

Americans' Attitudes About Work, Employers and Government

Work Trends

Restricted Access:

A Survey of Employers About People with Disabilities and Lowering Barriers to Work

By K.A. Dixon with Doug Kruse, Ph.D. and Carl E. Van Horn, Ph.D.

heldrich

John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

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*This report does not necessarily reflect the views of NIDRR or the
U.S. Department of Education*

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Background

Work Trends: The New Employer Series

Work Trends is the joint project of two distinguished social science research centers, the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, and the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut. This multi-year public opinion series, in its first phase, explores the attitudes of the U.S. workforce on the challenges faced by workers, families, and employers in the changing global economy. To date *Work Trends* reports encompass ten major surveys and contain data from 10,000 worker interviews on a range of trends and national workplace and policy issues. The series was conceived in order to explore the practices and perceptions of American workers about the economy, their jobs, and employers. The project is co-directed by Dr. Carl E. Van Horn of the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, and Dr. Kenneth Dautrich of the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut, respective directors of the two centers.

Through rigorous, objective, and balanced field methodology, the series provides a new public voice for America's workforce. *Work Trends* reports have received major media coverage in the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week*, *Fortune*, *Money*, Reuters, AP, Bloomberg Business Radio, Marketplace Radio, National Public Radio, ABC, NBC, CNN, CNN-fn, *USA Today*, and many other outlets on a regular basis. *Work Trends* reports and data have been used by a wide audience of economists and analysts, researchers, corporate executives, human resources consultants and experts, unions, activists, community based organizations, and students.

Restricted Access: A Survey of Employers About People with Disabilities and Lowering Barriers to Work is the third survey in a new series that seeks the views of American employers on the policies and practices that govern the workplace and workforce, on changing economic conditions, and government policies that affect the economy and the workplace. This new initiative will provide fresh, carefully evaluated field research about the views of employers across the spectrum regarding changing events and conditions that affect their own and the nation's workforce, from the threat of terror to the nature of applied technology. The survey will incorporate longitudinal trend questions that will allow researchers to track employer responses to the economy, politics, and jobs over time.

In addition, the *Work Trends* team will use this new data to compare how workers and employers view big-picture economic concerns as well as specific choices being made about policy and practice in the workplace. Employers were also asked questions that parallel worker data from previous *Work Trends* surveys. The new survey series will explore many other areas of conflict and cooperation that are defining the new compact between workers and employers taking shape in the economy and society of the 21st century. In future *Work Trends* surveys, researchers will track worker and employer opinion on key trend topics at the same points in time, allowing direct point by point comparisons on cutting-edge workplace issues.

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development is located at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. It is a university-based research and consulting center dedicated to raising the effectiveness of the American workplace by strengthening workforce education, placement and training programs and policies. The Center's efforts concentrate on both nurturing concrete innovations in local, state, and regional workforce practices, as well as addressing broad-scale economic policy changes that ensure Americans receive the education and training they need to be productive and prosperous in the knowledge economy of the 21st century.

The Heldrich Center was founded in 1997 and is well on its way to realizing its organizational goal of becoming the nation's leading academic center for the study of workforce issues. With an annual budget of \$4 million, it supports a staff of 25 full and part-time associates, which includes analysts, managers, and faculty. This group is now engaged in over 30 major projects with corporate, state and federal, nonprofit and foundation clients.

The Center embodies its slogan 'Solutions at Work' by teaming with partners and clients to translate cutting-edge research and analysis into practices and programs that companies, unions, schools, CBOs, and government officials can leverage to strengthen their workforces, create jobs, and remain competitive. Ultimately, the Center serves as a laboratory to create innovative, applied solutions to well-documented workplace challenges. These include the gap between worker skills and employer needs; under-performing government programs; economic disruptions resulting from a globalized economy; and the persistence of poverty despite work.

The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC)

This survey was funded in part by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workforce Investment and Employment Policy for Persons with Disabilities (RRTC). The Center is funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the U.S. Department of Education. Partners in the Center include the Law Health Policy and Disability Center at the University of Iowa, the Center for the Study and Advancement of Disability Policy at the George Washington School of Public Health and Health Services, and the Heldrich Center.

The *Work Trends* series: download reports and releases at
www.heldrich.rutgers.edu:

Work Trends X: Taking Stock of Retirement:

How Workers and Employers Assess Pensions, Trust, and the Economy.

Publication Date: 5/15/02

Work Trends IX: A Workplace Divided:

How Americans View Discrimination and Race on the Job.

Publication Date: 1/14/02

Work Trends Special Release: Workers Respond to Terrorism and its Impact.

Publication Date: 10/26/01

Work Trends VIII: Holding On: Americans Assess A Changing Economic Landscape.

Publication Date: 5/24/01

Work Trends VII: Second Wind: Workers, Retirement, and Social Security.

Publication Date: 9/26/00

Work Trends VI: Making the Grade? What American Workers Think Should Be Done to Improve Education.

Publication Date: 6/12/00

Work Trends V: Nothing But Net: American Workers and the Information Economy.

Publication Date: 2/10/00

Work Trends IV: Who Will Let the Good Times Roll? A National Survey on Jobs, the Economy, and the Race for President.

Publication Date: 9/2/99

Work Trends III: Working Hard But Staying Poor.

Publication Date: 7/22/99

Work Trends II: Balancing Work and Family.

Publication Date: 2/15/99

Work Trends I: The Economy & Job Security.

Publication Date: 9/3/98

Executive Summary

This report is the fourteenth survey in the *Work Trends* series that polls American workers and employers about issues regarding the economy, the workforce, and the workplace, and how they view the policy choices made by lawmakers to address their concerns. The project was founded in 1998 and is co-directed by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, and the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut.

This new report, *Restricted Access: A Survey of Employers About People With Disabilities and Lowering Barriers to Work*, surveys the nation's employers regarding their views on people with disabilities in the workplace, the accommodation of these workers, and policy strategies needed to increase workplace accessibility for all workers and job seekers. In addition, employers express a significant degree of concern regarding the nation's economy, unemployment rate, and their workers' job security, clearly conveying that the weakened economy continues to weigh on their minds.

- The vast majority (87%) of employers say they are concerned about the state of the economy, with nearly half (49%) saying they are very concerned.
- Nearly three-fourths (70%) of employers are concerned about the current unemployment rate, a slight increase over the 67% who were concerned in April 2002.
- Employers not only express concern about the state of the economy, they also worry about the job security of the nation's workers. More than one-third (36%) of employers say they are very concerned about job security for those currently working, while 35% say they are somewhat concerned.

Despite the significant number of people with disabilities who can and want to work, employers describe a workplace in which people with disabilities are woefully underrepresented.

- In thinking about the job situation in America today, only 29% of employers say that now is a good time to find a quality job. In contrast, in April 2002, 34% of employers thought it was a good time to find a quality job.

Many working-age Americans have a disability that influences the kind or amount of work they can do. However, these same Americans are capable of competing successfully in the labor market. Despite the significant number of people with disabilities who can and want to work, employers describe a workplace in which people with disabilities are woefully underrepresented.

