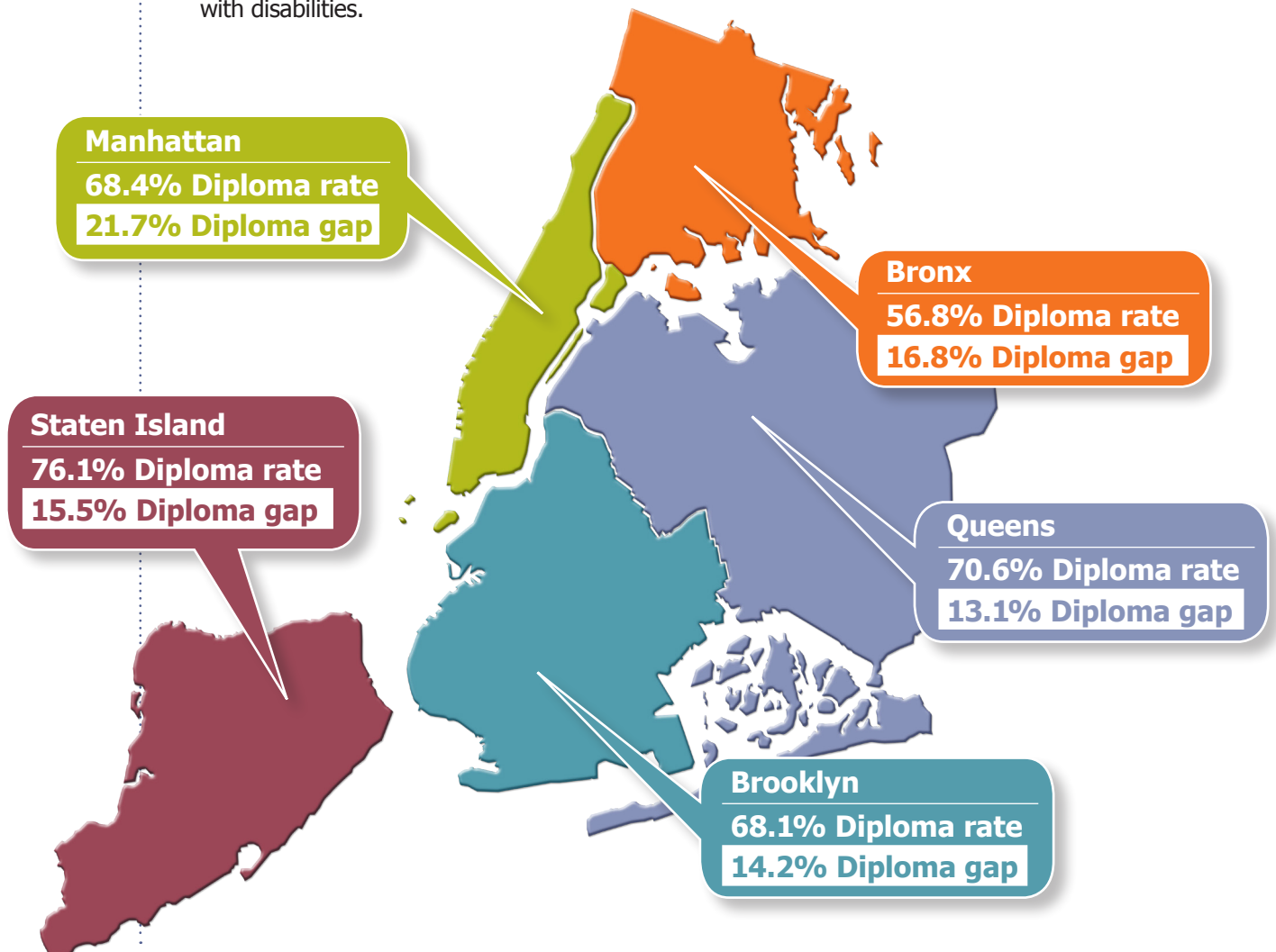
High school diploma rates are much lower for people with any kind of disability. People with some disabilities fare worse than others. Women with disabilities are less likely to have a high school diploma.

The percentage of people with disabilities who have a high school diploma in New York City is 66.4 percent (286,728 people). In contrast, the diploma rate for people without disabilities is 83.5 percent. The high school “diploma gap” between people with and without disabilities is 17.1 percent.

The national diploma rate for people with disabilities is 75.6 percent. The State diploma rate for people with disabilities is 72.9 percent. This gap between people with and without disabilities is wider than the diploma gaps of the U.S. (12.7%) and New York State (14.9%).

Type of disability matters in diploma rates. People with Cognitive disabilities have the lowest high school diploma rate (66.2%). Diploma rates also lag significantly for people who have an Ambulatory disability (73.1%) and for people with a Vision disability (70.5%).

Women with disabilities are less likely to have a high school diploma or equivalent than men with disabilities.





Education — College Diploma



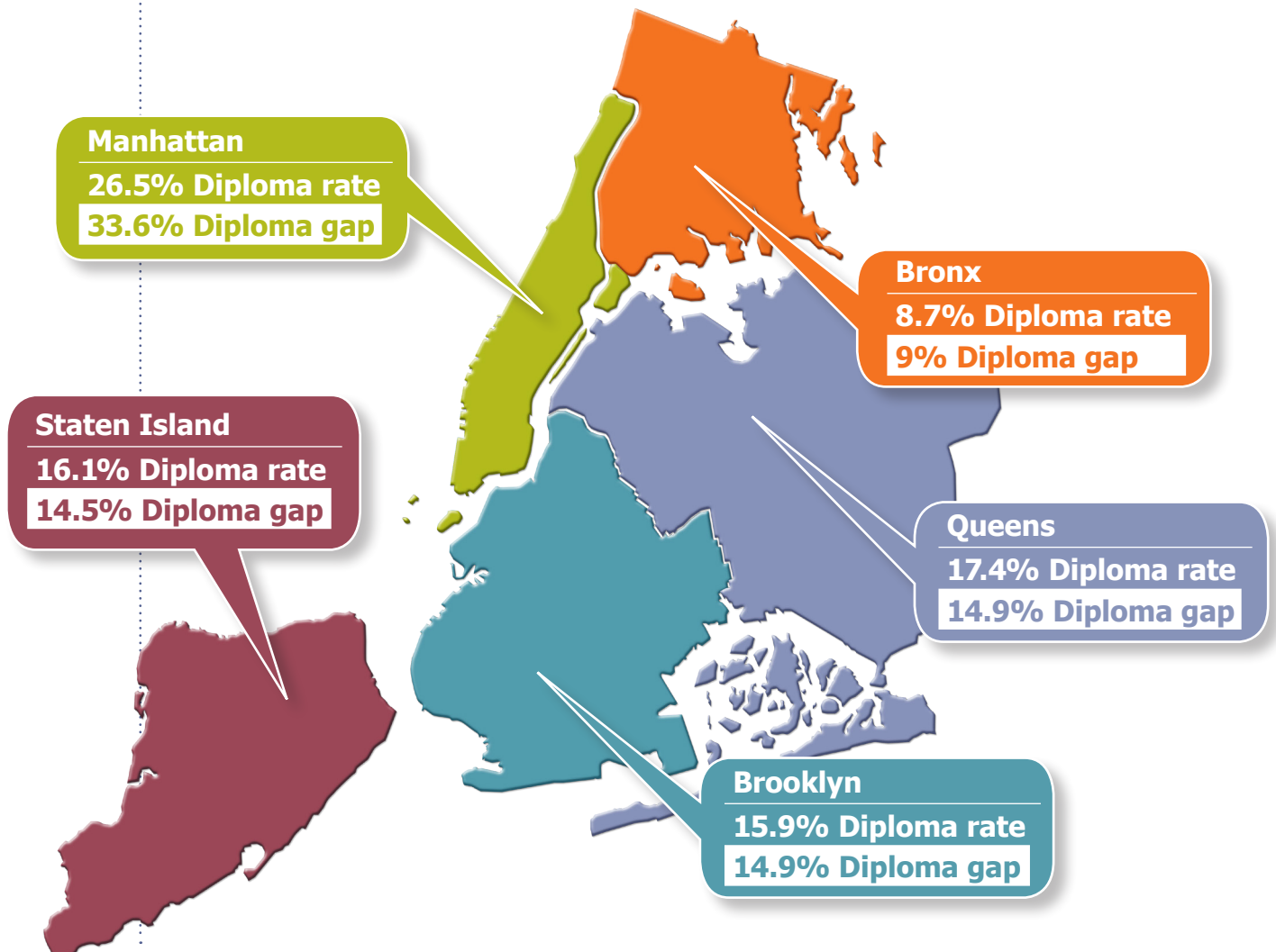
People with disabilities are far less likely to have a college diploma than people without disabilities. The gap in educational attainment widens at the college level.

The percentage of people with disabilities who have a college diploma or more in New York City is 16.4 percent (70,928 people). The college diploma rate for people without disabilities is 34.9 percent.

The college “diploma gap” between people with and without disabilities is 18.5 percent. This gap between people with and without disabilities is larger than the diploma gaps of the U.S. (12.7%).

The college graduation rate is highest for people with Hearing disabilities (17.1%) and Vision disabilities (14.7%). It is lowest for people with Cognitive disabilities (9.5%).

The effect of a college education on likelihood of employment is greater for people with disabilities than for people without disabilities. Obtaining a college degree has an impact on the likelihood of employment for people with any disability.





Education — Recommendations



Reduce disparities in educational attainment at the high school and college levels. Eliminate access barriers and provide services that enable students to succeed. Emphasize higher education for students with disabilities. Teach educators and students about disability rights.

In education, the ADA implementation will continue to be key to progress in elevating the status of people with disabilities and removing disparities in access and outcomes.

Education is the key to participation in our democracy, work, and economic well-being. Educational attainment has a significant impact on employability and earnings for people with disabilities—to a much greater extent than it has for people without disabilities.

Segregation and failure to provide resources that youth with disabilities need in order to be successful have to end.

Transition planning for students with disabilities is critical. Students must be prepared for the adult world of school and work while they are in high school. This includes being prepared to advocate for themselves in higher education and employment and exercise their rights as adults with disabilities.

- Make all public schools fully accessible for people with disabilities who are teachers, students and family members;
- Focus educational resources on ensuring that students with disabilities maximize school time and supports, include a focus on disability in programs that attempt to prevent students from dropping out or being pushed out of school;
- Educate teachers, principals, staff, students and families about the civil rights of students with disabilities and require accountability for the success of students with disabilities;
- Create bridges to college for youth with disabilities and programs focused on college success for students with disabilities;
- Emphasize higher education opportunities for those participating in vocational rehabilitation;
- Reduce cost barriers to education as these have a disparate impact on people with disabilities.



