Enhancing Employment Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities

QUANTITATIVE survey research, conducted by MarketResponse International, April 2023

For the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. (Proj. 2511)

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Research Overview

Studies Regarding Employment Opportunities for People With Developmental Disabilities

- First conducted in 2005
- Repeated 18 years later in 2023
  - with a focus on the new challenges and opportunities for employment

Phase I: Qualitative research was conducted to gather knowledge and experiences to inform the design of a quantitative survey of employers:

1) In-depth interviews (IDIs) with subject matter experts in State Government and the private sector (n=6).
2) In-depth interviews among employers of individuals with developmental disabilities (n=10).

Phase II: Quantitative survey of businesses in Minnesota, n=200 from an opt-in panel of business managers. Research objectives:

- Obtain measures of current employment of people with developmental disabilities, and other disabilities;
- Gauge employers' attitudes regarding employment of people with disabilities;
- Gain insights regarding the future outlook for employment of people with disabilities.

Thank you to these agencies, businesses and other organizations for participating in the qualitative portion of this very important study:

- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, DEED – Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Minnesota Department of Human Services, DHS – Disability Services Division
- MOHR – Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation
- HIGH IMPACT Mission Based Consulting Services, Allan Bergman

We very much appreciate the insights provided by these 10 employers who participated in the qualitative interviews*.

MARVIN

TRAVELERS

KWIK TRIP

TPI HOSPITALITY

ausm autism society of minnesota

enterprise

pitney bowes

chartwells serving up happy & healthy

Medtronic

MAYO CLINIC

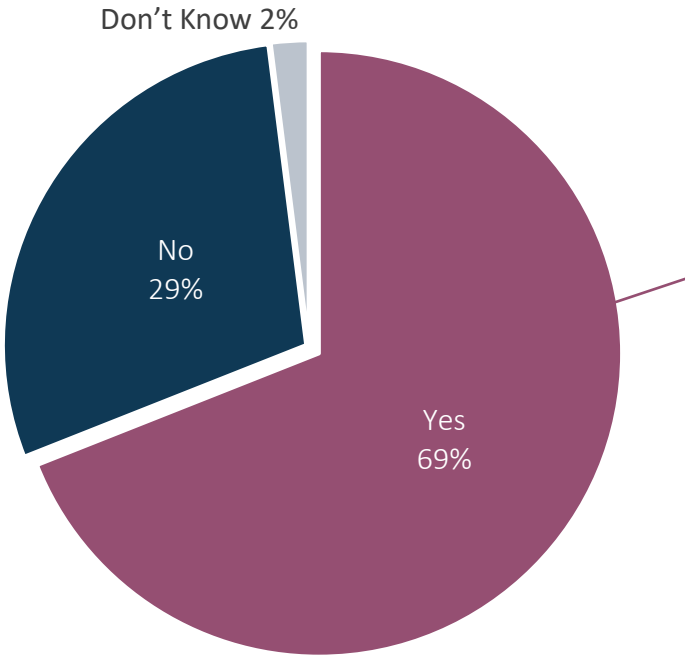
* Quotes gained from the qualitative interviews are shown throughout this report in italics.

Detailed Findings

- **PROFILE**
  of companies that employ people with disabilities
- **MOTIVATION**
  Why some companies employ people with disabilities
- **FLEXIBILITY and ACCOMMODATIONS**
  Why new and different hiring mindsets and processes are needed
- **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**
  Ratings of employees with, and without, disabilities
- **NON-EMPLOYERS**
  Why companies DO NOT currently employ people with disabilities
- **FUTURE OUTLOOK**
  For hiring people with disabilities
- **MINNESOTA'S PERFORMANCE**
  Ratings of the State of Minnesota's disability employment efforts

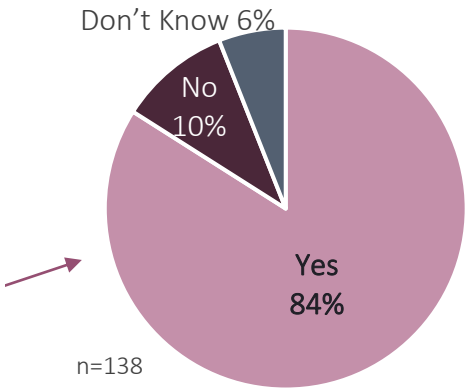
PROFILE of employers of people with disabilities

At the location where you work* does your organization employ any individual with any disability? Q8



*** Employers at locations with less than 5 employees were not included in this survey**

Do any of the individuals employed at your location have a <u>developmental disability</u>?** Q11



Among employers in Minnesota – at locations with 5 or more employees:

- Two-thirds (69%) employ persons with disabilities
  - And eight-out-of-ten of them (84%) believe they employ persons with <u>developmental</u> disabilities;

**** The respondents were shown this definition of <u>developmental disability</u>:**

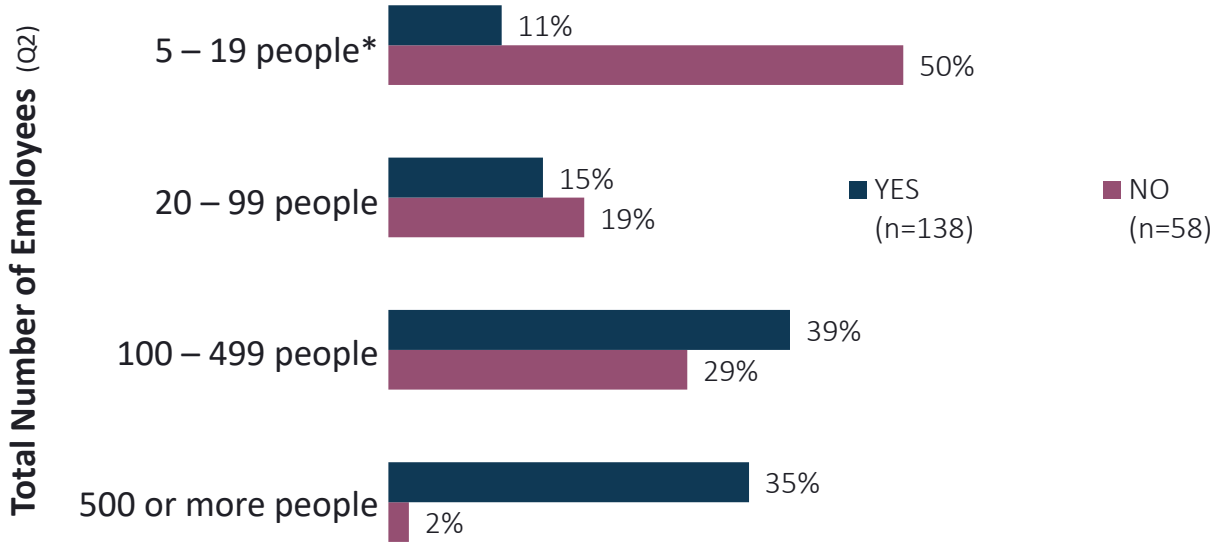
Developmental disability refers to people with the most significant disabilities, such as intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, or individuals with two or more disabilities; manifested before age 22; attributable to a mental and/or physical impairment; and the lifelong need for assistance that is individually planned and coordinated.

