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Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Needs Assessment: Employer Survey

Prepared by:

Julie Robison, PhD

Kathy Kellett, MA

Irene Reed, MA

Noreen Shugrue, JD, MBA, MA

Alison Kleppinger, MA

Sarah Rosenblum - student

University of Connecticut

Health Center

263 Farmington Ave.

Farmington, CT 06030-5215

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) is funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), designed to support the competitive employment of people with disabilities, and was awarded to the Connect to Work Center at the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Connecticut Department of Social Services. The grant is intended to facilitate improvements to the state Medicaid program and services, to promote linkages between Medicaid and other employment-related service agencies and to develop a comprehensive system of employment supports for people with disabilities.

The MIG Steering Committee adopted the name “Connect-Ability” to refer to both the entire MIG effort and to the statewide technical assistance center, designed to be the premier state resource center for employment information at the individual, programmatic and policy levels.

To further the strategic planning process for the successful employment of people with disabilities in Connecticut, a second MIG Needs Assessment was conducted in 2011. Similar to the 2006 Needs Assessment, employers, service providers and people with disabilities were surveyed. The purpose of the Employer Survey was to learn more about employment practices and issues experienced by various employers across Connecticut related to employing people with disabilities, and to compare these results with what was learned from the 2006 Needs Assessment.

Background

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination in all employment practices against qualified individuals with disabilities and guarantees equal opportunity in employment (Wooten & James, 2005), implementation remains slow and people with disabilities continue to represent a largely untapped pool of labor (Harris Interactive, 2010).

While disability is on the radar for some employers, most are not hiring people with disabilities even though they recognize the importance of doing so, and few are proactively striving to make positive changes in the employment environment for these workers (Harris Interactive, 2010).

Needs assessments and stakeholder feedback regarding ways to close the gap between desired goals and present conditions are crucial to overcoming barriers and creating a better employment environment for people with disabilities.

Methodology and Analysis

The primary method of data collection was a questionnaire that asked employers to provide information about their company, job accommodations the company provides, the experiences and attitudes employers have toward recruiting and hiring people with disabilities, and services and programs related to employees with disabilities that employers have used. Additional questions asked employers about their familiarity with Connect-Ability and what comments they would like to share on the topic of disability and employment.

The sample included 173 employers from 9 business membership organizations representing a broad range of industry sectors.

Survey responses were collected in a secured database and analyzed question by question, with a series of basic indicators including frequency, average, and percentage. Qualitative data from one open-ended question were analyzed line by line in order to identify and interpret content and were coded and organized into common themes.

Results

Of the organizations who participated in the survey:

- 54% of respondents were either the CEO or CFO of their organizations
- 61% were for profit businesses
- 31% employed between 10 and 49 people while almost half employed 50 or more
- The types of businesses represented were diverse, including healthcare (16%), agriculture (16%), long term care (12%), manufacturing and industry (10%), and government (7%) organizations
- Compared to the 2006 Needs Assessment about the same percentage of employers were CEO/CFO/business owners (54% vs. 56%, respectively), but a lower percentage were supervisors or managers (12% vs. 20%, respectively) and a greater percentage were human resource personnel (27% vs. 8%, respectively)

Practices and experiences employing individuals with disabilities:

- 47% of respondents have employed someone with a disability, an increase over the 34% reported in 2006, despite the economic downturn
- The most common job categories for people with disabilities within their organizations included entry level/unskilled jobs (59%), secretarial positions (58%), and professional (46%)
- Over half of employers were willing to provide job accommodations to the physical environment (53%), change the employee's work hours (56%), or change the employee's job tasks or provide a job reassignment (58%)
- 77% of employers indicated they would hire people with disabilities if they had the skills
- Compared to the 2006 Needs Assessment, a lower percentage of employers would hire more people with disabilities if they had the skills and experience needed (77% vs. 90%, respectively), however, a greater percentage of employers agreed that their company does a good job of matching jobs and abilities for employees with disabilities (71% vs. 50%, respectively) and that their company actively encourages job applications from people with disabilities (64% vs. 59%, respectively)

Attitudes about people with disabilities

Although most employers (67%) agreed that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages of hiring people with disabilities, 70 percent of respondents believe employers remain reluctant to hire someone with a known disability.

In comparison to the 2006 Needs Assessment, about the same percentage of employers agreed that employers are generally reluctant to hire someone who they know has a disability (70% vs. 71%, respectively) and a slightly greater percentage of employers agreed that the benefits outweigh the costs of hiring an employee with a disability (67% vs. 56%, respectively).

Programs and policies

Employer recommendations included the importance of policies, programs, and practices focusing on the ability, capability, and experience of people to do the work. These suggestions would improve the employment environment for people with disabilities and include: a potential

employee pool for employers to recruit pre-screened, qualified people (81%); job accommodations or tax incentives (80%); a centralized resource center as a single point of entry (74%), and job boards for employers to post available jobs targeting people with disabilities (71%).

Connect-Ability

Employers were asked about their familiarity with Connect-Ability. Responses indicate that the educational impact of Connect-Ability should not be overlooked or underestimated. Thirty-eight percent of employers were familiar with Connect-Ability with most having heard about it through the television.

Employer comments

In a request for additional comments, some employers stated they are already benefitting from the abilities of people with disabilities while others stated they would not consider hiring people with disabilities. Some employers suggested that they would be more likely to hire people with disabilities if they could determine the ability and capability of a person prior to making a commitment to hiring.

Additional analyses

Two secondary analyses were completed in order to view the data through a different lens. The first analyses explored variations by legal status (e.g., profit, not for profit, government) and the second explored differences by type of business or industrial sector. In both analyses, significant differences were noted in employer practices and experiences and employer attitudes.

Conclusions

This study confirms previous state and national research on the continuing mixed attitudes and results regarding the employment of people with disabilities. While employers from different businesses and organizations responded in 2006 and 2011, it does not appear that there has been a significant change in employer attitudes and practices in the past several years. There are, however, some areas of progress and hope amid the mixed outcomes: More employers report that they employ people with disabilities despite the worsening economy during this period, and Connect-Ability has achieved some brand recognition in a relatively short time, with nearly 40 percent of employers reporting familiarity with it.

On the negative side, this set of employers seems less willing to provide accommodations than their 2006 counterparts. Although certain industry sectors have made more progress than others, it appears that the greatest challenges remain with for-profit employers.

Connect-Ability should use the results of this report and its growing name recognition to focus its future efforts on the identified gaps in employer knowledge, attitudes and practices. It should consider putting resources towards the programs and policies that employers identified as helpful and should target the industry sectors that appear to lag behind in employment policies, attitudes and practices.

Results of this study will be useful to Connect-Ability and its agency partners in working with employers to assist them in achieving their common goals. Study outcomes will also provide employers and other stakeholders with information to enable them to improve organizational programs and policies that will create a better employment environment for people with disabilities.

I. Introduction

The Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) is funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and designed to support the competitive employment of people with disabilities. Awarded to the Connect to Work Center at the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Connecticut Department of Social Services, the grant is intended to facilitate improvements to the state Medicaid program and services, to promote linkages between Medicaid and other employment-related service agencies and to develop a comprehensive system of employment supports for people with disabilities. The MIG Steering Committee adopted the name “Connect-Ability” to refer to both the entire MIG effort and to the statewide technical assistance center, designed to be the premier state resource center for employment information at the individual, programmatic and policy levels.

To achieve these goals and strengthen the employment infrastructure for Connecticut residents with disabilities, Connecticut is implementing a comprehensive, statewide strategic plan. As a first step in the strategic planning process, beginning in January 2006 the Connect to Work Center contracted with the University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) to conduct a statewide needs assessment for the MIG. With direct guidance from the MIG Steering Committee, the UCHC research team developed a multi-pronged approach to contact people with disabilities, employers, and service providers throughout Connecticut to assess their experiences, attitudes, and observations about employment for persons with disabilities. Distinct research activities and results of the 2006 assessment are available at http://www.connect-ability.com/media/pdf/research/Final_MIG_Needs_Assessment_with_appendices_8-31-06.pdf/.

To assess the progress made in the implementation of the strategic plan for the successful employment of people with disabilities, and to provide data to inform the continuing priorities of Connect-Ability, a second MIG Needs Assessment was conducted in 2011. Similar to the 2006 Needs Assessment, employers, service providers and people with disabilities were surveyed. Research activities and results of the 2011 reports on service providers and people with disabilities are available at <http://www.connect-ability.com/media/pdf/research>.

II. Background

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination in all employment practices against qualified individuals with disabilities and guarantees equal opportunity in employment (Wooten & James, 2005). More than two decades after the enactment of the ADA, however, progress in implementation remains slow and people with disabilities continue to represent a largely untapped pool of labor (Harris Interactive, 2010).

According to the Census Bureau in 2005, approximately 55 million Americans (19%), or one in five people, reported some level of disability (Brault, 2008). In the same year in the United States, there were approximately 22 million working-age people with disabilities; about 13 million of these were unemployed and 8 million were employed (Lengnick-Hall, Gaunt, & Kulkarni, 2008). Of the estimated 8 million who were employed, only about 2 million were employed full-time (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2008).

If people with disabilities are available to work, as the statistics indicate, and employers are seeking sources of workers, why aren't more people with disabilities being considered for and obtaining employment? Highlights of the *2010 Survey of Employment of Americans with*

Disabilities indicate that overall while disability is on the radar for some employers, most are not hiring people with disabilities even though they recognize the importance of doing so, and few are proactively striving to make positive changes in the employment environment for them (Harris Interactive, 2010). Many employers participating in surveys about hiring people with disabilities have conflicted attitudes with some identifying the benefits and others reporting the perceived disadvantages of employing people with disabilities (Dewson, Ritchie, & Meager, 2005; Hernandez, Keys, & Balcazar, 2000, Lyth, 1973). Perceived disadvantages include job qualification and performance concerns, costs associated with reasonable accommodations, and reactions and responses of others (e.g., coworkers reacting negatively to working with people with disabilities) (Dixon, Kruse, & Van Horn, 2003; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2008; Wooten & James, 2005).

Barriers to employment have imposed significant economic and social costs on society and have undermined many well-intentioned efforts to rehabilitate and employ people with disabilities. The divide existing between service providers and employers is a major barrier that needs to be overcome in addressing the high unemployment rate of people with disabilities (Unger, Wehman, Yasuda, Campbell, & Green, 2002). Employers who are hiring people with disabilities tend to use informal methods, such as referrals, to recruit employees with disabilities (Carey, Potts, Bryen, & Shankar, 2004; Rankin, 2003) and do not use service provider agencies to the full extent because they don't understand the benefits these agencies offer in matching a qualified candidate's skills with employer needs (Harris Interactive, 2010).

Recent research (Harris Interactive, 2010) demonstrates that compared to 1995:

- fewer companies today have a disability policy or program (66% vs. 29%, respectively)
- only one in five companies currently has a specific person/department to oversee the hiring of people with disabilities (40% vs. 19%, respectively)
- fewer companies offer disability-related education programs (63% vs. 18%, respectively)
- fewer employers in 2010 report hiring people with disabilities (64% vs. 56%, respectively)

These findings underscore the need for assessments and the importance of stakeholder feedback in gaining some understanding of a way to close the gap between desired goals and present conditions.

III. Methodology and Analysis

Survey instrument

The survey questionnaire was based on the questions asked in the 2006 Needs Assessment mail-in survey, focus groups and key informant interviews with employers. The questions included: information about the company; what types of job accommodations have been provided; what experiences and attitudes employers have toward recruiting and hiring people with disabilities; what types of services and programs related to employees with disabilities employers have used and what would be useful, and familiarity with Connect-Ability.

There were a total of 14 questions. Thirteen of the questions were closed and one was an open-ended optional question (Appendix A). The survey was designed to take about 10 to 15 minutes and was provided as a web-based survey.

Survey data were collected remotely via a secured website and were collected anonymously without any identifying information links to the employer. The employer survey utilized a single identifier code to enter the survey website for all employer participants.

Research sample

The target research sample consisted of approximately 4,500 employers. A total of 11 business membership organizations were identified representing businesses and organizations from the following industry sectors: for-profit business, nonprofits, healthcare, long-term care, secondary education, government, hospitality and entertainment and agriculture (Table 1).

Table 1. Businesses and Organizations

Sector	Membership Organization	Estimated Members	Agreed to Participate
For Profit Business	Connecticut Business and Industry Association	3,000	Yes
Not for Profit Organizations	Connecticut Association of NonProfits	515	Yes
Healthcare/Hospitals	Connecticut Hospital Association	140	Yes
Long-term Care	Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities, Inc.	109	Yes
	Connecticut Association for Homecare and Hospice	139	Yes
	Connecticut Association of Not-for- Profit Providers for the Aging	130	Yes
Higher Education	Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges	16	Yes
Government	Connecticut Conference of Municipalities	_____	No
Hospitality & Entertainment	Connecticut Restaurant Association	_____	No
	Connecticut Lodging Association	80	Yes
Agriculture	Connecticut Farm Bureau Association	400	Yes

Recruitment

Requests were made by the UCHC research team to the 11 identified membership organizations to ask for their assistance in distributing an invitational letter to various businesses and organizations. Nine of the 11 membership organizations agreed to participate.

Notification to businesses and organizations was done by mass email to association members. An invitation letter was sent in the email briefly describing the purpose of the survey and how the survey would be conducted. A template of the invitation letter was provided to the participating associations and was personalized by each association as appropriate (Appendix B). Up to three reminder emails with the invitational letter went out to the association membership to increase the response rate.

The businesses and organizations were able to confidentially contact the UCHC research team with any questions via email. All communications received and sent were maintained confidentially by the research team.

To encourage businesses and organizations to participate an incentive was provided. All businesses and organizations who submitted a completed survey were offered the opportunity to voluntarily enter their email address into a separate database to be eligible for one of ten \$50 gift cards. The email addresses were maintained confidentially and separately from the survey responses.

Response rate

Approximately 4500 businesses in Connecticut received e-mail invitations. Two hundred-fourteen business CEOs or other employees of that business opened the survey. Of the 214, 41 did not complete any of the questions. One hundred forty-six employers completed the entire survey. Twenty-seven surveys were complete at least through question 6, and were included in the data. These 173 surveys represent a four percent response rate (Table 2).

Table 2. Final Response Rate

Survey Responses and Final Response Rate	
Approximate number of invitations e-mailed	4500
Total number of surveys opened	214
Total number of surveys opened but no data entered	41
Number of fully completed surveys	146
Number of partially completed surveys	27
Final Response Rate: $173/4500=4\%$	

The response rate for this assessment was lower than the 2006 Needs Assessment, which used a mailed survey format, but while less than anticipated, represents a range of company sizes and industry groups in the state. In 2008 in Connecticut, there were 2,063 large employers (500+ employees) and 73,779 small employers (< 500 employees) (U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, 2011). While small companies made up 97.3 percent of the state's employers (U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, 2011), nationally Connecticut ranked 34th in businesses employing 2-9 employees and 44th in employing 10-99 employees (Welch, 2011). Connecticut has a broad base of large businesses in a diverse group of sectors and is ranked seventh in the country in employers who employ 500 or more workers (Welch, 2011). Excluding government, Connecticut Department of Labor (2010) statistics show that most state work sites (78%) have less than 10 employees, 18 percent employ 10-49 employees, 4 percent employ 50-249 employees and less than 1 percent employ 250 or more employees. The 2011 Needs Assessment data differ proportionally from the state distribution: 22 percent of responding employers employ less than 10 employees, 31 percent employ 10 to 49, 25 percent employ 50-249, and 22 percent employ more than 250 employees. However, this sample evenly represents employers from each company size. Further, the industry sectors represented align closely with industries statewide (see Figure 4 and Table 6 below).

