



**American Dream Employment Network**  
**2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Driving Employment.  
Generating Economic Impact.  
Building a More Inclusive Workforce.**

---

In 2025, ADEN Participants earned \$25.3 million in wages and contributed \$3 million to the federal tax base—demonstrating that inclusive employment strengthens individuals, communities and our economy.

## **A MESSAGE FROM NDI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR THOMAS FOLEY**

As we reflect on this past year of progress, I am proud to celebrate the continued success of the American Dream Employment Network (ADEN), a cornerstone initiative of the National Disability Institute (NDI). ADEN's work advancing employment opportunities and helping individuals with disabilities take that critical first step toward financial independence embodies the best of NDI's mission. Each job placement represents more than income; it signifies empowerment, inclusion, and renewed confidence in what is possible.

### **Impact and Achievement**

Through ADEN's innovative, person-centered approach, thousands of individuals have rejoined the workforce, collectively earning more than \$116 million in wages. This extraordinary accomplishment demonstrates the life-changing impact of aligning meaningful work with financial growth. As part of the NDI family, ADEN helps connect employment outcomes to long-term economic security, offering individuals and families a stronger foundation for the future.

### **A Personal Reflection**

I often reflect on my own experience returning to the workforce and the challenges I faced along the way. I wish that ADEN had existed at that time to provide the kind of guidance, encouragement, and understanding that so many people now benefit from. ADEN continues to make that journey clearer and more achievable, helping individuals not only see opportunity but embrace it with confidence.

### **Building Pathways to Financial Empowerment**

At NDI, we recognize that employment is only the first step in a larger journey toward financial empowerment. Through our programs in financial education, savings, and inclusion, we help individuals build lasting financial strength and stability.

Together, NDI and ADEN are expanding pathways to full participation in the economy, ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable access to the tools, knowledge, and opportunities needed to reach their full potential.

## Looking Ahead

Moving forward, NDI and ADEN remain steadfast in our commitment to this mission. We will continue building partnerships, advancing inclusive employment strategies, and strengthening the foundation for a brighter financial future for all people with disabilities.

Best,



**Thomas E. Foley, J.D.**  
**Executive Director**



## **A MESSAGE FROM ADEN DIRECTOR KEVIN NICKERSON**

In 2025, ADEN celebrated 10 years of operation, a noteworthy benchmark for this innovative approach to serving Social Security Administration (SSA) disability beneficiaries who are ready to return to work. Over the past decade, ADEN has assigned and served nearly 5,000 beneficiaries and has helped hundreds achieve self-sufficiency, the goal of the Ticket to Work program.

This year represented a solid period of performance for ADEN, even as the organization navigated one of the most challenging operating environments in its history. The longest government shutdown on record lasted 43 days and halted Employment Network (EN) payment processing to ADEN Members, creating significant operational strain. As with other challenges faced by ADEN and its Members, the organization responded with resilience and determination. Despite these setbacks, ADEN ended the year in a strong position.

To celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> year of operation, ADEN held a very successful symposium in New Orleans with nearly 50 attendees. The event strengthened collaboration and camaraderie among participants, including ADEN Members and NDI staff. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with participants expressing interest in gathering again in the future.

This year, ADEN Members helped 807 Participants achieve or maintain employment and ADEN saw 62 Participants graduate, achieving all goals of the Ticket to Work program. We added 19 Members this year, furthering our reach throughout the country and setting the stage for increased capacity to serve in 2026.



**Kevin Nickerson**  
ADEN Director



## **ADEN STAKEHOLDERS**

ADEN Stakeholders include Participants, Members, State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies and other community partners.

### **Participants**

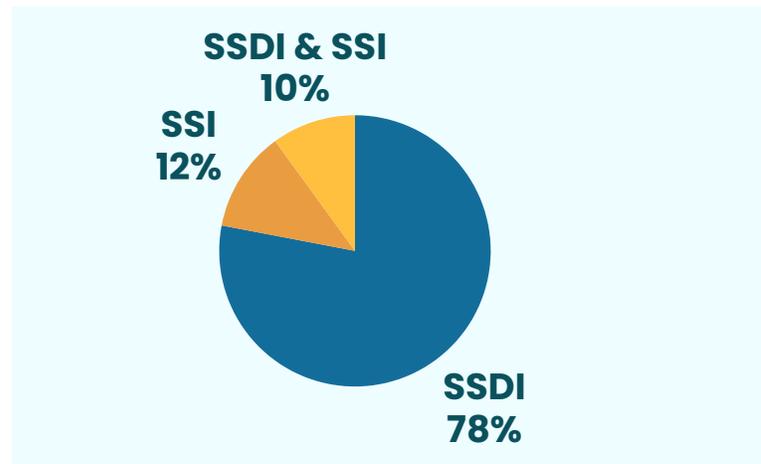
Participants are individuals who take advantage of the Ticket to Work program through ADEN. These are individuals receiving Social Security disability benefits who are committed to transitioning to employment and achieving financial independence.