See appendix for detail on employees' types of disabilities.

PROFILE of Employers of People With Disabilities

Companies that employ people with disabilities tend to be much larger, and more likely to be involved in retail trade or manufacturing, compared to those that do not currently employ people with disabilities.

Do You Currently Employ Persons with Disability?



*** Employers at locations with less than 5 employees were not included in this survey**

See appendix for detail on the number of people with disabilities employed, by company size.

Type of Business, Industry	Have Employees with Disabilities (n=138)	Do NOT Have Employees with Disabilities (n=58)
Retail Trade	**21%**	5%
Manufacturing	**19%**	3%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	13%	9%
Finance and Insurance	10%	3%
Information Tech and Services	9%	5%
Professional, Scientific, Tech Services	7%	**47%**
Construction	5%	3%
Accommodation and Food Service	3%	2%
Educational Services	3%	2%
Transportation and Warehousing	2%	3%
Other	1%	7%

MOTIVATION Why some companies employ people with disabilities

Having a company culture that embraces diversity, with a workforce that represents their communities, are more important reasons why companies employ people with disabilities, compared to the practical need of filling positions when there is a shortage of workers in Minnesota.

Not at all important		Somewhat important		Very important
1	2	3	4	5

Quote from an Employer

The most recent change is the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, with racial and cultural inclusion. Businesses get their act together in expectation of the public and of their employees. Hopefully this will lead to long term diversity. DEI opens the door to a lot of marginalized groups.

How important were each of the following reasons why your company has hired someone with a disability? Q16 (n=138)	Mean Ratings
It fit the values of our organization, our company culture.	4.3
We wanted to represent the diversity of our community within our workforce.	4.2
I myself, or someone else in my organization has had personal experience with individuals with disabilities.	3.9
A shortage of workers in Minnesota, exacerbated by the pandemic, attracted us to people with disabilities, a relatively untapped labor pool.	3.5

MOTIVATION Why some companies employ people with disabilities

Over half of the businesses that employ people with disabilities (57%), were assisted by Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) from the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

How have you found employees or candidates with disabilities? Q17

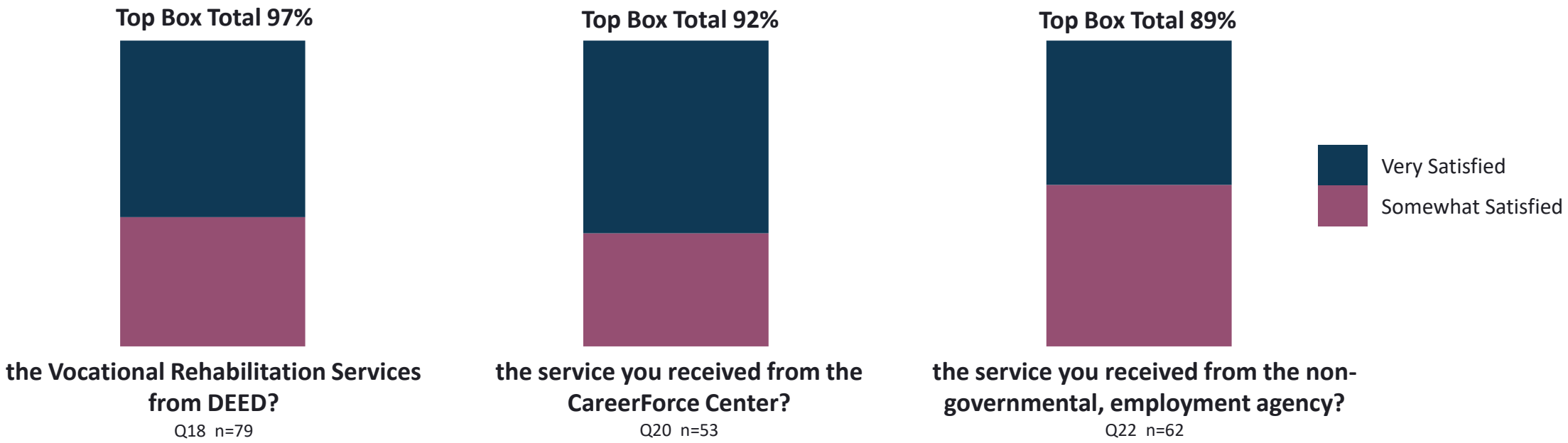
Voice of Employer regarding Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

I'm not a special ed teacher, I don't have the training. I partner with Vocational Rehabilitation (services); they have the understanding. They come into my business and learn what we need. It's scary, but partner with an expert and they'll help with the process.

MOTIVATION Why some companies employ people with disabilities

Employers gave high satisfaction ratings for services received from Minnesota DEED and CareerForce Centers, and slightly lower but still high satisfaction ratings for non-governmental employment agencies.

How satisfied are you with….



FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Why new and different hiring mindsets and processes may be needed

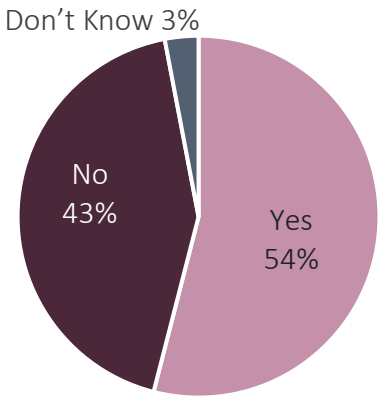
Flexibility in hiring processes are often required of companies that employ people with disabilities.

Quotes from Employers

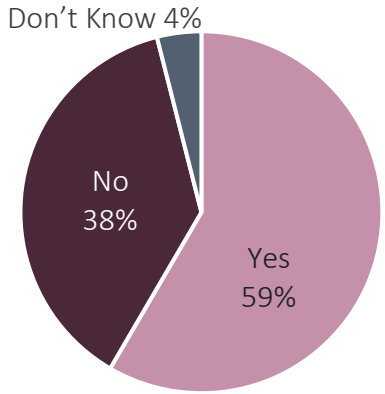
With a typical job you Apply – Interview – Tour the workplace. For people with developmental disabilities, we do that backwards: Tour – Interview (what do they want to do and is this appropriate for them) – Tour again – Apply. Applications can be a huge barrier; we do that as a later part of the process.

Our hiring process is maybe slightly modified depending on what the candidate needs... If somebody needs their job coach to come along with him to the interview, that's completely fine. If there's some other assistance that they need, we talk through that before the interview process.