In fact, only one-fourth (26%) of employers say that their company employs at least one worker with a physical or mental disability.

Employers express diverse opinions as to why this is so, including lack of physical accessibility, lack of experience on the part of disabled jobseekers, employer reluctance to hire a worker with a physical or mental disability, and discrimination against such workers. At the same time, many employers do not provide any training to their employees regarding working with people with disabilities.

- Nearly one-fifth (17%) of employers say that lack of skills and experience on the part of the job seeker is the greatest barrier, while 15% cite employer reluctance to hire workers with disabilities.

While employers express varying degrees of reluctance and concern regarding hiring and accommodating people with disabilities, they recognize the need for equal treatment in the workplace.

- The survey finds that *less than half* (40%) of employers surveyed provide training of any kind to their employees regarding working with or providing accommodations to people with disabilities. Further, only 34% of companies with 5-24 workers—the small companies that are 70% of the nation’s employers—provide training to their employees in this area. More than half (52%) of larger companies employing more than 25 workers provide training.
- Companies that employ workers with disabilities are more likely than those that do not to say they have provided training to their workers regarding working with or providing accommodations to people with disabilities (52% and 34%, respectively).

The majority of employers assert that their workplaces are accessible to people with disabilities. Employers also believe, however, that they themselves have barriers to hiring people with disabilities. These include discomfort or unfamiliarity with disabled workers, belief that the nature of the work they do is such that it cannot be performed effectively by people with disabilities, and fear of the cost of accommodation.

However, the survey finds that the majority of employers are not requested to provide accommodation for people with disabilities, and that employers with more experience actually employing people with disabilities are less likely to fear the cost of accommodation:

- While the majority of all firms agree that their company is physically accessible, those that employ 5-24 workers are less likely than those firms employing more workers (82% and 90%, respectively) to say that their company is physically accessible.
- When asked what the greatest barrier to employers hiring people with disabilities, nearly one-third (32%) say that the nature of their company’s work is such that it cannot be effectively performed by workers with disabilities.
- The vast majority (73%) of employers report their disabled workers did not require accommodation.
- Many (40%) employers maintain that it can be difficult or costly to provide accommodations to workers with disabilities—particularly those that have no experience doing so. Smaller firms are more likely than larger firms to agree that it is generally difficult or costly to accommodate workers with disabilities (44% and 32%, respectively). Only 35% of firms who have in fact hired workers with disabilities agree that it is costly to accommodate them.

While employers express varying degrees of reluctance and concern regarding hiring and accommodating people with disabilities, they recognize the need for equal treatment in the workplace. Employers likely recognize that people with disabilities represent an untapped pool of labor, and they see a role for both themselves and the federal government for increasing access to the workplace for all workers and ensuring equity of treatment.

- Nearly three-fourths (74%) of employers believe that employers, government, and workers are each equally responsible for equality in the workplace.

- Six in ten of all employers agree that the federal government should offer tax incentives to employers for hiring people with disabilities, and about the same number agree that the federal government should provide funds for tax incentives to employers to pay for accommodations for workers with disabilities.
- Employers in the hospitality services industry are the most likely to support hiring tax incentives (possibly because they employ larger numbers of workers with disabilities than other industries), while manufacturers are the least (65% and 57%, respectively).

Thirteen years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act that mandated greater access to the workplace for people with disabilities, disability remains a barrier to entrance to the workplace. People with disabilities are underrepresented in the labor market, despite the desire and ability to work. *Restricted Access* reveals that though many employers are willing to hire people with disabilities, misconceptions regarding hiring and accommodation abound.

Section 1

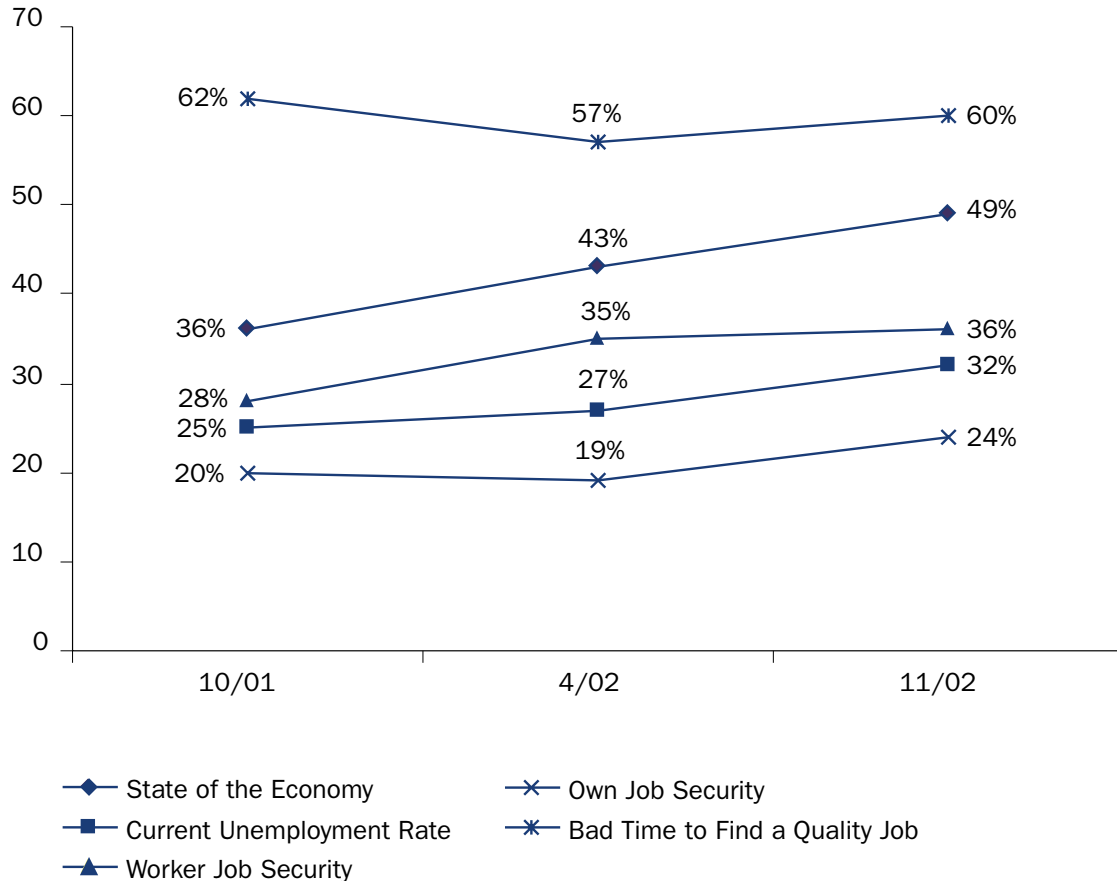
The Economic Context: Employers Remain Worried About the State of the Economy

The nation's economic performance has a dramatic impact on the nation's employers, influencing the costs of labor and production, taxation and sales. Employers express a significant level of concern regarding the continued uncertainty of the nation's economic recovery. For example, the majority (87%) of employers say they are concerned about the state of the economy, with nearly half (49%) saying they are very concerned. These numbers remain high since April 2002, when 87% of employers and business owners also expressed concern about the state of the economy, with 43% saying they

were very concerned. Likewise, 70% of employers are concerned about the current unemployment rate, a slight increase over the 67% who were concerned in April 2002.

