

Community Participation and Disability

“What life have you if you have not life together? There is no life that is not in community ...”
-T. S. Elliott

35% of Americans with disabilities say they are completely uninvolved in their communities, compared to 21% of those without disabilities.

Approximately half (51%) of people with disabilities report the absence of a full social life is a concern.

Barriers to community participation include:

- ◆ attitudinal barriers
- ◆ lack of transportation
- ◆ lack of awareness
- ◆ lack of income, and
- ◆ lack of encouragement from community organizations

31% of people with disabilities report lack of adequate transportation

Between 1990 and 2002 the number of people with disabilities in Virginia living in residential settings of 6 or fewer increased over 50%

Volunteerism

In the 2004 Presidential election, there was only a 4% gap in voter turnout between people with disabilities and people without disabilities (52% versus 56%)

People with disabilities have historically been thought of as recipients of volunteer service and they have been overlooked in efforts to involve people in improving communities.

Barriers to service include:

- ◆ lack of awareness of volunteer service opportunities
- ◆ gatekeepers need education on how to include people with disabilities
- ◆ volunteer service is often not included in the support service plan for people with disabilities.

These Disability Fast Facts are a product of the Virginia Board's Policy Fellowship Program. Copies may also be downloaded from the Board's website. Duplication and distribution is encouraged.