Do you have any positions that you have created specifically for individuals with disabilities? Q29



Has an employment specialist ever been provided to your organization, to support an employee with a disability? Q32



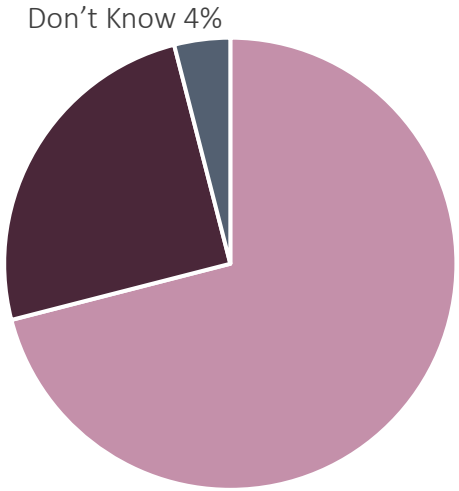
FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

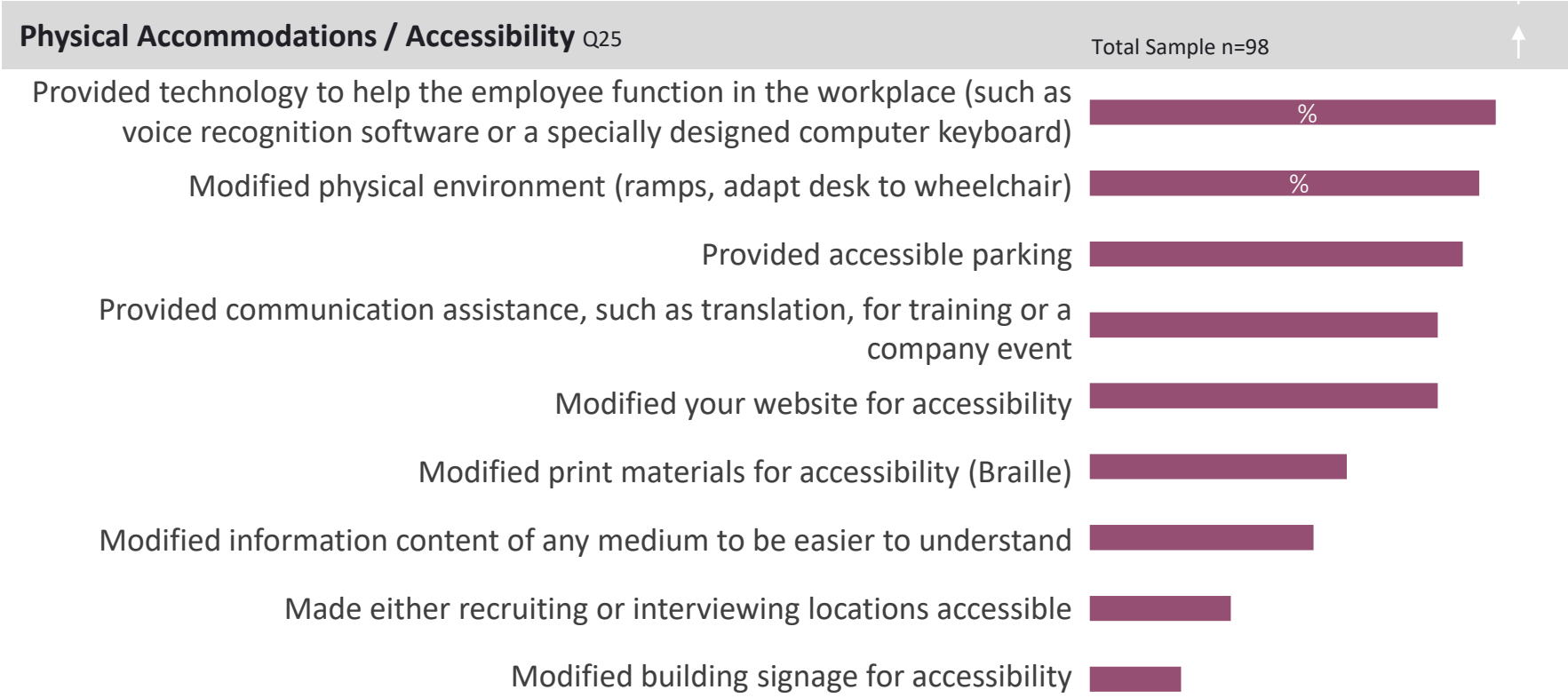
Physical accommodations for employees with disabilities

Just over half of employers (54%) have needed to provide accommodations for their employees with disabilities.

(Various physical accommodations are shown below; process accommodations are shown on the next slide.)

Did any of your workers require any type of workplace accommodations for their disability? Q24



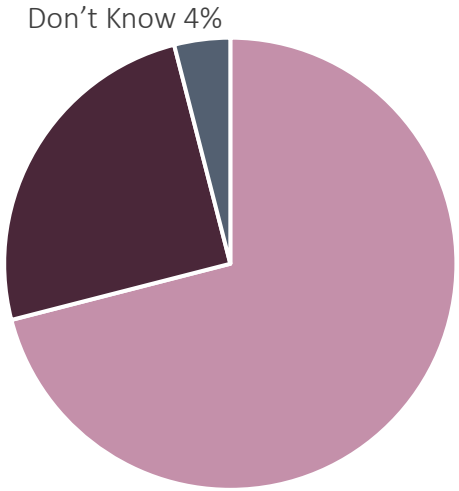


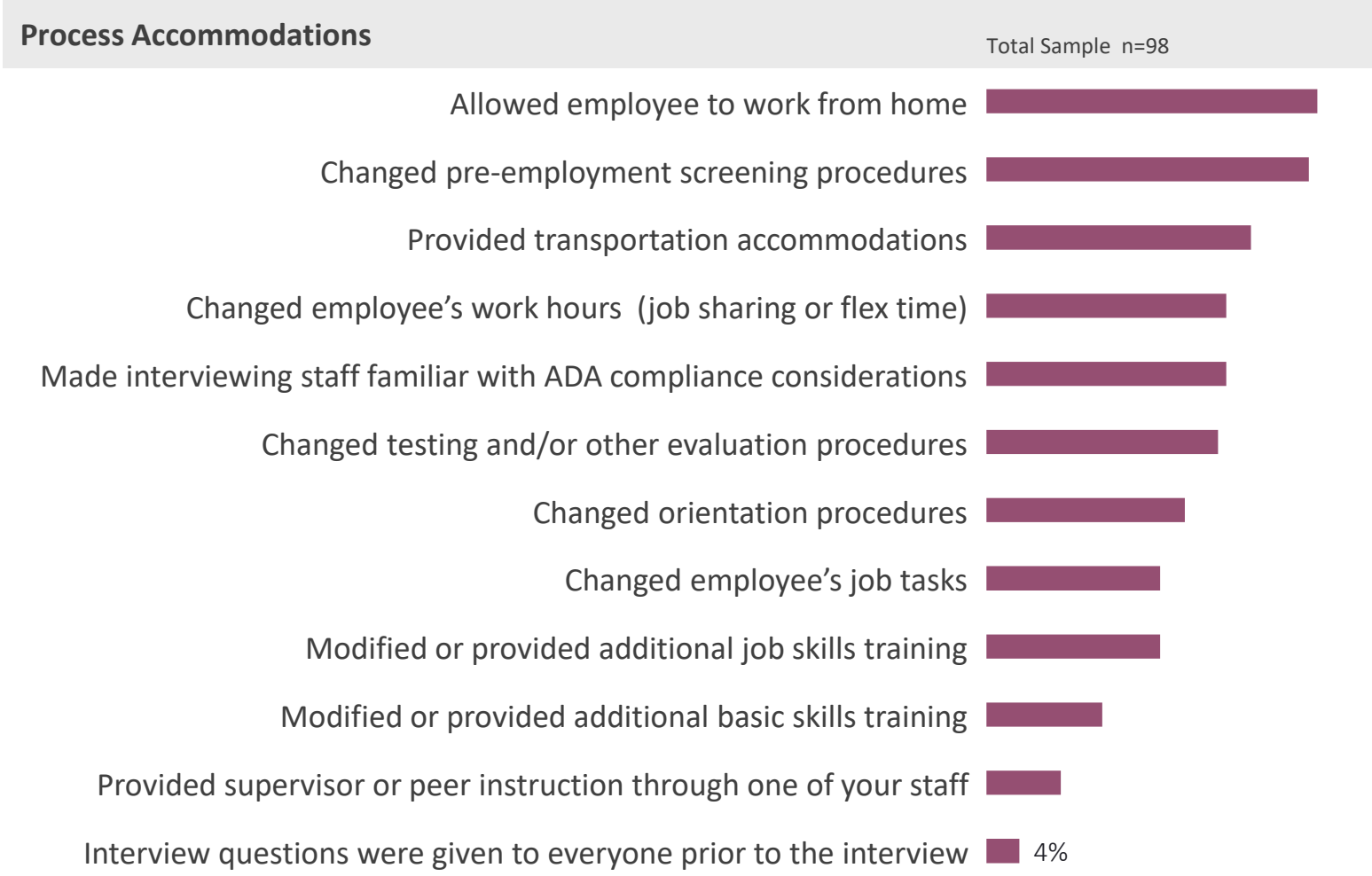
FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Process accommodations for employees with disabilities

