



Advancing the Conversation on Disability Inclusion Community Online Dialogue:

Strategies for Achieving the Goals of Section 503 within the Federal Contractor Community

November 18 – December 18, 2015
Participation Metrics



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Introduction:

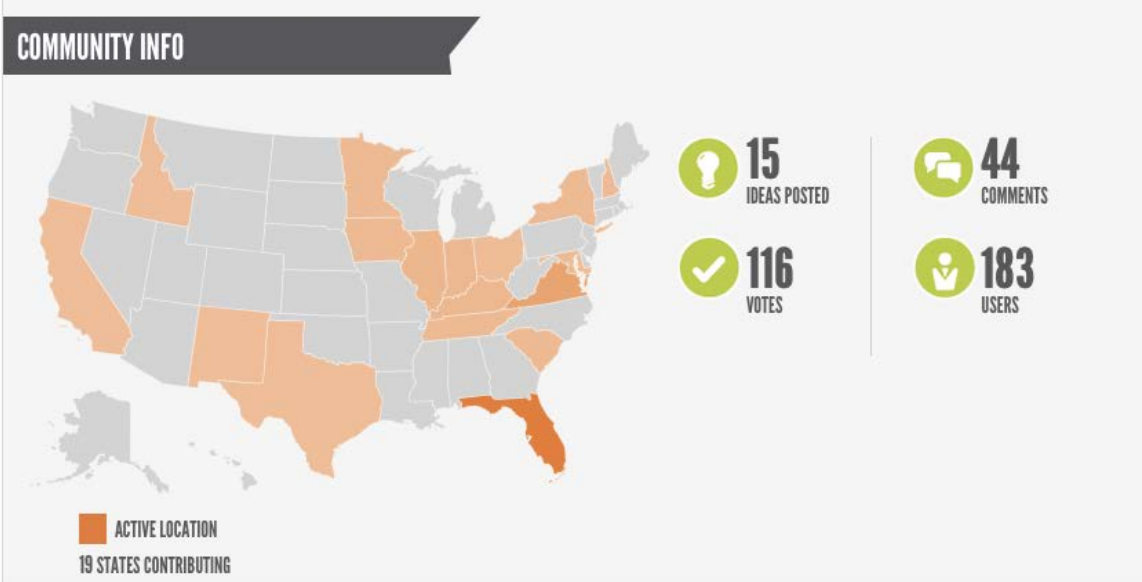
The following report outlines the results of the federal contractor community's online dialogue, *"Advancing the Conversation on Disability Inclusion: Strategies for Achieving the Goals of Section 503."* Hosted by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and its Employer Technical Assistance Center, the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN), this virtual event was held from Wednesday, November 18 through Friday, December 18, 2015. The dialogue invited the federal contractor community to contribute to a virtual conversation in an effort to gather insight into successful strategies federal contractors are using to achieve their goals under the updated rules of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The dialogue posed two questions:

- 1. What strategies do you recommend/does your organization use to encourage self-identification?**
- 2. What strategies do you recommend/does your organization use to foster a disability-inclusive culture?**

The dialogue asked participants to share strategies they feel are effective in creating an environment conducive to achieving goals under Section 503, and to vote for ideas submitted by others that they feel have significant potential. As part of the registration process, registrants were asked to answer a series of questions, including whether or not their company has a diversity program, what they feel are the biggest deterrents to self-identification among job applications and/or existing employees, and if they would like to be part of an ongoing engagement effort with EARN.

Ideas posted to the online dialogue were organized into topics, including: Accessible Technology, Accommodations, Fostering an Inclusive Culture, Recruitment Tactics and Sources, Retention and Advancement Strategies, and Self-Identification/Disclosure. In addition to posting ideas to the dialogue, participants were given an opportunity to "vote" on each idea and submit comments. Included in this report are the top posts contributed by and voted on by participants. An archive of the complete dialogue is available for viewing at <http://federalcontractors.epolicyworks.org/>.

Participation Summary:



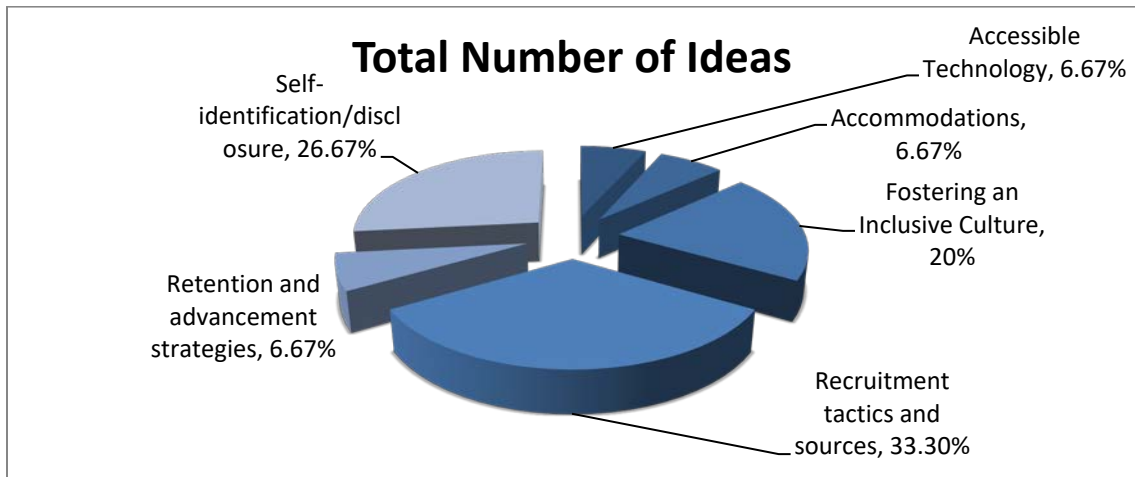
- Dialogue opened on Wednesday, November 18, 2015 at 8:00 am ET
- Dialogue closed on Friday, December 18, 2015 at 11:59 pm ET
- Total Ideas: 15
- Total Comments: 44
- Total Votes: 116
- Unique Visitors: 295
 - Total Registrants: 183 (62% of unique visitors)
 - Completed Registration: 171 (93.44%)
 - Active Registrants (submitted ideas or commented): 36 (19.67%)

Dialogue Registrant Participation

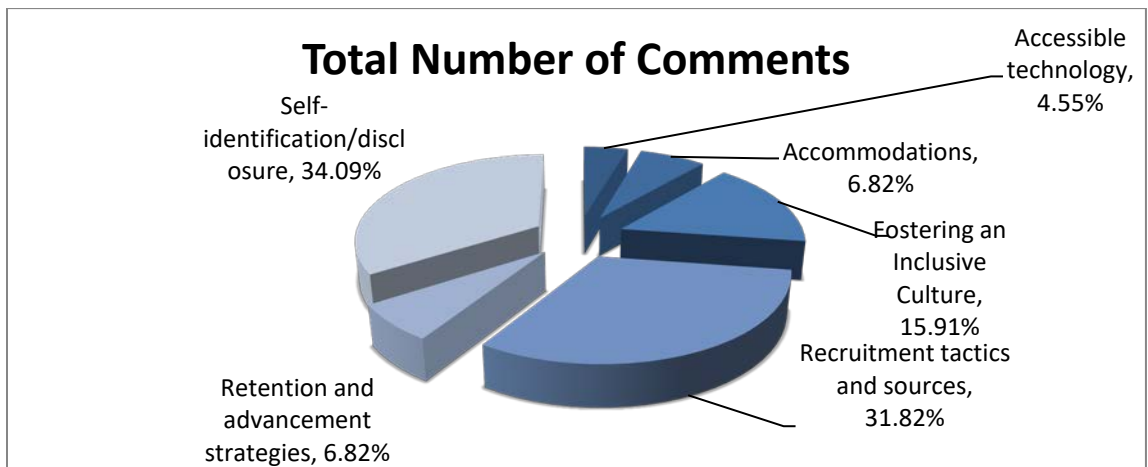


Campaign Summary:

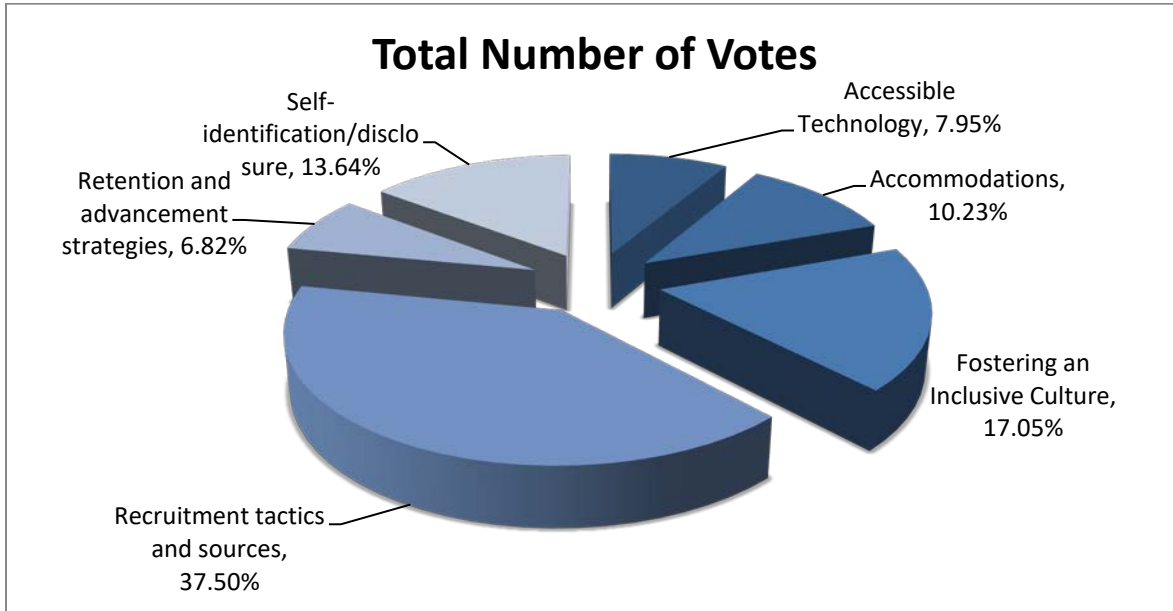
- Total number of ideas: 15
 - Accessible technology: 1 (6.67%)
 - Accommodations: 1 (6.67%)
 - Fostering an inclusive culture: 3 (20%)
 - Recruitment tactics and sources: 5 (33.3%)
 - Retention and advancement strategies: 1 (6.67%)
 - Self-identification/disclosure: 4 (26.67%)



- Total number of comments: 44
 - Accessible technology comments: 2 (4.55%)
 - Accommodations comments: 3 (6.82%)
 - Fostering an inclusive culture comments: 7 (15.91%)
 - Recruitment tactics and sources comments: 14 (31.82%)
 - Retention and advancement strategies comments: 3 (6.82%)
 - Self-identification/disclosure comments: 15 (34.09%)



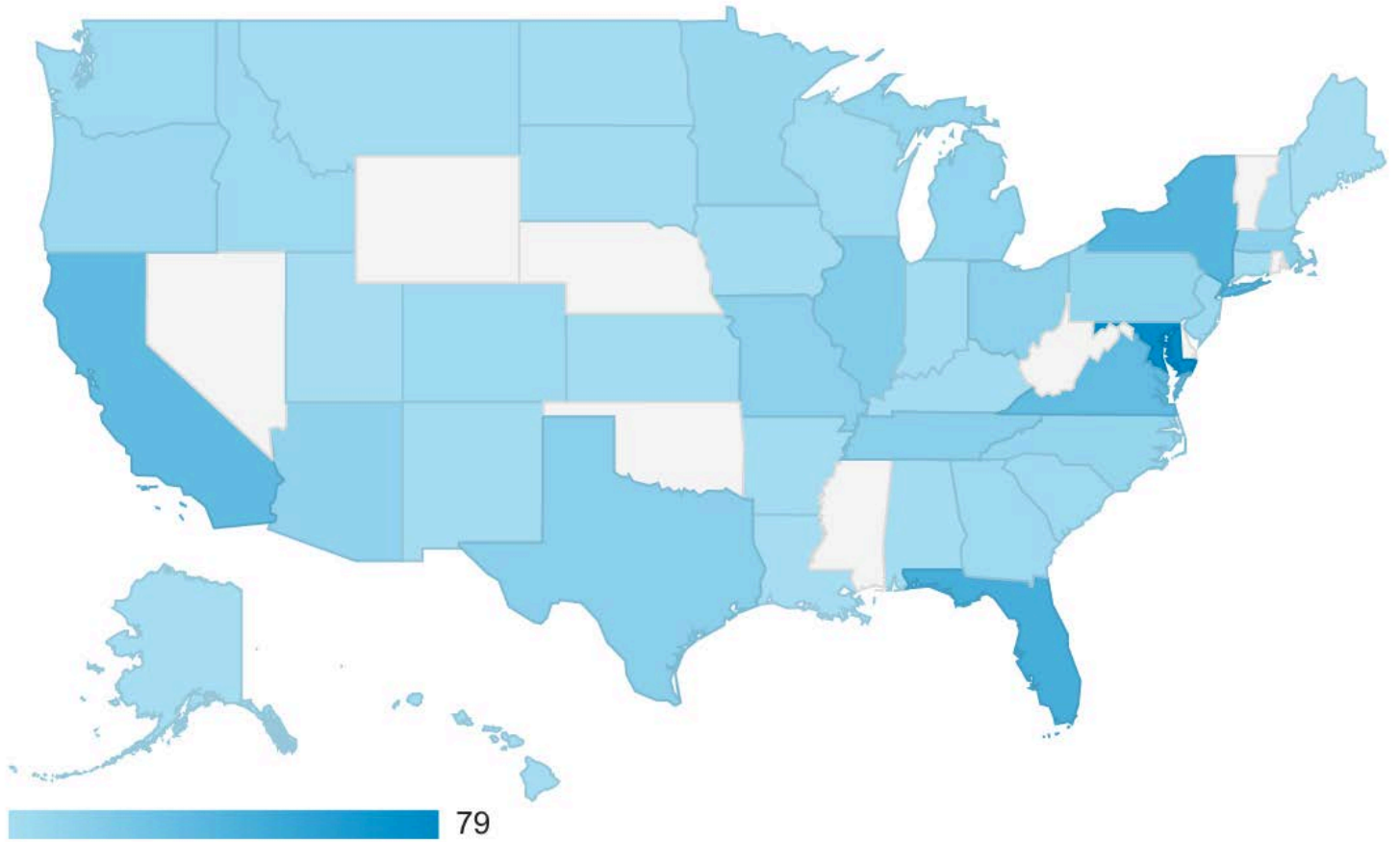
- Total number of votes: 88
 - Accessible technology votes: 7 (7.95%)
 - Accommodations votes: 9 (10.23%)
 - Fostering an inclusive culture votes: 15 (17.05%)
 - Recruitment tactics and sources votes: 33 (37.5%)
 - Retention and advancement strategies votes: 6 (6.82%)
 - Self-identification/disclosure votes: 12 (13.64%)