For populations that consistently use the Internet, the Web is a cost effective way to conduct research, however, some studies suggest that response rates for Web surveys may not match those of mail surveys (Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004). A meta-analysis comparing response rates for Web and mail surveys found that on average Web survey modes have a 10 percent lower response rate (Shih & Fan, 2008). Although more research is needed, explanations for differences in response rates between the two types of surveys may be related to methods including the more established elements used in mail surveys such as the use of personalization, pre-contact letters, follow-up post cards, and incentives (Kaplowitz, et al., 2004). Other major concerns for potential Web survey participants that may also impact response rates involve population types (Shih & Fan, 2008) and Internet security such as receipt of electronic "junk mail" and "spam" (Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004).

Analysis

The survey responses were collected in a secured database. Data were exported for analysis using SPSS 19.0, a statistical software package designed for both simple and complex analyses. Data were analyzed question by question, with a series of basic indicators computed: frequency, average, and percentage. All responses were summarized as a group and also by legal status and industry sector subgroup analysis. Descriptive statistics include descriptions of the businesses' and organizations' characteristics (Q1-6) and summary analysis of responses to questions about company experience (Q7-13).

Qualitative data from the one open-ended question (Q14) were analyzed line by line in order to identify and interpret content. The responses were coded and organized into common themes using the constant comparative technique of Glaser and Strauss (1967).

IV. Results

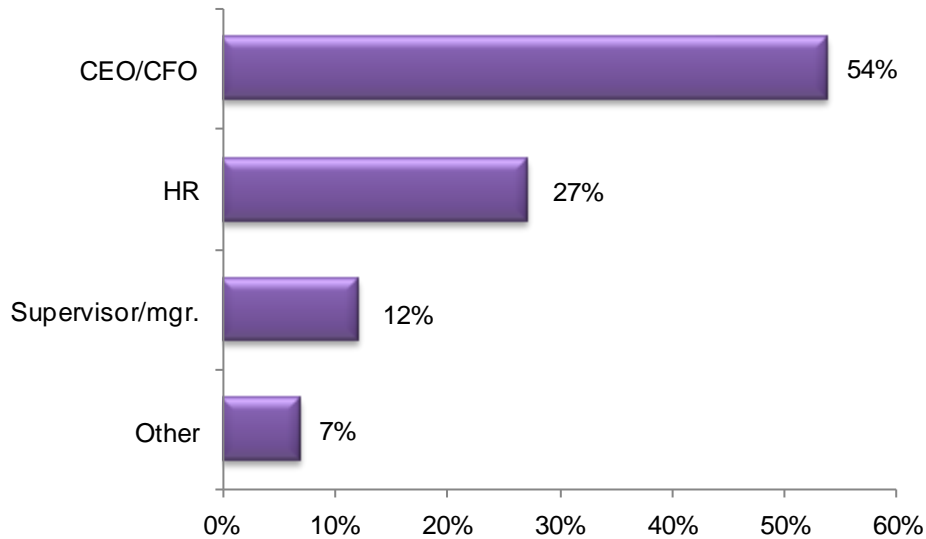
In each result section, the 2011 Needs Assessment are presented first and where applicable are followed by a comparison to the results of the 2006 Needs Assessment.

Company demographics

Job title

Of those who responded to the survey, over half (54%) were either the CEO or CFO of their organization. Over one-fourth of those who filled out the survey represented their company's human resources office. Twelve percent were either a manager or supervisor and seven percent indicated "other" including administrator, accounting, or secretary (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Job title



Compared to the 2006 Needs Assessment about the same percentage of employers were CEO/CFO/business owners (54% vs. 56%, respectively), but a lower percentage were supervisors or managers (12% vs. 20%, respectively) and a greater percentage were human resource personnel (27% vs. 8%, respectively). The "other" category had a 16% response, compared to only 7 percent in the 2011 Needs Assessment, and demonstrated diversity among participants in terms of the kind of job titles respondents have (e.g., attorney, politician, pathologist, pastor, secretary).

Location of business

There was a broad distribution of responses by zip code. Several zip codes had four or more businesses represented. These results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Zip codes

Town	Zip Code	Frequency	Percent
Wallingford	06492	6	3.5%
Hartford	06106	5	2.9%
New Haven	06525	5	2.9%
Avon	06001	4	2.3%
West Hartford	06107	4	2.3%

All eight Connecticut counties were represented in the responses. There were a total of 170 valid zip codes; one was invalid and two were missing. The greatest percentage of respondents reported businesses located in Hartford County (33%); this was followed by New Haven (22%) and Fairfield (17%) counties (Table 4).

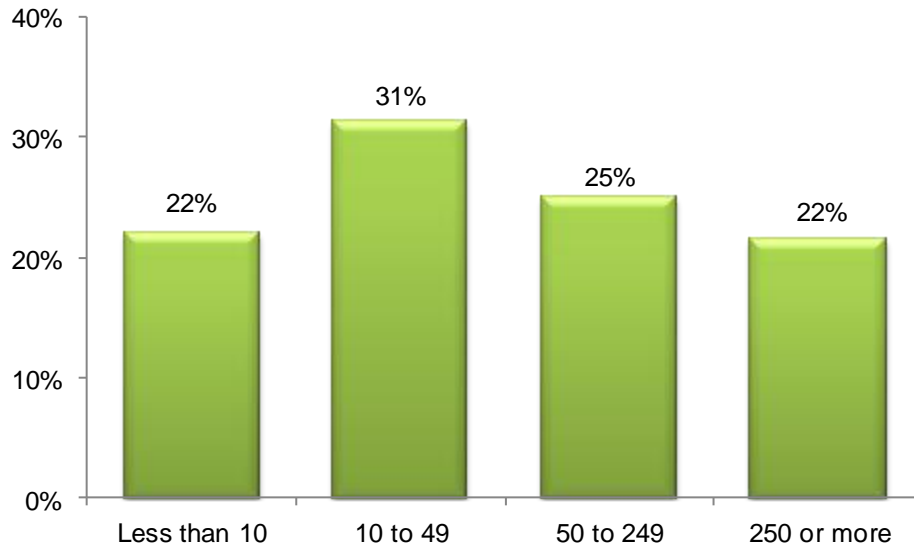
Table 4. Geographic distribution by county

County	Number of respondents	Percent
Hartford	57	33.3
New Haven	37	21.8
Fairfield	28	16.5
Middlesex	11	6.6
Windham	11	6.6
New London	10	6.0
Litchfield	9	5.4
Tolland	7	3.6
Invalid zip code	1	
Missing zip codes	2	
Total number of valid zip codes	170	

Number of employees

Employers indicated the number of Connecticut-based employees who worked in their company. Given specific parameters, the employers selected a business of less than 10 employees (22%), 10 to 49 employees (31%), 50 to 249 employees (25%), and 250 or more employees (22%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. How many employees does your organization have in the state of Connecticut?



Compared to the 2006 Needs Assessment, a lower percentage of respondents represented companies reporting less than 10 employees (22% vs. 35%, respectively) and greater percentage reported 10-49 employees (31% vs. 26%, respectively). The same percentage of respondents in both evaluations reported companies with 50-249 employees (25%). Compared to the earlier assessment, a greater percentage of employers reported companies of 250 or more employees (22% vs. 13%, respectively).

Compared to 2010 statewide statistics, which exclude government employers, a greater percentage of surveyed companies reported employing 10-49 people (31% vs. 18%, respectively) and 50-249 employees (25% vs. 4%). Compared to businesses throughout the state, fewer companies employed less than 10 employees (22% vs. 78%) and more companies employed 250 or more employees (22% vs. 0.5%, respectively) (Table 5).

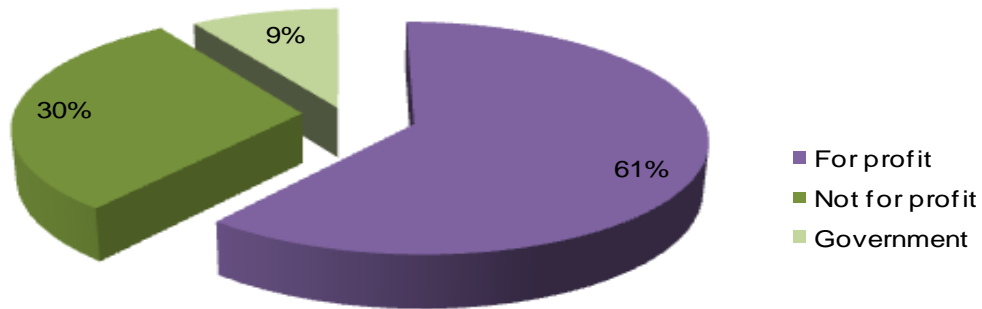
Table 5. Statewide worksites by size class

Size Class	Number of employees	Worksites		Employment	
		Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
1	Less than 10	83,651	78	220,545	16
2	10-49	19,257	18	389,615	28
3	50-249	4,245	4	424,194	31
4	250 or more	501	0.5	345,158	25

Source – Adapted from Worksites by Size Class (Fourth Quarter – 2010):
ct.dol.ct.us/lmi/202/worksites.asp

Employers also indicated the legal status of their organization as either for profit (61%), not for profit (39%) or a government entity (9%) (Figure 3).

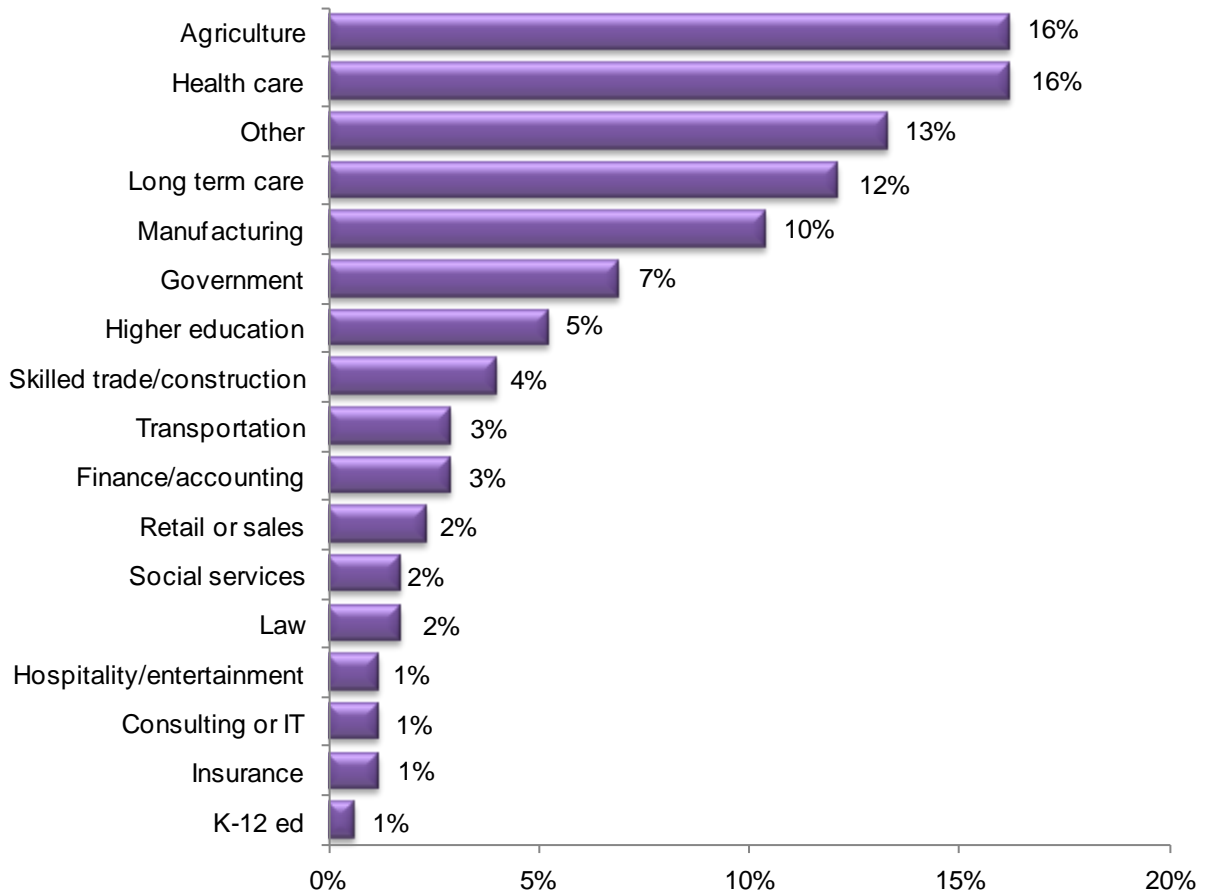
Figure 3. Legal status of organization



Type of business

Employers who responded to the 2011 Needs Assessment represented diverse types of businesses. The greatest percentage of those who responded were businesses devoted to healthcare (16%) or agriculture (16%), and businesses associated with long-term care (12%). The “other” category (13%) included horse farm, architecture, consumer/business information service, environmental testing laboratory, lawn care and pest control, outdoor advertising and utilities. Ten percent of those who responded were in the manufacturing business, seven percent in government, and five percent in higher education (Figure 4).

Figure 4. What is your organization's primary business?



Similar to the 2011 Needs Assessment, employers who responded to the 2006 assessment represented diverse types of businesses. In the earlier assessment some of the more commonly indicated responses included: retail/sales (12%), manufacturing/industry (9%), healthcare (7%), and finance/accounting (8%).

The Connecticut Department of Labor (2011) lists types of businesses in the following ten industrial sectors: Construction; Manufacturing; Trade, Transportation and Utilities; Information; Financial Activities; Professional and Business Services; Educational and Health Services; Leisure and Hospitality; Other Services and Government. Table 6 shows the number of employees for each sector as of September 2011. Educational and health services report the greatest number of employees (317,000). This is followed by Trade, transportation and utilities (291,800), and Government (238,900). The sector employing the least number of people is Information (31,700).