The most common process accommodations enable employees with disabilities to work from home.

Did any of your workers require any type of workplace accommodations for their disability? Q24



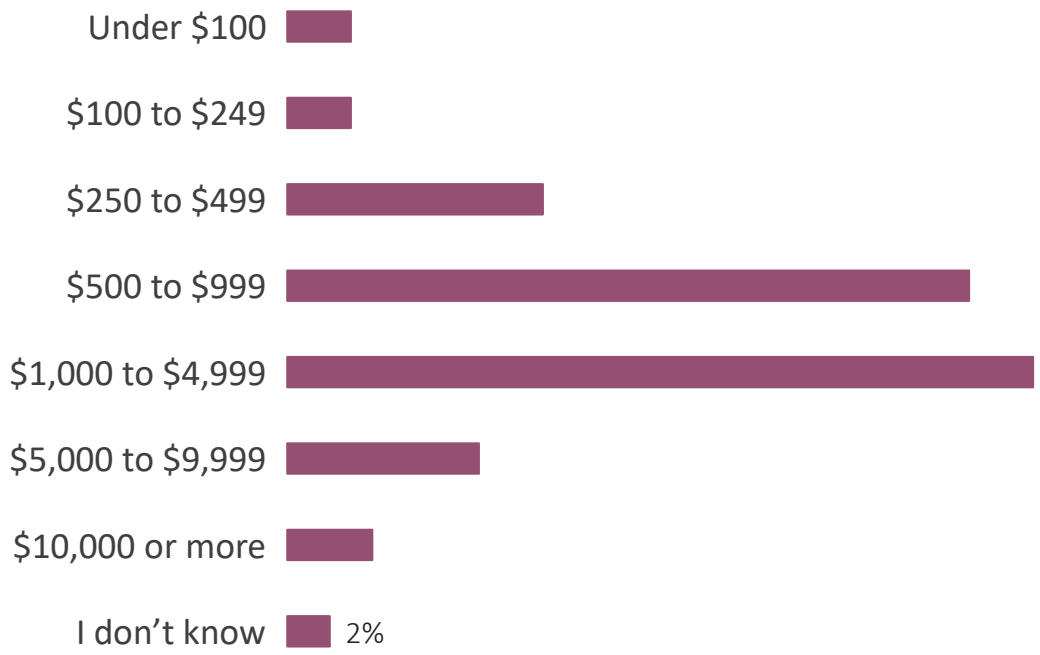


FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Costs and attitudes regarding accommodations

Half of the accommodations made for people with disabilities cost their employers less than $1,000; about a third (35%) costs between $1,000 and $5,000. Though costs were more than anticipated for 28% of employers, only 3% believed the costs of accommodations outweighed the benefits of employing people with disabilities.

Roughly, how much do you typically spend on accommodations, on average per employee with disabilities? Q26 n=98



Would you say, overall, the costs of accommodations have been more or less than what your company had anticipated? Q27 n=96

More costly than anticipated	28%
Equal to what we anticipated	52%
Less costly than anticipated	18%
Don't know	2%

Benefits outweighed the costs	22%
Costs were acceptable given the benefits	74%
The costs outweighed the benefits	3%

FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOMODATIONS

Important factors to consider when hiring people with disabilities

The top-2 most important factors to successfully employ individuals with disabilities have to do with motivation and skills of the prospective employee.

1-5 Importance Rating Scale

Quotes from Employers

You must have leadership from the top-down communicating that this is important to the organization, because there will be some growing pains. There can't be enough communication about why we're doing this, why this is important.

If we know that there's somebody that's going to be coming in who, for instance, has a job coach and needs an accommodation, we talk through all that before the individual starts, in detail with the manager. And I also make sure that they understand that if anything ever comes up and you're scared or it seems weird or you just don't know how to handle it, just call me.

How important are each of the following factors to successfully employing an individual with a disability within your organization?
(n=138) Q31

	Mean Ratings
Hiring a person who is motivated to have the job	4.3
Hiring a person who has the specific skills we are looking for	4.3
Establishing a specific routine for the employee	4.1
Having a support person for the employee provided by a public or private employment agency	4.0
Providing diversity or sensitivity training for the rest of your staff	4.0
Having access to someone who is already employed (co-worker) and is willing to be a support person	3.9
Having access to someone who knows the history of the individual	3.7

Employers appear to be equally satisfied with employees with disabilities as they are with their employees without disabilities, but for different reasons.

1-9 Rating Scale

Very Poor		Sub-par		Fair		Good		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Quotes from Employers

Maybe they won't be as efficient, but an employee with developmental disabilities will bring a lot to your team culturally. They've motivated our other associates, also our guest experience has been elevated. . . They're so happy to be there working, it brings up the whole team. Happier associates provide better guest services which means more repeat business.

Employees with disabilities are valuable. They bring a lot to the job work ethic, attitude and loyalty. In a convenience store there is typically high turnover, but people with developmental disabilities it's significantly less, at least half. It costs a lot of money to hire and train new employees, so loyalty is important.