Although concern regarding the economy is high among all employers, employers in certain industries are more likely than those in other industries to say they are concerned about the economy. The survey finds that employers in the retail trade industry are the least likely to say they are concerned about the state of the economy, while those in the hospitality services are the most likely to say they are concerned (80% and 88%, respectively).

Fig. 1.1: Employers Expressing Concern About Economy, 2001-2002



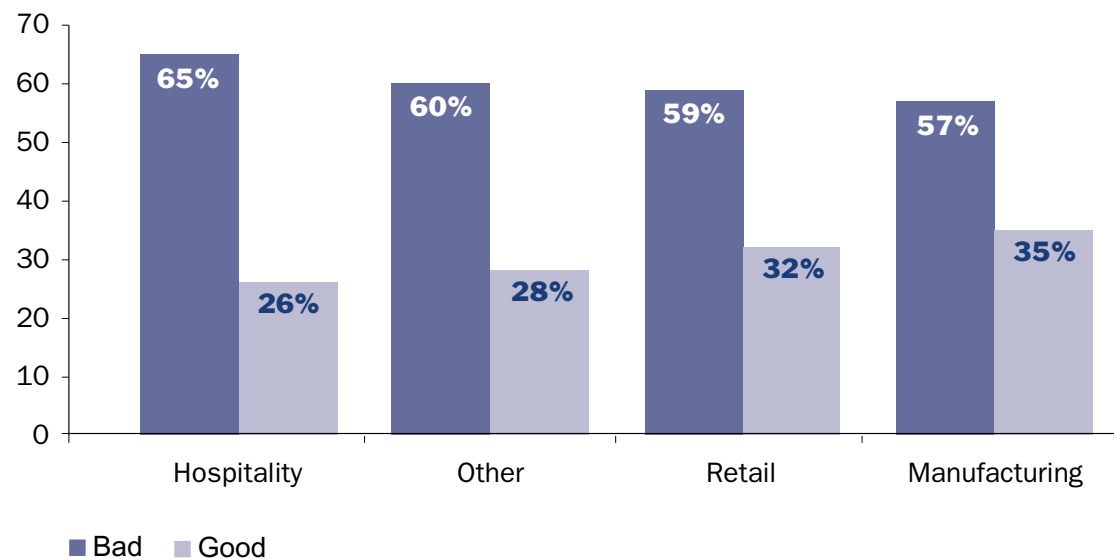
Employers are also concerned about the job security of the nation's workers. More than one-third (36%) of employers say they are very concerned about job security for those currently working, while 35% say they are somewhat concerned. In contrast, an October 2001 *Work Trends* found 28% of employers were very concerned about worker job security. This concern is most evident in the retail trade industry, which employs many lower-skilled, part-time workers, and least evident in the manufacturing industry (67% and 63%, respectively), where workers are more likely to be skilled and unionized.

Employers are significantly less concerned about their own job security. Only 43% indicate that they are concerned, with less than one-fourth (24%) saying they are very concerned. However, this represents a slight increase over the 19% of employers who in April 2002 said they were very con-

cerned about their own job security. Firm size seems to influence the level of concern. For example, smaller employers with 5-24 workers express less concern about their own job security than employers with 25 workers or more (40% and 49%, respectively). This likely reflects the reality that survey respondents are more likely to be partial owners or owners of a very small firm.

In thinking about the job situation in America today, only 29% of employers say that now is a good time to find a quality job. In contrast, in April 2002, 34% of employers thought it was a good time to find a quality job. This sentiment varies by industry. Among manufacturers, 35% say that now is a good time to find a quality job, compared to 26% of those in hospitality services, 32% in retail trade, and 28% of those in other industries.

Fig. 1.2: Employers by Industry: Is Now a Good time or a Bad Time to Find a Quality Job?



Section 2

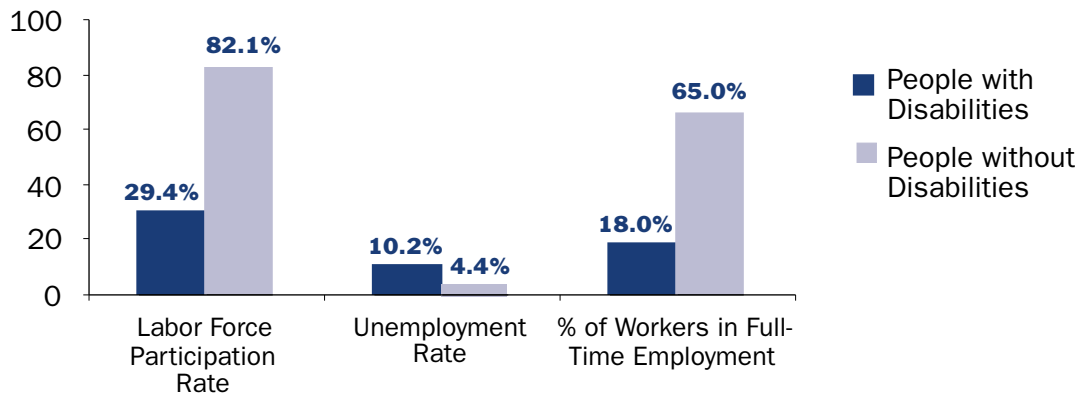
Workers with Disabilities: Reluctant Employers, Discrimination and Lack of Access

Many working-age Americans have a disability that limits the kind or amount of work they can do. The Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey (CPS) tracks people with work disabilities. In 2001, the CPS found that 9.6% of people between the ages of 16 and 64 had a work disability. Of those, 29.4% were in the labor force, compared with a labor force participation rate of 82.1% for those without a work disability (see Fig. 1).¹ People with a work disability faced an unemployment rate of 10.2%, compared with a rate of 4.4% for those without a work disability.² CPS data indicates that while the majority (82%) of working-age Americans are in the labor force, and 65%

are working full-time, less than one-third of people with disabilities are in the labor force (29%), and only 18% are working full-time.³

During economic downturns, all workers face barriers to finding good jobs. However, people with disabilities who want to work often face additional barriers to entering the workforce. These barriers include lack of physical access to the workplace, employers reluctant to hire people with disabilities, lack of transportation, potential loss of Social Security or federally funded health insurance, lack of experience, and insufficient access to employment services.⁴

Fig. 2.1: Labor Force Participation Rate, Unemployment Rate, and Percent of Full-time Workers for Disabled and Non-Disabled, 2001



¹ U.S. Census Bureau, March 2001 Current Population Survey. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/cps/cps101.html>

² U.S. Census Bureau, March 2001 Current Population Survey. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/cps/cps201.html>

³ U.S. Census Bureau, March 2001 Current Population Survey. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/cps/cps201.html>

⁴ The Ticket to Work program, currently being implemented, provides people with disabilities access to employment and training, as well as ways for “states to limit barriers to employment for people with disabilities by improving access to health care coverage under Medicare and Medicaid” even if people are working. This program is designed to address issues around finding work and keeping federal health insurance that people with disabilities face. “TWWIIA Fact Sheet.” www.hcfa.gov/medicaid/twwiia/factsh01.htm.