Visits during the Dialogue (11/18/15 – 12/18/15):

- Total visits: 504
- Unique visitors: 295
- Total page views: 1,826
- Average pages per visit: 3.62
- Average visit duration: 5:13
- Returning visitors: 52.8%
- Bounce rate (percentage of participants who leave after viewing the first page of the dialogue): 46.43%

Map of Demographics of United States Visits:



Demographics of Visits:

State	Visits
Maryland	79
District of Columbia	67
Florida	45
New York	38
California	33
Virginia	32
Illinois	17
Tennessee	14
Texas	14
Massachusetts	13
Missouri	13
Ohio	13
Arizona	11
Michigan	10
North Carolina	9
Pennsylvania	9
Minnesota	7
New Jersey	6
Oregon	6
Colorado	5
Georgia	5
Idaho	5

South Carolina	5
Washington	5
Wisconsin	4
Kansas	3
Montana	3
Alabama	2
Arkansas	2
Connecticut	2
Hawaii	2
Iowa	2
Indiana	2
Kentucky	2
North Dakota	2
New Hampshire	2
New Mexico	2
South Dakota	2
Alaska	1
Louisiana	1
Maine	1
Utah	1

Registration Metrics:

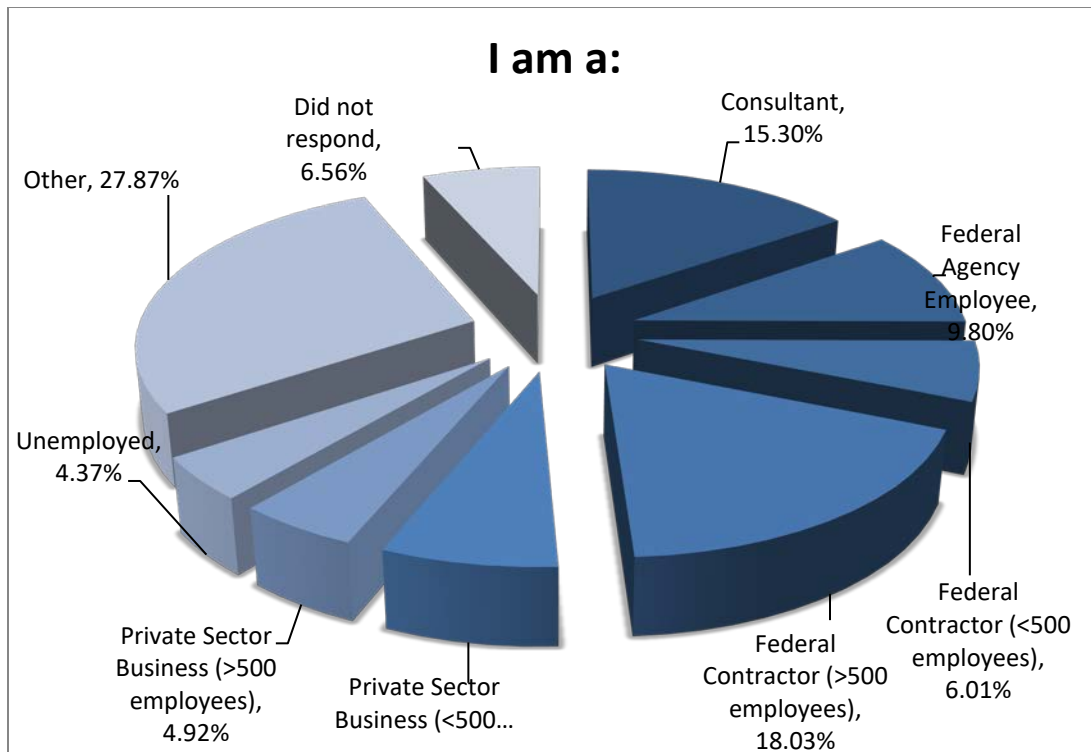
Total registrants: 183

Total number of registrants that completed the registration process: 171

Following is a breakdown of self-reported affiliations:

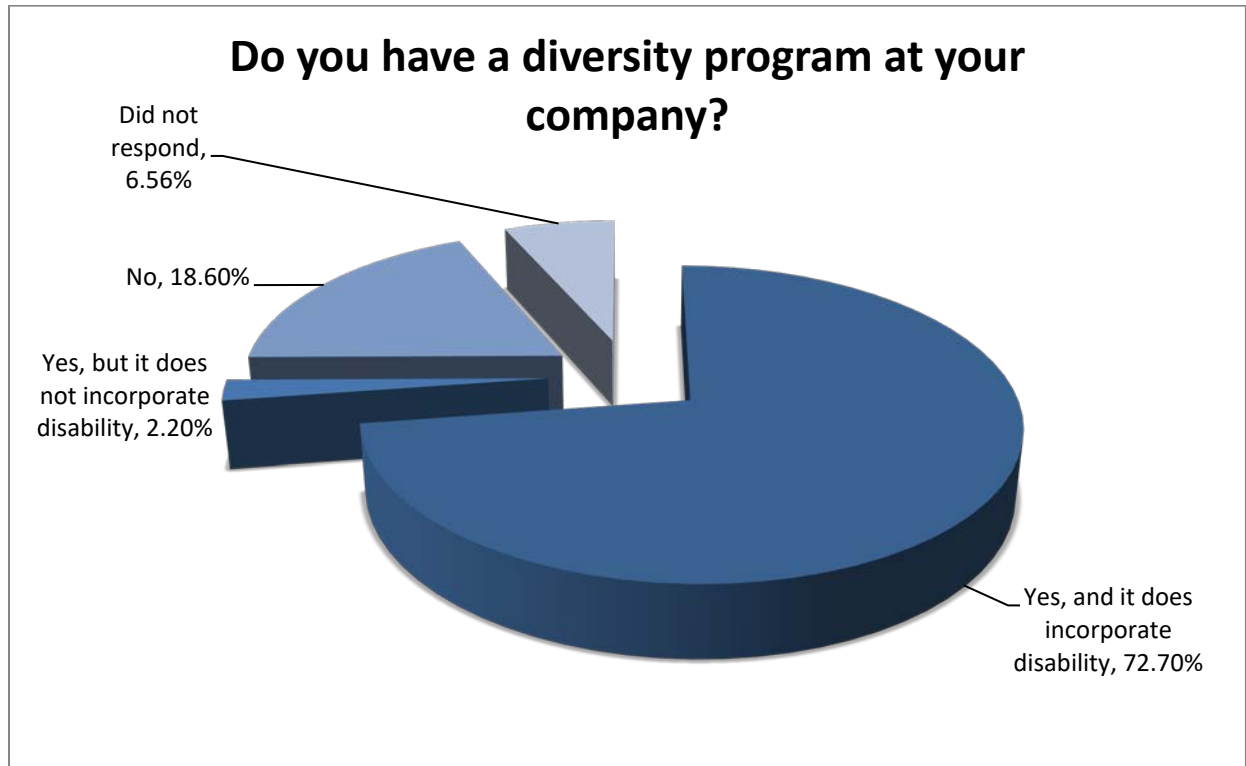
Are you a: Consultant, Federal Agency Employee, Federal Contractor (less than 500 employees), Federal Contractor (more than 500 employees), Private Sector Business (non-federal contractor) (less than 500 employees), Private Sector Business (non-federal contractor) (more than 500 employees), Unemployed, Other?

