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Workplace Flexibility, Accommodation and Disability: Tools for Workforce Productivity

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Presentation Overview

- Importance of attention on disability, employment and workplace flexibility
- Employers experience with workplace flexibility approaches for disability
- Disabilities where employers appear to be having difficulty accommodating
- Workplace flexibility strategies that maximize participation and productivity for workers with disabilities



Importance for American Workplaces

- More than one out of every ten (12.6%) working age Americans (ages 21-64) has a disability*
- Approximately 21.5 million working age Americans have disabilities*
- Social Security Data**
 - Approximately 10 million Americans under age 65 on SSI and/or SSDI
 - Almost 8 billion dollars/month
 - Mental disability and musculoskeletal highest in number (SSDI)

*NIDRR Demographics and Statistics RRTC at Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute, calculations based on 2005 American Community Survey, performed by William Erickson, 2006.

**Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, 2004. Available from http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/di_asr/2004/sect04.html



Importance for American Workplaces (con't)

- Employment rate in 2004 of working age men (21-64) with disabilities was 20%, as compared to 86% of men without disabilities.*
- The Employment rate in 2003 of working age women with disabilities was 18%, as compared to 73% of women without disabilities.*
- In 1986, two-thirds of Americans with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 who were not working indicated they would prefer to work. In 1994, that proportion increased to 79%.**

Houtenville, Andrew J. 2006. "Disability Statistics in the United States." Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics (StatsRRTC), www.disabilitystatistics.org. Posted April 4, 2005. Accessed October 31, 2006.

**Source: Louis Harris and Associates Inc. (1994). Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities. National Organization on Disability: New York



Relative Poverty Rate for People with Disabilities

In 2004, an estimated **28%** of civilian men and women with a work limitation, aged **21-64** in the United States lived in families with incomes below the poverty line, compared to an estimated **9%** of civilian men and women without a work limitation.*

Houtenville, Andrew J. 2006. "Disability Statistics in the United States." Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics (StatsRRTC), www.disabilitystatistics.org. Posted April 4, 2005. Accessed October 31, 2006.



Importance for American Workplaces

(con't)

- People with disabilities are a sizable concentration in the U.S. population
- People with disabilities want to work
- There is a continuing disparity in employment rates of people with disabilities
- The numbers of people collecting Social Security disability benefits continue to rise