CID-NY



Employment





Employment Rate/Gap



When working, people with disabilities are more likely to be concentrated in bottom-rung occupations with lower pay than their non-disabled peers.

The top occupations for people with disabilities for the most counties in New York State are different for people with and without disabilities. For people with disabilities, the top occupations are janitors and building cleaners. For people without disabilities, they are teachers in primary and elementary schools.

In New York City, the top ten occupations for people with no disabilities include elementary and middle school teachers, managers, accountants and auditors. The top ten occupations for people with disabilities include drivers, maids, janitors and building cleaners.

There are other kinds of “employment gaps” for people with disabilities. For example, people with disabilities are more likely to work part-time or part year.

These differences have an impact on household income and poverty rates.

Employment Rate

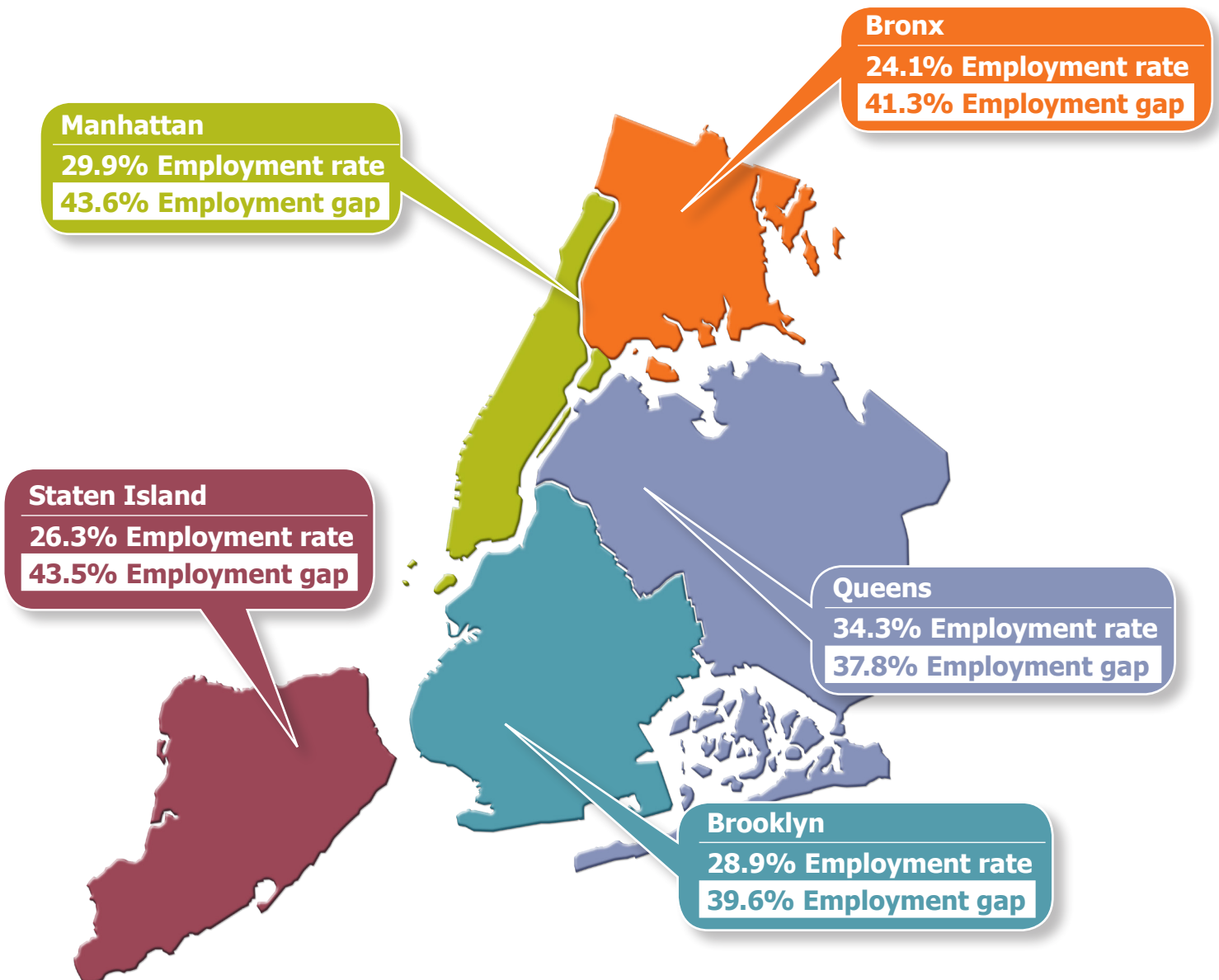
In New York City, the employment rate for people with disabilities is dramatically lower than the employment rate of people without disabilities.

In New York City, 125,557 individuals with disabilities are employed. This is an employment rate of 29.1 percent, which is substantially less than the 70.3 percent employment rate of their counterparts without disabilities. Therefore, the employment gap in New York City is 41.2 percentage points.

The New York City employment gap is slightly larger than the employment gap of the U.S. (40.2%) and the same as the gap at the State level (41.1%).

The highest employment gap is in Manhattan (43.6%), followed by the Bronx (41.3%).

The highest employment rate for people with disabilities is in Queens (34.3%).





Employment — Race/Ethnicity



Employment rates for people with disabilities of all races and disabilities vary across the City. People with disabilities who are Black and Hispanic appear to bear a higher burden of discrimination than people with disabilities who are White.

Employment rates vary by race and ethnicity for people with disabilities across all boroughs. The employment rate range across boroughs is higher for Whites than it is for people of other races and ethnicities.

- 25.5–43.5% White
- 22.1–36.4% Hispanic
- 20.7–32.8% Black
- 33.4–40.2% Asian
- 20–37.7% Other

Manhattan

43.5% White
24.4% Hispanic
20.7% Black
36.7% Asian
20% Other

Bronx

28.2% White
22.7% Hispanic
24.2% Black
39.2% Asian
27% Other

Queens

30.1% White
36.4% Hispanic
32.8% Black
40.2% Asian
37.7% Other

Staten Island

25.5% White
23.6% Hispanic
26% Black
39.5% Asian
100% Other
*31 people

Brooklyn

32.8% White
22.1% Hispanic
29.4% Black
33.4% Asian
29.6% Other



Employment — Gender

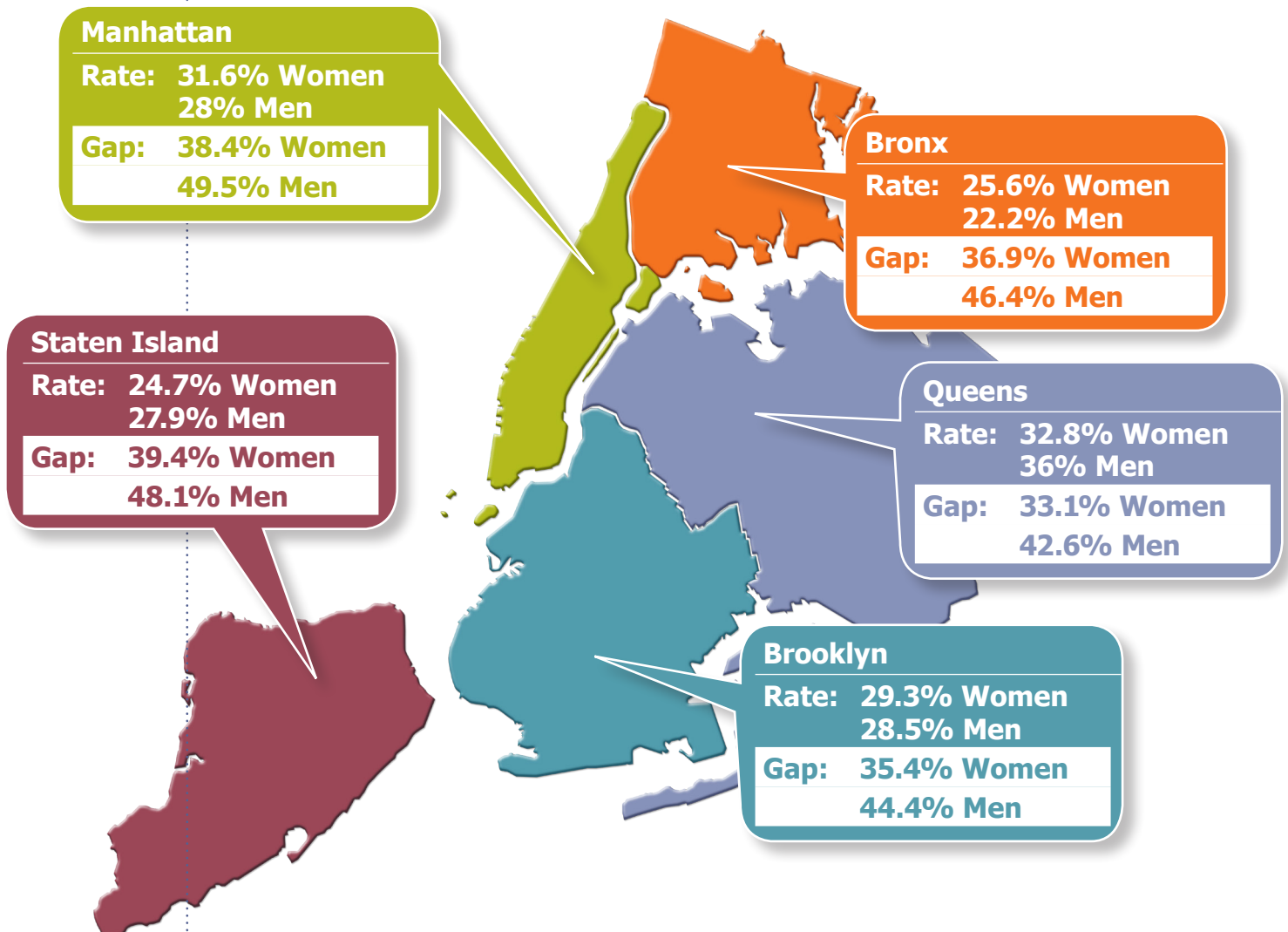


The gap in the employment rate between people with and without disabilities varies by gender. Wages are lower for women with disabilities.

In New York City, the employment rate for women without disabilities is 65.8 percent. The employment rate for women with disabilities is 29.3 percent. The employment rate for women with disabilities in New York City is slightly lower (29.3%) than at the State level (30.7%) or at the national level (31.8%).