- Consultant: 28 (15.3%)
- Federal Agency Employee: 18 (9.8%)
- Federal Contractor (less than 500 employees): 11 (6.01%)
- Federal Contractor (more than 500 employees): 33 (18.03%)
- Private Sector Business (non-federal contractor) (less than 500 employees): 13 (7.1%)
- Private Sector Business (non-federal contractor) (more than 500 employees): 9 (4.92%)
- Unemployed: 8 (4.37%)
- Other: 51 (27.87%)
- Did not respond: 12 (6.56%)



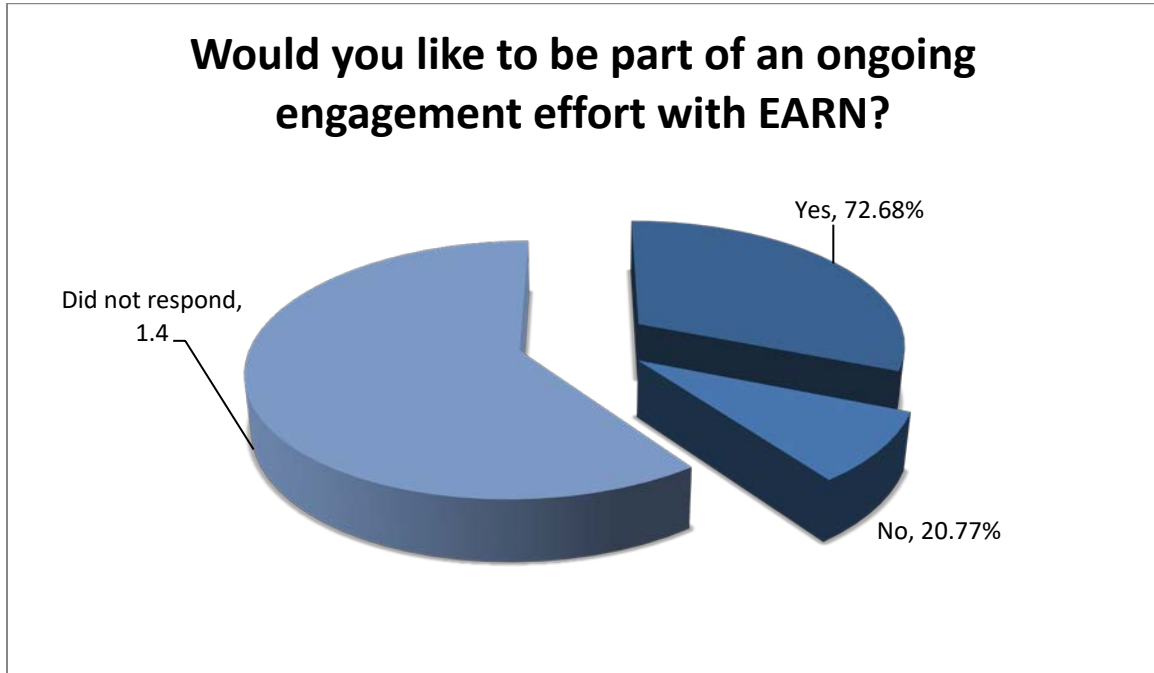
Do you have a diversity program at your company?

- Yes, and it does incorporate disability: 133 (72.7%)
- Yes, but it does not incorporate disability: 4 (2.2%)
- No: 34 (18.6%)
- Did not respond: 12 (6.56%)



Would you like to be part of an ongoing engagement effort with EARN?

- Yes: 133 (72.68%)
- No: 38 (20.77%)
- Did not respond: 12 (6.56%)



What do you feel are the biggest deterrents to self-identification among job applicants and/or your existing employees? Please type NA if this does not apply.

Listed in the table below are registrant responses to the question. Minor typographical corrections were made that have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised responses.

(1) Lack of understanding of legal protections and/or feeling that protections are not adequate to prevent problems; and (2) Fear of being victimized.
1) Lack of knowledge of what is considered a "disability" for government tracking and reporting purposes. 2) Fighting social stigma of being "disabled." Many who are eligible to self-identify don't view ourselves as "disabled" or part of "them." 3) Overcoming "don't disclose disability in the workplace." 4) Not fully understanding the employer's commitment to going beyond compliance to inclusion. 5) Fear that somehow the information will go to their supervisor or somehow be used against them at some point in their employment. 6) Belief that they are disclosing what type of disability they have.
Acceptance. Relevant education. Lack of understanding.

Applicants likely fear it will hurt their chances. Existing employees likely fear they will be treated differently, or that it will hurt their chances for advancement.
As an agency assisting individuals with disabilities obtain employment it is clear that most are fearful of disclosing due to possible discrimination and misunderstanding about the nature of their condition. It will help significantly if these applicants can feel confident that the information will be truly confidential. In addition, it will help if the company can insure that there are management and supervisory personnel who are knowledgeable about disabilities and more focused on what the individual can do.
As recently affirmed again by research, employees believe that they will be less competitive if they disclose, and most employers don't have effective ways to let job seekers know that they really want to diversify their workforce with people with disabilities thereby encouraging people with disabilities to apply and disclose.
Being excluded and discriminated against in either the hiring process, or in their day-to-day employment settings.
Candidates and employees often feel like employees need to know about their disability status, so they are reluctant to self-identify.
Comfortability to identify as an IWD and knowing information will be held confidential and not used against them.
Coming to grips with the trauma of living with a disability so you can effectively reach out and gain inclusive employment.
Concern that the information will not be kept confidential.
Confidentiality concerns.
Confidentiality, climate.
Create a world that welcomes people with disabilities.
Cultural differences.
Discrimination by employers.
Discrimination, fear of exclusion, embarrassment.
Discrimination, plain and simple. Not being hired or being marginalized.
Do not know.
Do not trust employers to accept them; do not trust coworkers; previous experiences of being misunderstood and ousted; employers always present and an arguable reason for not hiring them.
Doesn't apply to my organization but I feel the biggest deterrent is discrimination.
Education to employees regarding the stigma of having a disability - especially hidden.
Fear of bias. Once a disability is disclosed everything is seen through that lens.
Fear of disability status impacting the view on one's capabilities.
Fear of discrimination.
Fear of discrimination.
Fear of discrimination and judgment.
Fear of discrimination and not providing ADA mandated accommodations.
Fear of Discrimination and privacy concerns by the Job applicant or employee.
Fear of discrimination in hiring or advancement. Fear of being excluded from the social aspects of employment; not being treated as a peer by colleagues. Reluctance to be stereotyped and/or pitied.
Fear of discrimination.
Fear of judgement, unfair treatment, pre-conceived judgement or prejudice, etc.
Fear of losing employment or not gaining employment.
Fear of not being chosen for the position.