Section 3:

Employing Workers with Physical and Mental Disabilities: Hiring and Accommodation

A survey by Louis Harris and Associates in 2000 found that 67% of those people with disabilities who were not working wanted to work. Furthermore, a 30-year study of disabled workers and job performance conducted by Dupont E I De Nemours & Co found that workers with disabilities had high performance rates, with 90% having above-average job performance, as well as higher than normal attendance and safety records.⁵

People with disabilities want to work, and when given the chance are highly successful employees, yet many of them are not working. People with physical and mental disabilities continue to be vastly underrepresented in the American workplace. Despite measures such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal legislation mandating access to the workplace, barriers still exist to full participation by all those who want to work. For example, the 2000 Harris survey indicates that 36% of full-time employed people with disabilities say they have encountered some form of discrimination in the workplace due to their disabilities (most commonly from being denied a job, and next from being denied accommodations), and only 40% of employed people with disabilities say that their jobs require them to use their full talents and abilities, compared to 48% of people without disabilities. Today, many workplaces do not employ any people with disabilities, nor have many firms taken steps to make their workplace and business practices more accessible for people with physical or mental disabilities. This report outlines employer views on some of the barriers to work facing these adults,

and what policies may help connect them to the workforce.

According to the new *Restricted Access* data, slightly more than one-fourth (26%) of employers say that their company employs at least one worker with a physical disability or mental illness. Among firms that employ workers with disabilities, 59% of these employ one or more workers with a physical disability, while 44% say they employ one or more workers with a mental disability. The majority (85%) of employers report that their company was aware of the disability when it hired these employees.

A survey by Louis Harris and Associates in 2000 found that 67% of those people with disabilities who were not working wanted to work.

About one-fourth of employers (24%) agree that these workers required accommodation in the workplace to help them do their job. The vast majority (73%) report they did not. Nearly one-third (30%) of employers with 5-24 workers indicate that a worker required some type of workplace accommodation, compared to 17% of employers that have 25 or more workers, likely reflecting the reality that larger firms systemically make their facilities more accessible. Employers that did make accommodations indicate that modifications to the physical work environment were the most requested accommodation.

⁵ Conlin, Michelle. March 20, 2000. "The New Workforce: A tight labor market gives the disabled the chance to make permanent inroads." *Business Week*. 68.

Only a small number (9%) of employers interviewed for this survey say that they themselves have a disability. Because of this small sample size, it is impossible to determine if being disabled influences an employer's attitude toward people with disabilities in the workplace. So while it is interesting to note that nearly half (49%) of these employers say that they employ a worker with a disability, compared to 24% of other employers who say the same, these results are not statistically significant.

Firm size and type of industry do influence the likelihood that an employer has a person with a disability on staff. It follows that companies with 25 workers or more are more likely than companies that employ 5-24 workers to say that their company employs at least one worker with a physical or mental disability (42% and 20%, respectively). This figure no doubt reflects the statistical reality that if workers with disabilities were randomly distributed across all jobs in the economy, there would be a higher likelihood that a large firm would employ a person with a disability, simply because a large firm has more jobs. One interesting question is whether employees with disabilities represent a smaller proportion of all employees in small firms than in

large firms. Since the survey did not poll total firm employees, this cannot be ascertained with total confidence, but by looking at the mean number of employees with disabilities in each size class, we find that roughly 2% of employees in the smallest firms have disabilities, which appears to be larger than the percentages in the other employer size classes.

Manufacturers are the least likely to say they were aware of a worker's disability when he or she was hired, while those in hospitality services are the most likely (60% and 91%, respectively). In addition, this survey finds that larger companies are more likely than smaller companies to say they have had people with disabilities apply for positions in their company (34% and 20%, respectively). Similarly, among retail trade employers, only 18% say they have an employee with a disability, compared to 40% of employers in the hospitality services industry, 28% of those in manufacturing, and 25% of those in other industries.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires employers to provide a range of accommodations to workers with disabilities, and many employers have long been committed to ensuring these accommodations are provided. Employers have a number of resources for information about job

Fig. 3.1: Employment of People with Disabilities, by Industry

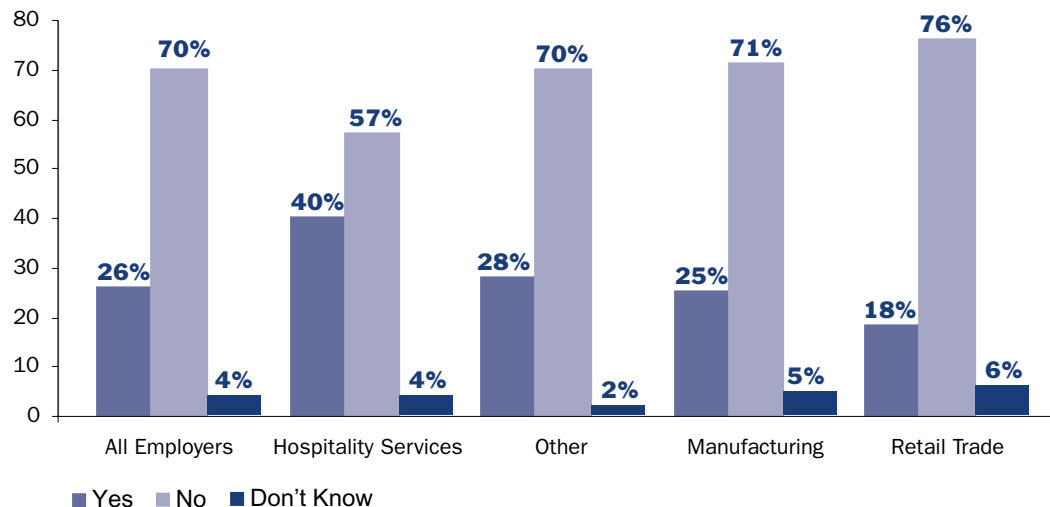
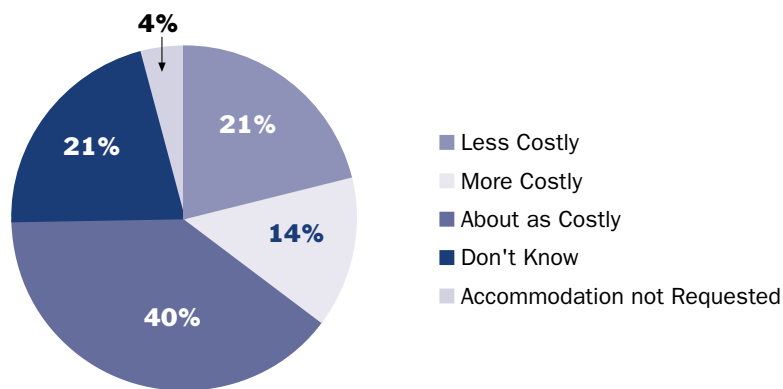


Fig. 3.2: Were the Costs of Accommodation More or Less Than what Your Company Anticipated?