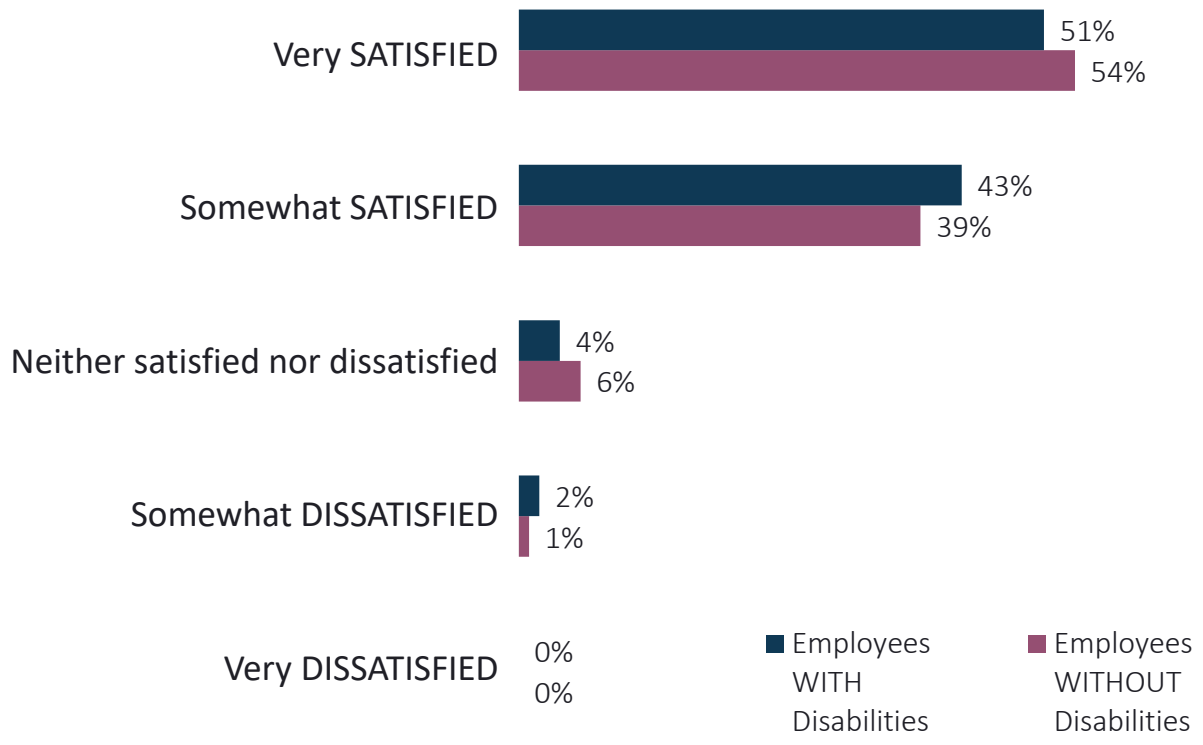
Employee Ratings (n=138) Q35	Mean Ratings on 1-9 Scale	
	Employees WITH Disabilities	Employees WITHOUT Disabilities
Punctuality	**7.6**	7.5
Attendance	**7.5**	7.3
Work quality	7.5	**7.7**
Task consistency	7.5	**7.6**
Work speed	7.2	**7.6**
Attitude	**7.7**	7.4
Safety	**7.7**	7.6
Longevity	**7.6**	7.5

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Ratings of employees with, and without, disabilities

Employees with disabilities are valued and appreciated for their positive attitude, loyalty, and impact on other employees and the companies as a whole.

All things considered, how satisfied are you with your employee(s) with disabilities, as compared to your other employees, who do not have a disability? Q3 n=138



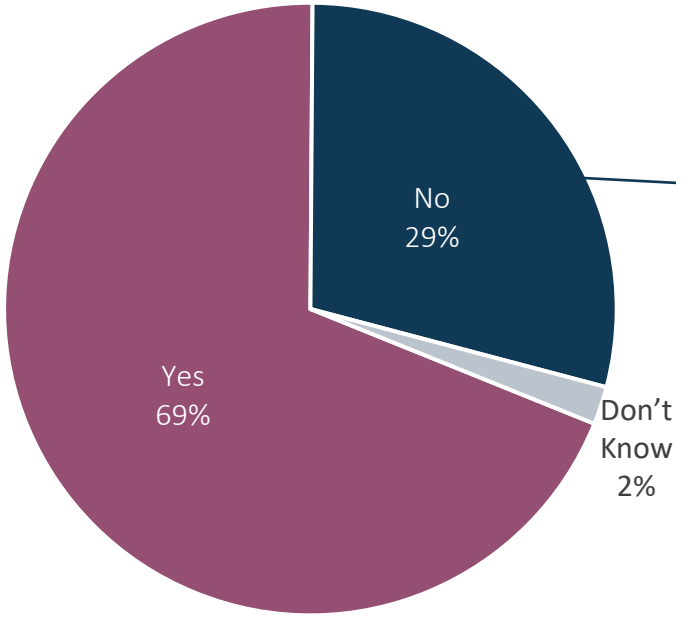
Voice of Employers

The most amazing thing I saw was the complaining almost stopped from my current employees. It was unbelievable. They got to see how important it was to somebody else. It changed the whole attitude and people became very accepting, very forgiving, very understanding. It was amazing to see how my own people changed for the better when we started doing this.

Why companies DO NOT currently employ people with disabilities

Among companies that do not currently employ individuals with disabilities, six-out-of-ten (62%) have employed individuals with disabilities in the past.

At the location where you work, does your organization employ any individual with any disability? Q8



IF NO

Has your organization ever employed individuals with disabilities, at your current location? Q38	n=58
Yes	62%
No	31%
I don't know	7%

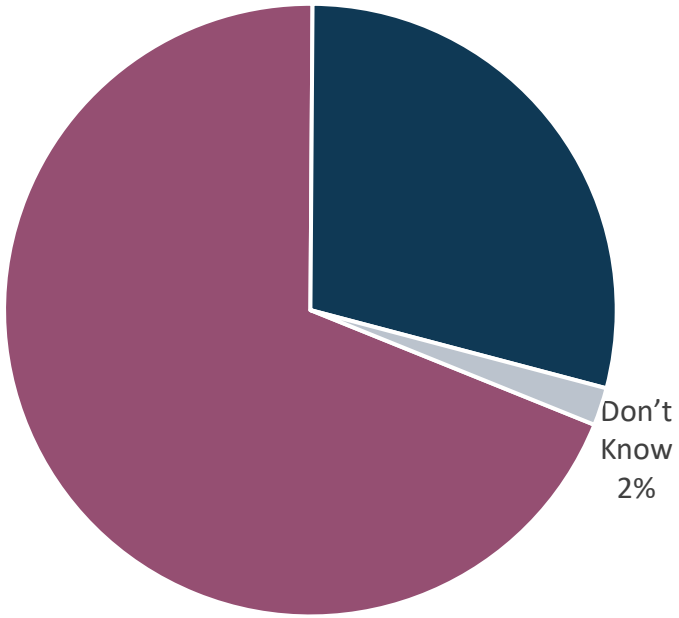
Has someone with a disability ever applied for a position in your organization, at your location? Q39	n=22
Yes	14%
No	63%
I don't know	23%

HESITATION

Concerns that may be holding companies back from hiring people with disabilities 1/3

Some employers are fearful of the unknown, and express concerns about the potential complexities of employing, managing, and working with people with disabilities.

At the location where you work, does your organization employ any individual with any disability? Q8



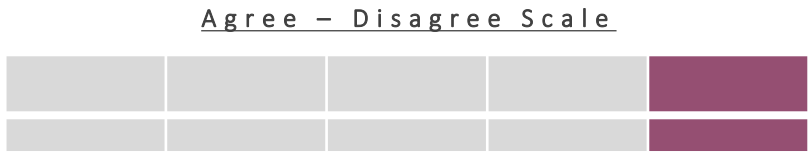
Voice of Employers

They're scared, right? Like, "I don't know how to manage that person. I don't know how to talk to that person." So, there's kind of a fear factor that nobody would admit to.