Across the boroughs of New York City, the gap in employment between people with and without disabilities is smaller for women (33.1%–39.4%) than it is for men (42.6%–49.5%), which may reflect the lower rate of employment for women without disabilities.

Wages for women with disabilities are 85.2 percent of wages for men with disabilities.





Employment — Disability



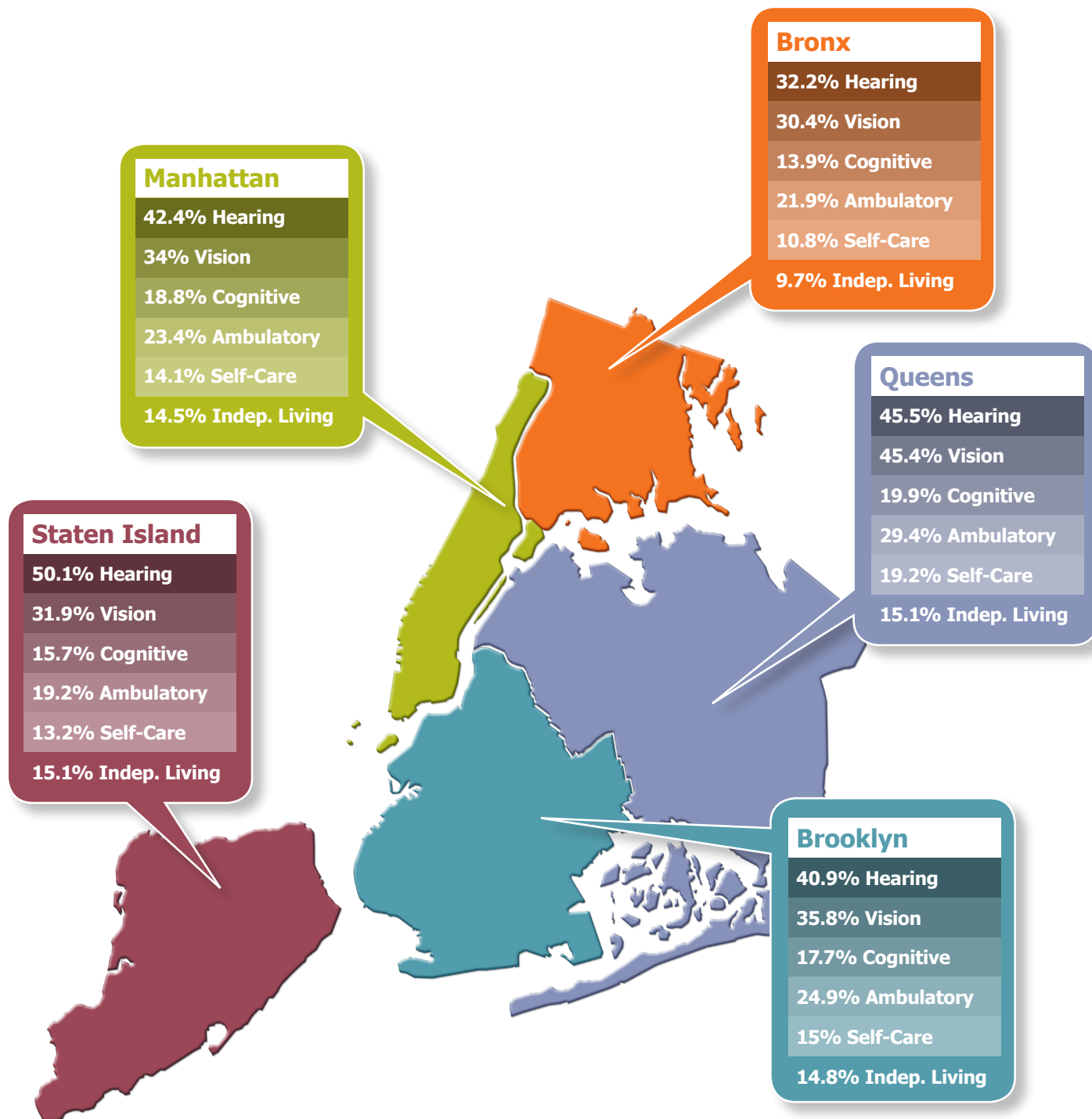
People with some disabilities appear less likely to have jobs. Employability also depends on whether a person has more than one disability. Employment rates vary quite significantly by type of disability.

Having Self-care or Independent Living disabilities in addition to another disability worsens prospects for employment, as indicated by the lower rates of employment for people with Self-care or Independent Living disabilities. Employment rates are also lower among people with Cognitive disabilities, which includes any mental or emotional disabilities.

In New York City, employment rates by disability are:

- 32.2–50.1% Hearing
- 30.4–45.5% Vision
- 13.9–19.9% Cognitive
- 19.2–29.4% Ambulatory
- 10.8–19.2% Self-care
- 9.7–15.1% Independent Living

Employment rates for people who have a Hearing disability is lower in New York City (40.8%) than at the State level (48.1%) or the national level (49.7%). For people who have a Cognitive disability in New York City, employment rates are also the lowest at 17.2 percent compared to 21.4 percent for New York State and 23.1 percent in the U.S.





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Income and Poverty





Income and Poverty — Median Equivalized Household Income (MEHI)



In New York City, people with disabilities take in \$11,307 less in income than people without disabilities.

People with disabilities of working age (18–64) have a median equivalized household income (MEHI) of \$22,904 in New York City. People without disabilities have a MEHI income of (\$34,211).

The MEHIs of people with disabilities are lower in New York City than they are at the State level (\$27,559), or in any other region of the State and across the nation (\$25,875). The gap in income is wider in Manhattan (\$40,192) than it is in other boroughs.

Men with any disabilities have a higher MEHI (\$22,062) than women with any disabilities (\$18,950).

MEHI disparities exist between people with disabilities of different races and ethnicities. Citywide, the income of people with disabilities who are Hispanic is \$14,891, while it is \$32,605 for people with disabilities who are White. Lower earnings persist for people who are Black, Asian, Hispanic, and Bi-racial.

The largest gaps in median earnings by industry are in the retail trade (34.7%), finance (38.9%), and insurance and real estate (38.9%). The gap in median earnings by industry for retail and for finance, and insurance and real estate is significantly bigger in New York City than it is at the State level or the national level.



Income and Poverty — Median Equivalized Household Income (MEHI) (continued)



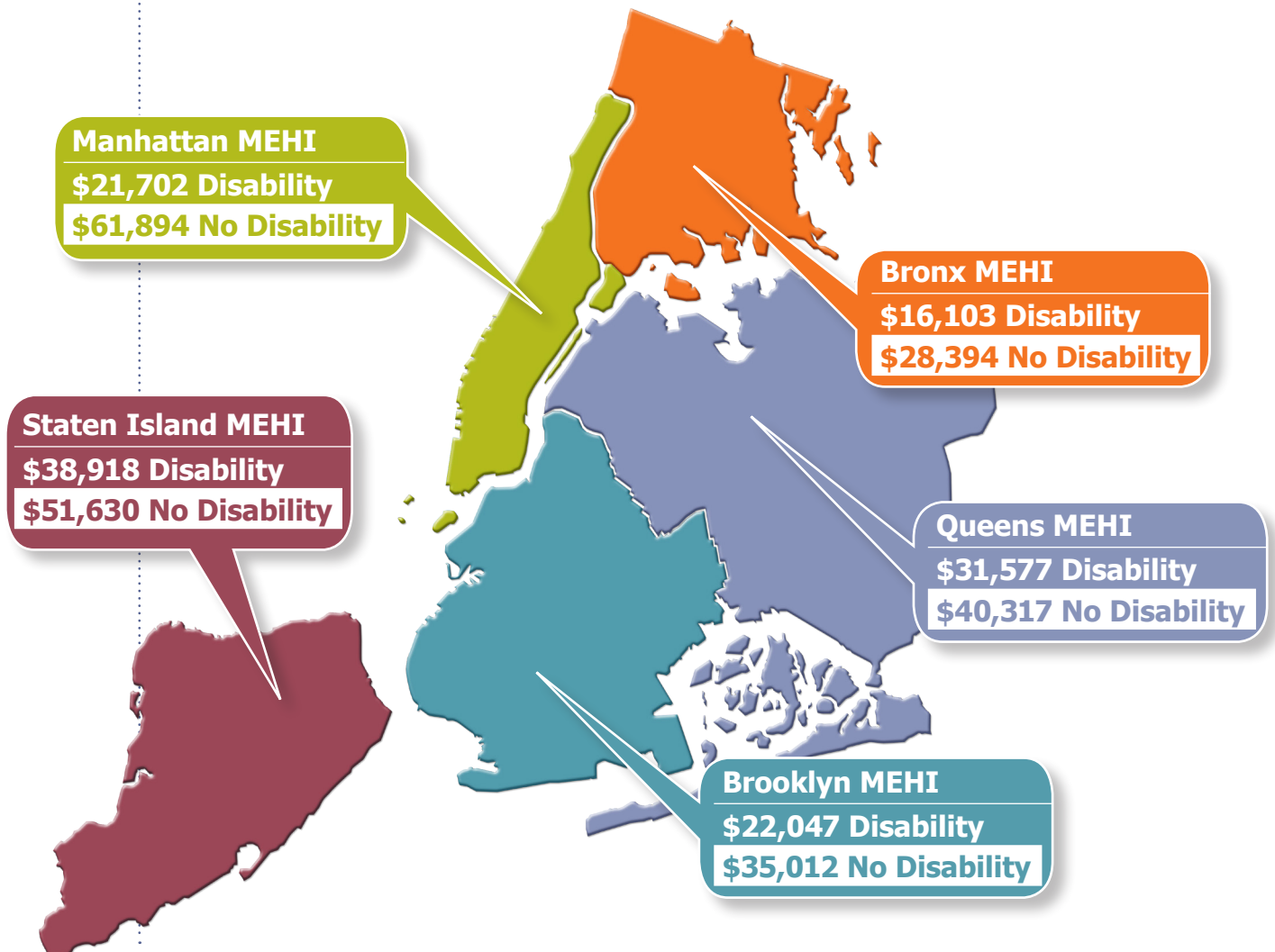
There are household income gaps among people with disabilities ages 18–64. People with some disabilities have lower incomes than others.

There are strong variations in income between people with different kinds of disabilities. People with Hearing disabilities have the highest incomes (\$24,800), followed by people with Vision disabilities (\$20,343). People with Cognitive disabilities have the lowest incomes (\$16,570).

