DEP Project Summary: The Impact of Local Infrastructure

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Research Strand: Employment Landscape

What are we Studying?

This study examines whether access to high-speed internet and public transportation increases employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities.

Why are we Studying this Issue?

High-quality infrastructure can help people find and keep jobs. High-speed internet enables job searching, online training, and remote work, while reliable public transportation connects people to workplaces and services. People with disabilities may particularly benefit from these infrastructure improvements, yet little research examines how internet and transit access specifically affect employment for this population. Without clear evidence, policymakers lack the information needed to make informed infrastructure investment decisions that support disability employment.

How will we Study this Issue?

We will link data from 41,700 ZIP codes nationwide (2014-2020) to track how changes in internet availability, internet speed, and public transit access relate to employment rates for people with disabilities. This analysis will examine differences across disability types, urban and rural areas, and other demographic groups. We will also conduct up to 30 interviews with people with disabilities across various locations to understand how local infrastructure facilitates or hinders their employment experiences and opportunities.

How will this Study Impact Disability Employment Policy?

This study will provide the first comprehensive evidence on how local infrastructure specifically influences employment for people with disabilities. The findings will help policymakers prioritize infrastructure investments and design policies that effectively expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

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