Increasing Prevalence of Disability in the U.S. Workforce

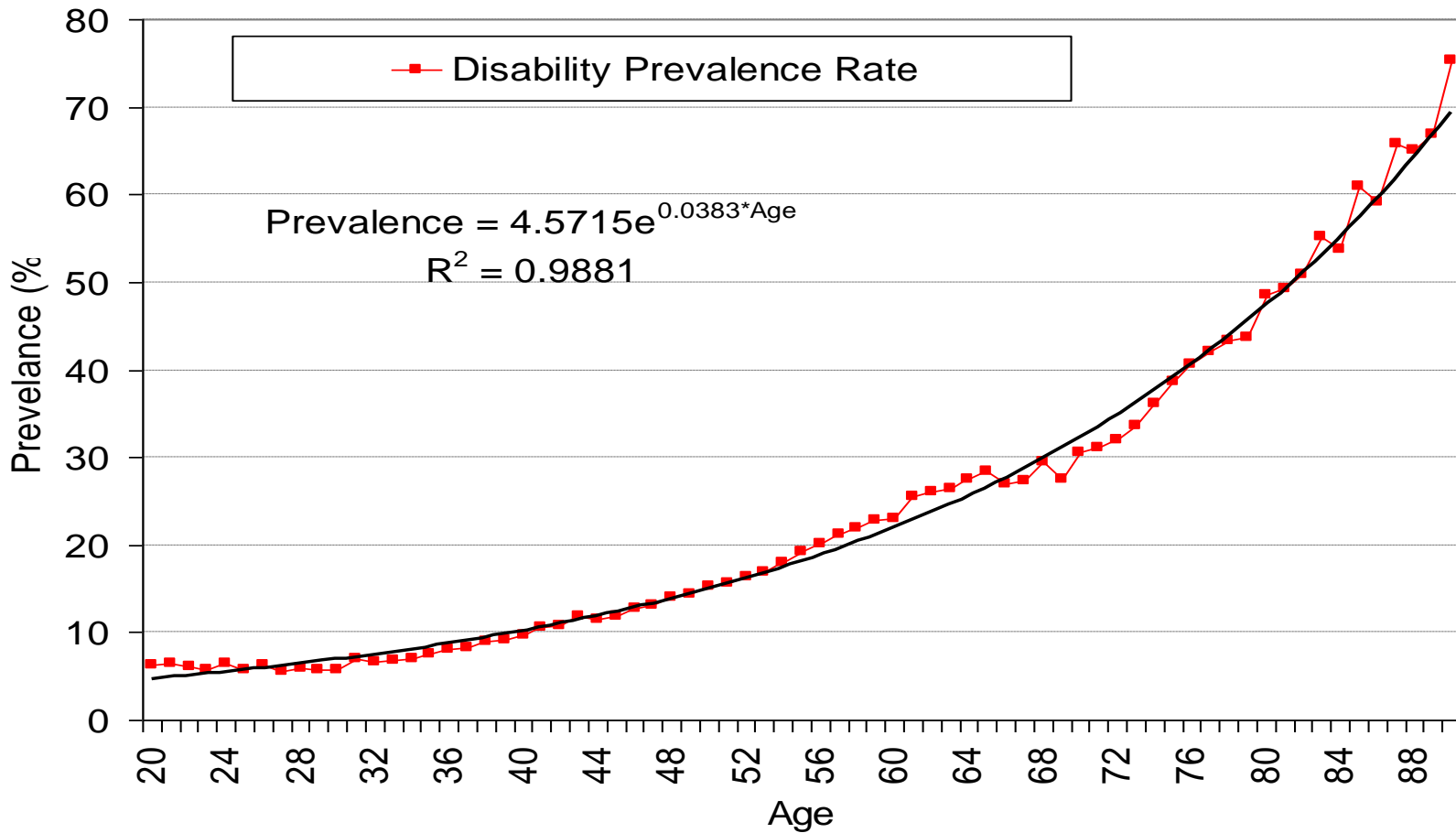
- The 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 year old U.S. population is projected to grow by nearly 44.2 million (17%) and 35 Million (39%) in the next ten years*
- This group will account for nearly half (44%) of the working age population (20-64) by the year 2010*
- The prevalence of disability grows with age (Figure 1)
- By 2010 the number of people with disabilities between the ages of 50 and 65 will almost double, and will be significantly larger than at any other age**

*From U. S. Census Bureau population projects <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/> accessed March 17, 2005.