### **Participant Profile**

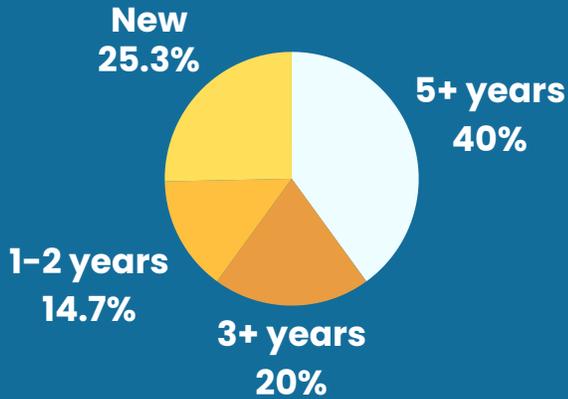
- In 2025, 588 beneficiaries chose to assign their Ticket to Work to ADEN for employment services, resulting in a total of 1,187 beneficiaries assigned to ADEN by the end of 2025.
- The average age of beneficiaries served by ADEN was 46.
- 57% were female and 43% were male.
- 78% of beneficiaries served by ADEN received Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI),

- 12% received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and 10% received both benefits.
- 95% of beneficiaries served by ADEN have post-secondary education:
  - Master's Degree or Higher = 9%
  - Bachelor's Degree = 23%
  - Associate's degree = 14%
  - Some College = 21%
  - High School Diploma or GED = 28%

**1,187**  
total beneficiaries assigned to ADEN by the end of 2025



**75**  
vocational  
professionals/  
agency ADEN  
Members



### Members

A network of service providers, known as ADEN Members, is crucial to the comprehensive services that ADEN offers to Participants. These providers include vocational professionals and agencies who collaborate with ADEN to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the same services and resources they need to succeed in the workforce, regardless of the ADEN Member they receive services from.

### Member Profile

- 75 vocational professionals/agencies represent:
  - 39 LLC or Sole Proprietorship
  - 17 Private community rehab providers
  - 10 Public workforce agencies
  - 6 Centers for Independent Living
  - 3 Corporations
  - Located in 27 states across the U.S.
- Longevity of ADEN Members:
  - 5+ years with ADEN = 30 agencies
  - 3+ years with ADEN = 15 agencies
  - 1-2 years with ADEN = 11 agencies
  - 19 agencies joined ADEN in 2025

### Other Partners

ADEN values partnerships with others who invest in employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. By partnering with employers and State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, together we are building a better economic future for ADEN Participants. [Click here to visit our website to view our current partners and explore partnership opportunities.](#)



## YEAR IN REVIEW

---

ADEN's success is measured through the following three benchmarks:

### 1. Individuals with disabilities achieving employment. Indicators include:

- 807 adults receiving disability benefits became employed or retained employment with support from ADEN in 2025.
- In 2025, ADEN Participants earned an estimated \$25.3 million in wages. From 2015–2025, ADEN Participants earned more than \$116.8 Million in wages.
- ADEN Participants earned an average of \$22.96 per hour and 31 work hours/week. This equates to a monthly salary of \$3,082. (For comparison, in 2025, the average Social Security disability monthly benefit was \$1,588, and the monthly benefit for SSI is \$994).
- The average duration from when a beneficiary began services with ADEN to when they started a job, on average, was three months.
- The top three industries in 2025 in which ADEN Participants were employed were Health Care/Pharmaceuticals, Consumer Service/Retail and Administrative Support Occupations.
- In 2025, 91% of current ADEN Members received outcome-based payments for successful employment outcomes, as defined by SSA.

### 2. Participants generate savings to the SSA trust fund and contribute to the federal tax base.

- In 2025, the earnings of ADEN Participants contributed an estimated \$3 million to the federal tax base. From 2015–2025, an estimated \$14 million has been contributed to the federal tax base by ADEN Participants.

### 3. ADEN core services exceed industry standards and are effective. Indicators include:

- 62 ADEN Participants successfully completed the Ticket to Work program in 2025, with a total of 219 graduated from the program since ADEN's inception.
- ADEN Members include 90 Certified Work Incentives Practitioners.
- In 2025, the following ADEN core services were delivered by ADEN providers:
  - 4,244 hours of Benefits and Work Incentives Advisement.
  - 1,160 hours of Career Counseling, Resume Development and Interview Preparation.
  - 2,850 hours of Job Search and Leads.

Page 7



- o 3,418 hours of Ongoing Employment Support and Career Advancement Services.
- o 924 hours of Referrals to Community, Financial Services Supports and Job Accommodations.

## ADEN PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIAL

---

**“With Patricia’s [ADEN Member] support, Tim secured a permanent custodial position at the University of Michigan in July 2021. He has since achieved significant milestones, such as moving into his own apartment, purchasing a car and achieving financial independence. Tim’s determination, coupled with the resources provided by ADEN and SteptoWork, has been instrumental in his success.”**



**“If you struggle with communication, having support is invaluable.”  
- Tim**

[Click here to learn more about Tim’s story and others who have benefited from the Ticket to Work Program.](#)