Table 6. Connecticut industrial sectors and number of employees

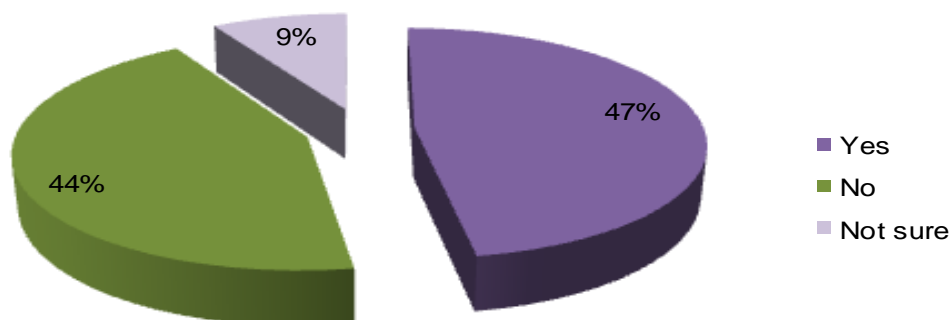
Industrial sector	Number of employees
Construction	50,200
Manufacturing	167,900
Trade, transportation and utilities	291,800
Information (e.g., publishing industries including newspapers)	31,700
Financial activities	132,600
Professional and business services	193,400
Educational and health services	317,000
Leisure and hospitality	133,800
Other services (e.g., repair and maintenance services; religious, grantmaking, civic, and professional organizations)	59,300
Government - includes federal employees (17,600), state employees (67,800), and local government employees including tribal governments and their gaming establishments (153,500)	238,900

Source – Adapted from Connecticut Labor Market Information:
<http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/SecEmp.asp>

Disability defined

The survey defines a disability as any physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of a person’s major life activities, significantly impairs physical or mental health, or requires special education, vocational rehabilitation or related services. Major life activities include: walking, seeing, hearing, learning, self-care, speaking, lifting, reaching, thinking, performing manual tasks, breathing, working and interacting with others. Employers responded by indicating whether or not their organization employed anyone with a disability or if they were not sure. Nearly half of the organizations did employ someone with a disability while 44 percent did not. Nine percent of the group were unsure (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Does your organization employ anyone with a disability?



Compared to the 2006 Needs Assessment, a greater percentage of respondents reported that their company employs one or more individuals with a disability (47% vs. 34%, respectively).

Types of jobs for people with disabilities

Employers who responded to the survey indicated what they thought would be the types of jobs that people with disabilities could hold within their company. They could check multiple categories including managers and senior officials, sales and customer service, professional occupations, entry level or unskilled occupations (i.e., cashiers, waiters, attendants, custodial), technical or skilled trade occupations, secretarial or administrative assistants or other (specify).

The highest percentage of employers selected entry level/unskilled (59%) or secretarial (58%) as types of jobs within their organization that people with disabilities could hold. Nearly half of the employers (46%) selected professional occupations, and 42 percent indicated that people with disabilities would be qualified to be managers or senior officials. Forty-one percent of the employers selected sales and customer service positions, while 37 percent chose either technical or skilled trade as a suitable position for a person with a disability. The “other” category yielded some comments, such as

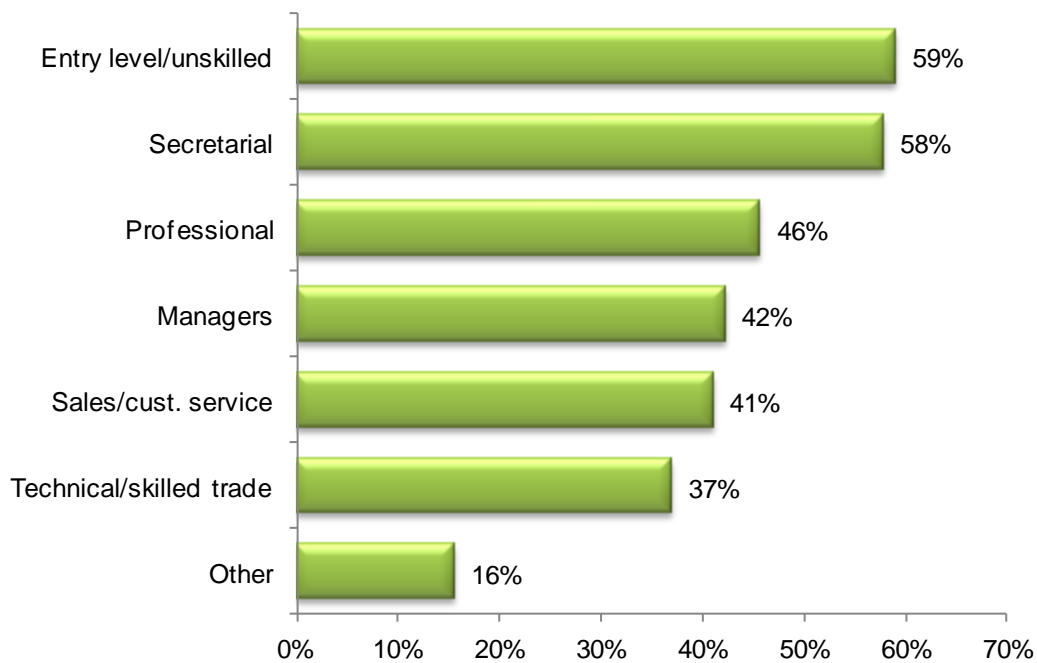
Dependent on the disability

Individuals on the autism spectrum can make good inspectors, file clerks ...

Physical disabilities would allow individual to perform office work.

Results are graphically displayed in Figure 6.

Figure 6. What kinds of jobs do you think people with disabilities could hold at your organization?*



*Categories are not mutually exclusive

In comparison to the 2006 Needs Assessment, a lower percentage of respondents in the current evaluation selected secretarial or administrative support as the kind of job they thought people with disabilities could hold (58% vs. 70%, respectively) and a greater percentage selected entry level or unskilled work (59% vs. 49%, respectively). Less than 50 percent in the current and former evaluations selected professional, managers, sales, and technical/skilled trade as the kind of jobs they thought people with disabilities could hold.

Job accommodations

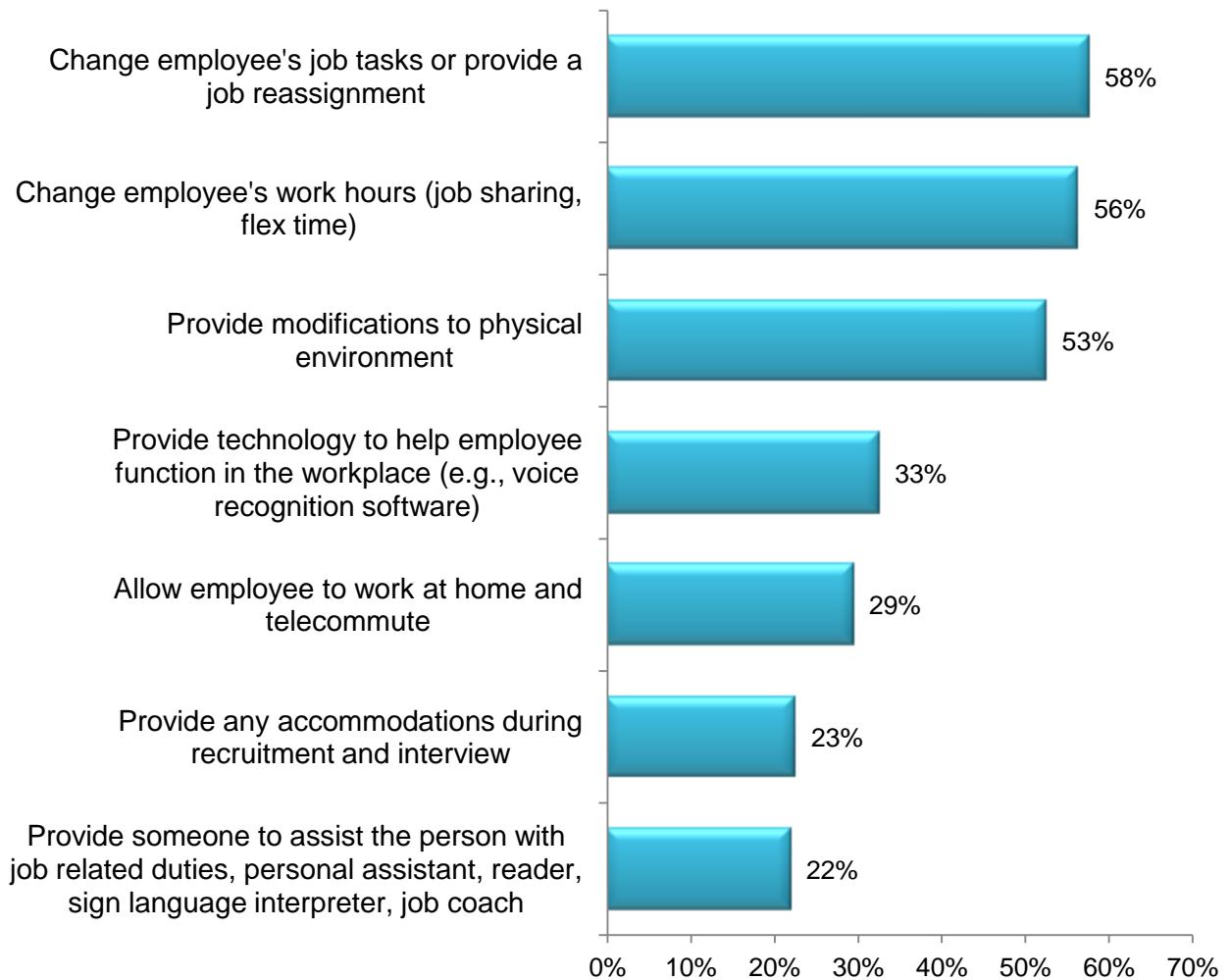
Employers who responded to the survey supplied information as to whether their organization was willing to provide accommodations for any employee with a disability. A job accommodation is any change or modification to an employee's workspace or equipment, work schedule, work tasks or responsibilities, or other changes because of a permanent disability or a temporary disability due to an injury or illness. The list of accommodations included:

- Provide modifications to the physical environment (such as ramps, adapt desk to wheelchair, etc.)
- Provide technology to help employee function in the workplace (such as voice recognition software, a specially designed computer keyboard, etc.)
- Change employee's job tasks or provide a job reassignment
- Change employee's work hours (includes job-sharing and flextime)
- Allow employee to work at home and telecommute
- Provide someone to assist the person with job related duties, such as a personal assistant, reader, sign language interpreter, job coach, etc.

- Provide any accommodations during the recruitment and interview process
- Other, specify

Over half of the employers were willing to change the employee's job tasks or provide a job reassignment (58%), change the employee's work hours (56%), or provide modifications to the physical environment (53%). A substantially lower percentage of employers were willing to provide technology such as voice recognition software (33%) or allow a person to work at home and telecommute (29%). Less than one-quarter of employers were willing to provide accommodations during the recruitment or interview process (23%) or to provide a person to assist the employee (22%) (Figure 7). Full results are shown in Appendix C.

Figure 7. Job accommodations



Compared to the 2006 Needs Assessment, a lower percentage of 2011 employers reported a willingness to provide assistive technology (33% vs. 50%, respectively) and physical modifications (53% vs. 63%, respectively) along with shifting an employee's hours (56% vs. 62%).

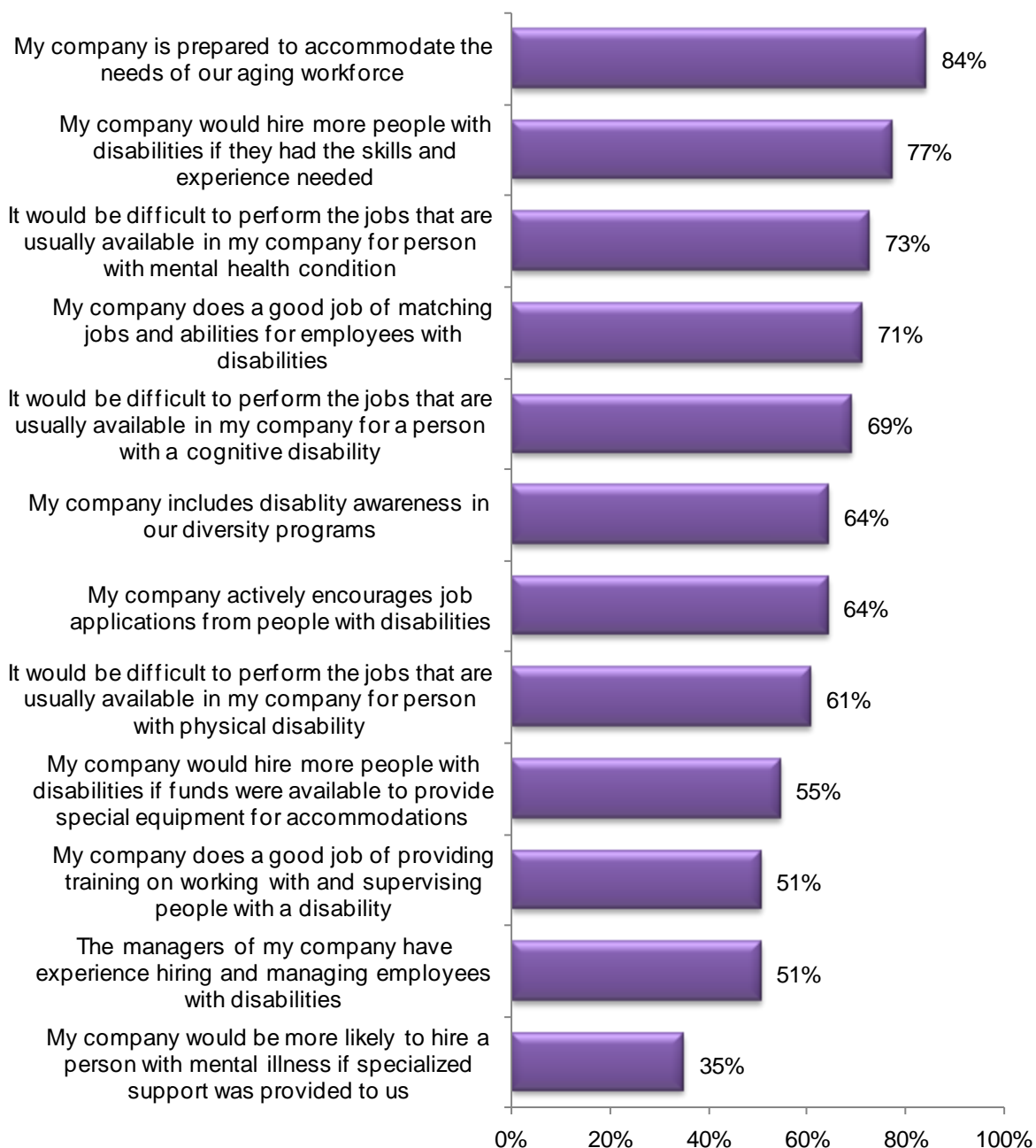
Employer practices and experiences

Employers responded to a series of statements regarding disability awareness and disability – friendly attitudes of employers. These statements and the response rate per category are shown in full in Appendix D. The following chart (Figure 8) summarizes the findings by collapsing the responses strongly agree and somewhat agree into one category.

Eighty-four percent of employers reported that their company is prepared to accommodate the needs of an aging workforce. More than three-quarters of the employers (77%) indicated that they would hire more people with disabilities if they had the skills, and a slightly lower percentage said that it would be difficult to perform the jobs that are usually available for a person with a mental health condition (73%), a person with a cognitive disability (69%), or those with a physical disability (61%).