If employers don't have experience, it's fear of the unknown. Employers are just trying to do what they have to do with limited resources, and knowing what they know.

HESITATION

Concerns that may be holding companies back from hiring people with disabilities 2/3

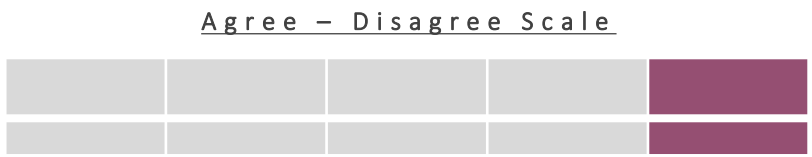


Current non-employers of people with disabilities are most concerned about senior management reactions to their hiring decisions, as well as concerns for safety and costs of employing people with disabilities.

HESITATION

Concerns that may be holding companies back from hiring people with disabilities 3/3

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that the statement represents a barrier, or hesitation, to employing individuals with disabilities for your organization. Q15



Employers that currently do not employ people with disabilities are more likely to *Agree Strongly* with every statement representing a barrier, or hesitation, to employing individuals with disabilities, as compared to current employers of people with disabilities.

FUTURE OUTLOOK for Hiring People with Disabilities

Listed below are some positive comments we've heard from companies in Minnesota regarding the benefits of employing people with disabilities. Please indicate how important each of these potential benefits would be to your organization? (n=201) Q42	Employ Persons with Disabilities: Yes (n=138)	Employ Persons with Disabilities: No (n=58)
Hiring people with disabilities demonstrates a company culture that truly embraces diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).	4.3	4.3
People with disabilities are generally very appreciative of their employment and tend to be very loyal and reliable workers.	4.3	4.2
The enhanced work atmosphere has a positive effect on the engagement of all employees.	4.2	4.1
Improved morale, better work environment, improves customer and community relations.	4.2	4.2
Awareness of workplace safety is enhanced because, people start to pay attention to each other's safety more.	4.1	4.0
People with disabilities have a keen sense of watching processes, seeing processes from a different lens, offering a unique perspective that can add value.	4.1	4.1
Overall productivity can be enhanced when people with disabilities handle specific tasks that were burdensome for people in other positions.	4.1	4.1
Ultimately, hiring persons with disabilities is good for the bottom line, with less absenteeism and better retention.	4.1	4.2
Hiring people with disabilities enables companies to fill positions that otherwise would not have been filled, due to the shortage of workers in Minnesota.	3.7	**4.0**

1-5 Importance Rating Scale

Not at all important		Somewhat important		Very important
1	2	3	4	5

For both current employers and non-employers, the most attractive benefits of employing people with disabilities were the same:

- **Enhancing a culture of DEI**
- **Gaining appreciative, loyal employees**
- **Positive atmosphere impacts all employees**
- **Improved morale, and customer and community relations**

Compared to current employers of people with disabilities, the *non-employers* were more attracted to the idea that people with disabilities could fill positions when there is a shortage of workers in Minnesota.

FUTURE OUTLOOK for Hiring People with Disabilities

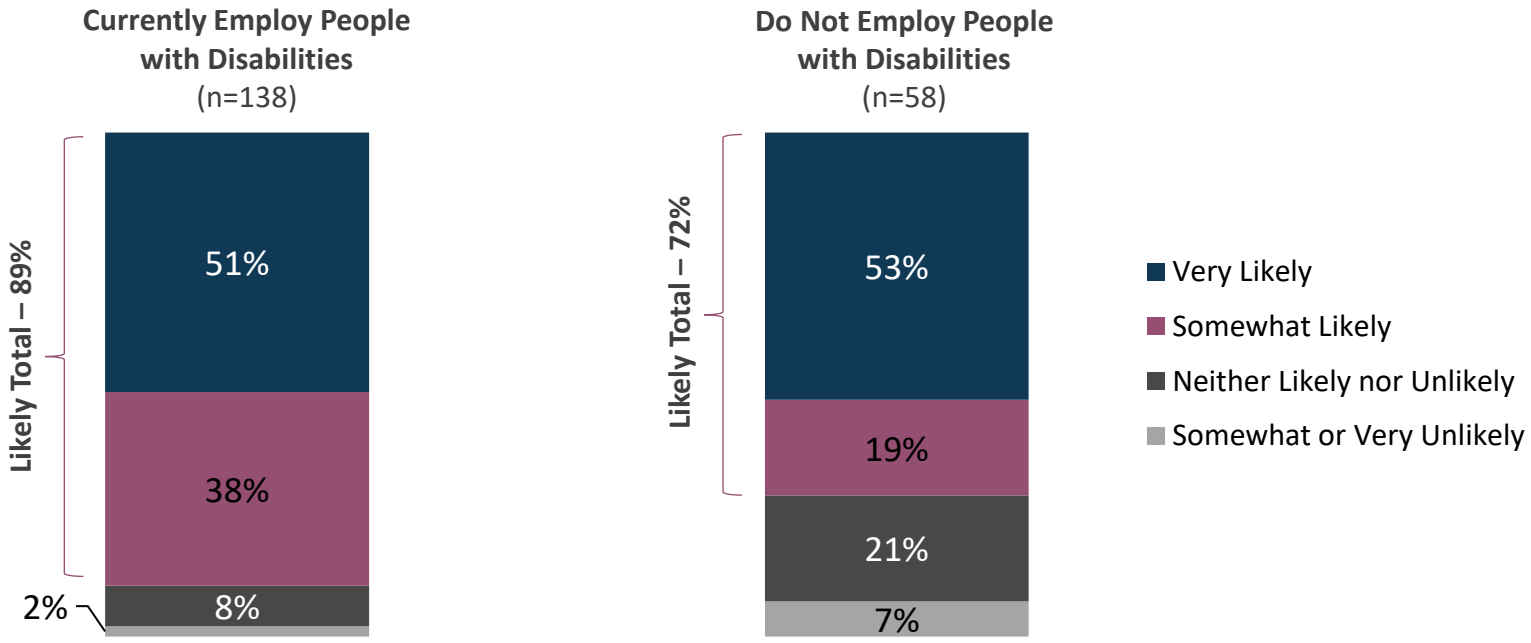
All respondents were shown the following statement . . .

Professionals from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), along with its partnering organizations, work directly with businesses to help them find the right candidates, resulting in successful integrated employment for people with disabilities.