**From "The Economic Consequences of Disability Onset Near Retirement," mimeo, Robert Weathers 2005.



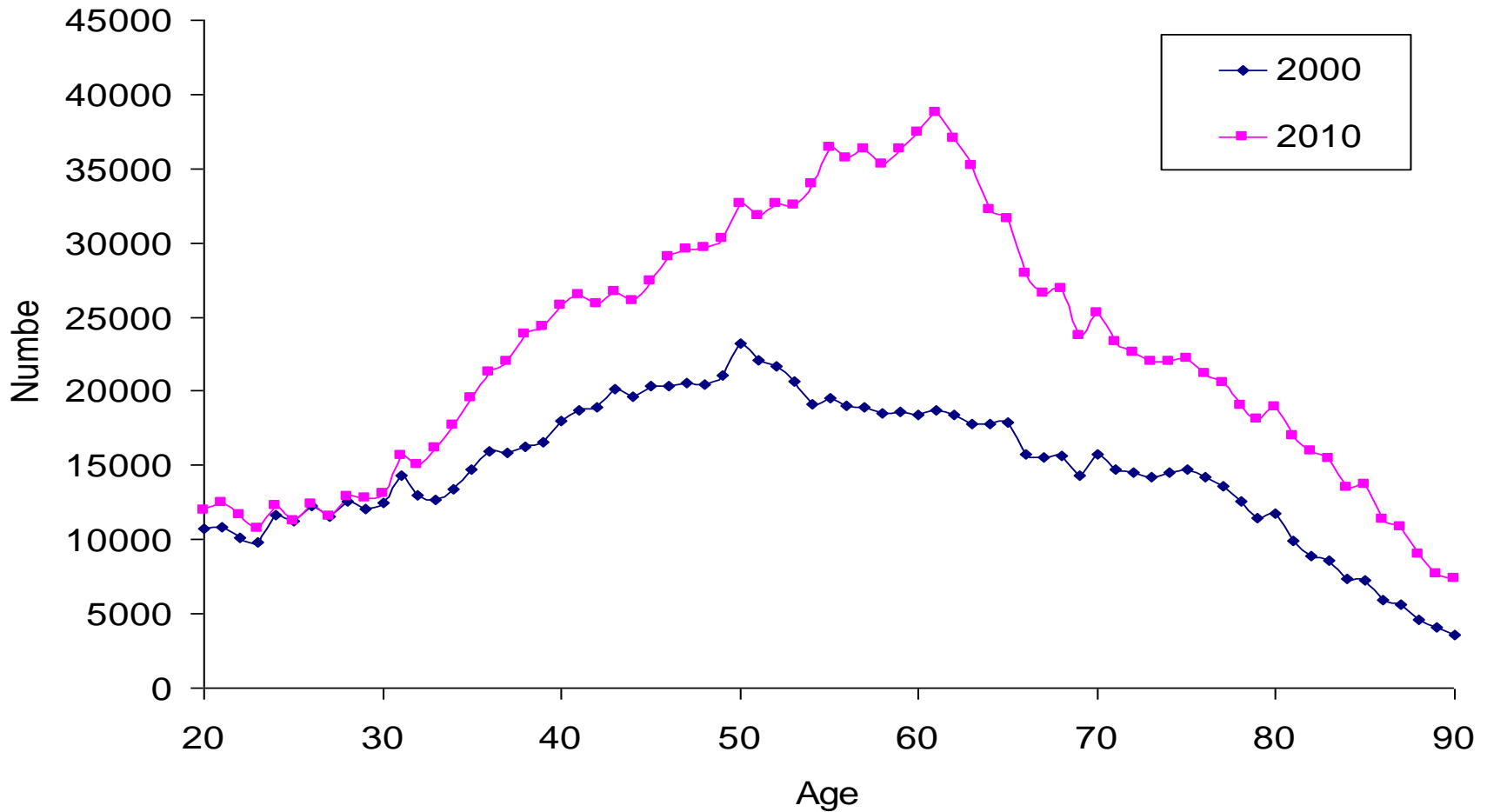
Figure 1. Growth in Disability Prevalence by Age



Source: NIDRR Demographics and Statistics RRTC at Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute, calculations from 2003 ACS PUMS file performed by Robert Weathers, 2005.



Figure 2. Estimated Growth in Disability Population 2000-2010, By Age



Source: NIDRR Demographics and Statistics RRTC at Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute, Disability Prevalence Rates from 2003 American Community Survey (ACS) applied to U. S. Census Bureau population forecasts performed by Robert Weathers. 2005.