Over half of employers (64%) responded that they actively encourage job applications from people with disabilities, and 64 percent also indicated that they provide disability awareness in their diversity programs (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Employer practices and experiences



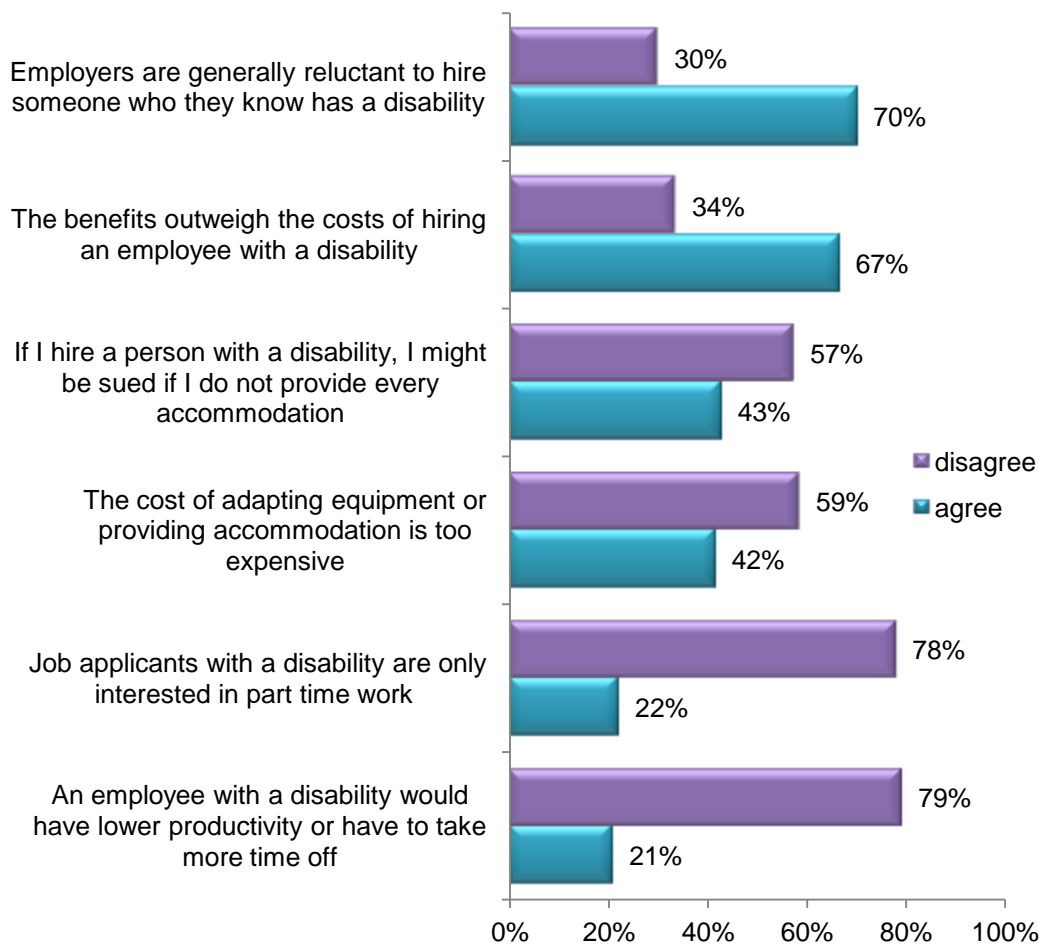
Compared to the 2006 Needs Assessment, a lower percentage of employers would hire more people with disabilities if they had the skills and experience needed (77% vs. 90%, respectively). However, a greater percentage of employers agreed that their company does a good job of matching jobs and abilities for employees with disabilities (71% vs. 50%, respectively) and that their company actively encourages job applications from people with disabilities (64% vs. 59%, respectively). A greater percentage of employers in the current assessment also agreed that their company would hire more people with disabilities if funds were available to provide special equipment for accommodations (55% vs. 26%, respectively).

Other items associated with employer practices and experiences were not included in the earlier assessment.

Employer attitudes about people with disabilities

Employers responded to statements about people with disabilities. Two-thirds (67%) of the employers responded that that the benefits outweigh the cost of hiring a person with a disability. Nonetheless, 70 percent of the employers indicated that employers are generally reluctant to hire someone who they know has a disability. More than three-quarters of employers disagreed that an employee with a disability would have lower productivity or would have to take more time off (79%). Seventy-eight percent of employers also disagreed with the idea that people with disabilities are only interested in working part time (Figure 9). The full results are shown in Appendix E.

Figure 9. Employer attitudes



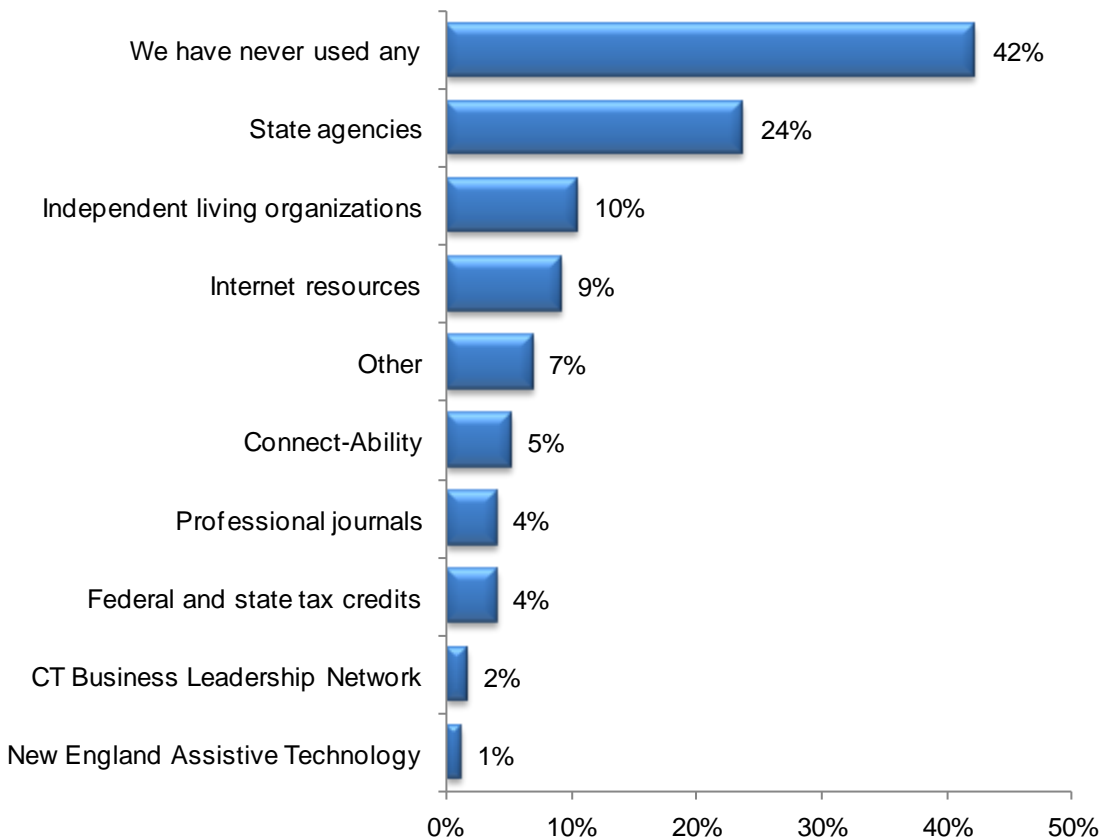
In comparison to the 2006 Needs Assessment, about the same percentage of employers agreed that employers are generally reluctant to hire someone who they know has a disability (70% vs. 71%, respectively) and a slightly greater percentage of employers agreed that the benefits outweigh the costs of hiring an employee with a disability (67% vs. 56%, respectively).

Conversely, about the same percentage of employers in the current and former assessments disagreed that if they hire a person with a disability, they might be sued if they do not provide every accommodation (57% vs. 55%, respectively). Compared to the earlier assessment, a greater percentage of employers disagree that the cost of adapting equipment or providing accommodation is too expensive (59% vs. 49%, respectively). Approximately the same percentage in both the current and earlier assessments disagreed that job applicants with a disability are only interested in part time work (78% vs. 80%, respectively) and an employee with a disability would have a lower productivity or have to take more time off (79% vs. 71%, respectively).

Working with government or other community-based programs

Forty-two percent of employers responded that they have never used any government or community-based programs or agencies. Twenty-four percent responded that they have worked with various state agencies including but not limited to: the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Department of Developmental Services, the Board of Education and Services for the Blind, and the Department of Labor. Ten percent of employers indicated that they had worked with disability or independent living organizations and nine percent indicated they have used various internet resources. Only five percent reported working with Connect-Ability (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Working with government agencies or community-based programs

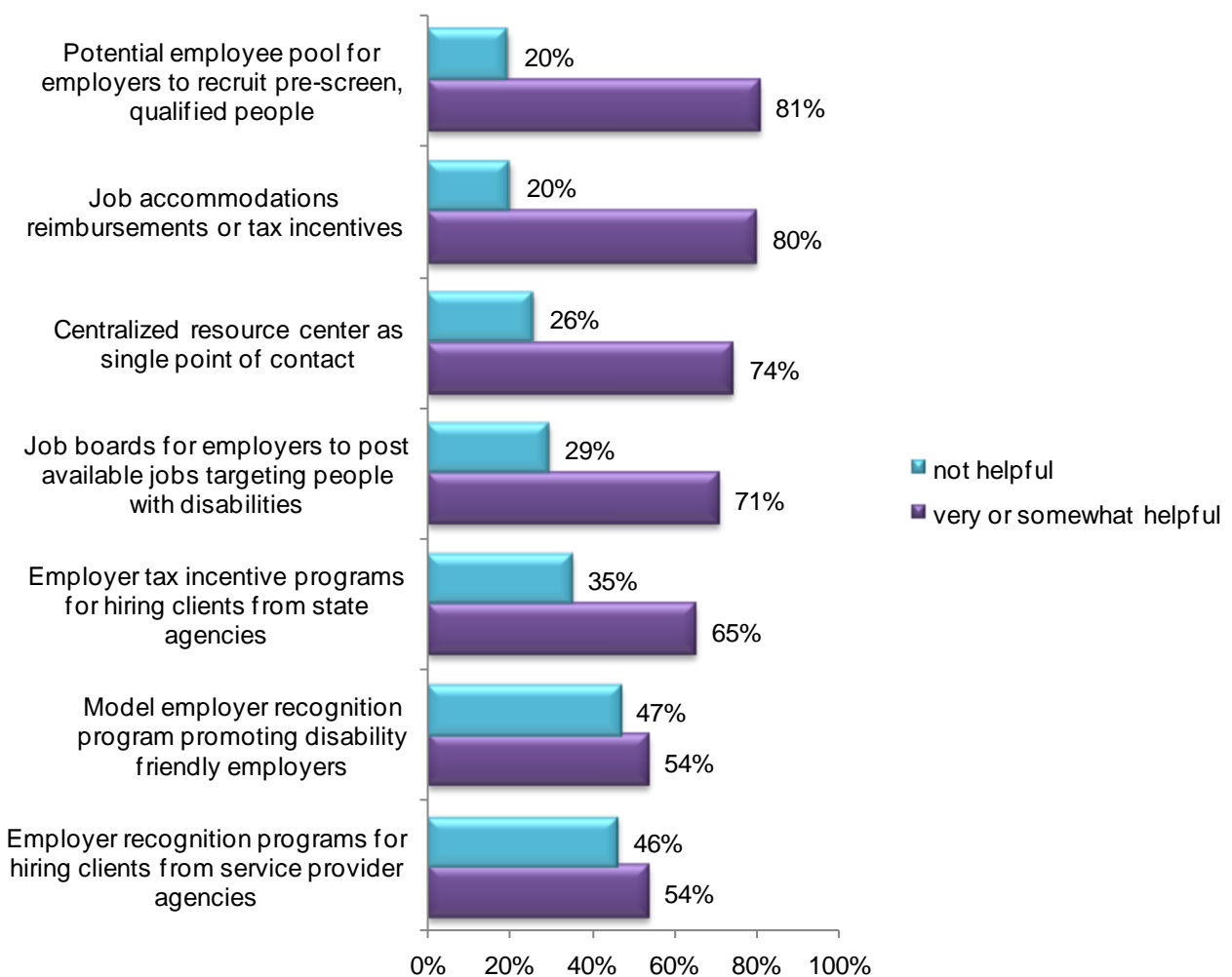


Programs and policies

Employers indicated the helpfulness of various programs or policies that support an organization's efforts to hire more people with disabilities. A majority of employers responded that in general, certain incentives would be conducive to encourage employers to consider hiring people with disabilities. Eighty-one percent of employers responded that a potential employee pool for employers to recruit pre-screened and qualified people with disabilities would be very or somewhat helpful. Eighty percent of employers considered job accommodations reimbursements or tax incentives advantageous. Other programs or policies considered useful in supporting organizational efforts to hire people with disabilities included a centralized resource center as single point of contact for employment support services related to hiring people with disabilities (74%), job boards to post available jobs targeting people with disabilities (71%), and employer tax incentive programs for hiring clients from state agencies (65%).

In the following chart (Figure 11), responses of "very helpful" and "somewhat helpful" were combined. The complete responses are found in Appendix F.

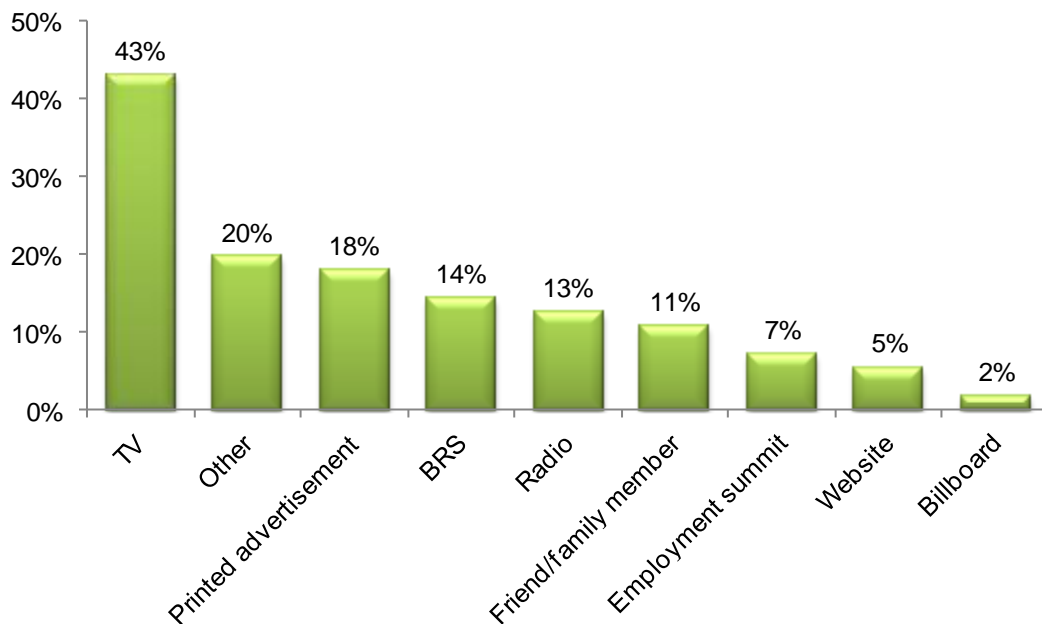
Figure 11. Employer programs and policies



Connect-Ability

Thirty-eight percent of employers responding to the survey had heard of Connect-Ability. Of these, the greatest number (43%) had been exposed to it via television. Eighteen percent of respondents reported hearing about Connect-Ability from printed advertisements and 14 percent learned about it from BRS. Fewer respondents had gained information on Connect-Ability from radio (13%) or friend or family member (11%). Twenty percent reported learning about Connect-Ability through others including a DDS social worker, job fairs, or peer and community organizations (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Where did you heard about Connect-Ability?*



*Categories are not mutually exclusive

Employer comments

Several of the employers responded to a request for additional comments or things that they would like to share on the topic of disability and employment. Some employers reported that they have already embraced the concept of working with people with disabilities and are benefiting from their abilities.