. . . and then they were asked this question:

If someone from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), or one of its partnering organizations, were to contact you regarding employment opportunities for people with disabilities, **how likely would your organization be to pursue the possibility of hiring a person with a disability?** Q44

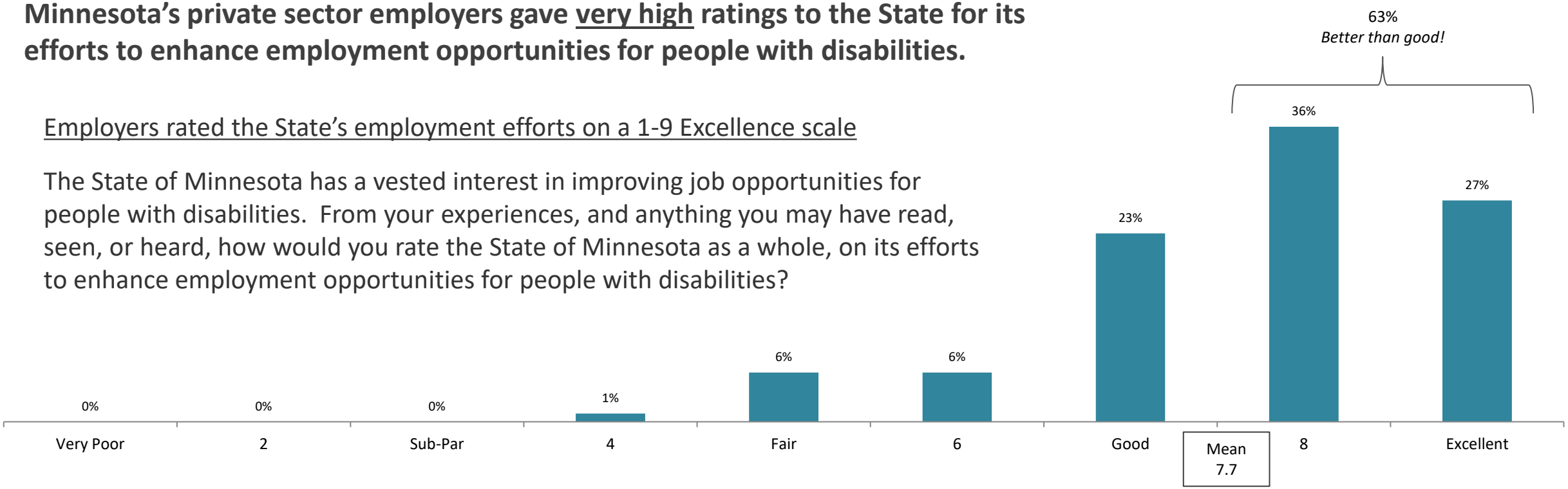
Among employers that currently do not employ people with disabilities, 72% would be likely to pursue the possibility of hiring a person with a disability, if contacted by DEED or one of its partnering organizations.



Minnesota's private sector employers gave very high ratings to the State for its efforts to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Employers rated the State's employment efforts on a 1-9 Excellence scale

The State of Minnesota has a vested interest in improving job opportunities for people with disabilities. From your experiences, and anything you may have read, seen, or heard, how would you rate the State of Minnesota as a whole, on its efforts to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities?



State's efforts acknowledged by employers:

Equal opportunity activism

There is increasing conversation and activism concerning fair representation and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

It is possible for companies to recruit and hire people with disabilities by partnering with agencies that specialize in serving people with disabilities, such as vocational rehabilitation agencies.

Tax Credits and other Incentives

Businesses in Minnesota that hire people with disabilities may receive tax credit or other incentives.

Summary of Findings

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Study of employers in Minnesota

A majority of employers in Minnesota, at locations with 5 or more employees, employ individuals with disabilities:

- Two-thirds (69%) say they employ persons with disabilities
  - Eight-out-of-ten of them (84%) believe they employ persons with developmental disabilities

Companies that employ people with disabilities tend to be much larger, and more likely to be involved in retail trade or manufacturing, compared to those companies that do not currently employ people with disabilities.

- Almost half of the companies that do not currently employ people with disabilities (47%) said their business was in *Professional, Scientific, Tech Services*

Just over half of employers (54%) have needed to provide accommodations for their employees with disabilities.

- Half of the accommodations cost less than $1,000 on average, per employee;
- About a third (35%) cost between $1,000 and $5,000.
- Though costs were more than anticipated for 28% of employers, only 3% believed the costs of accommodations outweighed the benefits of employing people with disabilities.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Study of employers in Minnesota

Employers are equally satisfied with their employees with disabilities as they are with their employees without disabilities, but for different reasons.

Employees with disabilities are valuable. They bring a lot to the job work ethic, attitude and loyalty.

For all employers at locations with 5 or more employees, whether they currently employ people with disabilities or not, the most attractive perceived benefits of employing people with disabilities were the same:

- Enhancing a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)
- Gaining appreciative, loyal employees
- Positive atmosphere impacts all employees
- Improved morale, and customer and community relations

Compared to current employers of people with disabilities, the *non-employers* were more attracted to the idea that people with disabilities could fill positions when there is a shortage of workers in Minnesota.

Employers that do not currently employ people with disabilities, 72% would be likely to pursue the possibility of hiring a person with a disability, if contacted by DEED or one of its partnering organizations.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Study of employers in Minnesota

Over half of the businesses that employ people with disabilities (57%), were assisted by Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) from the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

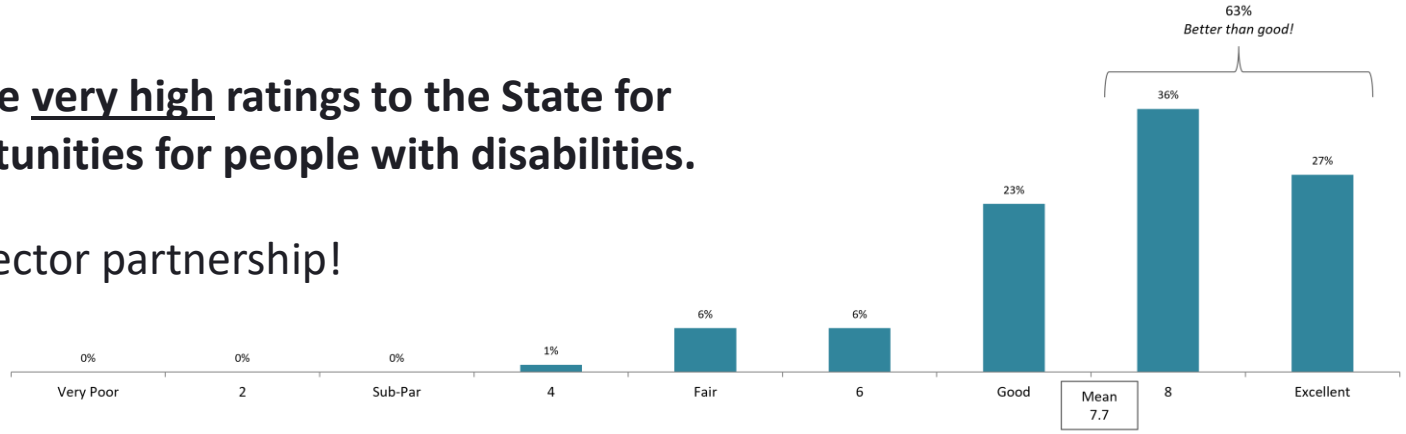
- 97% were satisfied with VRS services,
  - 56% were *very satisfied*

38% of businesses that employ people with disabilities were assisted by a government CareerForce Center.

- 92% were satisfied with the CareerForce Center services,
  - 58% were *very satisfied*

Minnesota's private sector employers gave <u>very high</u> ratings to the State for its efforts to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

- An exemplary public and private sector partnership!