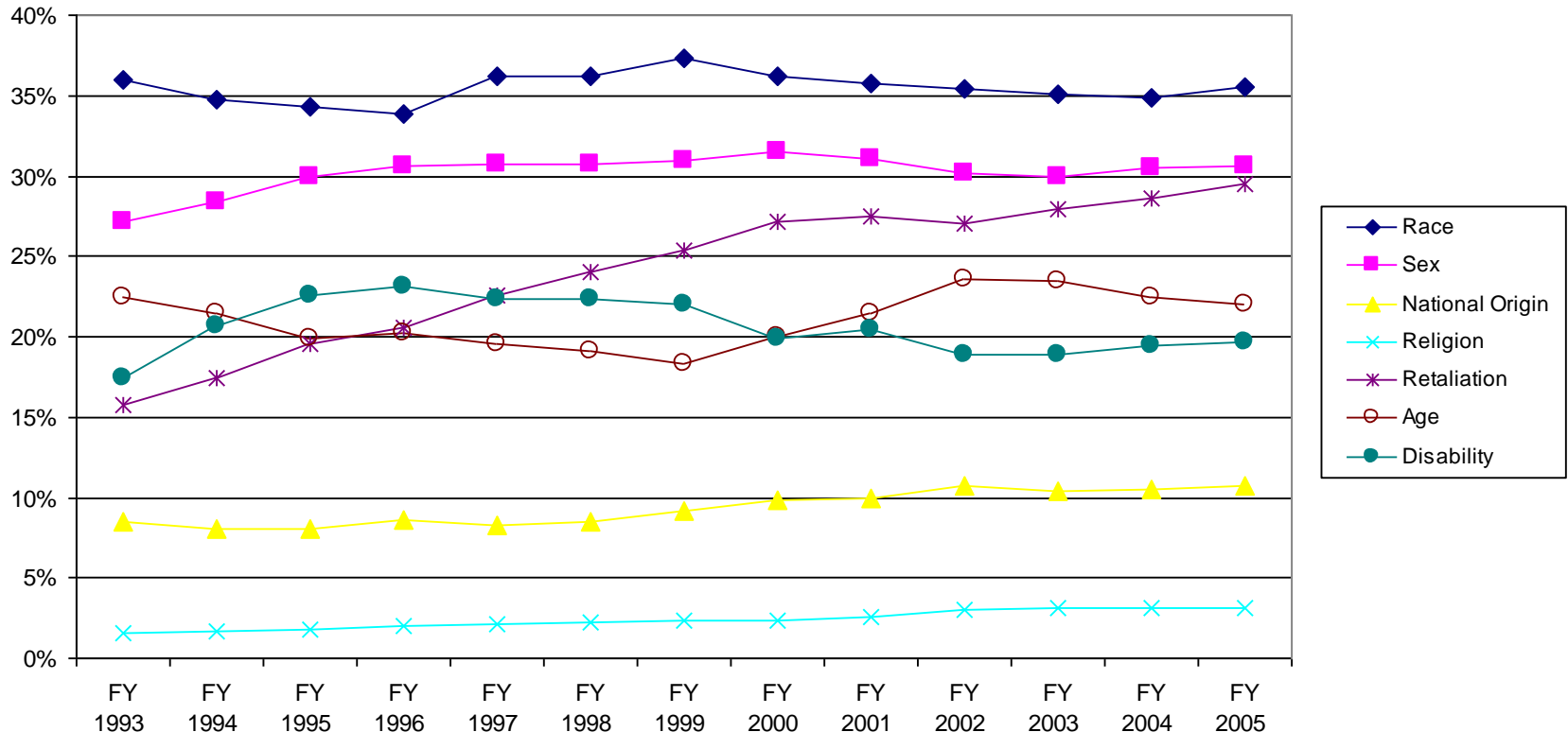
Accommodation Promotes Retention of Workers with Disabilities

- Workers accommodated following the onset of disability had significantly lower risk of applying for SSDI benefits*
- Universal employer accommodation would increase expected duration of employment of men by 3.13 years*

*Burkhauser, R.V., Butler, J.S. & Weathers II, R.R., (January 2001), How Policy Variables Influence the Timing of Social Security Disability Insurance Applications, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Economic Research on Employment Policy for Persons with Disabilities, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.



U.S. Employment Discrimination Charges (percent of total EEOC Charges by Type)



* Because individuals often file charges claiming multiple types of discrimination, the number of total charges for any given fiscal year will be less than the total of the eight types of discrimination listed.

Data from: <http://www.eeoc.gov/stats/charges.html>, Data provided by William A. Erickson, Employment and Disability Institute, Cornell University



ADA Charges—Top 5 Issues (by Total Charges)

Issue	Total Charges	EEOC Charges	FEPA Charges	Percent FEPA
1 Discharge	127,460	67,142	60,318	47.3
2 Terms/Conditions	37,981	13,190	24,791	65.3
3 Reasonable Accom.	60,402	40,866	19,536	32.3
4 Hiring	22,498	12,379	10,119	45.0
5 Harassment	19,663	11,561	8,102	41.2

Note: Charges in which only the ADA is cited. Charges can have more than one issue.