Our organization already employs and retains disabled individuals. We look at all candidates and do not turn those away for having disabilities especially if they are best qualified for a position.

[name of hospital] is committed to a diverse workforce which includes employing people with disabilities. We seek to recruit and employ people who possess the skills and experience needed to support our goal to provide the best quality care to our patients.

For other employers, the idea of hiring someone with a disability remains problematical.

Seventy-five percent of our work is police, fire and public works requiring a great degree of physical and mental ability. These jobs often do not lend themselves to accommodation.

Having hired a couple of teenagers, with learning disabilities, some social issues and one with a drug history, all through work-study programs at their schools, I'm not sure I have the endurance to go through the grief again.

Some employers had suggestions they wanted to share.

I think that the ADA laws started off as a great idea, but they have been so stretched and manipulated by the legal establishment that many employers are afraid to take the chance and hire some with special needs.

It would be a good program if we could have individuals on a job trial basis with no commitment by the organization until they can determine the individual can perform the basic functions of the job.

V. Variations by Legal Status

Two secondary analyses were completed in order to view the data through a different lens. The first analysis explored variations by legal status (e.g., profit, not for profit, government) and the second explored differences by type of business or industrial sector. In this section differences by legal status are explored.

Company demographics

Job title

The greatest percentage of respondents were CEOs/CFOs in for profit organizations (68%). But Human Resource individuals responded most often in not for profit (53%) and in government (44%) organizations (Table 7).

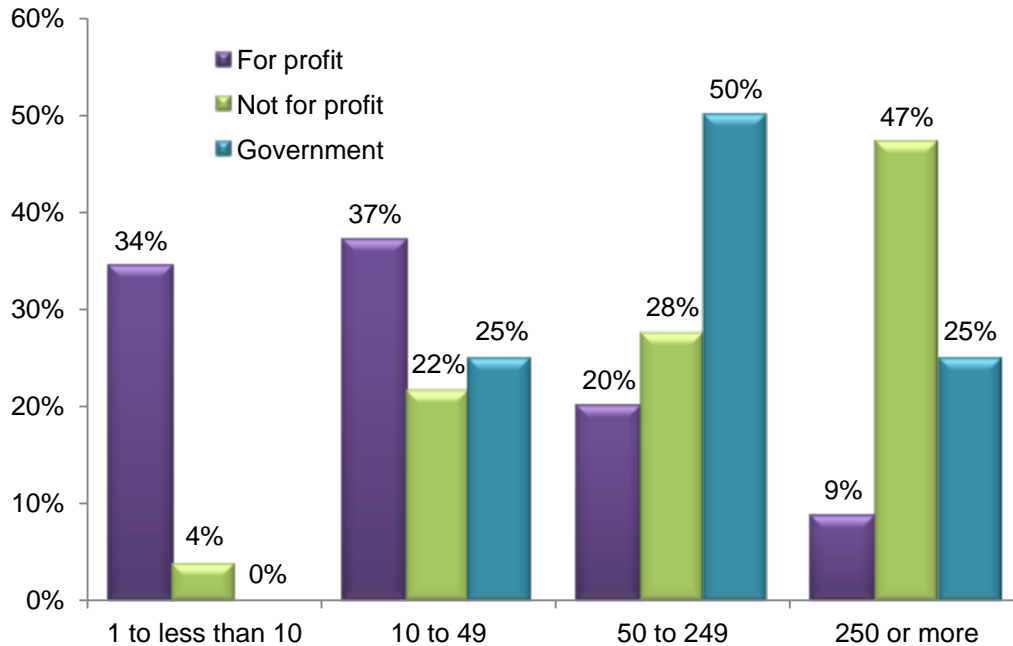
Table 7. Job title (by legal status)

Legal status	CEO/CFO	Human resources	Supervisor/manager	Other
For profit	67% (71)	12% (13)	11% (11)	10% (10)
Not for profit	31% (16)	53% (27)	14% (7)	2% (1)
Government	31% (3)	44% (7)	19% (3)	6% (1)

Number of employees

Employers indicated the number of employees that their business employed. Half of respondents in government organizations reported employing 50-249 employees. Nearly half of respondents in not for profit organizations (47%) reported employing 250 or more employees. A greater percentage of respondents in for profit organizations reported employing 10-49 or less than 10 employees (37% and 34%, respectively) (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Number of employees (by legal status)



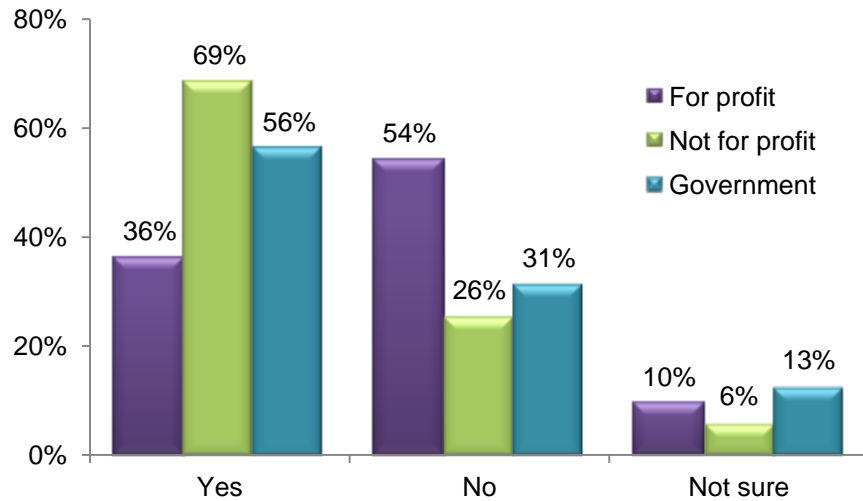
Type of business

Respondents reported that industry, finance, and agriculture were predominantly for profit organizations (95%, 90%, and 93%, respectively). Businesses offering educational services were only not for profit. Retail and healthcare businesses were more diversified by legal status (e.g., for profit, not for profit, and government) with more than half reporting not for profit status (53% and 54%, respectively). Businesses offering long term care services were either for profit or not for profit (50% and 50%, respectively).

Employees with disabilities

More than half of respondents representing not for profit organizations (69%) and government (56%) reported employing people with disabilities while fewer for profit organizations (36%) reported employing people with disabilities (Figure 14).

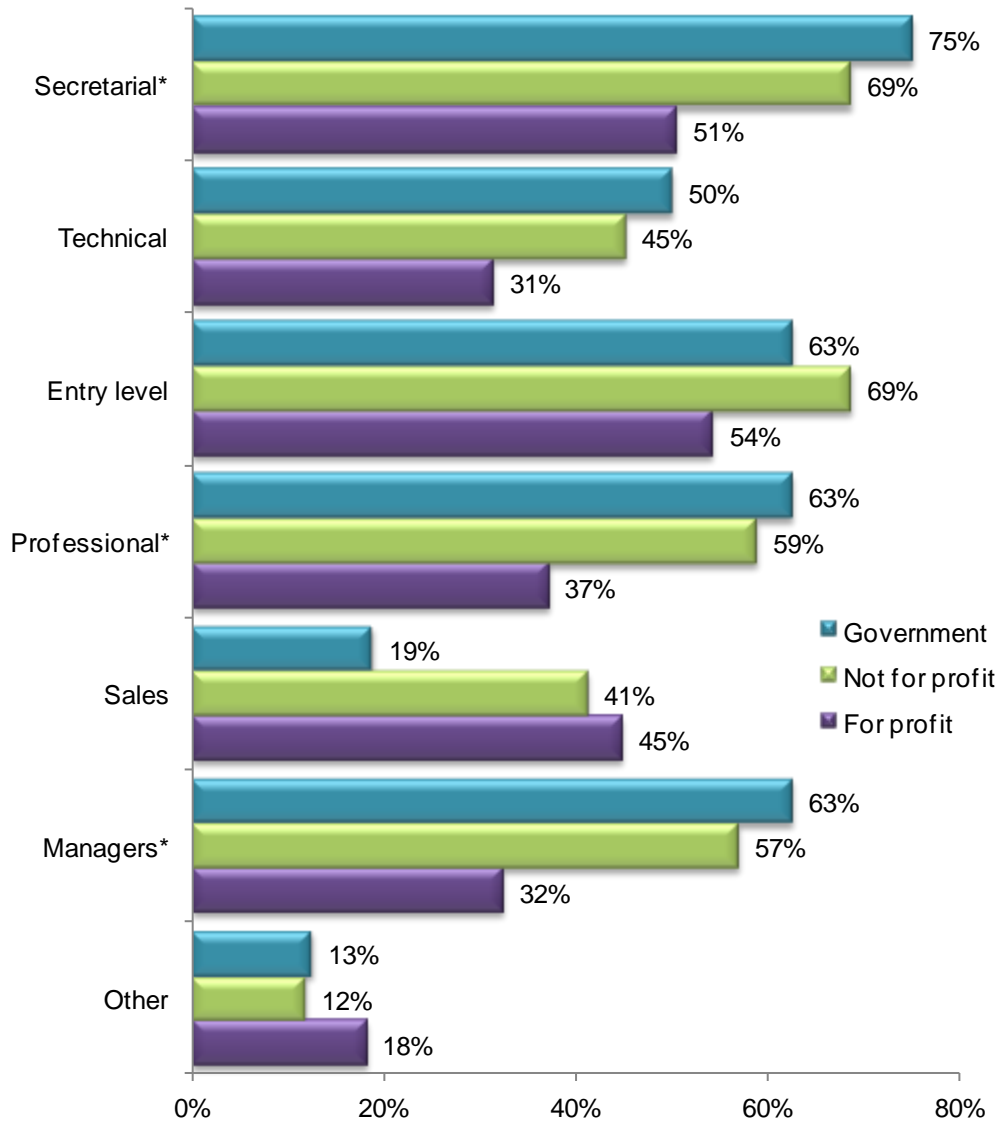
Figure 14. Do you have employees with disabilities (by legal status)



Types of jobs for people with disabilities

Respondents were asked to indicate “yes” or “no” for each type of job indicating which occupations they think people with disabilities could hold in their organization. Figure 15 shows the percentages of “yes” answers for each job category. Significant differences by legal status exist within secretarial, professional, and managerial types of jobs. While over three-quarters of respondents in government organizations agreed that people with disabilities could hold secretarial positions, more than half also suggested they could hold professional (63%) or managerial jobs (63%). Similarly, respondents from not for profit organizations agreed a greater percentage of individuals with disabilities could hold secretarial (69%) positions and more than half could also hold professional (59%) or managerial (57%) positions. Although more than half of respondents in for profit organizations (51%) agreed that people with disabilities could hold a secretarial position, less than half indicated they could hold a professional (37%) or managerial (32%) type of job.

Figure 15. What types of jobs for people with disabilities (by legal status)**



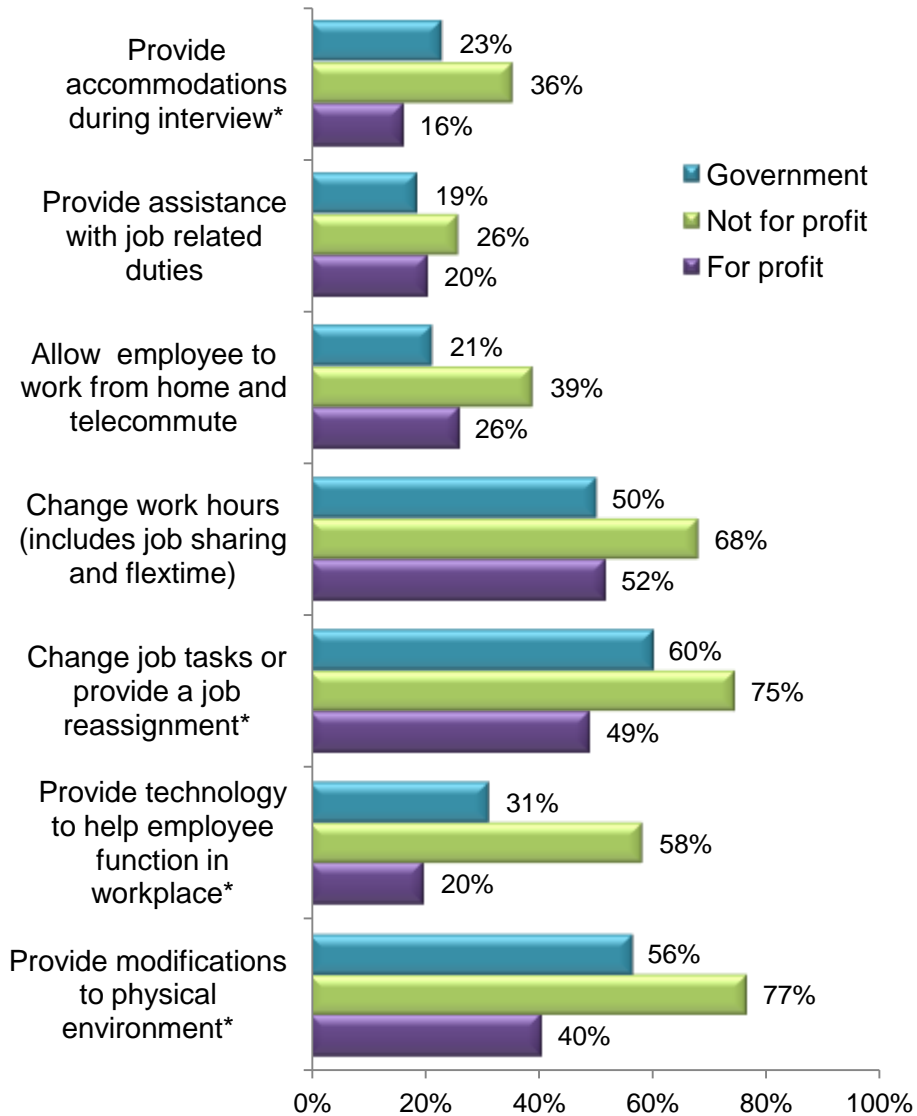
*indicates statistically significant differences between the three groups

**Categories are not mutually exclusive

Job accommodations

Employers were asked if they were aware of their organization ever providing certain accommodations. Overall, not for profit organizations were more likely than for profit or government organizations to make accommodations for people with disabilities, and for profit organizations were less likely than not for profit or government organizations to make job accommodations (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Job accommodations (by legal status)



*indicates statistically significant differences between the three groups

Employer practices and experiences

Employers were asked to provide additional information about their organization’s practices and experiences. The greatest percentages of respondents in for profit, not for profit, and government organizations strongly or somewhat agreed that their organization is prepared to accommodate the needs of an aging workforce (80%, 90%, and 93%, respectively). There were significant differences between types of organizations regarding the inclusion of disability awareness in their diversity programs with for profit organizations being the most likely (88%) to provide this specific training. There were also significant differences between for profit, not for profit, and government organizations regarding agreement that it would be difficult for people

with physical disabilities to perform the jobs available in their company (69%, 48%, and 53%, respectively).