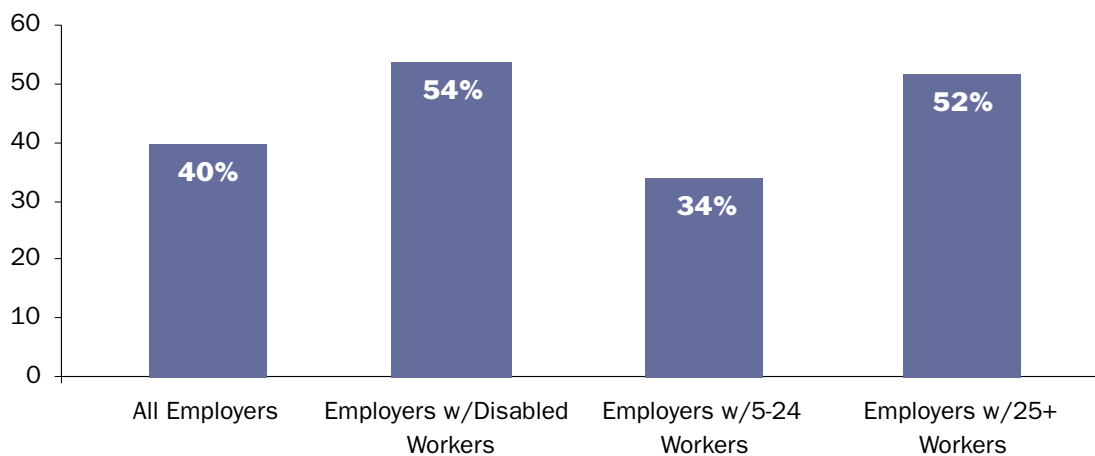


accommodation, including rehabilitation services, disability agencies, and professional journals. More than two-thirds of employers report they have consulted such resources of information, most typically using outside agencies (17%) and Internet resources (11%). Nearly one-third (30%) of employers have not used any information resources.

Significantly, only 14% of employers say that implementing these accommodations were more costly than anticipated, while 50% say the changes were less costly to

implement, or about what they expected. The majority (61%) of employers indicate that the average cost of accommodation was only \$500 or less, with 29% saying it was less than \$100. This is consistent with a December 1994 report issued by the federal Office of Disability Employment Policy's Job Accommodation Network (JAN) that reported that 68% of job accommodations made cost less than \$500, and further, that employers report that for every dollar spent on accommodations, the company received \$28 in benefits.⁶

Fig. 3.3: Share of Companies Providing Worker Training Regarding People with Disabilities, Types of Employers



⁶ See the Office of Disability Employment Policy, Job Accommodation Network, at <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/english/homeus.htm>

The survey finds that *less than half* (40%) of employers provide training of any kind to their employees regarding working with or providing accommodations to people with disabilities. Further, only 34% of companies with 5-24 workers—the small companies that are 70% of the nation’s employers—provide training to their employees in this area. More than half (52%) of larger companies employing 25 workers or more.

Companies that employ workers with disabilities are more likely than employers that do not to say they have provided training to their workers regarding working with or pro-

viding accommodations to people with disabilities (52% and 34%, respectively). Hospitality services employers are more likely than other industries to have provided such training, with half (51%) of hospitality employers indicating their company has provided training to workers on working with or providing accommodations to people with disabilities, while only 39% of manufacturing and retail trade, and 37% of other industries have done the same.

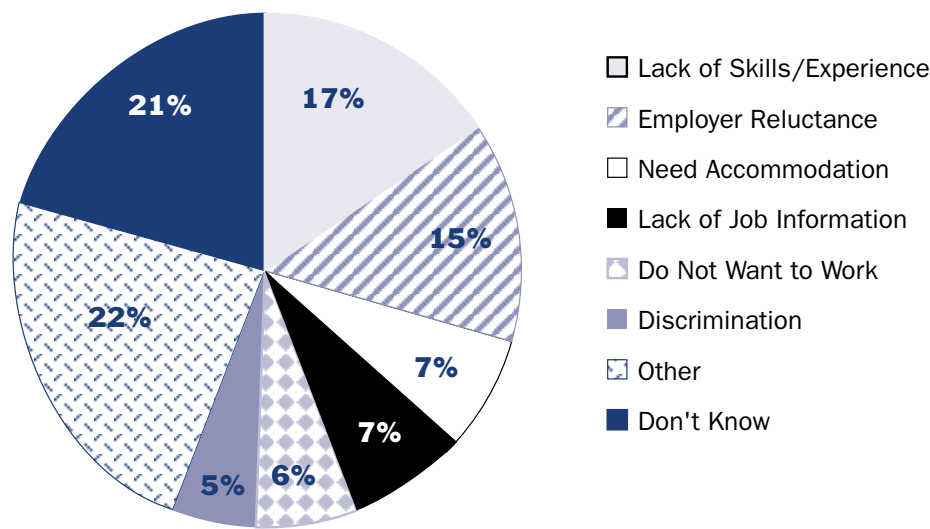
Section 4: Barriers to Employment and Policy Solutions

The lack of training programs at a majority of America’s employers represents a major barrier to people with disabilities enjoying free access to the labor market, while the positive record of training at employers who do hire people with disabilities shows that these decisions are not regretted by the employer. In this survey, employers themselves were polled regarding the greatest barriers people with disabilities face in finding employment at their firms. Nearly one-fifth (18%) report that lack of skills and experience on the part of the job seeker is the greatest barrier, while 15% cite employer reluctance to hire workers with disabilities. Other barriers include lack of information about job opportunities (7%), the need for special accommodation (7%), transportation issues (2%), and discrimination or prejudice (5%). Notably, only 6% of employers say it is because people with disabilities do not want to work.

The lack of training programs at a majority of America’s employers represents a major barrier to people with disabilities enjoying free access to the labor market, while the positive record of training at employers who do hire people with disabilities shows that these decisions are not regretted by the employer.

When asked what the greatest barrier employers themselves face in hiring people with disabilities, nearly one-third (32%) say that the nature of their company’s work is such that it cannot be effectively performed by workers with disabilities. Only 10% say that employer discomfort or unfamiliarity regarding hiring people with disabilities is the greatest barrier, while another 10% cite fear about the cost of accommodating disability. The survey’s discovery that more

Fig. 4.1: Barriers to Employment for People with Disabilities



than half of employers do not provide training in this area, suggests that more of companies' work could be performed by people with disabilities if the appropriate training was provided. In addition, the actual experience of employers surveyed for this report indicate that the cost of accommodation is generally less than \$500, and often less than anticipated.

The survey finds that physical accessibility to the workplace is a minor barrier. The majority (85%) of employers agree that their company is physically accessible to employees with disabilities, with 59% strongly agreeing.

The survey finds that physical accessibility to the workplace is a minor barrier. The majority (85%) of employers agree that their company is physically accessible to employees with disabilities, with 59% strongly agreeing. While the majority of all firms agree that their company is physically accessible, those that employ 5-24 workers are

less likely than those who employ more workers (82% and 90%, respectively) to say that their company is physically accessible. The majority (86%) of employers also agree that their company fully complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Those in retail trade are the least likely to agree that they are in compliance, while hospitality services is the most likely (89% and 82%, respectively).