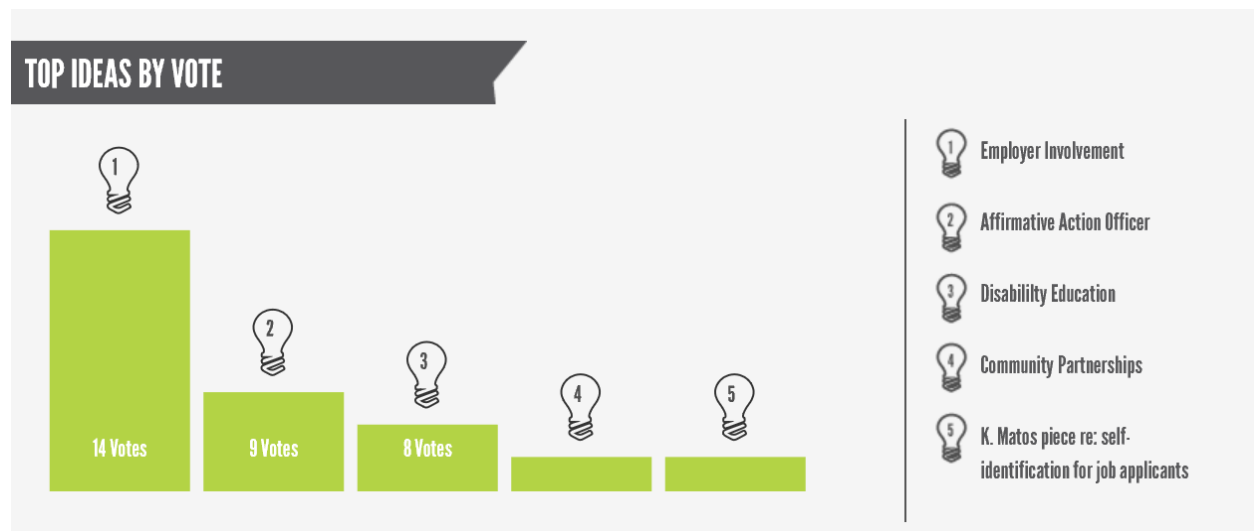
Fear of not being hired or being let go.
Fear of not being hired or of being "pushed out" if currently in a position. Disability of any kind instills fear of a stigma being attached to the person once they acknowledge their disability.
Fear of not being hired. Once hired, the Section 503 questionnaire responses often show different responses.
Fear of not getting hired.
Fear of not winning the job or not advancing in the job due to disability stigma and perceptions of capability limitations among people with disabilities.
Fear of others finding out.
Fear of retaliation. Personal pride.
Fear of retaliation and the future use of the info by management. Fear of perceptions by colleagues and superiors.
Fear of retaliation, being seen as somehow different than others, management resistance to making accommodations, US Government employees not understanding their obligations to comply with 503, US government having unrealistic expectations of contractors when they are subject to the same laws and guidelines.
Fear of stigma attached to self-identification; corporate culture; lack of understanding of how disability is a diversity issue.
Fear that self-identification will interfere with gaining employment or future advancement. Lack of knowledge of the process.
Fear, based on a lack of communication.
Feeling secure about who will get the information.
Having applicants/Crewmembers feel comfortable enough to self-identify.
I am with a company that places people with developmental disabilities in jobs that pay above minimum wage.
I believe pride is the biggest deterrent in self-identifying a disability. People want to be seen for what they can do and not be judged by co-workers, who may believe they were hired because of their disability.
I believe the fear of stigmatization to be a key deterrent of self-identification for those who may have invisible disabilities.
I can't speak for others, but only by my own experiences. I have a MBA degree with specializations in Organization Leadership Development and Health Care Administration. I am sought after to serve on many national and statewide boards/councils in the I/DD arena, yet I can't find employment. I am either over qualified or lacking paid employment experience.
I feel employees still feel uncertain if they should disclose disabilities, thinking they may be overlooked for promotions, advancement, etc. I think the mindset remains that it's not a company's business to disclose personal information unless it will benefit the individual in some way. These are my personal thoughts and are not based on any aggregate data collected by the company.
I just resigned from working at a federal contractor agency. Deterrents for employees: Lack of clear procedures and standards, insular disability advisors not guided by leadership policy for any type of flexibility other than the law, coerced interactive interviews where the advisors refuse to provide agendas, team up with other managers and interrogate as needed yet the employee cannot prove this, the only documentation that exists is after the interview the disability advisor sends out the notes and says the employee can change or add things, this is an old school authoritarian water district culture where the aggressive communication and high control of the culture can characterize the interactive interview. There is no employee recourse other than to go through the

<p>health harming processes of filing a complaint which can take a long time to investigate. Because there are no Federal laws that require a contractor to do what the Federal Government agencies are required to do-publish to all employees' clear procedures, protocols standards, organizations can easily set up disability interactive interview sessions to do really, whatever they want to short of major Federal law violation. The laws governing working with doctors is optional. The Federal laws are too broad for clear protections for employees other than obvious adverse actions like firing someone. Without mandatory protocols and standards, for example, behaviors like prolonging the accommodation decisions beyond a month are tolerated. I think the current set up for Federal Contractors leave employees at great risk for more health damages, loss of income, more time off, etc. I would like to see a law like Obama's Executive Order for Federal laws that provide a template for the organization to provide step by step information to employees about what and how the accommodation process works.</p>
<p>I work as a job developer and the greatest challenge that I see is the lack of education and health fears. Employers are also so multi task focused that they are not willing to work with disabilities. The lack of education on disabilities and the fear of adding stress are the 2 biggest issues that I see on a daily basis. I have also found that many employers that have a person in their personal life with a disability seem to have tunnel vision (one size fits all) approach to dealing with people that have a disability. They do not see the potential only the disability. This makes it hard to share the information as individuals that have a disability seem to be intimidated by the application/interview process. I also think that sometimes that the persons that do the interviewing are not necessarily the people that need to know or make the decisions. They are there to hire the most qualified person and feel that hiring someone with a disability will directly affect their job.</p>
<p>I work for The Arc of Howard County, so I am a Job Developer for developmentally and/or intellectually disabled adults, so this question doesn't apply to me.</p>
<p>I work with the Veteran's population who is seeking employment and many of them absolutely do not want to self-identify as having a mental disability. They feel they will be discriminated against or that employers will assume that they have PTSD and are violent or unreliable.</p>
<p>Investment in the lives of individuals with disabilities, an investment that allows them to take them toward economic independence through employment. We are grateful for the support that helps us foster the recognition that all of us – disabled and non-disabled – bring to communities that truly welcome diversity.</p>
<p>Job applicant/employees feel they will be discriminated against.</p>
<p>Job applicants--fear it will interfere with an offer. Existing employees--not to know to self-identify.</p>
<p>Job Applicants; people not aware that they can consider themselves disabled - Disabled Veteran not identifying as a person with a disability, old stigma attached to not getting hired if you self-identify - Employees - afraid of being treated differently if they self-disclose.</p>
<p>Lack of community connection; lack of Leadership buy-in; lack of training in disabilities with management/coworkers; lack of training on Self-ID form; no proof of diversity in recruitment outreach, hiring, marketing campaigns or inter-office posters/materials, etc.; no presence of employee resource groups.</p>
<p>Lack of understanding of how the information will be used.</p>
<p>Lack of understanding of how the information will be used. Objection to being asked this and other personal identity information on principle.</p>
<p>More integrity, trust, education, understanding needed.</p>
<p>N/A but the biggest problem is that the fear of things if it were done more secure and confidential information keep down low. I feel that if it was more explain to the employee that they are</p>

