Chart 8.
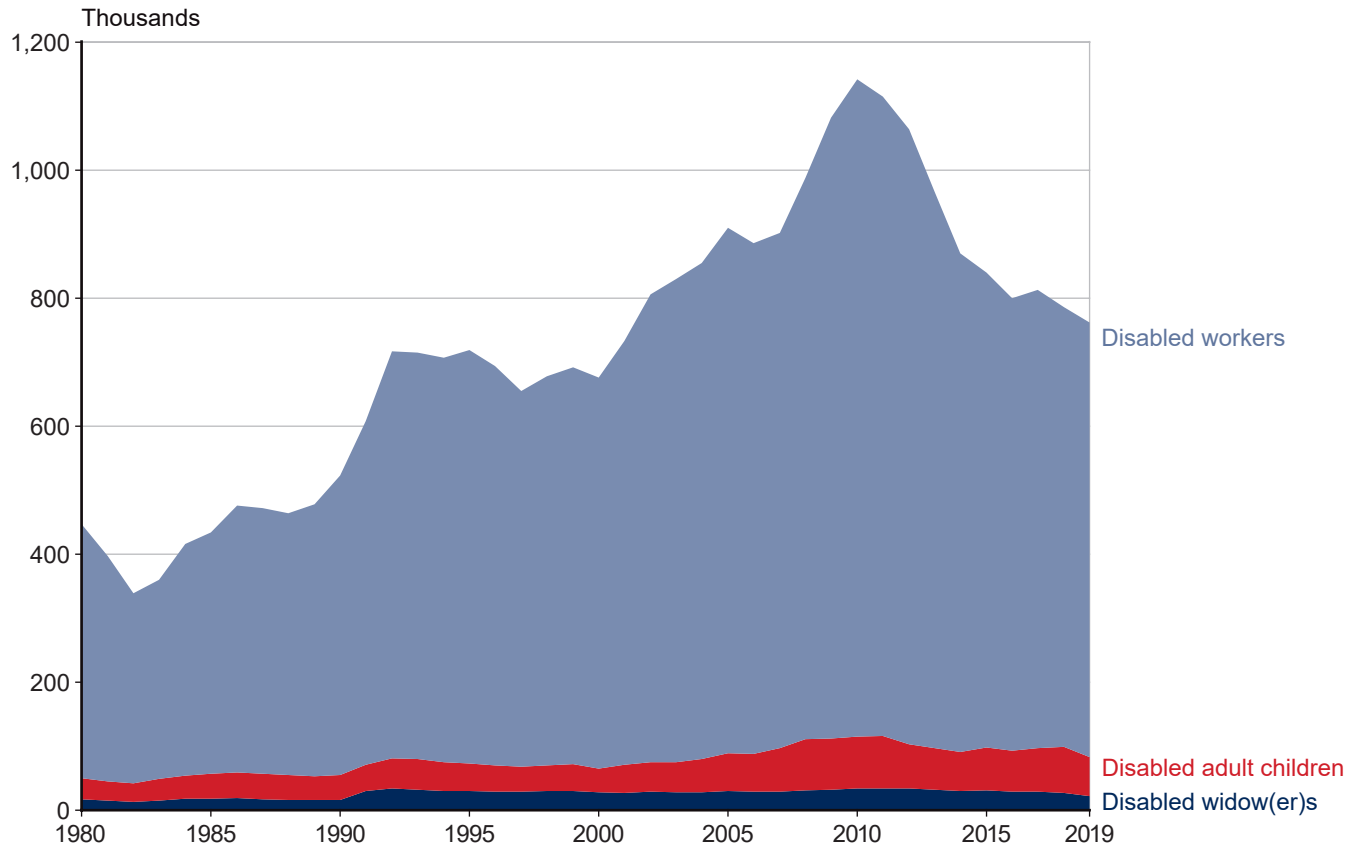**Social Security disability awards, 1980–2019**