Employer attitudes about people with disabilities

More than half of respondents in for profit, not for profit, and government organizations strongly or somewhat agreed that the benefits outweigh the costs of hiring an employee with a disability (62%, 78%, and 60%, respectively) and that employers are generally reluctant to hire someone who they know has a disability (75%, 64%, and 57%, respectively). There were significant differences between the three types of organizations with nearly one-third of respondents in for profit organizations (31%) strongly or somewhat agreeing that an employee with a disability would have lower productivity or have to take more time off and more than three-quarters in not for profit or government organizations somewhat or strongly disagreeing with same statement (96% and 87%, respectively).

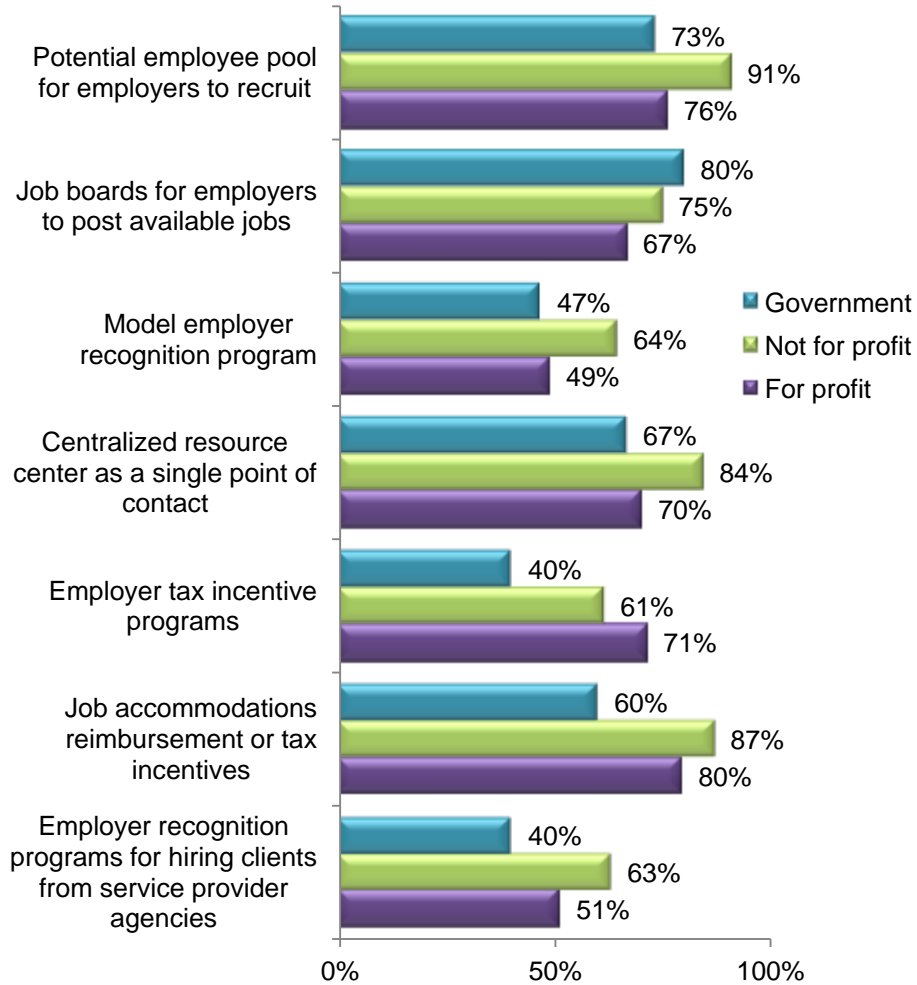
Working with government or other community-based programs

A greater percentage of for profit and government than not for profit organizations reported never having used or worked with other government or community-based programs related to employees with disabilities (51%, 44%, and 24%, respectively). Likewise, a greater percentage of for profit and government than not for profit organizations reported utilizing Internet resources related to people with disabilities (51%, 44%, and 24%, respectively). Not for profit organizations were more likely than for profit or government organizations to use State agencies related to people with disabilities (51%, 11%, and 25%, respectively). These resources included but weren't limited to: the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Department of Developmental Services, and the Department of Labor.

Programs and policies

Respondents in not for profit organizations were more likely than those in for profit or government organizations to find most of the programs or policies listed in Figure 17 very or somewhat helpful. The top three programs or policies determined to be most useful by those in not for profit organizations is a potential pool of employers to recruit (91%), job accommodations reimbursement or tax incentives (87%), and a centralized resource center as a single point of contact (84%). Respondents in for profit organizations focused on some of the same programs with job accommodations or tax reimbursements being the most helpful (80%) followed by a potential pool for employers to recruit (76%), and employers tax incentive programs (71%). Respondents in government organizations favored job boards for employers to post available jobs (80%), a potential employee pool for employers to recruit (73%), and a centralized resource center as a single point of contact (67%).

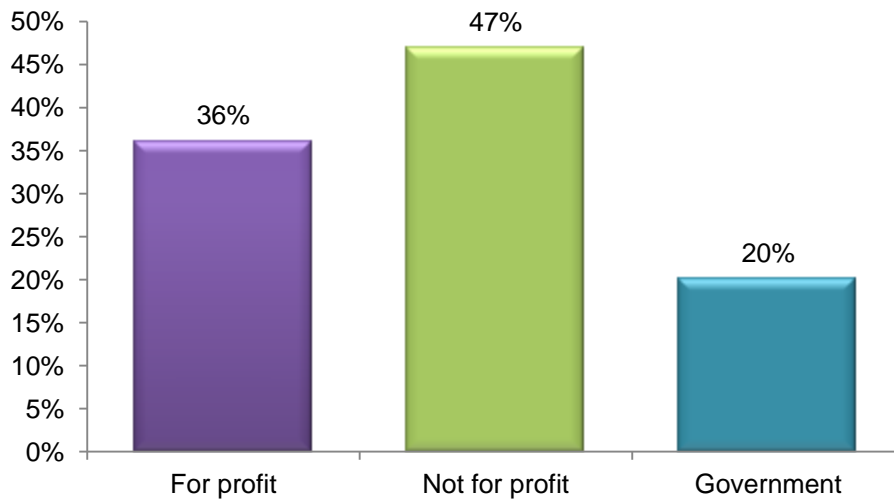
Figure 17. Programs and policies (by legal status)



Connect-Ability

A greater percentage of respondents in not for profit than for profit or government organizations had heard of Connect-Ability (47%, 36%, and 20%, respectively) (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Have you heard of Connect-Ability? (by legal status)



VI. Variations by Industrial Sector

For the purposes of the secondary analyses by industrial sector, some types of businesses were combined with others because of a low response rate within sectors. In addition, industries listed in the “other” category were recoded and included in one of the eight industrial groups listed below:

1. Industry and skilled trade
2. Finance, insurance and consulting
3. Law and government
4. Education
5. Retail and services
6. Healthcare
7. Long-term care
8. Agriculture

Due to the number of industrial sectors, some figures in the following sections are split with the first figure showing results for sectors 1-4 and the second figure displaying results for sectors 5-8.

Company demographics

Job title

Over half of respondents from organizations in industry, finance, retail, and agriculture listed themselves as CEOs or CFOs (65%, 80%, 53%, and 83%, respectively). Respondents in law/government, education, or healthcare organizations were more likely to be Human Resources personnel (47%, 82%, and 43%, respectively) (Figures 19a and 19b).

Figure 19a. Job title (by industrial sector)

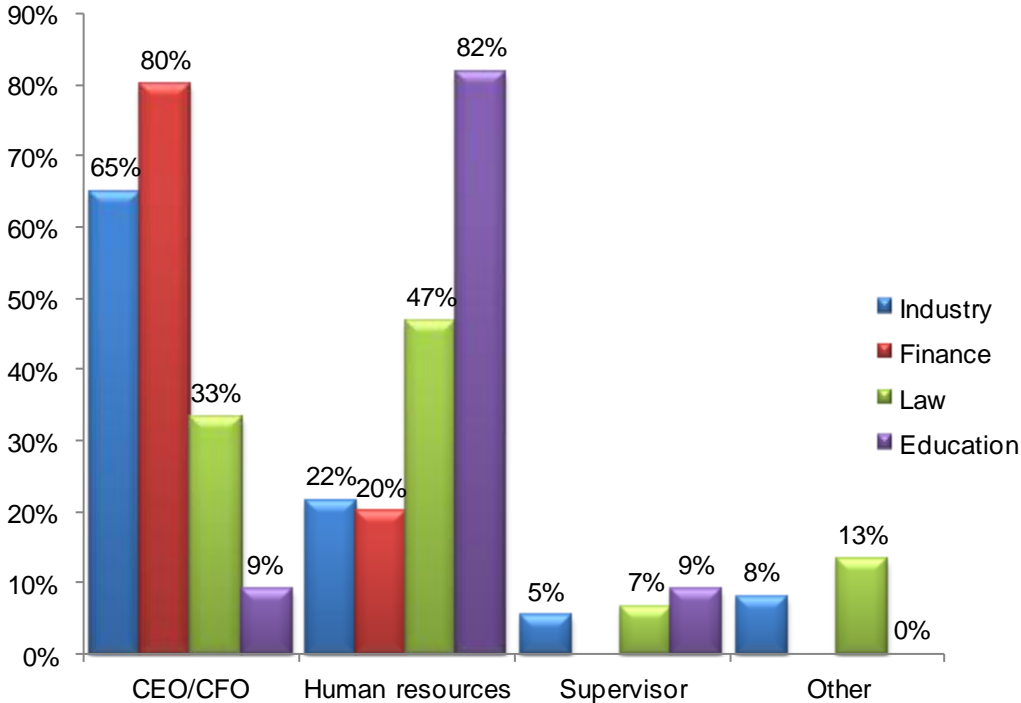
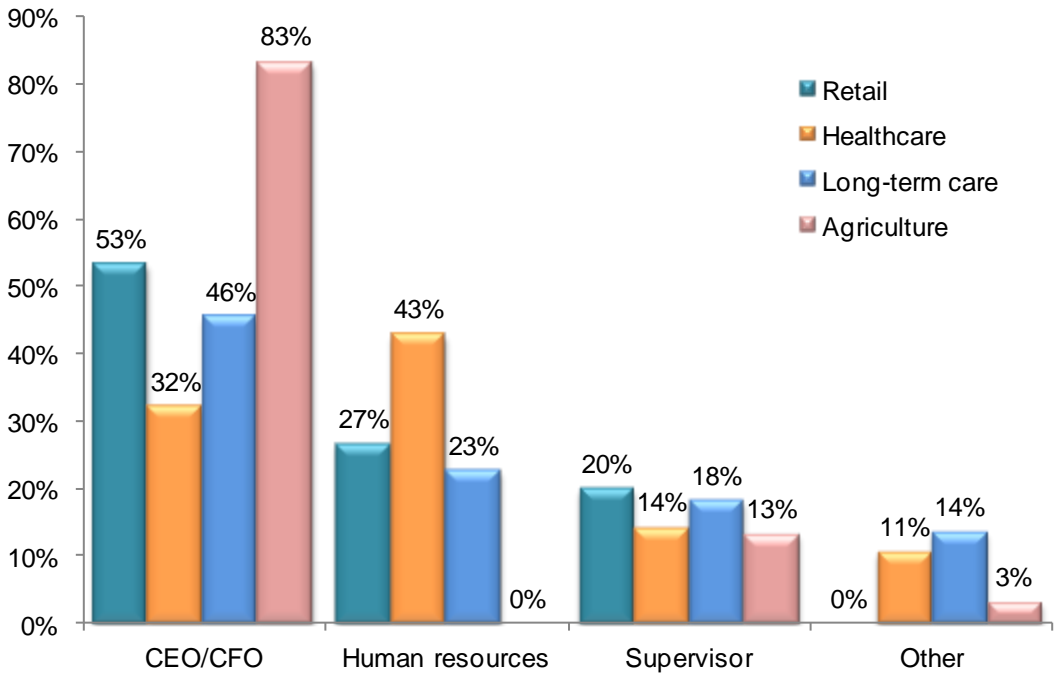


Figure 19b. Job title (by industrial sector)



Number of employees

Respondents indicated the number of employees who work in their company. Results show that organizations in the agriculture sector were more likely to have less than 10 employees (79%) while retail, industry, and finance were more likely to employ 10-49 employees (67%, 60%, and 60%, respectively). Long-term care had the greatest percentage of employees in the 50-250 range (73%) and more than half in healthcare and education reported having 250 or more employees (57% and 73%, respectively) (Figures 20a and 20b).