protected by law they would be more likely to be open without the feeling of losing clients and job market employment opportunities.
Negative Myths About People with Disabilities.
No incentive for doing so, only perceived risk.
Not identifying with the disabled community. Not recognizing 'hidden' disabilities are included.
Not making it mandatory. We have communicated numerous times to our employee population about completing the Disability Self ID form but have only gotten a 15% response rate. Of those who did respond, more than 20% claimed to have a disability so the numbers are likely there. The other reason is fear. Of someone finding out, of losing out on future career opportunities, being treated differently. We have worked very hard at making our culture inclusive but that has not had the desired impact.
Not sure, new to this space.
Not understanding the importance of self-ID'ing.
Our company is very disability friendly and we don't have a problem with self-identification.
Privacy and understanding that they will not be looked at differently by sharing the information amongst their colleagues.
Privacy comfort level.
Public perceptions.
Reasonable fear of discrimination and retaliation.
Since disclosing my disability I have experienced negative repercussions (lay-off) and have not been able to find similar work for approximately 17 months which could be due to retaliation for filing a complaint.
Social networks are lacking in people's lives.
Stigma.
Stigma about disability. Not knowing how to bring the topic up without violating privacy act or ADA.
Stigma and fear of being valued less by employer and colleagues. Limited understanding among managers about how to create welcoming environment. Corporate focus on compliance and avoiding litigation has historically created a "don't ask/don't tell" culture.
Stigma associated with disability, especially mental illness.
Stigma associated with disability, fear that disclosure will somehow lead to termination, privacy issues (people naturally do not want to make their medical information public knowledge), inability to see any benefit for them in disclosing.
Stigma surrounding the word disability. Fear that an individual will be seen as less than capable due to a disability.
Stigma, discrimination.
Stigma, the idea that I might be getting preferred treatment, the fact that some might not see me as being able to fully do the job and therefore should not be hired.
System issues and people not seeing the benefit in self-identifying.
TBD.
That they believe they will not be hired.
The applicants have the feeling of discrimination and judgement. I am not saying companies do this, but for some individuals with disabilities it is difficult for them to let go of past experiences.
The biggest deterrent to people with disabilities self-identifying is twofold: stigma related to being disabled, then being ignored, socially excluded, or treated differently because of disability status. New applicants may believe that the employer will not hire them, or even consider them for the position, if the applicant discloses disability. Hiring discrimination still exists.

The biggest deterrents are fear of job loss or fear of one's career being limited if one's disability were known.
The biggest deterrents to self-identification seem to be uncertainty and anxiety about treatment of people with disabilities.
The ego and getting through the vulnerability of disclosing a disability and possibly being thought of being "less than" others, along with the anxiety of possible discrimination.
The framing of the question to Self-Identify is a problem for the candidate. Some companies do it well in discussing the importance of inclusion and that there are regulations in place that require voluntary measurement. Happy to send examples of best practices if you like.
The stigmatism associated with self-identification and the potential fall-out.
There is a stigma to identification because of the hoops you have to jump through to apply for accommodations and the process to approve, and there is also a perception that some are either faking their disability or are following a fashion diagnosis.
They are worried about being treated differently than other applicants and/or employees. They also don't trust that the system will not cause discrimination against them.
They see it as a barrier to employment. They see it as a private, personal matter and should not be disclosed to anyone. They don't always know or understand why the information is needed and, therefore, don't trust to disclose.
Trust that the information will remain confidential. Lack of understanding as to what constitutes a qualifying disability. Inability to articulate the What's In It For Me (WIFM).
Trust, stigma and fear. Employers have not done a good job of inclusion, being consistent with disability marketing or training within the organization.
Well, my staff is of the Independent Living Movement so they do not have the reticence to self-identify in any capacity of their lives. The folks we serve, however, may not be so compelled to self-identify for any number of reasons, including the existing societal stigmas pertaining to people with disabilities, especially among those who do the hiring and firing, and their ability to be "productive" enough to earn a fair wage. This lack of understanding of workers with disabilities, their abilities and skills, etc. is reflected as you know in US employment data and CILs actively seek to promote the needed paradigm shift away from these antiquated and shortsighted ideas.
Working with my business clients they believe the biggest deterrent for employees to self-identify is fear that the disclosure will impact their employment, advancement and their standing with fellow teammates.

Top 5 Overall Ideas:



Note: The ideas listed in the following sections include minor typographical corrections, which have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised posts.

Top Idea #1: Employer Involvement

14 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 14 Net Votes

I would encourage those helping employees with disabilities find jobs to sponsor events and meet one-on-one with HR Departments and those making hiring decisions to provide information about simple accommodations, tax incentives and success stories regarding hiring those with disabilities. I believe a lack of knowledge and concern that such employees would be difficult to accommodate, has impacted a willingness to hire qualified employees who happen to have disabilities.

Top Idea #2: Affirmative Action Officer

9 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 9 Net Votes

Our Department has created a position whose primary duty is to work with employees who need accommodations.

Top Idea #3: Disability Education

8 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 8 Net Votes

Address attitudinal barriers by educating hiring management and employees about the skills people with disabilities bring to the workplace, the resources available through partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation department and the advances of assistive technology.

Top Idea #4: Community Partnerships

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

Partnering with local disability organizations to conduct employment readiness workshops (resume writing, interviewing skill, mock interviews, etc.). Strengthens the candidate pool as well as identifies suitable applicants and increases confidence level.