However, many (40%) employers maintain that it can be difficult or costly to provide accommodations to workers with disabilities—particularly those that have no experience doing so. Smaller firms are more likely than larger firms to agree that it is generally difficult or costly to accommodate workers with disabilities (44% and 32%, respectively). Only 35% of firms with actual experience employing workers with disabilities agree that it is costly to accommodate workers with disabilities. Manufacturers have the most positive view of the cost of accommodation, with those in the retail trade industry are more likely than manufacturers to agree that accommodation is costly (33% and 45%, respectively).

Fig. 4.2: Specific Barriers Cited by Employers to Their Hiring People with Disabilities

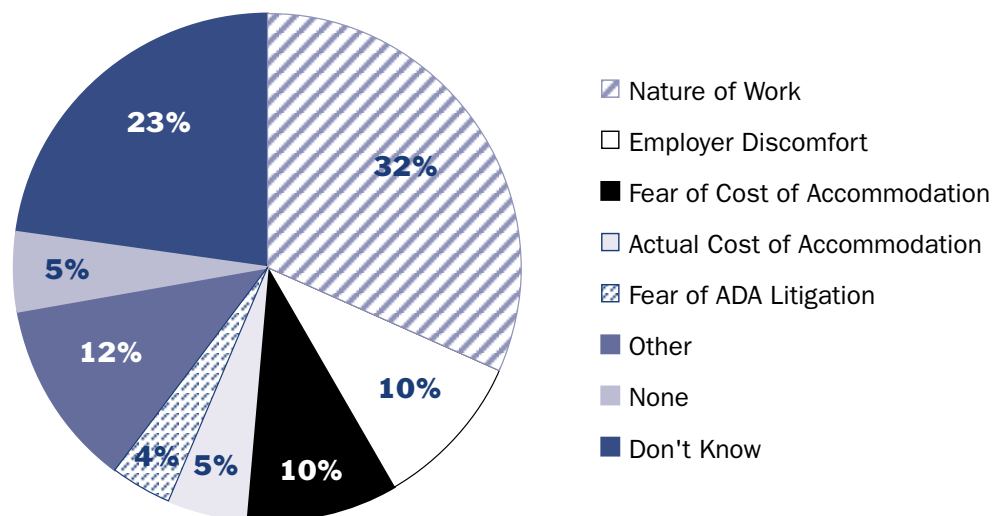
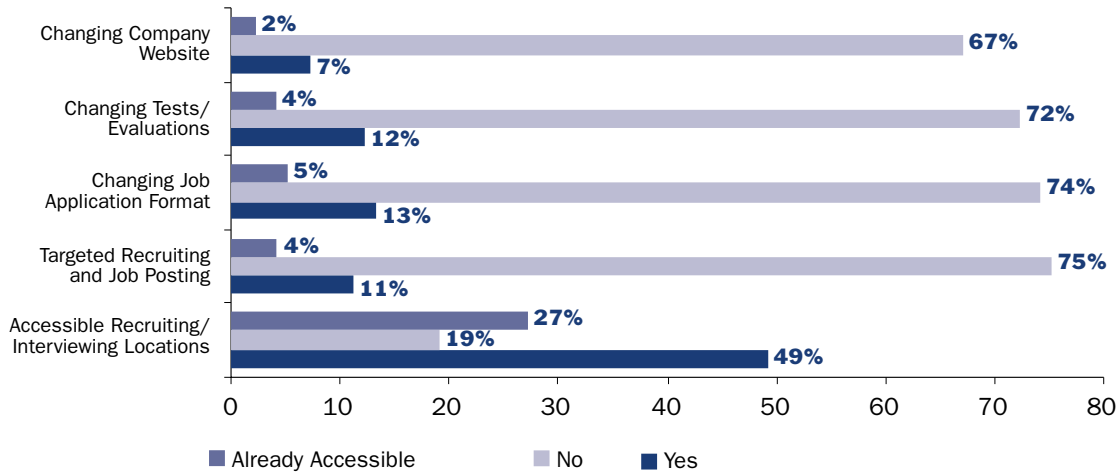


Fig. 4.3: Steps Employers Say They Have Taken to Make Their Workplace More Accessible



Some employers have made changes to their workplaces and business practices to better attract and accommodate workers with disabilities, the survey finds, including developing accessible recruiting materials and strategies, and conducting outreach to potential workers with disabilities:

- About half (49%) of employers say that they have made recruiting and interviewing locations accessible.
- Only 11% of employers say that they have developed recruiting methods and advertising job position that specifically target people with disabilities.
- Only 12% of employers have changed the format of job applications to make them more accessible, or have changed the tests or evaluations used in hiring or promotion. Even fewer (7%) say that they have changed the company’s website to make it more accessible to people with disabilities.
- In all instances, larger firms are more likely than smaller firms to have made changes to their business practices to accommodate and recruit workers with disabilities. For example, among firms with 5-24 workers, 44% say they have

made recruiting and interviewing locations accessible, compared to 62% of firms that employ 25 workers or more.

The survey finds employers are divided on the cost and importance of training, the difficulty and cost of job accommodations, and the implementation of actual changes to accommodate such workers. Employers, however, clearly see some role for themselves in ensuring that people with disabilities are treated equally in the workplace. Nearly three-fourths (74%) say that employers, government, and workers are all three equally responsible for equality in the workplace. Only 10% say that employers are primarily responsible. A substantial majority of employers support an expanded role for government in encouraging and financing programs to connect workers with disabilities to employment.

As a group, 60% of all employers agree that the federal government should offer tax incentives to employers for hiring people with disabilities, while 61% agree that the federal government should provide funds for tax incentives to employers to pay for accommodations for workers with disabili-

ties. Smaller firms are more likely than larger firms to support both of these tax incentives. For example, nearly two-thirds (63%) of employers with 5-24 workers support the idea of tax incentives to employers for hiring people with disabilities, while 64% support incentives to employers to pay for accommodations. In contrast, 52% of firms with 25 workers or more support federal tax incentives for hiring people with disabilities, and 54% support incentives to pay for accommodations for people with disabilities.

Those in the hospitality services industry are the most likely to support hiring tax incentives (possibly because they employ larger numbers of workers with disabilities than other industries), while manufacturers are the least (65% and 57%, respectively). Likewise, among employers, 56% of manufacturers agree with tax incentives to pay for accommodations, while 65% of employers in other industries say the same.

Conclusion

Thirteen years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act that mandated greater access to the workplace for people with disabilities, disability remains a barrier to entrance to the workplace. People with disabilities are underrepresented in the labor market, despite the desire and ability to work. *Restricted Access* reveals that though many employers are willing to hire people with disabilities, misconceptions regarding hiring and accommodation abound. Many employers have never hired a worker with disabilities, or provided training in making that option feasible. For those who have, the cost of accommodating these workers is often less than or about the same as expected—a pleasant surprise. Smaller employers however, are more concerned about costs than larger firms, particularly if they have no experience with these workers.