People with Cognitive disabilities have the lowest MEHI. It ranges from \$12,091 in the Bronx to \$28,784 in Staten Island.

People with Independent Living disabilities have a MEHI of \$13,424 in the Bronx to \$26,385 in Staten Island.

People with Ambulatory disabilities have a MEHI of \$18,448 citywide.





Income and Poverty — Poverty Rate



The poverty rate for people with disabilities in New York City is double the poverty rate for people without disabilities.

In New York City, 36.5 percent of people with disabilities are living in poverty. In contrast, 16.6 percent of people without disabilities are living in poverty citywide. The poverty rate for people with disabilities is higher in New York City than it is in any other region in New York State. People with disabilities are more likely to be living in poverty in New York City than they are at the State level (32.5%) or the national level (30.5%).

The poverty rate gap between people with and without disabilities is wider in New York City (19.9%) than it is at the State level (18.8%) or at the national level (16%). The widest poverty gap is in Manhattan (23.4%).

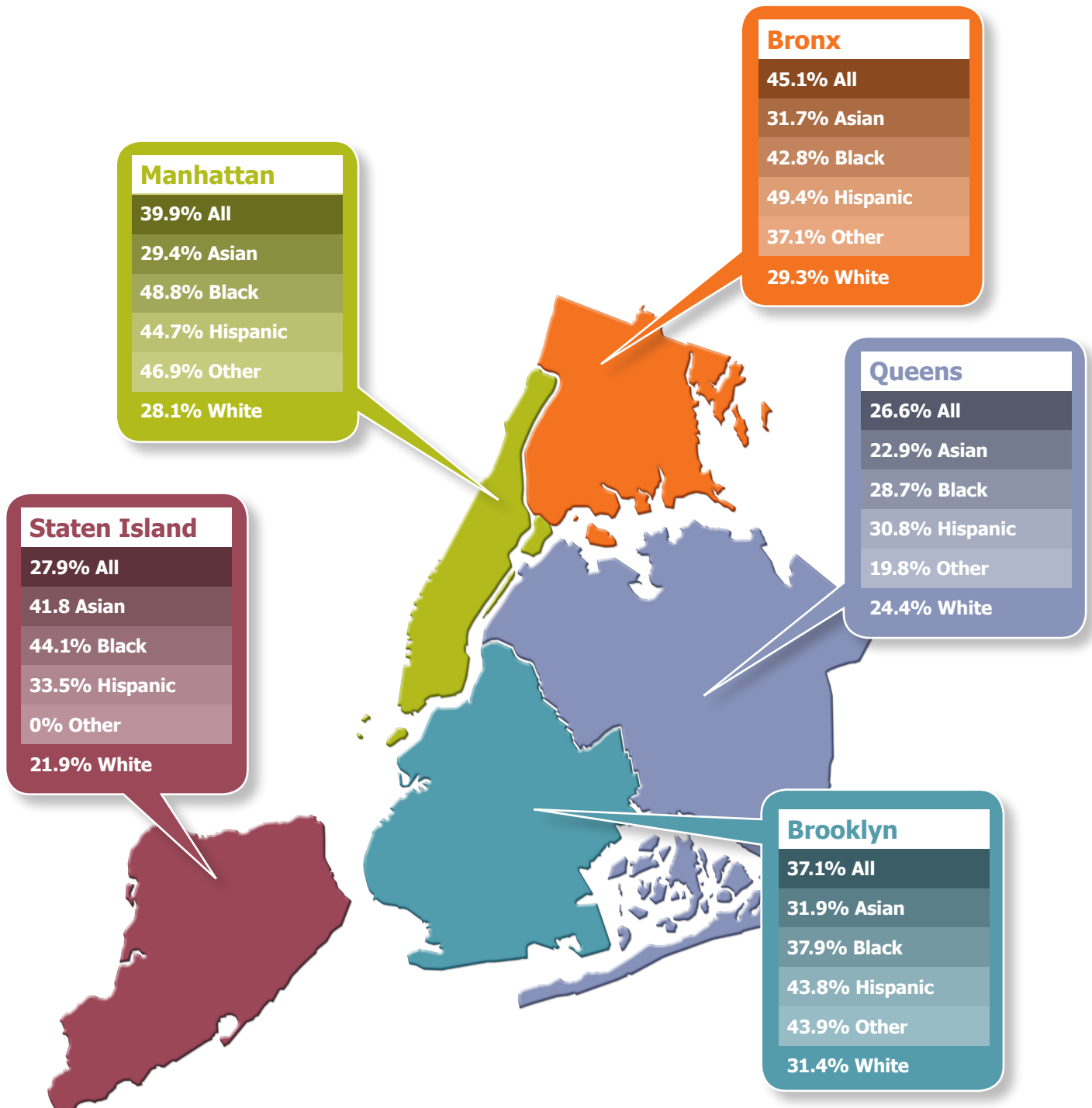
People with different disabilities have different poverty rates:

- 40.6% Cognitive disability;
- 38% Independent Living;
- 36.% Self-care;
- 34.4% Vision;
- 33.1% Ambulatory;
- 23.9% Hearing.

Poverty rates for people with disabilities also vary by race and ethnicity. The highest rate of poverty in New York City for all people with disabilities is in the Bronx, which has a rate of 45.1 percent.



Income and Poverty — Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity





Employment, Income & Poverty Recommendations



Narrow the economic gaps between people with disabilities and people without disabilities in employment, earnings and poverty rate. Government can use economic development and purchasing power to achieve better employment outcomes. It must raise the minimum wage.



Economic development, government contracting and employment program policies must focus on eliminating employment disparities for people with disabilities. New York City could direct economic development resources and government contracting resources to employing people with disabilities, setting disability employment targets. Workforce programs need disability-literate workers who are able to advise unemployed job seekers who have disabilities not only on work incentives but also on employment rights. Government economic development resources and government contractors need to be educated concerning reasonable accommodations and become more disability literate.

- Government-funded and private sector employment and economic development programs must be incentivized to focus resources on elimination of disparities in employment rates, pay and conditions of employment for people with disabilities;
- Collaboration with community-based organizations serving people with disabilities to teach employment rights pursuant to the ADA would help employers provide reasonable accommodations and remove job barriers that relate to disabilities;
- People with disabilities are still often ignorant of their civil rights in employment settings, and employment programs need to emphasize “know your rights” education;
- Create City and State utilization goals for employment of people with disabilities mirroring the federal utilization goal of seven percent;
- Benefits advisement must become a routine part of vocational rehabilitation, in particular because so many working people with disabilities are living in poverty and are more likely to remain dependent on safety-net programs while working;
- Raise the minimum wage so that entry-level workers with disabilities have a greater likelihood of earning a living wage;
- Develop jobs and job training programs that help an individual grow, creating “career ladders” for people with disabilities who are otherwise locked in poverty;
- Prioritize higher education and career paths for people with disabilities and/or “learn and earn” programs to reduce the employment disparities between people with and without disabilities.



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Health





Health Rate



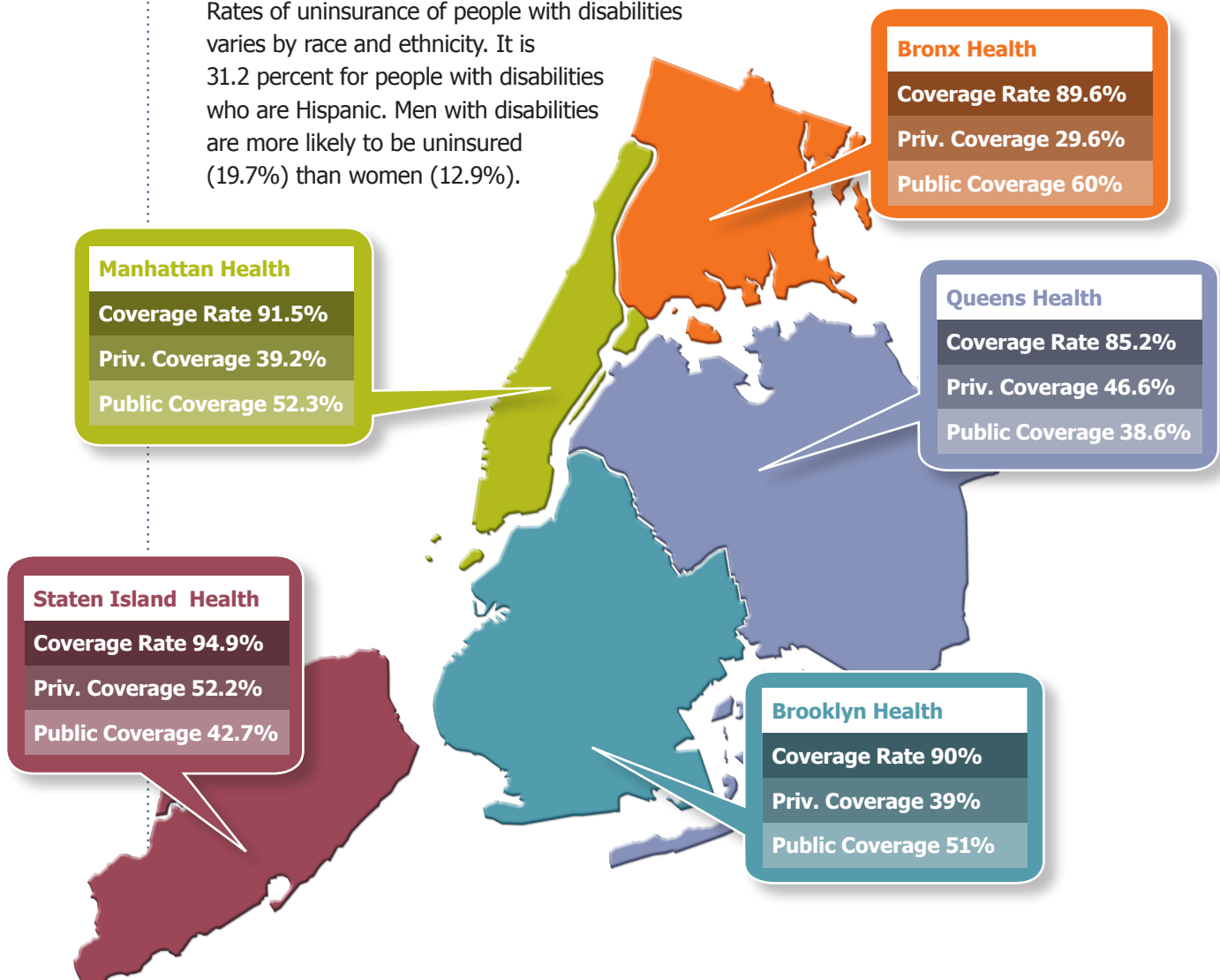
People with disabilities have a much lower rate of private health coverage than people without disabilities.