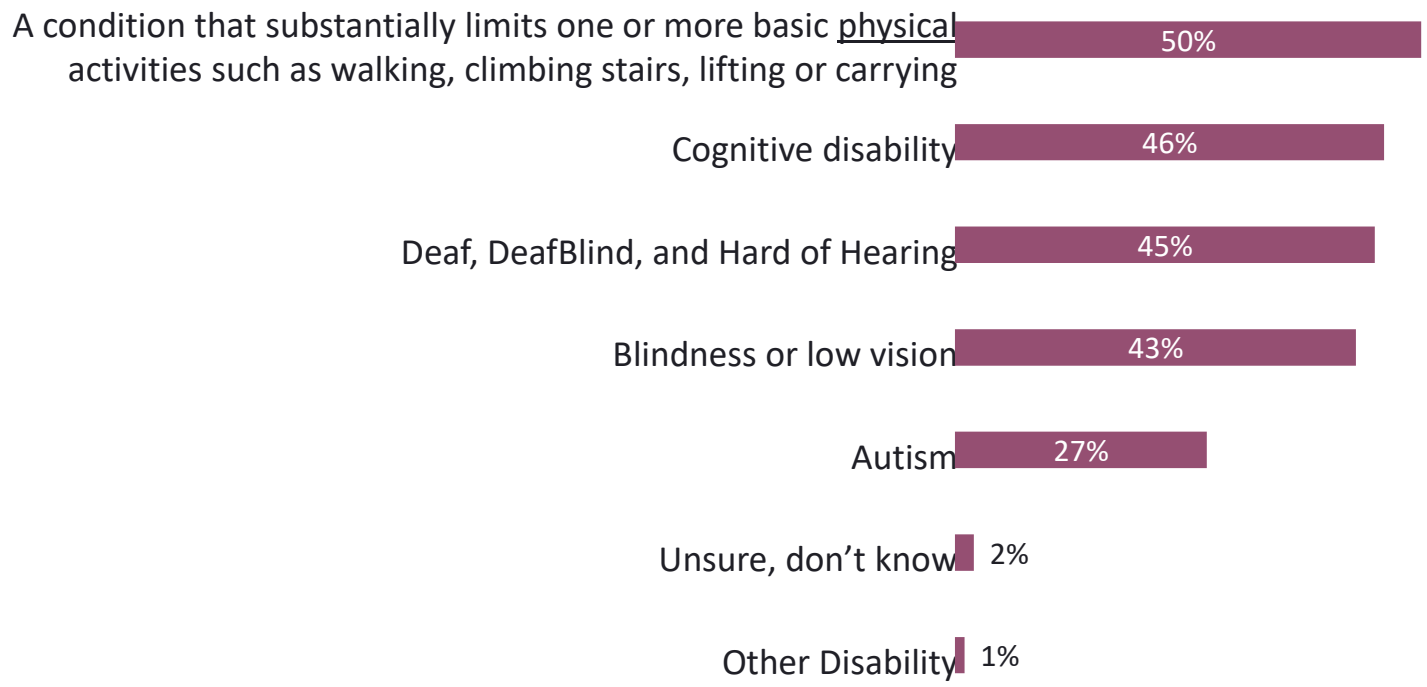


Appendix

EMPLOYEES

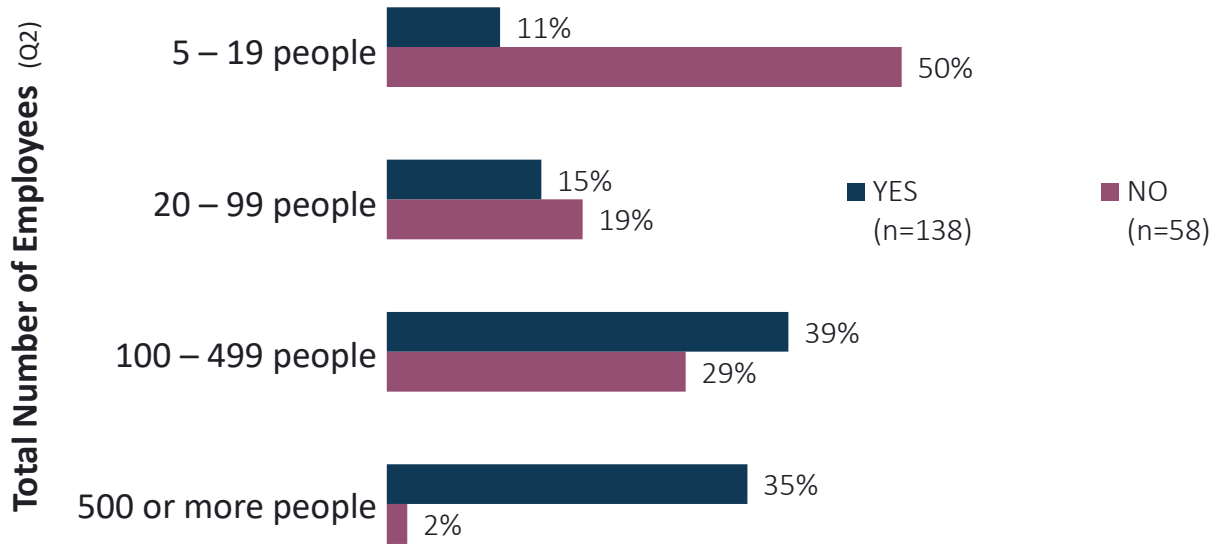
Types of Disabilities

Which of the following types of disabilities do (your employees) have? (Please check all that apply) (Q10) (n=138)



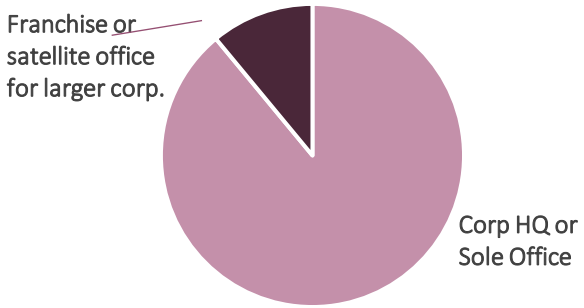
PROFILE of Employers of People With Disabilities

Do You Currently Employ Persons with Disability? Q8



Though the larger organizations are more likely to employ larger numbers of people with disabilities, a third of the largest employers, with 500 or more employees in total, have locations that employ fewer than 5 people with disabilities.

Which of the following best describes the location where you work? Q3



Number of employees with Disabilities at business location:	Total (n=138)	Companies Numbers of Employees in Total: 5 – 19 (n=15)	20 to 99 (n=21)	100 to 499 (n=54)	500 or more (n=48)
1 Only	14%	33%	14%	2%	23%
2 - 4	20%	53%	52%	4%	13%
5 - 10	26%	13%	24%	37%	19%
11 - 20	22%	0%	5%	43%	13%
More than 20	14%	0%	5%	9%	27%

THANK YOU! From your MarketResponse Team:

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Enhancing Employment Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities

QUANTITATIVE survey research, conducted by MarketResponse International, April 2023

For the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. (Proj. 2511)