The survey points to a number of areas where employers could expand the pool of talent for recruitment into their firm by reaching more people with disabilities, at relatively little cost. Some employers have made changes to their workplaces and business practices to better attract and accommodate workers with disabilities, including developing accessible recruiting materials and strategies. However, only 11% of employers have developed recruiting methods and advertising that specifically target people with disabilities, and only 12% have changed the format of job applications to make them more accessible, or changed the tests or evaluations used in hiring or promotion. Even fewer (7%) say that they have changed the company's website to make it more accessible to people with disabilities.

The survey strongly suggests that employers would support expansions of the federal partnership and progress represented by the Americans with Disabilities Act, to allow them to more aggressively recruit, hire, train, and support workers with disabilities.

Nearly three-fourths of employers believe that employers, government, and workers should share equal burdens for equality in the workplace. Six in ten agree that the federal government should offer tax incentives to employers for hiring people with disabilities, and about the same number agree that the federal government should fund tax incentives to pay for accommodations for workers with disabilities. It is interesting to note that the surveys shows support for either type of tax incentive does not really differ according to whether or not the firm employs disabled workers, and support for tax incentives for accommodations does not differ according to whether or not the firm has made accommodations. So the firms that would appear to benefit most from these policies are not the strongest pushers of these changes. There appears to be broad, general support for these ideas.

Existing research amply demonstrates that people with disabilities are underrepresented in the labor market, and that many who are not working strongly wish to be employed and make a contribution. However long the current economic slowdown continues to restrain employment, it does not alter the new paradigm of today's labor market, where jobs and job requirements change frequently as employers respond to rapidly-shifting global market conditions. Job tenures will continue to shorten, and employer worker needs become more complex. The importance of finding workers on a rapid basis with the appropriate skills and motivation to fit appropriate jobs is an increasingly dominant challenge for corporate managers and hr leaders. With these challenges, opportunities arise for categories of workers who have faced longstanding barriers to employment, and are willing to work to overcome the confusion and lack of training that can maintain these barriers in place. Employers will benefit by making the accommodations needed to open their doors wider.

Appendix 1: Methodology

Braun Research Incorporated completed 501 interviews with businesses from November 10th through December 3rd, 2002. Businesses were selected randomly from a database of all businesses throughout the continental United States. Businesses with fewer than 5 employees were left off the sample. Colleges, Universities and government offices were ineligible to participate.

The eligible respondent was the personnel director, human resources director, or other person in charge of hiring for their respective company. The average length of the survey was 9 minutes. The sample error is +/- 4.38% at the 95% confidence level.

The sampling frame used in the *Employer Work Trends* report yields a representative sample of the nation's employers. Consistent with common practice in survey research of employers, the sample frame for *Employment Work Trends* excludes firms with fewer than 5 employees. In addition to being difficult to contact, employers with fewer than 5 employees are often self-employed individuals and consultants and are not representative of employers that hire full-time workers or make policies affecting an actual workplace. Looking at the population of workers in the United States, only 5% of workers are employed by employers with fewer than 5 employees. In addition, the sampling frame excludes public sector employers (governments and institutions of higher education) so that the results reflect the perceptions and actions of private employers.

Appendix 2: Survey Results

Hello, my name is \$I and I'm calling from Braun Research. We are conducting a brief national survey of American employers that employ at least 4 workers. May I please speak to the owner, president, or director of your firm?

Economic Issues

IQ. I'm going to read you a list of some economic issues. For each issue that I read, please tell me whether you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about this.

Q1. The state of the economy

	N=502
<i>Very concerned</i>	49%
<i>Somewhat concerned</i>	38%
<i>Not too concerned</i>	8%
<i>Not concerned at all</i>	5%
<i>Don't know</i>	0%

Q2. The current unemployment rate

	N=504
<i>Very concerned</i>	32%
<i>Somewhat concerned</i>	38%
<i>Not too concerned</i>	16%
<i>Not at all concerned</i>	13%
<i>Don't know</i>	1%

Q3. Job security for those currently working

	N=502
<i>Very concerned</i>	36%
<i>Somewhat concerned</i>	35%
<i>Not too concerned</i>	15%
<i>Not at all concerned</i>	14%
<i>Don't know</i>	1%

Q4. Your own job security

	N=502
<i>Very concerned</i>	24%
<i>Somewhat concerned</i>	19%
<i>Not too concerned</i>	18%
<i>Not concerned at all</i>	39%
<i>Don't know</i>	0%

Q5. Thinking about the job situation in America today, would you say that now is a good time or a bad time to find a quality job?

	N=502
<i>Good</i>	29%
<i>Bad</i>	60%
<i>Don't know</i>	11%

Now I am going to ask you some questions about the workers at your company.

A common definition of a person with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental condition that substantially limits one of life's major activities, such as work.

Q6. How many people does your organization or company employ? (Read choices)

	N=502
<i>5-25 people</i>	69%
<i>25-99 people</i>	16%
<i>100-249 people</i>	5%
<i>250 to 499</i>	1%
<i>500 or more people</i>	6%
<i>Don't know</i>	2%

Q7. To your knowledge, do any of your company's employees have a physical or mental disability?

	N=502
<i>Yes (Go to Q8)</i>	26%
<i>No, not to my knowledge (Go to Q12)</i>	70%
<i>Don't know (Go to Q12)</i>	4%
<i>Refused (Go to Q12)</i>	

Q8. What do you mean when you say one or more of your employees' has a disability?

Ask open-ended

[Verbatim Responses]

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, an individual with a disability is defined as a person who 1.) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; 2.) has a record of such an impairment; or 3.) is regarded as having such an impairment.

Q9. How many of the employees in your workplace have a disability?

	N=502
<i>1</i>	48%
<i>2</i>	2%
<i>3</i>	9%
<i>4</i>	2%
<i>5</i>	2%
<i>6</i>	1%
<i>7</i>	1%
<i>10</i>	1%
<i>Don't know</i>	15%

Q10a. How many of these employees have a physical disability?

	N=502
<i>None</i>	32%
<i>1</i>	45%
<i>2</i>	8%
<i>3</i>	4%
<i>4</i>	2%
<i>5</i>	1%
<i>Don't know</i>	9%

Q10b. How many of these employees have a mental disability?

	N=502
None	46%
1	27%
2	11%
3	3%
4	1%
5	1%
7	1%
10	1%
Don't know	10%

Q11. To your knowledge, was your company aware of the disability when it hired any of these employees?

	N=502
Yes (Go to Q13a)	85%
No (Go to Q12)	12%
Don't Know (Go to Q13a)	3%

Q12. If your place of business has never knowingly hired someone with a disability, have you had any people with disabilities apply for positions in your company?

	N=502
Yes (Go to Q18)	24%
No (Go to Q18)	66%
Don't know	10%

Q13a. Did any of your workers require any type of workplace accommodation for their disability?

	N=502
Yes (if yes, go to Q13b)	24%
No (Go to Q17)	73%
Don't Know (Go to Q17)	3%

Q13b. How many of your workers required accommodation?

	N=502
0	7%
1	64%
2	7%
3	7%
4	4%
Don't know	11%

Q14. I'm going to read you a list of possible accommodations a worker might request. Please tell me if you have ever provided one of these accommodations to an employee at your place of business.