In New York City, people with disabilities have a coverage rate of 89.3 percent, which is higher than the 79.4 percent coverage rate of their non-disabled counterparts. At the same time, there are 46,334 people with disabilities in New York City who lack health insurance coverage. There are 107,512 people with disabilities in New York State who have no health insurance.

People with disabilities have a lower rate of coverage by private insurance: 39.2 percent of people with disabilities have private health insurance, whereas 77.3 percent of people without disabilities have it. The coverage gap is 38.1 percent.

People with Self-care disabilities are most likely to have coverage; their uninsured rate is 6.7 percent. However, people with Vision and Hearing disabilities are less likely to have coverage and have uninsured rates that more closely resemble their non-disabled counterparts.

Rates of uninsurance of people with disabilities varies by race and ethnicity. It is 31.2 percent for people with disabilities who are Hispanic. Men with disabilities are more likely to be uninsured (19.7%) than women (12.9%).





Health Coverage and Access Recommendations



Decrease barriers to public and private insurance and increase network adequacy so that people with disabilities are ensured adequate insurance products and health outcomes. Health care organizations receiving public funds, particularly those serving low-income communities, must be required to become compliant with the ADA.

People with disabilities are more likely to have health coverage than people without disabilities. However, they are still less likely to have private coverage than people without disabilities. More working people with disabilities lack health insurance of any kind in New York City than at the State level.

The ADA can be a tool to reduce barriers to health care that result in health disparities for people with disabilities. There is more work to be done to ensure that health insurance programs do not benefit from discrimination and that providers may not avoid people with disabilities and segregate them into more institutional medical settings.

- Address barriers created by the design of private insurance benefits packages and network adequacy to increase the viability of private insurance as a source of coverage for people with disabilities;
- Increase adequacy of and access to private coverage for low-wage and part-time workers;
- Provide benefits advisement to people with disabilities moving into employment so that they do not lose health coverage as they gain low-wage employment;
- Increase accessibility of health providers—particularly those serving low-income communities—by requiring that all equipment being replaced is replaced with accessible diagnostic medical equipment and that renovations include removal of architectural barriers;
- Require that government-funded healthcare service providers complete surveys demonstrating their accessibility and planning to eliminate barriers to care, and make the information on accessibility available to the public;
- Include people with disabilities and goals related to eradicating the health disparities they experience as a required element in State contracts with health plans and in contracts for funding for public health activities.



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Food





Food



People with disabilities are more likely to need a boost to food purchasing power when working than people without disabilities.

In New York City, people with disabilities who are employed access SNAP at a much higher rate than those without disabilities who are employed.

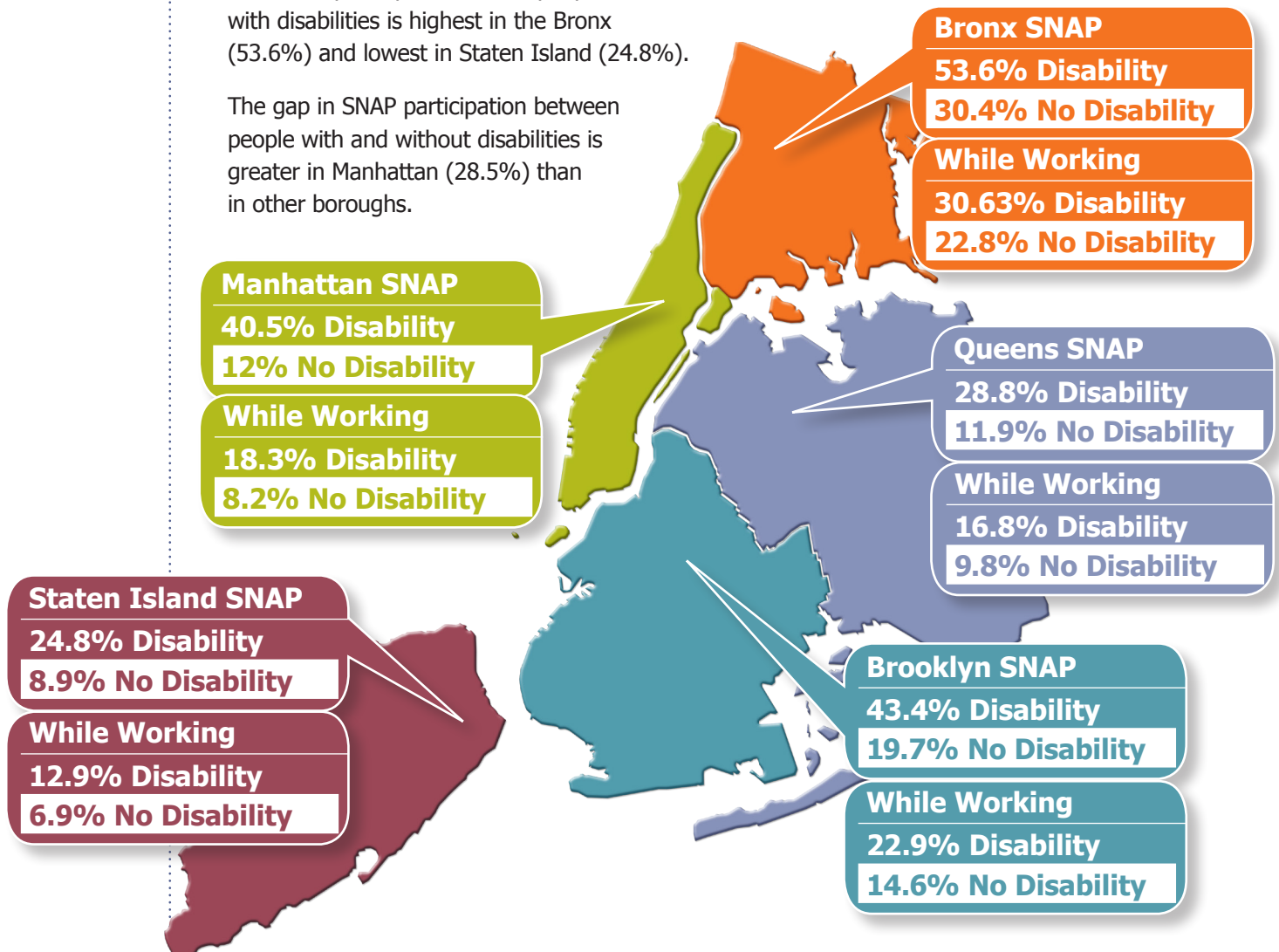
In New York City:

- 21.24% of people with disabilities who are working use food stamps;
- 12.51% of people without disabilities who are working use food stamps.

People with disabilities in New York City have a higher rate of participation in the nutrition support program SNAP (40.8%) than people without disabilities (17%). In New York City, 176,469 people with disabilities use SNAP. The SNAP participation rate of people with disabilities in New York City, is greater than the participation rate at the State level (34.1%) or the national level (28.9%). SNAP use is higher in New York City than in any other region.

The SNAP participation rate of people with disabilities is highest in the Bronx (53.6%) and lowest in Staten Island (24.8%).

The gap in SNAP participation between people with and without disabilities is greater in Manhattan (28.5%) than in other boroughs.





Food – Recommendations



Expand access to fresh food for low-income communities and make these options accessible for people with all disabilities. Eliminate barriers to pantries, soup kitchens, food shops and green markets that make them unusable or difficult to use for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities have fewer options for food shopping for healthful foods because of barriers to access to healthy foods. This is due to lack of resources available to purchase nutritious foods. However, it is also due to inaccessibility of food marketplaces, including pantries, soup kitchens, food shops and green markets. In addition, there is no publicly available information regarding accessibility and reasonable accommodations by these food marketplaces.

This contributes to health disparities. For example, people with disabilities have higher rates of adult obesity than people without disabilities;

- Improve accessibility of food marketplaces, including pantries, soup kitchens, food shops and green markets. Evaluate their accessibility and require them to plan for the elimination of barriers that discourage healthy eating by people with disabilities;
- Require that all food programs provide information about accessibility and reasonable accommodations to the public to encourage use of these programs by people with disabilities.