Figure 20a. Number of employees (by industrial sector)

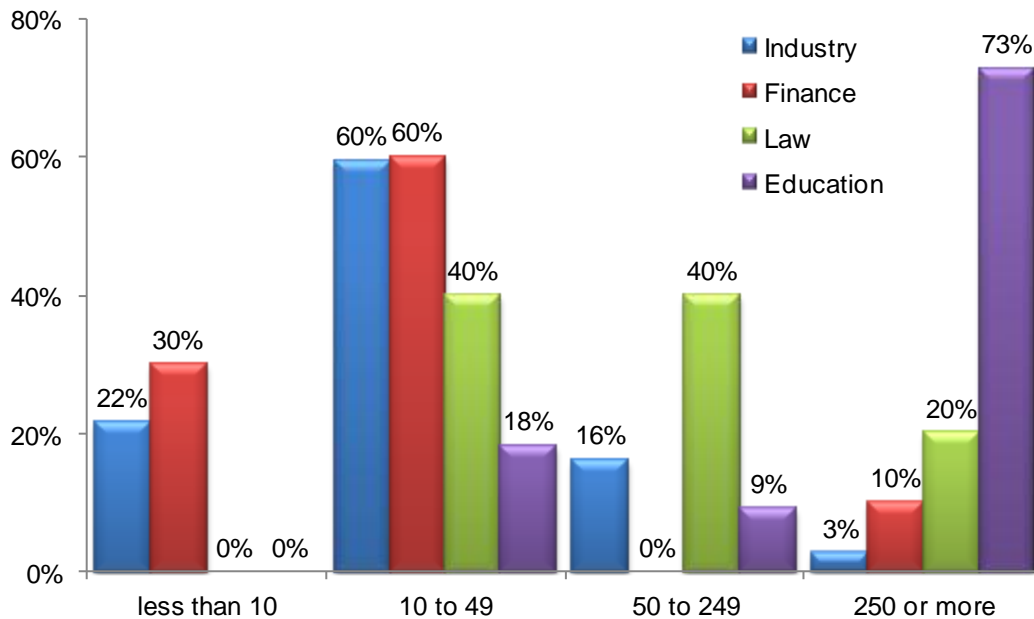
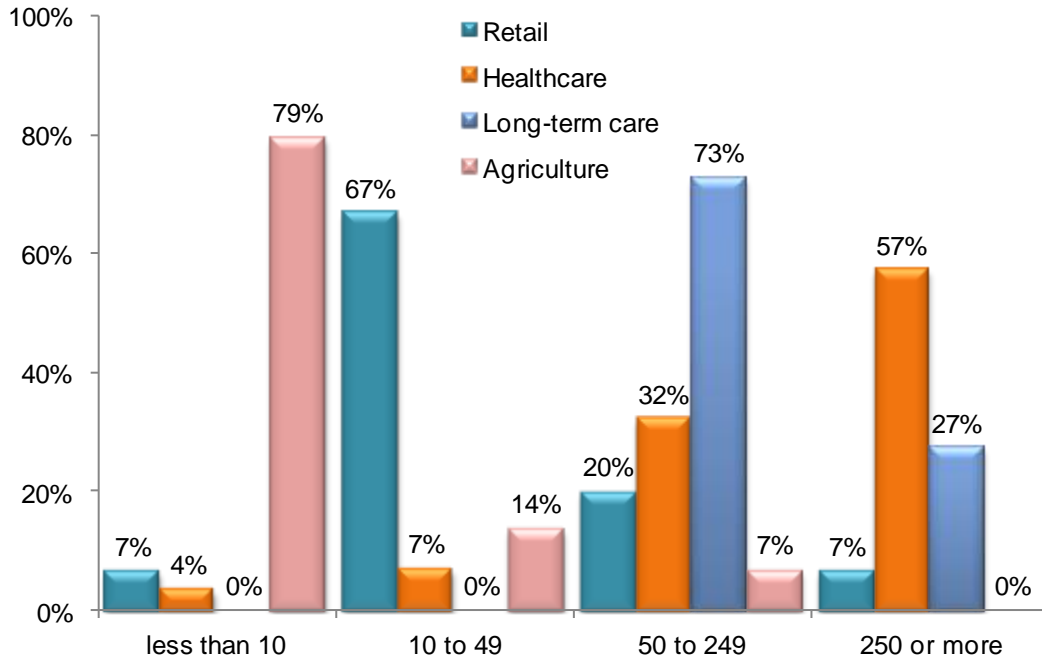


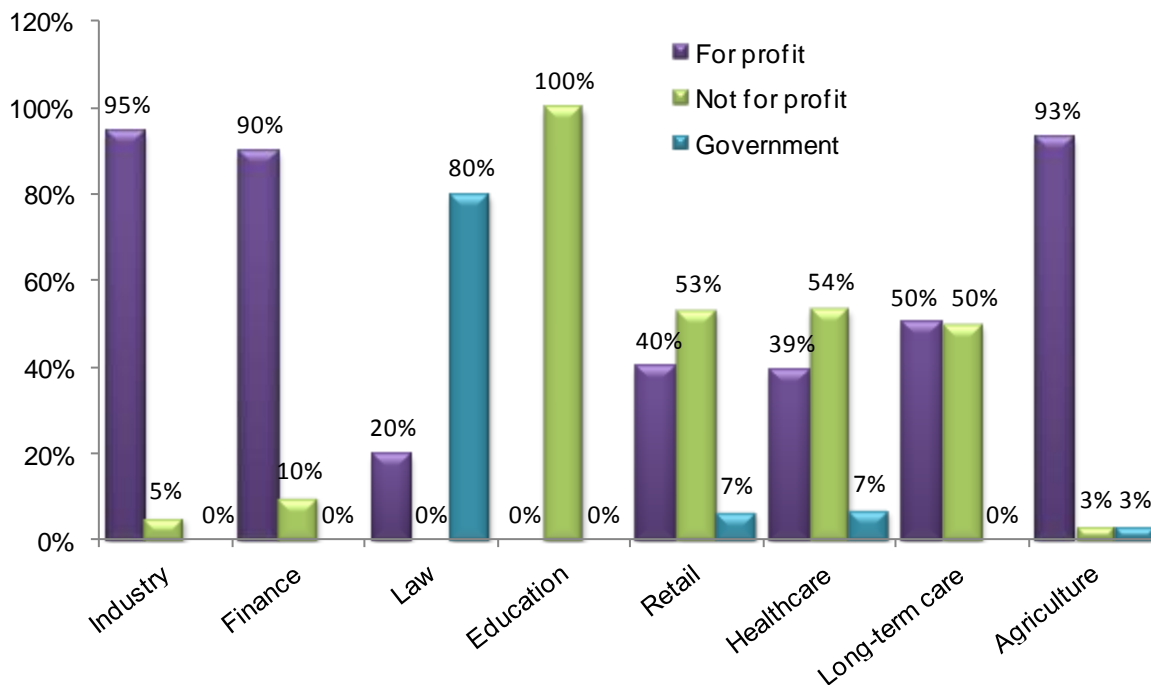
Figure 20b. Number of employees (by industrial sector)



Type of business

Respondents reported that industry, agriculture, and finance organizations were most likely to be for profit (95%, 93%, and 90%, respectively). All of the organizations in education and more than half in retail, healthcare, and long-term care were not for profit (100%, 53%, 54%, and 50%, respectively) (Figure 21).

Figure 21. Legal status of business (by industrial sector)



Employees with disabilities

Respondents in education organizations reported the greatest percentage of employees with disabilities (91%) while agriculture reported the lowest percentage (20%). More than half of respondents in healthcare, long-term care, and retail reported having employees with disabilities (68%, 64%, and 60%, respectively) (Figures 22a and 22b).

Figure 22a. Do you have employees with disabilities? (by industrial sector)

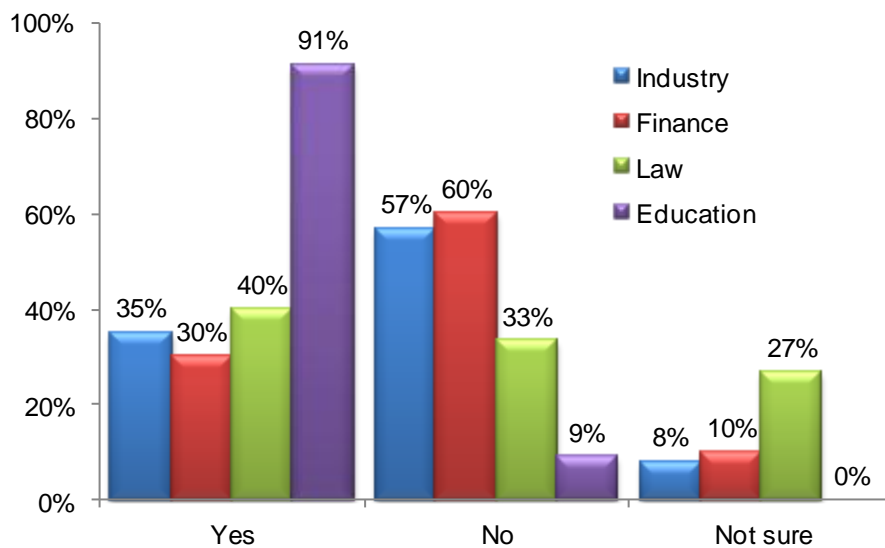
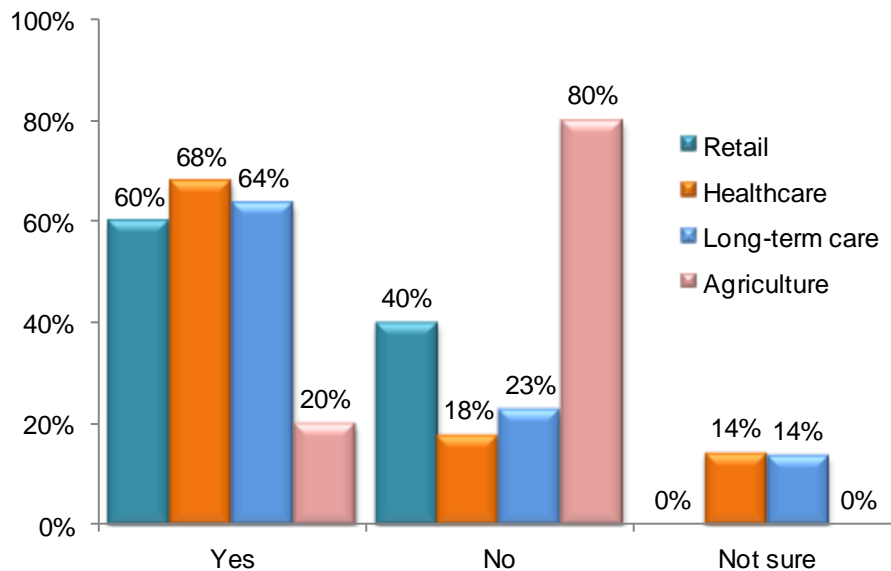


Figure 22b. Do you have employees with disabilities? (by industrial sector)



What types of jobs for people with disabilities?

Respondents indicated what types of jobs they thought people with disabilities could do in their organization. While respondents in most industrial sectors thought that people with disabilities could do entry level or secretarial jobs, more than three-quarters of respondents representing education organizations reported that people with disabilities could hold professional, managerial positions, or technical positions (82%, 82%, and 82%, respectively).

Job accommodations

Overall, respondents in education organizations reported a greater percentage of accommodations with more than three-quarters of accommodations related to a change in job tasks/job reassignment or the provision of modifications to the physical environment (82% and 91%, respectively).

Employer practices and experiences

There were significant differences between industrial sectors regarding the inclusion of disability awareness in their diversity programs with industry and finance being the least likely to provide this training (37% and 40%, respectively). Significant differences were noted between industrial sectors regarding agreement that it would be difficult for people with physical disabilities to perform the jobs available at their business with finance and education being the least likely sectors to agree (13% and 20%, respectively).

Employer attitudes about people with disabilities

Significant differences were noted regarding employer attitudes that an employee with a disability would have lower productivity or have to take more time off from work. Less than one-quarter of respondents in most industrial sectors somewhat or strongly agreed that an employee with a disability would have lower productivity or have to take more time off from

work, however more than one-quarter in industry, retail, and agriculture sectors strongly or somewhat agreed with this statement (33%, 27%, and 48%, respectively).

Working with government or other community-based programs

There were significant differences between industrial sectors in working with government or other community-based programs with over half of respondents in agriculture, law/government and industry organizations reporting they never used any government or community-based programs or agencies related to employees with disabilities (63%, 53% and 60%, respectively). In contrast, less than one-quarter in education, healthcare, and retail reported never using any of the same government or community-based programs related to employees with disabilities (9%, 18%, and 13%, respectively). More than one-third of respondents in education, long term care, healthcare, and retail reported using state agencies as resources in regard to employees with disabilities (36%, 41%, 39%, and 40%) while a far less percentage in finance, industry, and agriculture reported using the same state resources (10%, 14%, and 3%, respectively). Respondents in retail organizations (33%) were more likely than those in other industrial sectors to use internet resources and those in healthcare and retail were the most likely to use federal/state tax credits.

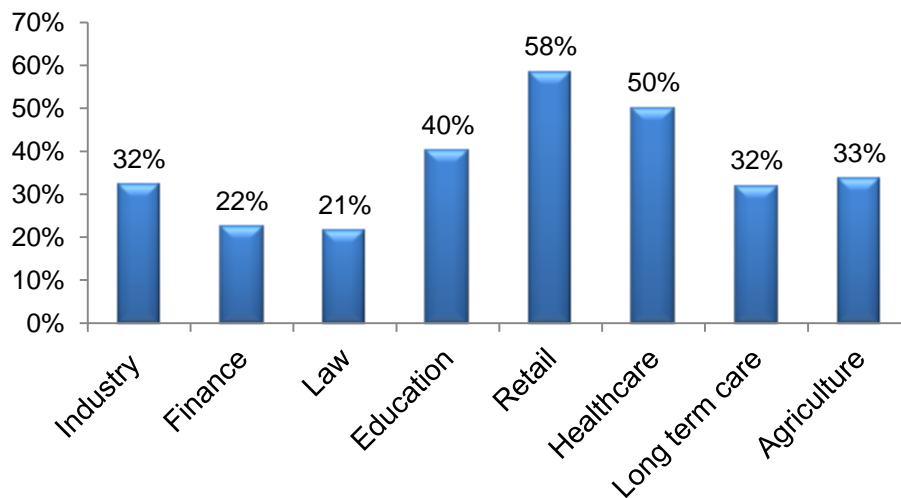
Programs and policies

Respondents in education organizations were the most likely to embrace a range of programs and policies as helpful or somewhat helpful, although a large percentage of respondents across sectors approved of the programs and policies listed. Significant differences were noted in job accommodations reimbursement or tax incentives with all respondents in education and retail agreeing that this incentive is useful.

Connect-Ability

The greatest percentage of respondents who had heard about Connect-Ability were from the retail and healthcare sectors (58% and 50%, respectively). This was followed by 40 percent in education and one-third in agriculture (Figure 23).

Figure 23. Have you heard of Connect-Ability? (by industrial sector)



VII. Conclusions

This study contributes to our understanding of the persistent low employment rate of people with disabilities by exploring employment practices and issues experienced by various employers across Connecticut related to employing people with disabilities. It also confirms previous state and national research on the continuing mixed attitudes and outcomes regarding the employment of people with disabilities. It should be noted that because only one person from each organization responded to the survey, knowledge of company policy or practices related to the people with disabilities may not be complete. In addition, their opinions may or may not reflect company policy.

Employers in this study were asked to provide information about their company, job accommodations the company provides, the experiences and attitudes employers have toward recruiting and hiring people with disabilities, and services and programs related to employees with disabilities that employers have used. Employers were also asked what services and programs might be useful for them in working with people with disabilities. Additional questions asked employers about their familiarity with Connect-Ability and what comments they would like to share on the topic of disability and employment.

The majority of employers in this study were either the CEO or CFO of their organizations, and a greater percentage of companies were described as for profit (61%). There was a fairly even distribution across size of companies with the largest percentage of organizations (31%) employing between 10 and 49 people. While the types of businesses represented were diverse, the larger percentages of employers represented healthcare (16%), agriculture (16%), or long term care (12%) businesses. Almost half of employers responded that their organization employs a person with a disability. Top job choices for people with disabilities within their organization included entry level/unskilled jobs or secretarial positions. While about half of employers reported they were willing to provide modifications to the physical environment, fewer indicated they would consider providing the person with assistance, such as a job coach. Similar to other research (Dewson et al., 2005; Hernandez et al., 2000, Lyth, 1973), many employers in this survey reported conflicted attitudes about hiring people with disabilities. While three-quarters of employers reported they would hire more people with disabilities if they had

the skills and more than half encourage applications from people with disabilities, others expressed the disadvantages of employing people with disabilities and concerns about job performance for people with certain types of disabilities. Although most respondents agreed that employers feel the benefits outweigh the disadvantages of hiring people with disabilities, a greater percentage of respondents felt that employers are generally reluctant to hire someone with a known disability. Other research also indicates the effects of corporate culture and the attitudinal, behavioral, and physical barriers it can produce for people with disabilities (Schur, Kruse, & Blanck, 2005). For example, supervisor and co-worker attitudes have a significant impact on the employment experiences of individuals with disabilities and reflect the influences of stereotypes, discomfort in being in the presence of those with disabilities, stress generated by communication problems, personality factors, and prior contact and familiarity with people with disabilities (Schur et al., 2005). Supervisor and co-worker attitudes also influence performance expectations and evaluations, the interest level in working with an individual with disabilities, and hiring people with disabilities into jobs that have lower responsibility, are lower paying, and have less opportunity for developing worker potential (Schur et al., 2005).