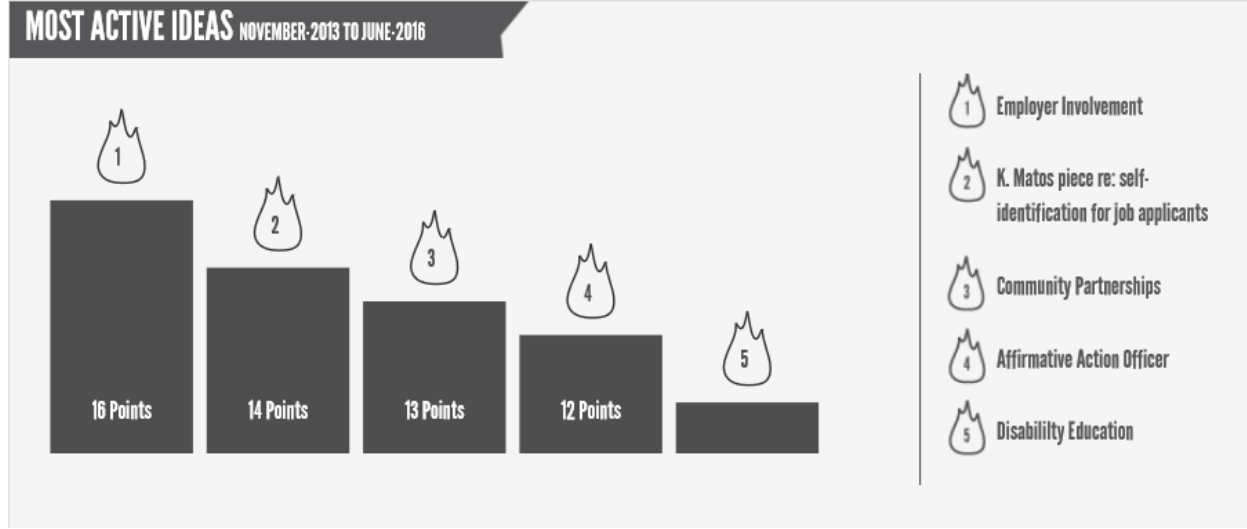
Top Idea #5: Ken Matos Piece RE: Self-Identification for Job Applicants

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kenneth-matos/catch22-of-disclosing-dis_b_8456016.html?utm_hp_ref=accessibility

A great piece by Ken Matos in the Huffington Post regarding a recent study. A great read!

Most Active Ideas:



Note: The ideas listed in the following sections include minor typographical corrections, which have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised posts.

Most Active Idea #1: Employer Involvement

14 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 14 Net Votes | 2 Comments

I would encourage those helping employees with disabilities find jobs to sponsor events and meet one-on-one with HR Departments and those making hiring decisions to provide information about simple accommodations, tax incentives and success stories regarding hiring those with disabilities. I believe a lack of knowledge and concern that such employees would be difficult to accommodate, has impacted a willingness to hire qualified employees who happen to have disabilities.

Most Active Idea #2: Ken Matos Piece RE: Self-Identification for Job Applicants

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes | 7 Comments

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kenneth-matos/catch22-of-disclosing-dis_b_8456016.html?utm_hp_ref=accessibility

A great piece by Ken Matos in the Huffington Post regarding a recent study. A great read!

Most Active Idea #3: Community Partnerships

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes | 6 Comments

Partnering with local disability organizations to conduct employment readiness workshops (resume writing, interviewing skill, mock interviews, etc.). Strengthens the candidate pool as well as identifies suitable applicants and increases confidence level.

Most Active Idea #4: Affirmative Action Officer

9 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 9 Net Votes | 3 Comments

Our Department has created a position whose primary duty is to work with employees who need accommodations.

Most Active Idea #5: Disability Education

8 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 8 Net Votes | 2 Comments

Address attitudinal barriers by educating hiring management and employees about the skills people with disabilities bring to the workplace, the resources available through partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation department and the advances of assistive technology.

Top Ideas by Topic

Top Ideas – Accessible Technology

Top Idea #1: Program Manager, Military, University, Disability

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

Yearly survey of employees giving them the opportunity to self-identify 2. Opportunity to be able to select as an IWD at any time the same as other identifiers.

Top Ideas – Accommodations

Top Idea #1: Affirmative Action Officer

9 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 9 Net Votes

Our Department has created a position whose primary duty is to work with employees who need accommodations.

Top Ideas – Fostering an Inclusive Culture

Top Idea #1: Disability Education

8 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 8 Net Votes

Address attitudinal barriers by educating hiring management and employees about the skills people with disabilities bring to the workplace, the resources available through partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation department and the advances of assistive technology.

Top Idea #2: Employee Resource Group

5 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 5 Net Votes

As an employer, we can facilitate starting an Employee Resource Group for IWDs who we can then leverage to help us gain insight into barriers they commonly encounter as well as how we can help applicants/employees feel comfortable to self-identify.

Top Idea #3: (Idea from a Friend) Promote Visibility via Video

2 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 2 Net Votes

This idea was proposed by a friend with multiple disabilities, for the particular application of becoming visible on the web presence of an organization: Create a welcome video featuring someone with disabilities. People visiting the web page will see that the organization truly values those with disabilities, and is providing more than simple lip service to those with disabilities. It also fosters the concept that those with disabilities are really and truly full-fledged, contributing members of the organization.

Top Ideas – Recruitment tactics and sources

Top Idea #1: Employer Involvement

14 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 14 Net Votes

I would encourage those helping employees with disabilities find jobs to sponsor events and meet one-on-one with HR Departments and those making hiring decisions to provide information about simple accommodations, tax incentives and success stories regarding hiring those with disabilities. I believe a lack of knowledge and concern that such employees would be difficult to accommodate, has impacted a willingness to hire qualified employees who happen to have disabilities.

Top Idea #2: Community Partnerships

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

Partnering with local disability organizations to conduct employment readiness workshops (resume writing, interviewing skill, mock interviews, etc.). Strengthens the candidate pool as well as identifies suitable applicants and increases confidence level.

Top Idea #3: Improve Communication of Job Demands and Accommodation Options

6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

Poor communication of functional job demands and accommodation options is a huge barrier to success with self-identification and recruitment of persons with disabilities during job fairs or other affirmative action strategies. The functional job demands are typically not well described in job advertisements for the benefit of job candidates or job placement professionals. Most employers still use narrative job descriptions and paper-based documentation that is more akin to how bookkeeping was done using ledger books before the advent of QuickBooks. When accommodations are made by the employer, there is usually not a searchable taxonomy to reference availability of de-identified accommodations by job position or ability factor. Standardization for reporting job demands and accommodation options needs to be employer-relevant and transparent to promote a search for suitable functions and consistency in tracking accommodations with the employer. Better reporting would encourage more consumers to self-identify and find suitable job opportunities and accommodations for their abilities or limitations. An example of an innovative technology platform that solves this communication barrier is the WorkerFIT Platform that is described at www.workerfit.com.

Top Idea #4: Describe Successful Job Placements in a Searchable Manner

3 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 3 Net Votes

Document the physical demands, mental cognitive demands, and work schedule requirements of jobs where workers with disabilities are successfully placed in a technology platform that can be searched by other vocational rehab counselors and job developers.

Top Idea #5: Paid Internships

3 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 3 Net Votes

Employers need to know that employees with disabilities can be and are as competitive as those without disabilities. Concerns about additional costs and supervision are also an issue for employers. Paid Internships will provide not only new opportunities for individuals with disabilities if incentives for employers include employer tax credits and incentives for accommodating and training interns without the obligation to hire.