CID-NY



Housing





Housing — Ownership

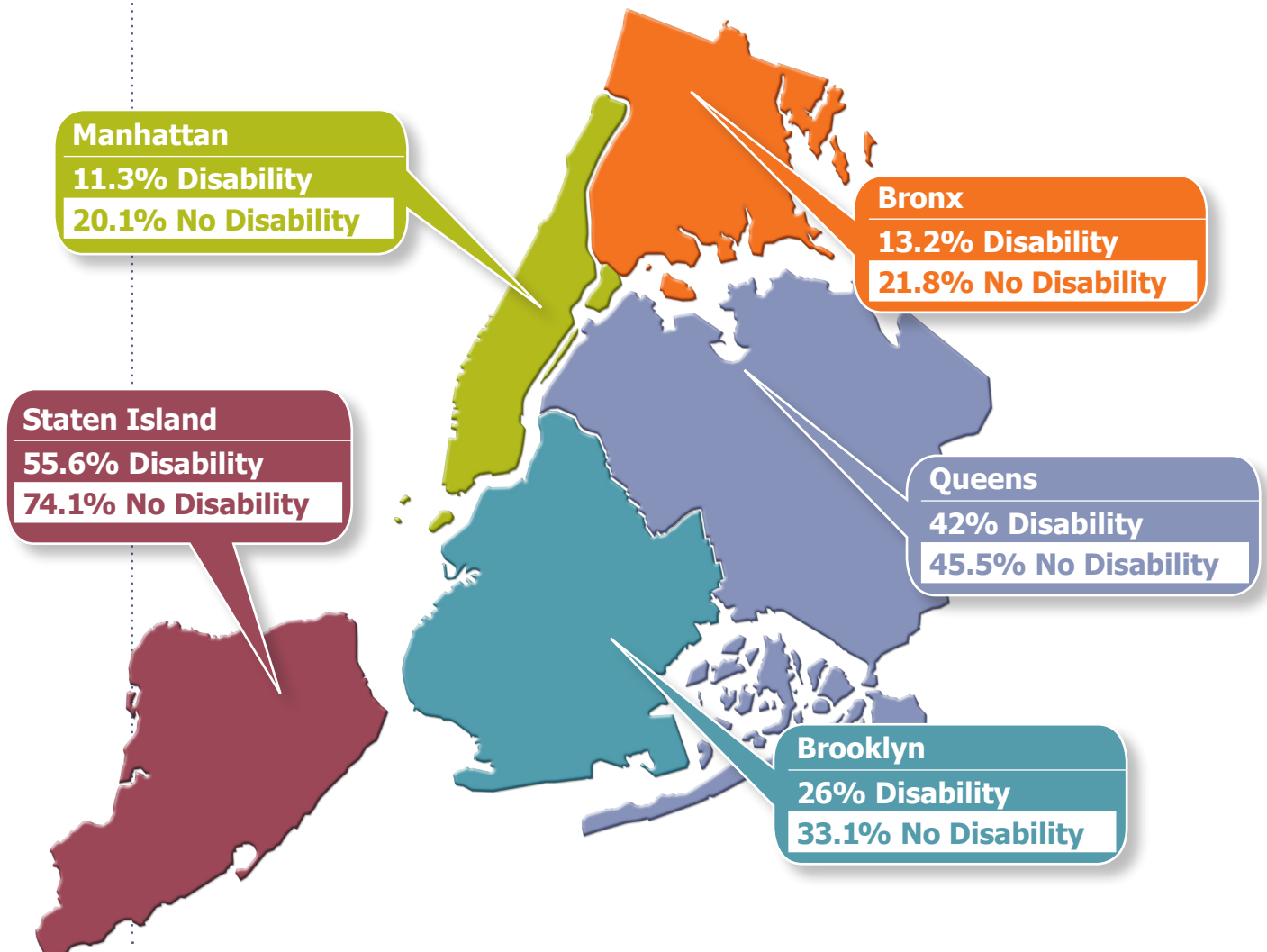


People with disabilities are significantly less likely to own their own homes than people without disabilities.

People with disabilities are significantly less likely to own their own homes than are people without disabilities. In New York City, 25.7 percent of people with disabilities (106,028) own their own homes, and 34.4 percent of people without disabilities own their own homes.

There is a higher rate of home ownership by people with disabilities in Staten Island (55.6%) than in any other borough. It is comparable to the rate of home ownership for people with disabilities nationally.

In Queens, the gap in home ownership between people with and without disabilities is the smallest (3.5%) The lowest home ownership rates for people with disabilities are in Manhattan (11.3%) and the Bronx (13.2%).





Housing — Rent Burdened



More than one in three people with disabilities are paying more than half of their income for rent. They are very severely rent burdened.

In New York City, 52.4 percent of people with disabilities spend more than one-third of their income on rent compared with 42.1 percent of their non-disabled peers.

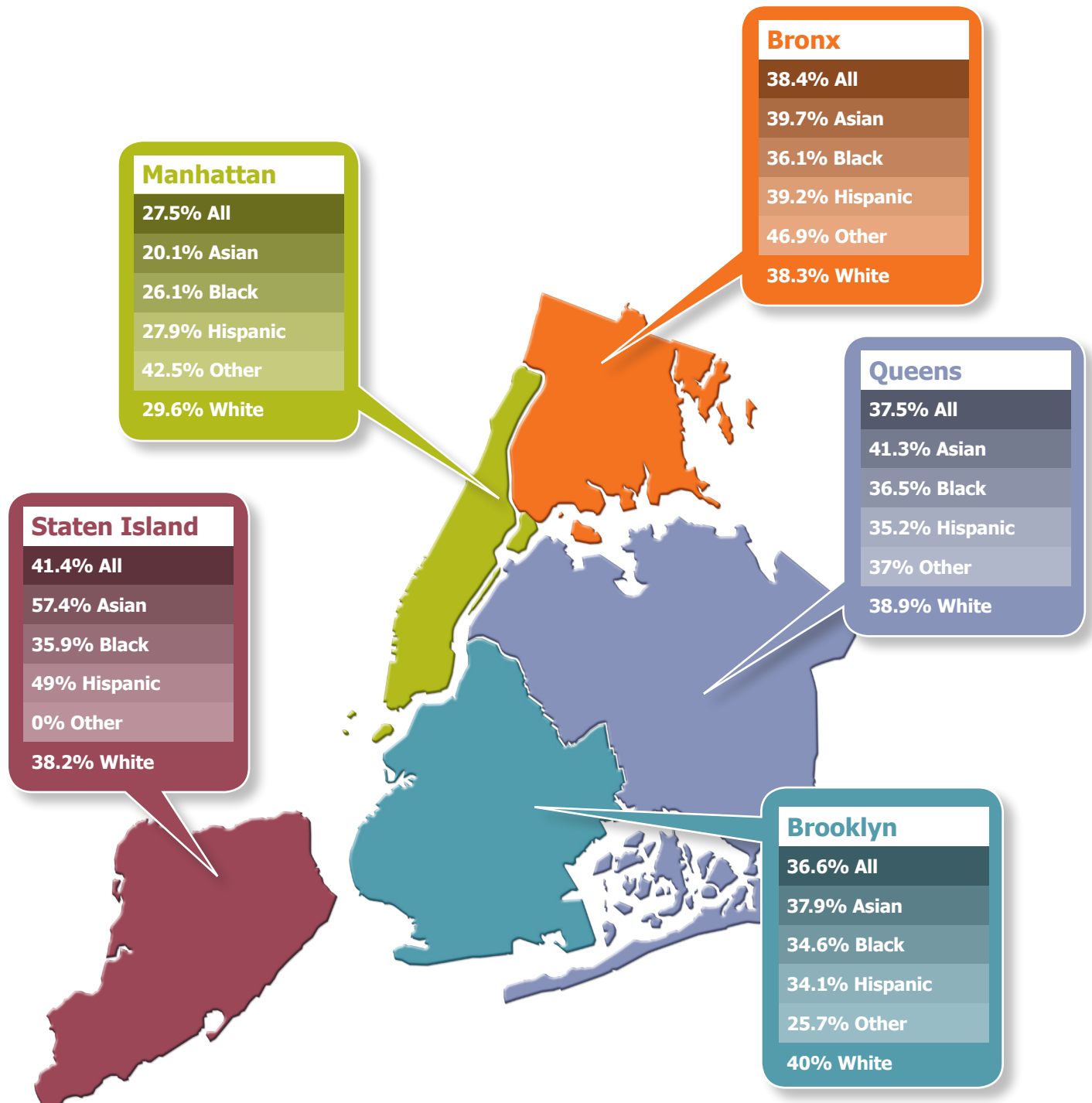
Nearly 311,000 individuals or 35.2 percent of people with disabilities in New York City spend more than 50 percent of their income on rent, compared with 25.9 percent of people without disabilities.

There are significant variations among people with disabilities depending on the borough they live in. In Manhattan, 27.5 percent of people with disabilities are spending more than 50 percent of their income on rent. However, in Staten Island, 41.4 percent of renters with disabilities are spending more than 50 percent of their income on rent.

The gap between people with and without disabilities who are paying more than 50 percent of their household income for rent varies from 7.8 percent in the Bronx to 11.2 percent in Staten Island.

In some boroughs of the City, there are significant variations in the degree for which people with disabilities are extremely rent burdened. For example, 38.2% of White people with disabilities pay more than 50% of household income on rent, while 49% of Hispanic people with disabilities pay more than 50% of their income on rent.

Housing — Extremely Rent Burdened by Race/Ethnicity





Housing — Recommendations



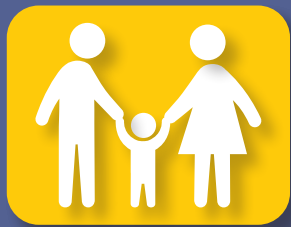
Increase the availability of integrated accessible housing options for people with disabilities who have extremely low incomes and who are now severely rent burdened and at risk of homelessness, living insecurely doubled up with elderly family members, in homeless shelters or trapped in institutions. Preserve existing affordable housing.

People with disabilities who have housing are significantly more likely to be severely rent burdened (paying more than half of their income on rent) than people without disabilities. They are at higher risk of homelessness and make up a disproportionate share of the homeless population. The Supreme Court's Olmstead decision interpreting the ADA holds that state and local governments are accountable for integrating people with disabilities into the mainstream. This mandate applies to housing.

- Publicly funded housing programs must be held accountable for the provision of accessible housing—whenever the City or State invest in housing in any way, they must be creating and promoting accessible and affordable units for people who live in poverty;
- While supportive housing is one point on a continuum of housing options, it is not a solution for all people with disabilities who do not qualify for, need, desire, or benefit from services attached to their housing or want to live in segregated settings in the community. Independent housing must be the preferred solution;
- Engage the disability community in planning for new housing so that considerations of accessibility is taken into consideration. When sidewalks and transportation options are developed, they should be made compliant with the ADA;
- Create rental assistance options, such as a City Section 8 voucher, for severely rent burdened people with disabilities—as has been done for people with AIDS—that limits the out-of-pocket cost of rent to one-third of income;
- Require homeless shelters to become ADA-compliant, as they are the source of “housing” for a large segment of the disability population and are currently not in compliance with federal civil rights law;
- Track housing set-asides to ensure that they are being rented to people with disabilities as intended.