Previous research shows that most employers are unaware of government programs and policies related to the employment of people with disabilities and therefore don't use them (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2008). Similarly, in this study, a large percentage of employers reported never using any government or community-based programs to hire people with disabilities. Many employer recommendations included the importance of policies, programs, and practices focusing on the ability, capability, and experience of people to do the work. These suggestions would improve the employment of people with disabilities and include: a potential employee pool for employers to recruit pre-screened, qualified people; job boards for employers to post available jobs targeting people with disabilities, and job accommodations reimbursements or tax incentives. Interestingly, almost three-fourths of employers thought a centralized resource center as a single point of entry would be helpful to them; Connect-Ability is exactly that. Perhaps more can be done to increase employers' understanding of Connect-Ability and how it can help them.

Employers were asked about their familiarity with Connect-Ability. Responses indicate that the educational impact of Connect-Ability should not be overlooked or underestimated; 38% of employers were familiar with Connect-Ability. Research shows that the more employers are educated about the ability and capability of people with disabilities, the more likely they are to hire someone with a disability (Harrison, 1998; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2008). Successful educational strategies demonstrated in the research and utilized by Connect-Ability include: identifying success stories and using them as models for employers; publicizing the positive characteristics of people with disabilities and how motivated and dedicated they are as employees; and encouraging more personal interaction with people with disabilities through job shadowing and mentoring (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2008).

While positive strides are being made by Connect-Ability and other programs, some companies have organizational policies and practices that limit employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In other research, one company found that the most significant problem in hiring people with disabilities was not the unsuitability of jobs but being able to identify organizations that are willing to allow people with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities (Schur et al., 2005). In the present study, while some organizations have hired employees with disabilities, others reported negative experiences in employing people with disabilities. Similar to previous research (Schur et al., 2005), employers participating in our study suggested that they would be more likely to hire people with disabilities if they could determine the ability and capability of a person prior to making a commitment to hire them.

Two secondary analyses explored variations by legal status and by type of business. In both analyses, significant differences were noted in employer practices and attitudes and were related to the inclusion of disability awareness in organizational diversity programs, agreement that it would be difficult for people with physical disabilities to perform the jobs available in their company, and agreement that an employee with a disability would have lower productivity or have to take more time off.

While employers from different businesses and organizations responded in 2006 and 2011, it does not appear that there has been a significant change in employer attitudes and practices in the past several years. There are, however, some areas of progress and hope amid the mixed outcomes: More employers report that they employ people with disabilities despite the worsening economy during this period, and Connect-Ability has achieved some brand recognition in a relatively short time, with nearly 40 percent of employers reporting familiarity with it.

On the negative side, this set of employers seems less willing to provide accommodations than their 2006 counterparts. Although certain industry sectors have made more progress than others, it appears that the greatest challenges remain with for-profit employers.

Connect-Ability should use the results of this report and its growing name recognition to focus its future efforts on the identified gaps in employer knowledge, attitudes and practices. It should consider putting resources towards the programs and policies that employers identified as helpful and should target the industry sectors that appear to lag behind in employment policies, attitudes and practices.

Results of this study will be useful to Connect-Ability and its agency partners in working with employers to assist them in achieving their common goals. In addition, as people with disabilities continue to make themselves employable and seek out appropriate employment, the results of this study provide employers and other stakeholders with information to enable them to improve corporate programs and policies that will help support the employment of people with disabilities and prevent them from being unnoticed and underutilized.

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IX. Appendices

Appendix A: Employer Survey

Appendix B: Invitation letter to member – template

Appendix C: Job accommodations

Appendix D: Employer practices and experiences

Appendix E: Employer attitudes

Appendix F: Programs and policies

Appendix A: Employer Survey

1. What is your job title? [check only one]
 - CEO, CFO, or Business owner
 - Human Resources
 - Supervisor or manager (excluding Human Resources)
 - Other, specify _____

2. What is your organization's 5 digit zip code (the plant or offices where you work)? _____

3. How many employees does your organization have in the state of Connecticut? [check only one]
 - Less than 10
 - 10 – 49
 - 50 –249
 - 250 or more

4. What is the legal status of your organization? [check only one]
 - For profit
 - Not for profit
 - Government

5. What is your organization's primary business? [check only one]
 - Manufacturing or Industry
 - Skilled Trade or Construction
 - Insurance
 - Finance or Accounting
 - Consulting or Information Technology
 - Law
 - Retail or Sales
 - Higher Education
 - K-12 Education or Child Care
 - Health Care
 - Long-Term Care
 - Hospitality or Entertainment
 - Transportation
 - Agriculture
 - Government
 - Social Services
 - Other, specify: _____

6. A disability is defined as any physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities, significantly impairs physical or mental health, or requires special education, vocational rehabilitation or related services. Major life activities include: walking, seeing, hearing, learning, self-care, speaking, lifting, reaching, thinking, performing manual tasks, breathing, working and interacting with others.

Does your organization currently employ anyone with a disability? [check only one]

- Yes No Not sure

7. What occupations or kinds of jobs do you think people with disabilities could hold at your organization? [check all that apply]

- Managers and senior officials
 Sales and customer service
 Professional occupations
 Entry level or unskilled occupations (i.e. cashiers, waiters, attendants, custodial)
 Technical or skilled trade occupations
 Secretarial or administrative assistants
 Other, specify: _____

8. A job accommodation is when an employer makes a change or modification to an employee's workspace or equipment, work schedule, work tasks or responsibilities, or other changes because of a permanent disability or a temporary disability due to an injury or illness.

Are you aware of your organization ever providing any of the following job accommodations to an employee with a disability? [check one box for each statement]

	Yes	No
Provide modifications to the physical environment (such as ramps, adapt desk to wheelchair, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide technology to help employee function in the workplace (such as voice recognition software, a specially designed computer keyboard, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change employee's job tasks or provide a job reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change employee's work hours (includes job-sharing and flextime)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allow employee to work at home and telecommute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide someone to assist the person with job related duties, such as a personal assistant, reader, sign language interpreter, job coach, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide any accommodations during the recruitment and interview process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, specify: _____		

9. Please tell us more about your organization’s practices and experience. For each statement below indicate how much you agree or disagree by checking one of the following: strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. [check one box for each statement]

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
My company actively encourages job applications from people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My company does a good job of matching jobs and abilities for employees with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My company is prepared to accommodate the needs of our aging workforce.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The managers of my company have experience hiring and managing employees with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My company includes disability awareness in our diversity programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My company does a good job of providing training on working with and supervising people with a disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It would be difficult to perform the jobs that are usually available in my company for a person with a disability such as:				
(i) Physical condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) Mental health condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iii) Cognitive, developmental or Learning disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My company would hire more people with disabilities if they had the skills and experience needed for the job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My company would hire more people with disabilities if funds were available specifically to provide special equipment for job accommodations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My company would be more likely to hire a person with mental illness and/or substance abuse history if specialized support was provided to us and the employee.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Given your management experience, for each statement below please indicate how much you agree or disagree by checking one of the following: strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. [check one box for each statement]

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
Job applicants who have a disability are usually interested only in part time work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An employee with a disability would have lower productivity or have to take more time off from work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The benefits outweigh the costs of hiring an employee with a disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I hire a person with a disability, I might be sued if I do not provide every accommodation they want on the job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The cost of adapting equipment or providing other accommodations at work is too expensive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employers are generally reluctant to hire someone who they know has a disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Has your organization used or worked with any of the following government or community-based programs or agencies *related to employees with disabilities*? [check all that apply]

- State agencies, including but not limited to:
 - Bureau of Rehabilitation Services from the Department of Social Services
 - Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
 - Department of Developmental Services
 - Board of Education and Services for the Blind
 - Department of Labor
- Connect-Ability
- Federal and State Tax Credits
- New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) or other assistive technology support organizations
- CT Business Leadership Network (CT BLN)
- Disability or independent living organizations
- Professional journals
- Internet resources
- We have never used any
- Other, specify: _____

12. How helpful would the following programs or policies be in supporting your organization's efforts to hire more people with disabilities?
 For each statement below please indicate how helpful by checking one of the following: very helpful, somewhat helpful, or not helpful. [check one box for each statement]

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful
Employer recognition programs for hiring clients from service provider agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job accommodations reimbursement or tax incentives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer tax incentive programs for hiring clients from state agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Centralized resource center as single point of contact for employment support services related to hiring people with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Model employer recognition program promoting disability friendly employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job boards for employers to post available jobs targeting recruitment from people with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potential employee pool for employers to recruit pre-screened and qualified people with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Have you heard of Connect-Ability? [check only one]

- No
 Yes

How did you hear of it? [check all that apply]

- TV
 Radio
 Printed advertisement
 Billboard
 Website
 Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
 Invitation to Employment Summit
 Friend or family member
 Other, specify: _____

14. Do you have additional comments you would like to share on the topic of disability and employment? [optional]

Appendix B: Invitation letter to member – template

[Member letterhead]

[Date]

RE: Invitation to Participate in a Survey Related to Hiring and Retaining People with Disabilities

Dear [Name of Member]:

The [Name of Member] is assisting The UConn Health Center (UCHC), under the direction of Julie Robison, PhD, to conduct a short survey that requires input from employers across the state. The purpose of the statewide survey is to identify the needs and experiences of employers related to hiring or retaining people with disabilities and older workers.

This survey is part of the evaluation of a federally funded Medicaid Infrastructure Grant which was awarded to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services within the CT Department of Social Services. In Connecticut this grant program is called “**Connect-Ability**”.

You are invited to voluntarily and confidentially provide your input about your needs, experiences and suggestions. The web-based survey is **completely anonymous**; your name and business identity will not be collected. Your responses will be summarized along with other employers’ responses across the state. The survey will take you **about 10 minutes** to complete on-line.

Simply click on the link below or type in the website address into your web-browser to open the survey and submit your responses anonymously on-line.

www.uconnsurveys.com/EmployerSurvey/survey.aspx?id=####

Please consider completing this short survey within the next two weeks. You will have the opportunity to voluntarily submit your email into a separate database to be eligible for one of ten **\$50 gift cards**.

In return, the [Name of Member] will be able to receive results from the survey responses overall and specifically related to agriculture in Connecticut.

Thank you for considering this initiative to better understand the needs of Connecticut employers. Your input will help to further shape policy and programs supporting the employment of people with disabilities and older workers in our state. Your time and input are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

[NAME of contact]

[ROLE of contact]

[NAME of Member]

Appendix C: Job accommodations

	Yes	No
Provide modifications to the physical environment (such as ramps, adapt desk to wheelchair, etc.)	52.5% (85)	47.5% (77)
Provide technology to help employee function in the workplace (such as voice recognition software, a specially designed computer keyboard, etc.)	32.5% (52)	67.5% (108)
Change employee's job tasks or provide a job reassignment	57.6% (91)	42.4% (67)
Change employee's work hours (includes job-sharing and flextime)	56.3% (89)	43.7% (69)
Allow employee to work at home and telecommute	29.4% (45)	70.6% (108)
Provide someone to assist the person with job related duties, such as a personal assistant, reader, sign language interpreter, job coach, etc.	21.9% (34)	78.1% (121)
Provide any accommodations during the recruitment and interview process	22.5% (34)	77.5% (117)

Appendix D: Employer practices and experiences

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
My company actively encourages job applications from people with disabilities.	23.2% (35)	41.1% (62)	23.2% (35)	12.6% (19)
My company does a good job of matching jobs and abilities for employees with disabilities.	19.3% (29)	52.0% (78)	19.3% (29)	9.3% (14)
My company is prepared to accommodate the needs of our aging workforce.	34.2% (52)	50.0% (76)	10.5% (16)	5.3% (8)
The managers of my company have experience hiring and managing employees with disabilities.	15.8% (24)	34.9% (53)	32.9% (50)	16.4% (25)
My company includes disability awareness in our diversity programs.	20.1% (30)	44.3% (66)	18.8% (28)	16.8% (25)
My company does a good job of providing training on working with and supervising people with a disability.	12.7% (19)	38.0% (57)	32.7% (49)	16.7% (25)
It would be difficult to perform the jobs that are usually available in my company for a person with a disability such as:				
(i) Physical condition	33.1% (49)	27.7% (41)	27.7% (41)	11.5% (17)
(ii) Mental health condition	34.7% (51)	38.1% (56)	23.1% (34)	4.1% (6)
(iii) Cognitive, developmental or Learning disability	32.2% (47)	37.0% (54)	25.3% (37)	5.5% (8)
My company would hire more people with disabilities if they had the skills and experience needed for the job.	30.9% (46)	46.3% (69)	16.8% (25)	6.0% (9)
My company would hire more people with disabilities if funds were available specifically to provide special equipment for job accommodations.	20.9% (31)	33.8% (50)	31.1% (46)	14.2% (21)
My company would be more likely to hire a person with mental illness and/or substance abuse history if specialized support was provided to us and the employee.	10.1% (15)	25.0% (37)	40.5% (60)	24.3% (36)

Appendix E: Employer attitudes

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
Job applicants who have a disability are usually interested only in part time work.	3.3% (5)	18.7% (28)	50.7% (76)	27.3% (41)
An employee with a disability would have lower productivity or have to take more time off from work.	3.4% (5)	17.4% (26)	51.7% (77)	27.5% (41)
The benefits outweigh the costs of hiring an employee with a disability.	15.1% (22)	51.4% (75)	26.0% (38)	7.5% (11)
If I hire a person with a disability, I might be sued if I do not provide every accommodation they want on the job.	12.0% (18)	30.7% (46)	34.7% (52)	22.7% (34)
The cost of adapting equipment or providing other accommodations at work is too expensive.	8.2% (12)	33.3% (49)	45.6% (67)	12.9% (19)
Employers are generally reluctant to hire someone who they know has a disability.	11.6% (17)	58.5% (86)	21.1% (31)	8.8% (13)

Appendix F: Programs and policies

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful
Employer recognition programs for hiring clients from service provider agencies	11.7% (17)	42.1% (61)	46.2% (67)
Job accommodations reimbursement or tax incentives	32.6% (47)	47.2% (68)	20.1% (29)
Employer tax incentive programs for hiring clients from state agencies	27.3% (39)	37.8% (54)	35.0% (50)
Centralized resource center as single point of contact for employment support services related to hiring people with disabilities	28.5% (41)	45.8% (66)	25.7% (37)
Model employer recognition program promoting disability friendly employers	17.4% (25)	36.1% (52)	46.5% (67)
Job boards for employers to post available jobs targeting recruitment from people with disabilities	23.8% (34)	46.9% (67)	29.4% (42)
Potential employee pool for employers to recruit pre-screened and qualified people with disabilities	32.9% (47)	47.6% (68)	19.6% (28)