Top Ideas – Retention and advancement strategies

Top Idea #1: Promote Success Stories

6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

I believe it is important to have transparent data that shows what the organization is doing with regards to retention and promotion as well as how the data looks over time. Showing actual data will help ensure the organization's efforts are not unfounded good intentions, but produces results. In addition, promoting success stories of individuals in the organization helps to educate others with regards to the capabilities and commitment of these individuals as well as reduce potential stigma and inaccurate assumptions about what individuals with disabilities are able to contribute when given the opportunity.

Top Ideas – Self-Identification/Disclosure:

Top Idea #1: Ken Matos Piece RE: Self-Identification for Job Applicants

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kenneth-matos/catch22-of-disclosing-disability.html?utm_hp_ref=accessibility

A great piece by Ken Matos in the Huffington Post regarding a recent study. A great read!

Top Idea #2: Self-ID Education as Part of On-boarding Process

6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

Disability self-ID education can be included in the on-boarding process as part of the company's overall D&I/EEO communication. A company can include a list of their EEO/AA/non-harassment policy titles, their diversity/inclusion statement, list of employee business resource groups and how to join, and information about self-ID (disability, race, sex, veteran, LGBT, etc.).

Top Idea #3: Direct Employee Services

1 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 1 Net Votes

One on one counseling - after hire to discuss the self-identification process, what constitutes a disability and assurance that such identification is not known to the supervisor unless an accommodation is needed. This is especially true of veterans who will disclose their disability status for other than employment purposes (i.e. reduced home taxes) but are reluctant to disclose disabilities (especially mental issues) in the workplace.

Top Idea #4: Better Language Improves Esteem

1 Up Votes | 3 Down Votes | -2 Net Votes

A major barrier to self-identification is the word, "disabled." Better terms are "differently abled" or "uniquely able" or even "gifted." At the Staunton Media Lab (YouTube) we talk of "capability arrays" and assistive tech as something fitted to each individual's unique talent matrix. Many deaf or blind students respond well to this language. They're proud they can hear things and see things and smell things and feel things that "normal people" cannot. I would be interested in working with someone who wants to test this language in a more scientific manner.

Recommendations and Resources

Through the Federal Contractor community's online dialogue, *"Advancing the Conversation on Disability Inclusion: Strategies for Achieving the Goals of Section 503,"* ODEP and EARN successfully leveraged leading-edge crowdsourcing tools to engage the federal contractor community and gather ideas to help improve communication about and compliance with Section 503. Based on the input received, the following are recommendations and resources that can serve as a starting point for federal contractors, categorized by each of the top idea topics resulting from this dialogue.

Accessible Technology

Recommendations

- Ensure that high-level leadership is committed to company-wide use of accessible information and communication technologies (ICT).
- Evaluate accessibility of all workplace technology through user testing and available testing tools.
- Adopt company-wide standards for ICT accessibility.
- Develop clear policies to ensure that all ICT procured for company use is accessible.
- Appoint a Chief Accessibility Technology Officer.
- Establish measurable objectives and benchmarks to evaluate ICT accessibility.

Resources

- [Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology \(PEAT\)](#)
- [PEAT's TalentWorks](#)
- [PEAT's Accessible Technology Action Steps: A Guide for Employers](#)
- [BuyAccessible](#)
- [Business Strategies that Work: Be Tech Savvy: Accessible Information and Communications Technology](#)

Related Idea Submissions

- [Program Manager, Military, University, Disability](#)

Accommodations

Recommendations

- Develop a disability services or workplace supports position to ensure accommodations are implemented smoothly and successfully.
- Implement a procedure for requesting and providing reasonable accommodations.
- Establish a workplace policy providing flexibility and accommodations for all employees, with and without disabilities, that allows for the use of telework options if needed.
- Develop plans for emergencies that take into account the needs of employees with disabilities.
- Provide organization-wide training on accommodations such as telework and assistive technologies.

Resources

- [The ADA: Your Responsibilities as an Employer](#)
- [Job Accommodation Network](#)
- [Making an Accommodation](#)
- [Business Strategies that Work: Ensure Productivity: Reasonable Accommodation Procedures](#)

Related Idea Submissions

[Affirmative Action Officer](#)

Fostering an Inclusive Culture

Recommendations

- Develop policy statements and other illustrations of the company's commitment to equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities and communicate these both internally and externally.
- Include disability as part of all of the company's diversity policies and activities.
- Provide resources and training about disability issues to executives and employees at all levels.

Resources

- [The Campaign for Disability Employment](#)
- [A Toolkit for Establishing and Maintaining Successful Employee Resource Groups](#)
- [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#)
- [Creating an Inclusive Work Environment](#)
- [Business Strategies that Work: Lead the Way: Inclusive Business Culture](#)

Related Idea Submissions

- [\(Idea from a Friend\) Promote Visibility via video](#)
- [Employee Resource Group](#)
- [Disability Education](#)

Recruitment Tactics and Sources

Recommendations

- Establish an enterprise-wide team consisting of executives, managers and employees with disabilities to support and advance inclusive recruiting and hiring practices.
- Make (and publicly support) the business case for employing qualified individuals with disabilities.
- In job announcements, indicate that qualified individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.
- Offer internship and mentorship opportunities for students and recent graduates with disabilities.
- Partner with community organizations and institutions to connect with potential applicants with disabilities.
- Ensure online applications and recruiting efforts are fully accessible to job seekers with disabilities.

Resources

- [Recruiting, Hiring, Retaining and Promoting People with Disabilities: A Resource Guide for Employers](#)
- [Workforce Recruitment Program](#)
- [Disability-Focused Online Job Posting Boards](#)
- [Business Strategies that Work: Build the Pipeline: Outreach and Recruitment](#)

Related Idea Submissions

- [Describe successful job placements in a searchable manner](#)
- [Paid Internships](#)
- [Community Partnerships](#)
- [Improve communication of job demands and accommodation options](#)
- [Employer Involvement](#)

Retention and Advancement Strategies

Recommendations

- Assemble a team, perhaps a disability-focused employee resource group (ERG), to focus on retention and promotion of workers with disabilities.
- Establish systems that include internal auditing to facilitate accountability and commitment to fostering inclusion at all levels of the workplace.

Resources

- [Professional Development and Advancement of Employees with Disabilities](#)
- [FAQ: Employer Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining People with Disabilities and Veterans](#)
- [Return-to-Work Toolkit for Employees & Employers](#)
- [Business Strategies that Work: Hire \(and Keep\) the Best: Personnel Practices](#)

Related Idea Submissions

- [Promote Success Stories](#)

Self-Identification/Disclosure

Recommendations

- Encourage all employees with disabilities to self-identify and to communicate any accessibility concerns or barriers without fear of reprisal.
- Provide an outlet for employees and new hires to disclose disabilities anonymously or confidentially.

Resources

- [OFCCP Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability Form](#)
- [Do Ask, Do Tell: Encouraging Employees with Disabilities to Self-Identify](#)
- [Enforcement Guidance: Disability-Related Inquiries and Medical Examinations of Employees Under the Americans with Disabilities \(ADA\)](#)

- [Business Strategies that Work: Communicate: External and Internal Communication of Company Policies and Practices](#)

Related Idea Submissions

- [Self-ID Education as part of on-boarding process](#)
- [Better language improves esteem](#)
- [Dir, Employee Services](#)
- [K. Matos piece re: self-identification for job applicants](#)