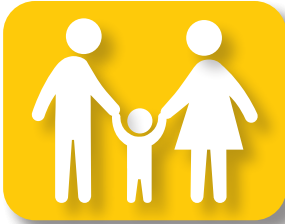
CID-NY



Marriage & Family



Marriage & Family — Married People



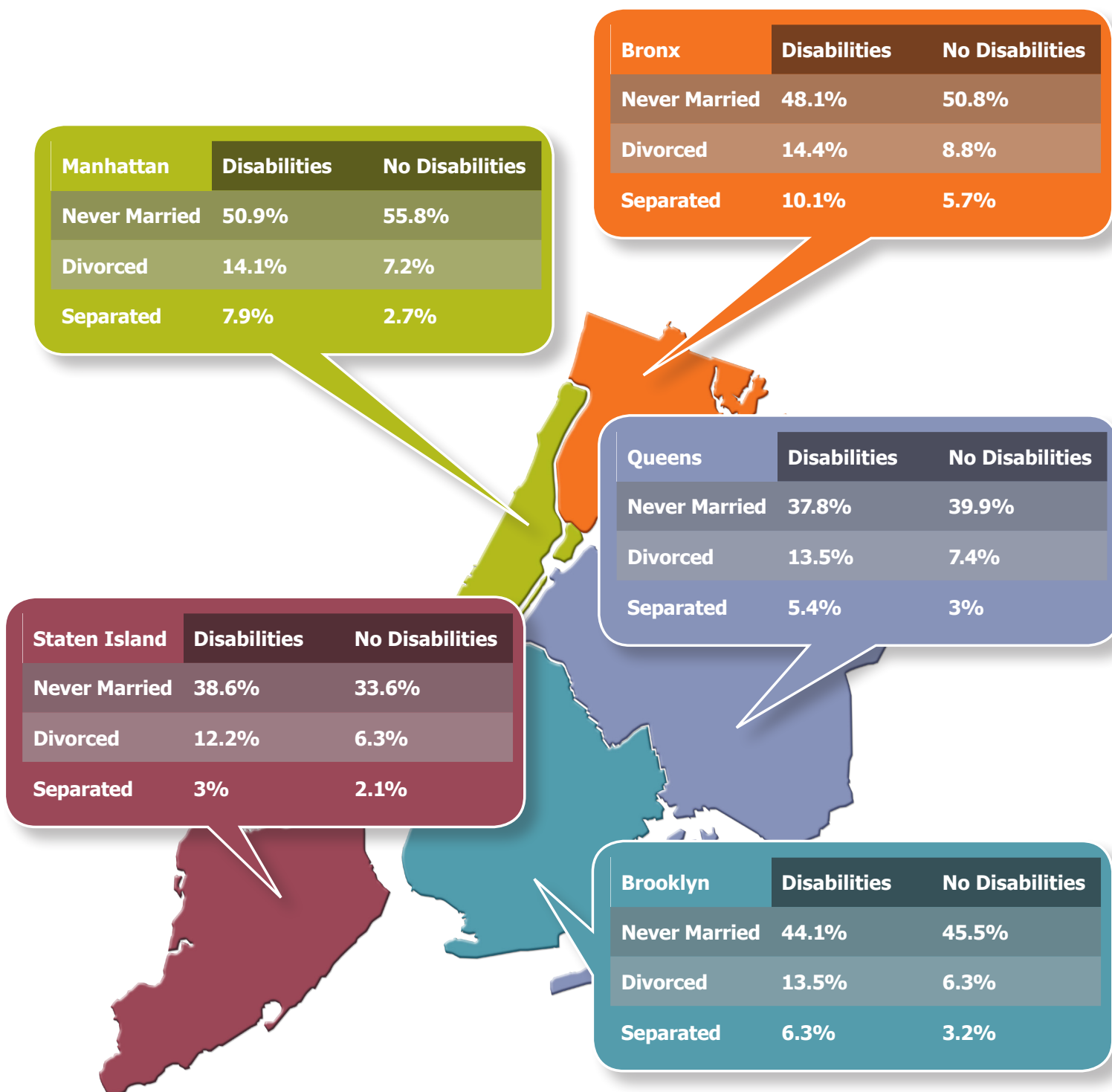
People with disabilities are less likely to be married with a spouse present than people without disabilities. The marriage rate for people with Cognitive disabilities is only 15.8 percent.

In New York City, 25.2 percent of people with disabilities are married and living with their spouse. For people without disabilities, 37.1 percent are married and living with their spouse.

People with disabilities are less likely to be married and living with a spouse in New York City than people with disabilities Statewide (39.2%) or at the national level (36.9%).

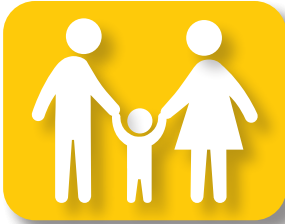
In New York City, the highest rates of marriage with a spouse being present for people with disabilities are in Staten Island at 36.7 percent. For people without disabilities, the rate of people married with a spouse present is 54.3 percent.

People with Cognitive disabilities are the least likely to be married. The marriage with a spouse present rate for people with Cognitive disabilities is 24.9 percent at the national level; it is 19.2 percent at the State level. In New York City, the marriage with spouse present rate for people with Cognitive disabilities is 15.8 percent – the lowest of any region in the state.





Marriage & Family — Recommendations



Family: Policymakers need to scrutinize legislative initiatives and administrative procedures to ensure that government policies are not encouraging discrimination against people with disabilities that impede them from marrying and creating families.

People are less likely to be married with a spouse present than are people without disabilities. There is a “spouse gap” for people with disabilities in New York City.

Since marriage tends to be associated with better economic health, laws discouraging marriage for people with disabilities appear to be paradoxical. Yet, for people with disabilities living in poverty, the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program includes a marriage penalty. SSI is a Social Security Administration program for low-income people with disabilities and seniors. Because of strict income and resource limits, marriage can cause couples to become ineligible for SSI. When two individuals on SSI marry, their income is reduced and their resource limit for saved funds shrinks. In New York State, legislative threats issued annually to eliminate “spousal refusal” signal to couples that they may be forced to choose between marriage and public health insurance.



CID-NY



Transportation





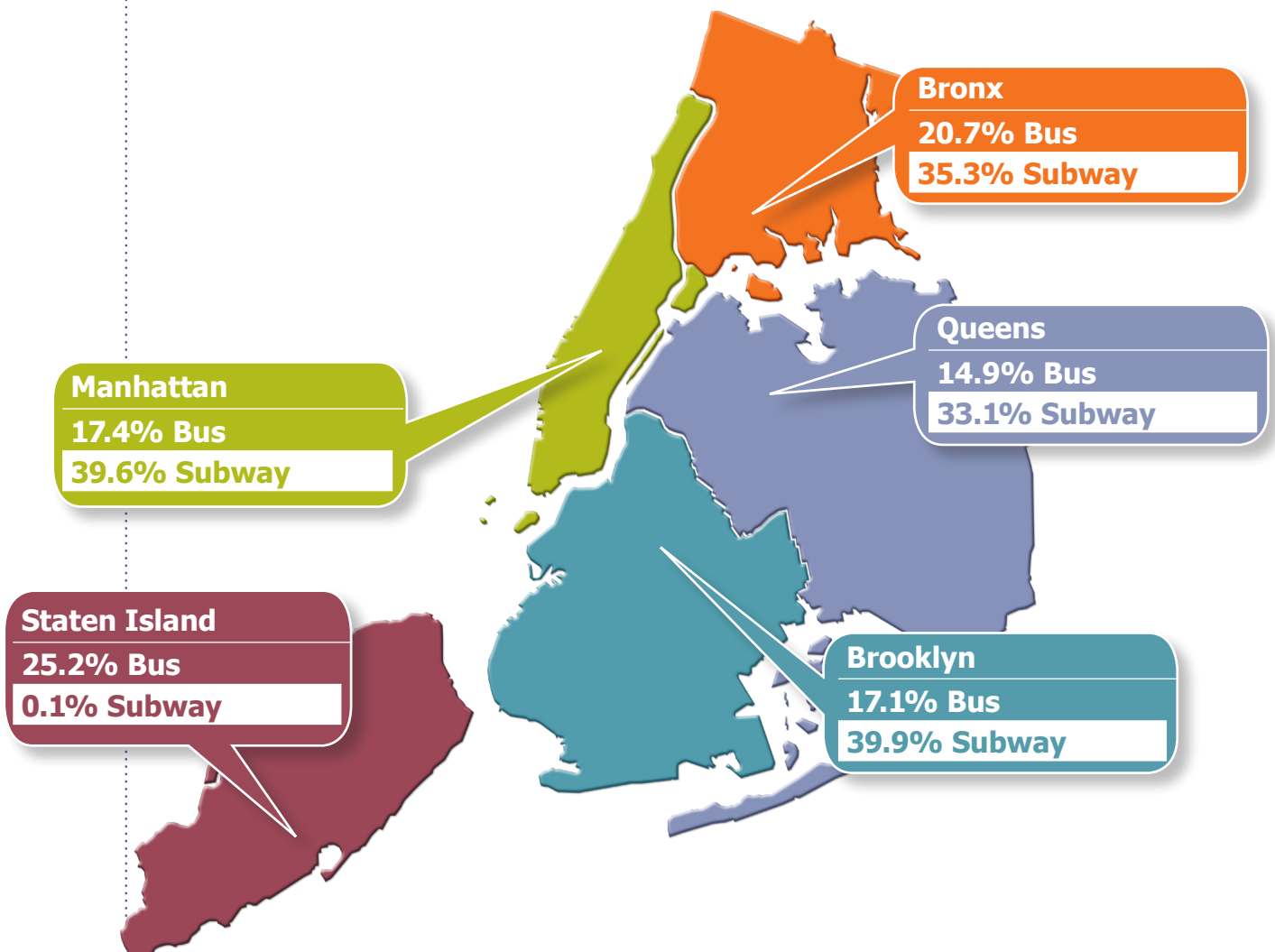
Transportation — Public Transportation



People with disabilities use public transportation at nearly the same rate as people without disabilities, except for the subways. A lack of affordable and accessible transportation impedes access to work.

Lack of accessible transportation is a key barrier to employment for persons with disabilities. In most upstate locations, where rail is not as widely used, private vehicles are the main way people travel to work.

People with disabilities are significantly less likely to use private vehicles, and again are more likely to use the bus. In New York City, more than half of all people with disabilities (52.6%) travel to work by public transportation. However, people with disabilities (34.9) are much less likely to use the subway than people without disabilities (41.8%). Only 30.5 percent of people with Ambulatory disabilities use the subway, compared to 41.8% of people without disabilities.