Overall, the number of disability awards has risen from 446,083 in 1980 to 761,481 in 2019. Fluctuations during that period were predominately driven by changes in the number of awards to disabled workers. In 2019, there were 679,449 awards to disabled workers; 60,788 awards to disabled adult children; and 21,244 awards to disabled widow(er)s.
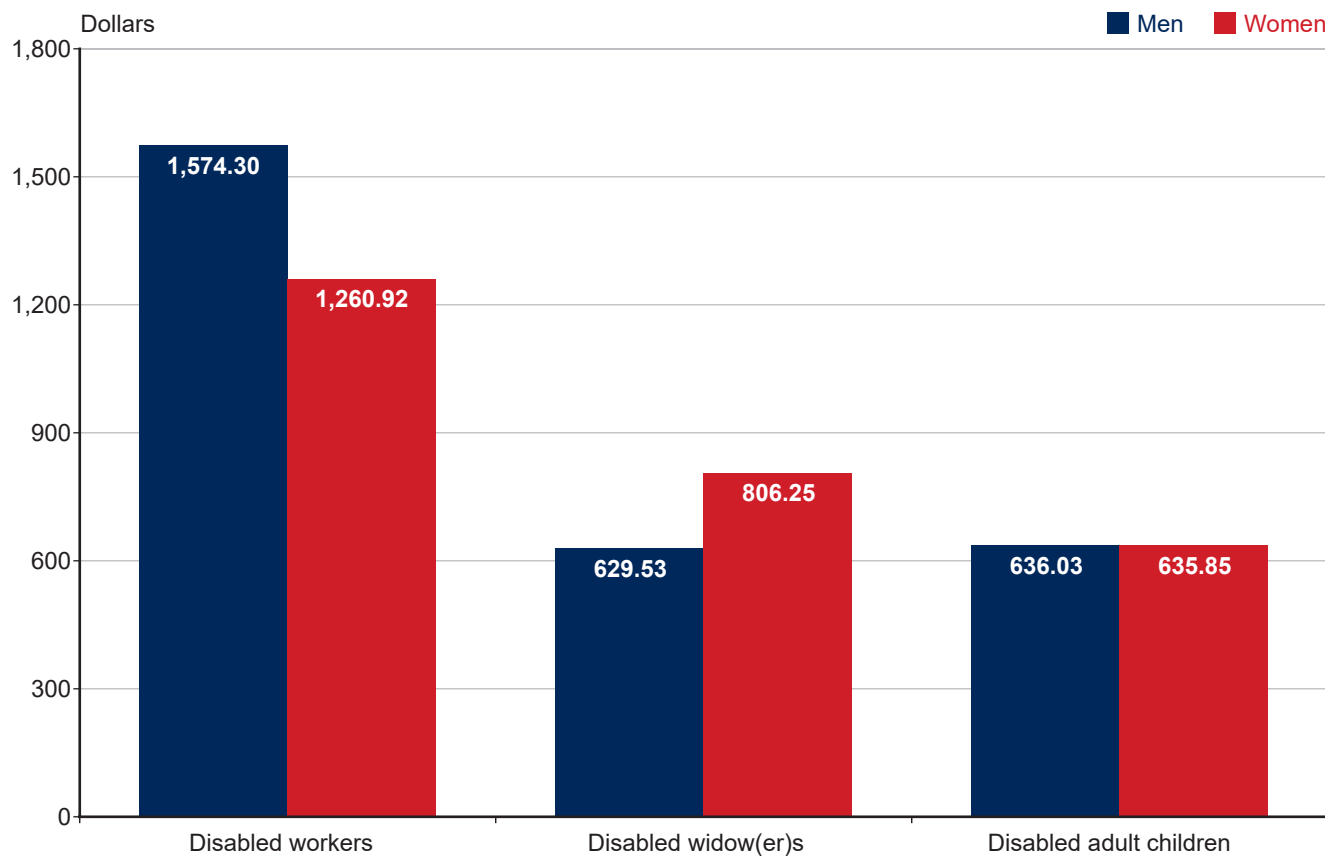

SOURCE: Table 35.