	N=502
Modifications to physical environment (e.g., ramps, adapt desk to wheelchair)	46%
A job reassignment	21%
Change worker's job tasks	7%
Change worker's work hours (e.g., job-sharing or flextime)	11%
Allow worker to work at home and telecommute	4%
Provide technology to help worker function in the workplace (such as voice recognition software or a specially designed computer keyboard)	4%
Other (Please describe)	4%
Don't know	4%

Q15. What is the average cost of the accommodations you have provided?

	N=502
under \$100	29%
\$100-500	32%
\$500-1000	11%
\$1000-5000	11%
\$5000 or more	4%
Don't know	14%

Q16. Were the costs of accommodation more or less than what your company anticipated?

	N=502
Less costly to implement than anticipated	21%
More costly to implement than anticipated	14%
About what was anticipated	39%
Accommodation was not requested	4%
Don't know	21%

Q17. What resources have you used for information about job accommodations?

	N=502
Outside agencies	17%
Internet resources	11%
Professional journals	4%
Rehabilitation services	5%
Government documents	5%
Disability agencies	7%
Other (please describe)	1%
None	30%
Don't know	10%
Internal H.R.	4%
Personal Knowledge	4%
Newspaper	1%

Q18. At your place of business, has your company provided training to any of its employees on working with or providing accommodations to people with disabilities?

	N=502
Yes	40%
No	53%
Don't know	8%

Q19. In your opinion, what is the greatest barrier to people with disabilities finding employment? (open-ended, pre-coded)

	N=502
Lack of skills and experience on the part of the job seeker with disabilities	17%
Lack of information about job opportunities	7%
Need for special accommodations in the workplace	7%
Reluctance of employers to hire people with disabilities	15%
Other	9%
Don't know	22%
People with disabilities do not want to work	6%
Discrimination/Prejudice	5%
Transportation getting to work	2%
Physical limitations due to the disability	3%
Just need to be given a chance	2%
Persons attitude lack of confidence in themselves	2%

Economy/lack of jobs in general 1%
 Finding a job they can perform 2%

Q20. In your opinion, what is the greatest barrier to employers hiring people with disabilities? (open-ended, pre-coded)

N=502

Employer discomfort/unfamiliarity regarding hiring people with disabilities 10%
 Fear of cost of accommodation 10%
 Actual cost of accommodating disability 5%
 Fear of litigation under the Americans with Disabilities Act 4%
 Nature of work is such that it cannot be effectively performed by people with disabilities 32%
 Other 9%
 Don't know 23%
 Lack of knowledge/information on the disabled 3%
 None I dont think there are any 5%

Now I am going to ask you a few questions about your employees...

Q21. Are any of your employees covered by a collective bargaining contract?

N=502

Yes (Go to Q21a) 5%
 No (Go to Q23) 83%
 Don't Know (Go to Q23) 13%

Q22a. Have any employees covered by the contract received accommodations for a disability?

N=502

Yes 17%
 No 58%
 Don't know 25%

Q22b. Does this contract have any provision regarding procedures or accommodations for employees or job applicants with disabilities?

N=502

Yes 42%
 No 25%
 Don't know 33%

I am going to read you a series of statements pertaining to your company and people with disabilities. Please tell me if you agree with the statements for your company. The choices will be strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Q23. My company is physically accessible to employees with disabilities.

N=502

Strongly Agree 59%
 Somewhat Agree 26%
 Neither Agree nor Disagree 3%
 Somewhat Disagree 6%
 Strongly Disagree 4%
 Don't know 2%

Q24. My company fully complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

N=502

Strongly Agree 70%
 Somewhat Agree 16%
 Neither Agree nor Disagree 4%
 Somewhat Disagree 1%
 Strongly Disagree 1%
 Don't know 8%

Q25. It is generally difficult or costly to provide accommodations to workers with disabilities.

N=502

Strongly Agree 14%
 Somewhat Agree 27%
 Neither Agree nor Disagree 11%
 Somewhat Disagree 22%
 Strongly Disagree 20%
 Don't know 7%

Now I am going to ask you some questions about your workplace. Have you made any of the following changes to the following areas to make your place of business more accessible to people with disabilities?

N=502

Q26. Making recruiting and interviewing locations accessible.

Yes 49%
 No 19%
 Already fully accessible (volunteered) 27%
 Don't know 5%

Q27. Developing recruiting methods and advertising job positions that specifically target people with disabilities.

N=502

Yes 11%
 No 75%
 Already fully accessible (volunteered) 4%
 Don't know 9%

Q28. Changing the format of job applications.

N=502

Yes 13%
 No 74%
 Already fully accessible (volunteered) 5%
 Don't Know 9%

Q29. Changing tests or evaluations used in hiring or promotion.

N=502

Yes 12%
 No 72%
 Already fully accessible (volunteered) 4%
 Don't Know 11%

Q30. Changing your company's web site.

	N=502
Yes	7%
No	67%
Already fully accessible (volunteered)	2%
Don't know	25%

Now I would like to ask you some questions about policies regarding people with disabilities

Q31. Who do you think is primarily responsible for ensuring that people with disabilities are treated equally in the workplace?

	N=502
Government	5%
Employers	10%
Workers	1%
All three equally	74%
Government and employers (Volunteered)	3%
Government and workers (Volunteered)	0%
Workers and employers (Volunteered)	5%
None of the above	1%
Don't know	1%

Q32. The federal government should offer tax incentives to employers for hiring people with disabilities.

	N=502
Strongly Agree	30%
Somewhat Agree	30%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13%
Somewhat Disagree	14%
Strongly Disagree	10%
Don't know	3%

Q33. The federal government should provide funds or tax incentives to employers to pay for accommodations for people with disabilities

	N=502
Strongly Agree	29%
Somewhat Agree	33%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12%
Somewhat Disagree	15%
Strongly Disagree	9%
Don't know	3%

ID1. Now, I just have a few questions for classification purposes.

I am going to read you a list of general activities undertaken by firms, please tell me the one that most closely corresponds to the primary work done by your business.

	N=502
Read choices	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	3%
Mining	0%
Construction	9%
Manufacturing	11%
Transportation, Communications, Electric, and Gas	8%
Sanitary Services	1%
Wholesale Trade	3%
Retail trade	28%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate Services	7%
Public Administration	1%
Other (specify)	4%
DK/ref	0%
Healthcare	6%
Hospitality Services	17%

D2. Which best describes your business or organization? Is it a... (Readchoices 1-4)

	N=502
Private, for profit business	92%
A non-profit organization	5%
Other (specify)	0%
DK/ref	2%

D3. For how long has your company or organization been in business?

	N=502
0-5 years	13%
6-10 years	13%
11-15 years	12%
16-20 years	8%
20+ years	50%
Don't Know	4%

D4. In what state is your business located?

List States

D5. Do you yourself have a disability?

	N=502
Yes	9%
No	91%
Don't Know	0%

Thank you for your time and cooperation. That's all the questions I have.

	N=502
Gender	
Male	51%
Female	49%



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