Transportation — Walk to Work

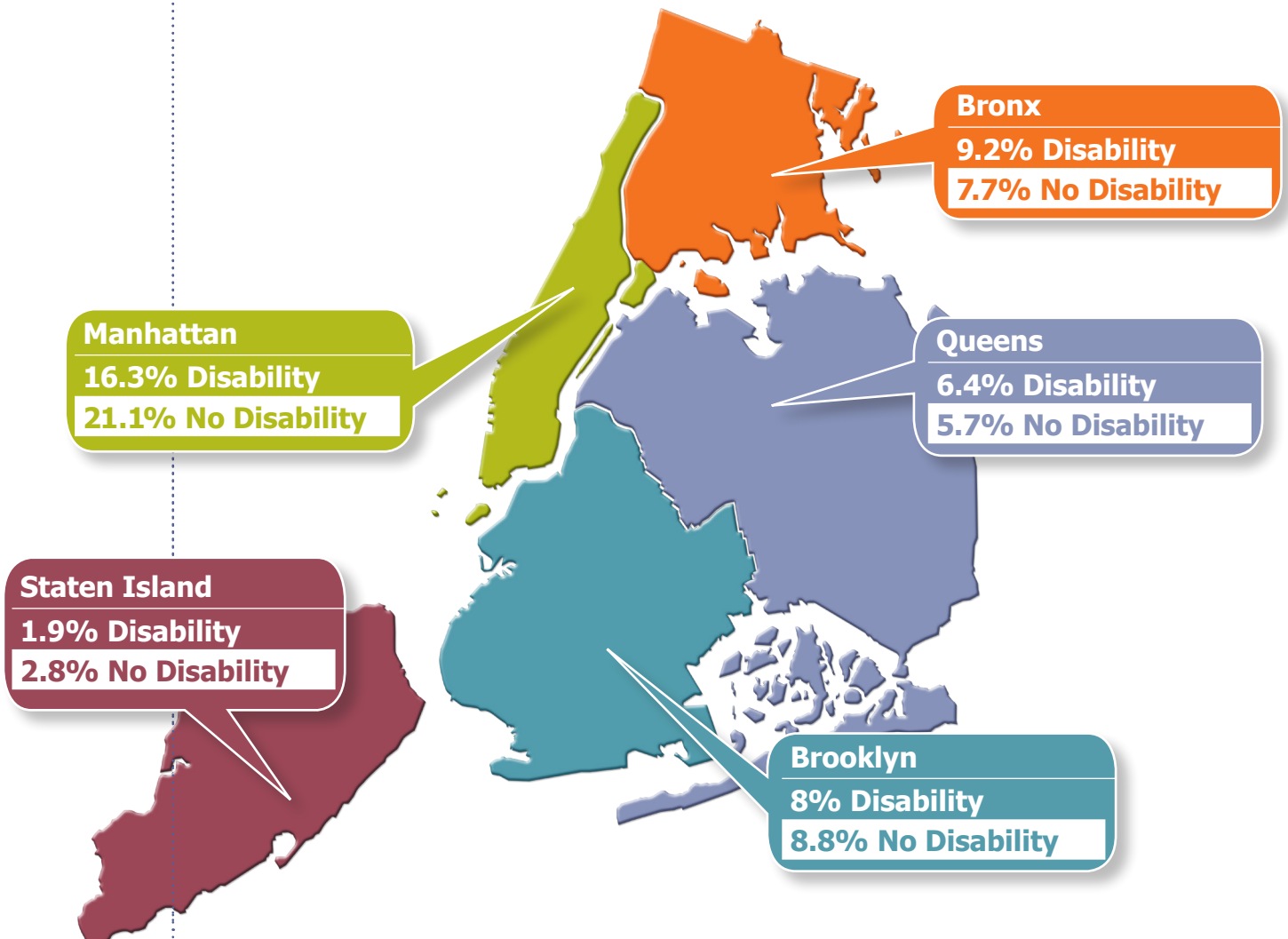


In Manhattan, people with disabilities are less likely to walk to work than people without disabilities. For people with Ambulatory disabilities, the “walk” rate is 8.1 percent less than half the rate of people without disabilities.

In New York City, people with disabilities are more likely to walk to work (9.2%) than are their counterparts in New York State (6.9%) or across the nation (3.6%).

New York City’s working people with disabilities are less likely to walk (wheel) to work than their non-disabled counterparts in some boroughs. In Manhattan, 16.3 percent of people with disabilities walk to work; 21.1 percent of people without disabilities walk to work. People with disabilities in Staten Island have a walk to work rate of 1.9%.

Type of disability matters. In New York City, only 8.1 percent of people with Ambulatory disabilities walk (wheel) to work, and only 8.7 percent of people with Vision disabilities walk to work. People with Independent Living disabilities have a 8.5 percent rate of walking (wheeling) to work.





Transportation — Recommendations



The MTA must make accessibility of the subway system a priority to cure existing discrimination by repairing the elevators, marking the platforms and undertaking other improvements to make existing “accessible stations” workable. The addition of bus routes must consider expanding service to low-income communities that are home to people with disabilities to improve access to employment. The City of New York must cure the inaccessibility of the built environment Citywide to improve the health of people with disabilities in our communities.

People with disabilities use public transportation to get to work. However, people with disabilities (34.87%) are much less likely to use the subway than people without disabilities (41.81%). Ridership of the subway is lower still (31%) for people with Ambulatory disabilities, reflecting the lack of accessibility of New York City’s subway system. People with Ambulatory disabilities are less likely to walk/wheel to work than people without disabilities, reflecting the lack of curb cuts and lack of compliance with standards for them.

Inaccessibility of New York City’s subway transportation and “right of way” are a key barrier to employment and full community integration for people with disabilities. In New York City, the subway system is overwhelmingly inaccessible to people with Ambulatory disabilities because of lack of elevators, broken elevators and the gap between the platform and the subway car. It can also be dangerous when edge markings are absent, for people with Vision disabilities. As well, it can be impossible to cross the street.

When low-income housing is developed, access to transportation for people with disabilities must be considered to ensure access to bus lines and accessible subway stations to facilitate employment.

Finally, just as consideration turns to how the built environment encourages or discourages health, consideration must be given to how the inaccessibility of the sidewalks and crossings contribute to health disparities and increase the dangers to pedestrians with disabilities.



CID-NY

Methodology





Methodology

Accurate and reliable statistics are powerful tools for funders, policymakers and advocates. Statistics are used to frame the issues, monitor current circumstances and progress, judge the effectiveness of policies and programs, make projections about the future, and predict the costs of potential policy changes. The estimation of accurate and reliable statistics depends on the collection of accurate and reliable data.

This report provides statistics on the population with disabilities in New York State, the five boroughs of New York City, and all other counties in the State. Topics include population size, age, race/ethnicity, disability type, educational attainment, employment, income, health insurance coverage, Food Stamp/SNAP receipt, and poverty.

Data Source

There are very few sources of local-level statistics on the population with disabilities. The U.S. Census Bureau generates disability statistics using its American Community Survey (ACS). The American Community Survey is a large, continuous demographic survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau that provides accurate and up-to-date profiles of America's communities every year. Annual and multi-year estimates of population and housing data are generated for small areas, including tracts and population subgroups. This information is collected by mailing questionnaires to a sample of addresses. To generate statistics for counties with small populations, the Census Bureau must pool together data from multiple years. The disability statistics presented in this report are based on the 2012 5-year public-release ACS data file.

The American Community Survey asks people to identify their disability by asking whether they have:

Hearing Difficulty: Deaf or having serious difficulty hearing (DEAR).

Vision Difficulty: Blind or having serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses (DEYE).

Cognitive Difficulty: Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions (DREM).

Ambulatory Difficulty: Having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs (DPHY).

Self-Care Difficulty: Having difficulty bathing or dressing (DDRS).

Independent Living Difficulty: Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping (DOUT).

A major limitation of using the public-release file is that the data is self-reported, meaning that those who are undiagnosed do not characterize themselves as having a disability, or those who are uncomfortable reporting a disability generally do not fill in this portion of the survey. These questions have been criticized as not accurately identifying certain mental health, speech, developmental or learning disabilities or certain neurological conditions.

Methods

The 2012 ACS data is a raw data set containing the survey responses of individuals. These data are used to generate statistics for different sub-groups, like individuals living in New York.

The Census Bureau groups people into Public-Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), where each PUMA contains at least 100,000 individuals, thereby protecting the anonymity of individuals that participate in the survey. The Census Bureau leaves it up to the states to define PUMAs, and PUMA boundaries do not necessarily coincide with county boundaries. New York has 143 PUMAs and 62 counties. Some of the PUMAs will cover portions of more than one county. In order to produce county-level estimates of the population with disabilities, one must assign the disability populations of the PUMAs to the counties. When a PUMA fits entirely within a county, that PUMA's total number of people with disabilities is simply added to the county's total number of people with disabilities. When a PUMA runs over county borders and is split between more than one county, each county receives a portion of the PUMA's total number of people with disabilities.

It is important to recognize that this approach assumes that the distribution of people with disabilities within a PUMA is the same as the distribution of all people within that PUMA. In addition, this method assumes that people with disabilities are distributed in the same fashion as people without disabilities. This assumption may not be entirely true, but it is the most straightforward method to estimate county-level disability statistics.

This approach is used to estimate the populations for each subgroup, e.g., the number of people with disabilities that are below the poverty level in each PUMA are allotted to their respective county using the same method. County-level rates and percentages were then calculated based on subgroup counts; e.g., the poverty rate for people with disabilities in a given county is the number of people with disabilities that are below the poverty line in that county, divided by the number of people with any disability(ies) in that county, and multiplied by 100.



Acknowledgements

First, we thank the tens of thousands of New Yorkers with disabilities who have shared their stories with us over the past 25 years. Many have worked with us not only to transform their own lives, but also to bring about positive change for all.

This work would not be possible without the steadfast support and stewardship of CIDNY's Board of Directors. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the assistance and support of board member John O'Neill, whose advice, expertise to us and work with the University of New Hampshire were invaluable to this project.

We are deeply grateful to our generous donors and to the foundations that support our work.

Thanks to CIDNY staff for their commitment to creating change for individuals and society and for the skills and dedication they bring to this struggle.

We have been well-matched in our commitment to improving the lives of people with disabilities by the very gifted attorneys who have helped us transform the landscape and elected officials who "get it."

We have been fortunate to work with Andrew Houtenville, Ph.D., Debra Brucker, Ph.D. and Nicholas Rollins, M.S. at the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire whose excellent skill in teasing out the categories and data gave us a foundation for this report. And we acknowledge that any inadvertent errors in this report are our own.

We are fortunate to bring our own voices to a movement that has so many impressive leaders. We join our voices to theirs.

Susan M. Dooha, J.D.

Executive Director



About CIDNY

The Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York's (CIDNY) goal is to ensure full integration, independence and equal opportunity for all people with disabilities by removing barriers to the social, economic, cultural and civic life of the community.

In 2014, we helped over 15,000 people take control of their own lives by offering information, education and advice to individuals struggling with poverty, housing, barriers to health care coverage and access, nutrition, education, and work. We help apply for services and supports, navigate complex systems and advocate for consumers when things go wrong. We provide technical assistance to public and private entities to improve their disability literacy. We guide lawmakers on sound public policies that will foster equal opportunity.

In the last five years, CIDNY has been party to successful lawsuits that seek to protect the civil rights of people with disabilities. Our expert testimony and evidence helped win a lawsuit to ensure the rights of people with disabilities to vote independently and to travel throughout New York City in accessible transportation. Most recently, we were plaintiffs and won a landmark decision that directs New York City to provide an equal opportunity for people with disabilities to survive in disasters and emergencies by adhering to seven specific Memoranda of Understanding in planning for those events. Our success in these lawsuits is due, in part, to the data we collect and the analysis we provide about people with disabilities and the affect public policies have on our lives. This report will help policy makers, funders, and disability advocates as we continue to ensure the rights of all people with disabilities.

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