Chart 9.
Average monthly benefit awards, by sex, 2019

The average monthly benefit awarded to disabled workers is higher than that awarded to disabled widow(er)s or disabled adult children. The reason for the difference is that disabled workers receive 100 percent of the primary insurance amount, compared with 71.5 percent for disabled widow(er)s and 50 percent for disabled adult children (if the worker is disabled or retired) or 75 percent (if the worker is deceased).
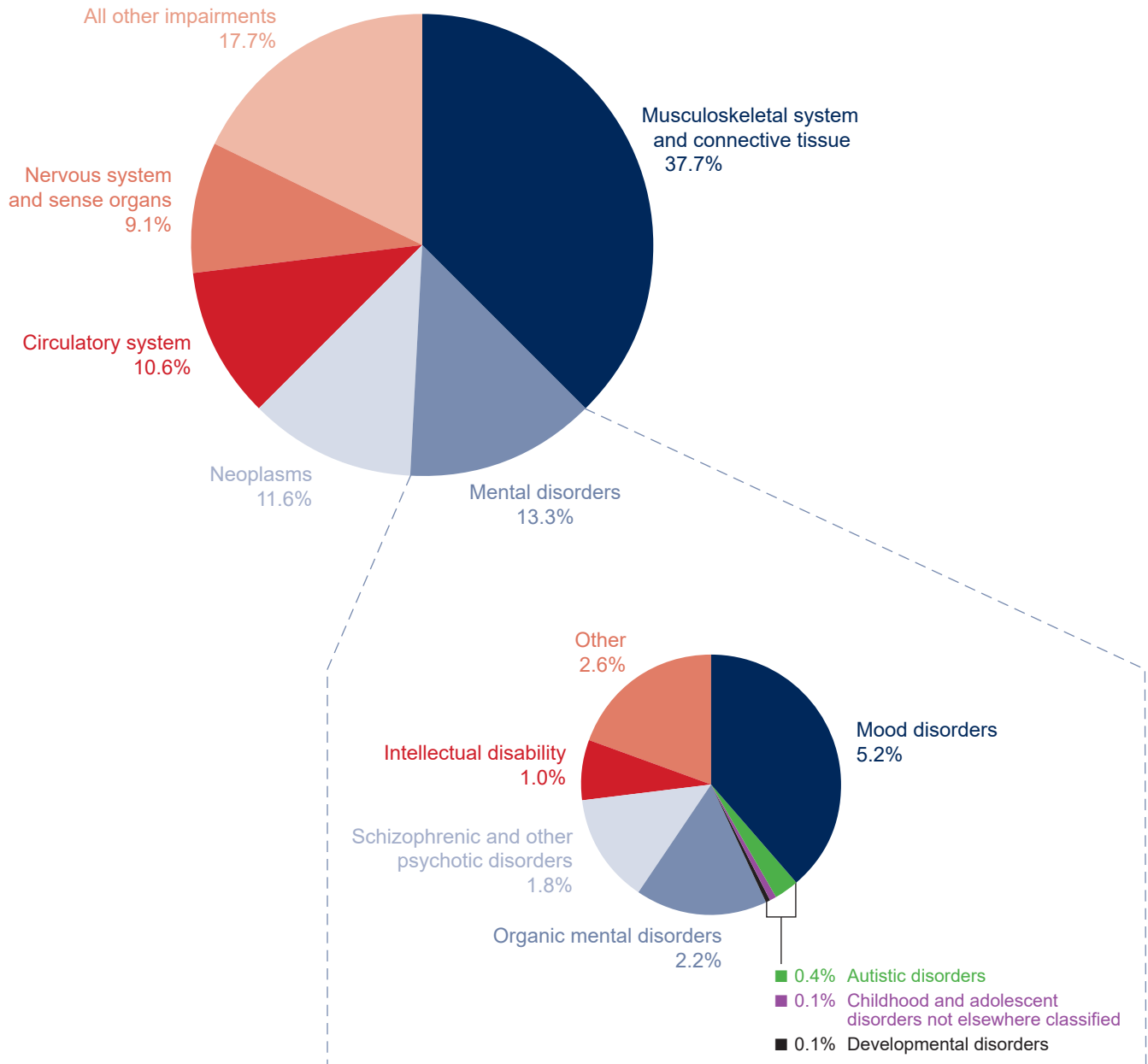
Because men have traditionally had higher earnings than women, their monthly benefit is higher. This is most obvious in the disabled-worker group. Benefits for disabled widow(er)s and disabled adult children are dependents' benefits, so their monthly benefit is a function of the worker's earnings. Therefore, a disabled widow's average benefit tends to be higher than that of a disabled widower because a male worker's earnings are higher than a female worker's. Benefit amounts are about the same for men and women in the disabled adult children group.

Dollars

■ Men ■ Women

	Men	Women
Disabled workers	1,574.30	1,260.92
Disabled widow(er)s	629.53	806.25
Disabled adult children	636.03	635.85

SOURCE: Table 36.

Chart 10.
Disabled-worker awards, by selected diagnostic group, 2019

In 2019, benefits were awarded to 679,449 disabled workers. Among those awardees, the most common impairment was diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue (37.7 percent), followed by mental disorders (13.3 percent), neoplasms (11.6 percent), diseases of the circulatory system (10.6 percent), and diseases of the nervous system and sense organs (9.1 percent). The remaining 17.7 percent of awardees had other impairments.