This data was provided by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under a special agreement to allow confidential university research. Data tabulations by S. Antonio Ruiz-Quintanilla of Cornell University. (NIDRR-funded Grant No. H133G040265: *Using the U.S. EEOC Employment Discrimination Charge Data System for Research and Dissemination Purposes*).



ADA Charges—Top 7 Bases (by Total Charges)

Basis	Total Charges	EEOC Charges	FEPA Charges	Percent FEPA
1 Other Disability	56,841	24,125	32,716	57.6
2 Orthopedic Back Impairment	32,474	18,060	14,414	44.4
3 Regarded As Disabled	19,116	12,810	6,306	33.0
4 Nonparalytic Orthopedic Impairment	18,135	11,114	7,021	38.7
5 Depression	13,275	8,263	5,012	37.8
6 Other Psychiatric Disorders	9,577	4,344	5,233	54.6
7 Diabetes	7,792	4,690	3,102	39.8

Note: Charges in which only the ADA is cited. Charges can have more than one basis.

This data was provided by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under a special agreement to allow confidential university research. Data tabulations by S. Antonio Ruiz-Quintanilla of Cornell University. (NIDRR-funded Grant No. H133G040265: *Using the U.S.EEOC Employment Discrimination Charge Data System for Research and Dissemination Purposes*).

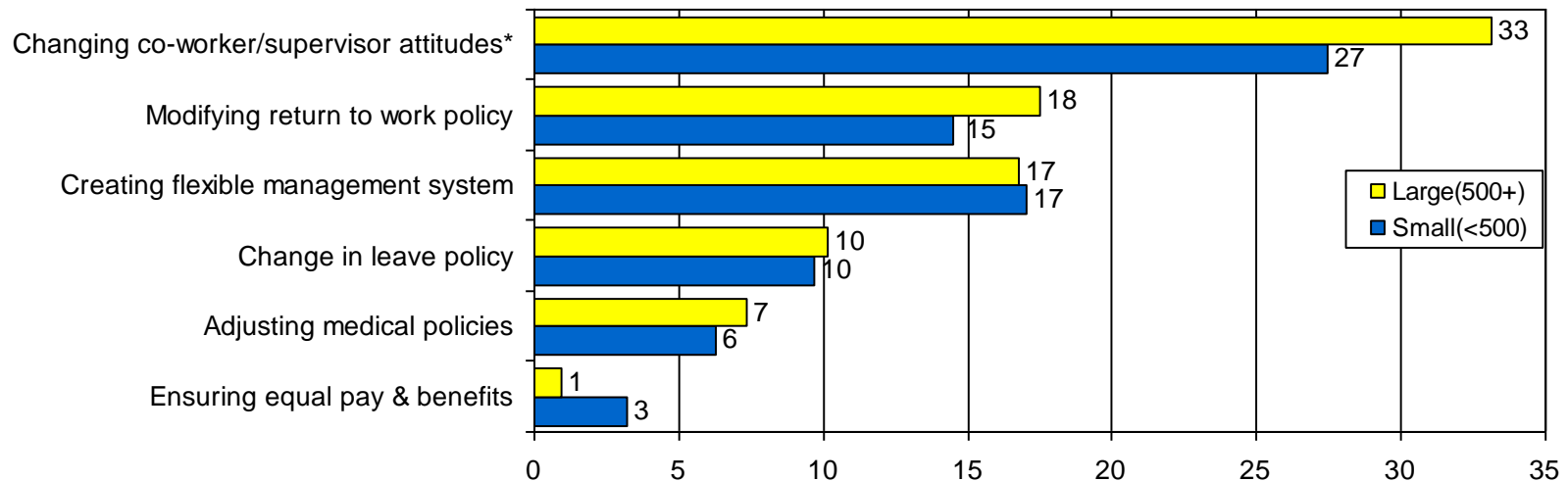


Flexibility in Workplace Policies and Practices for People with Disabilities

- Flexible work hours
- Time off (short term, extended, episodic)
- Use of telecommuting
- Flexibility in workplace policies
- Flexible management system
- Flexibility in test taking



Degree of Difficulty in making Organizational Changes to Better Meet the Needs of Employees with Disabilities by Organization Size



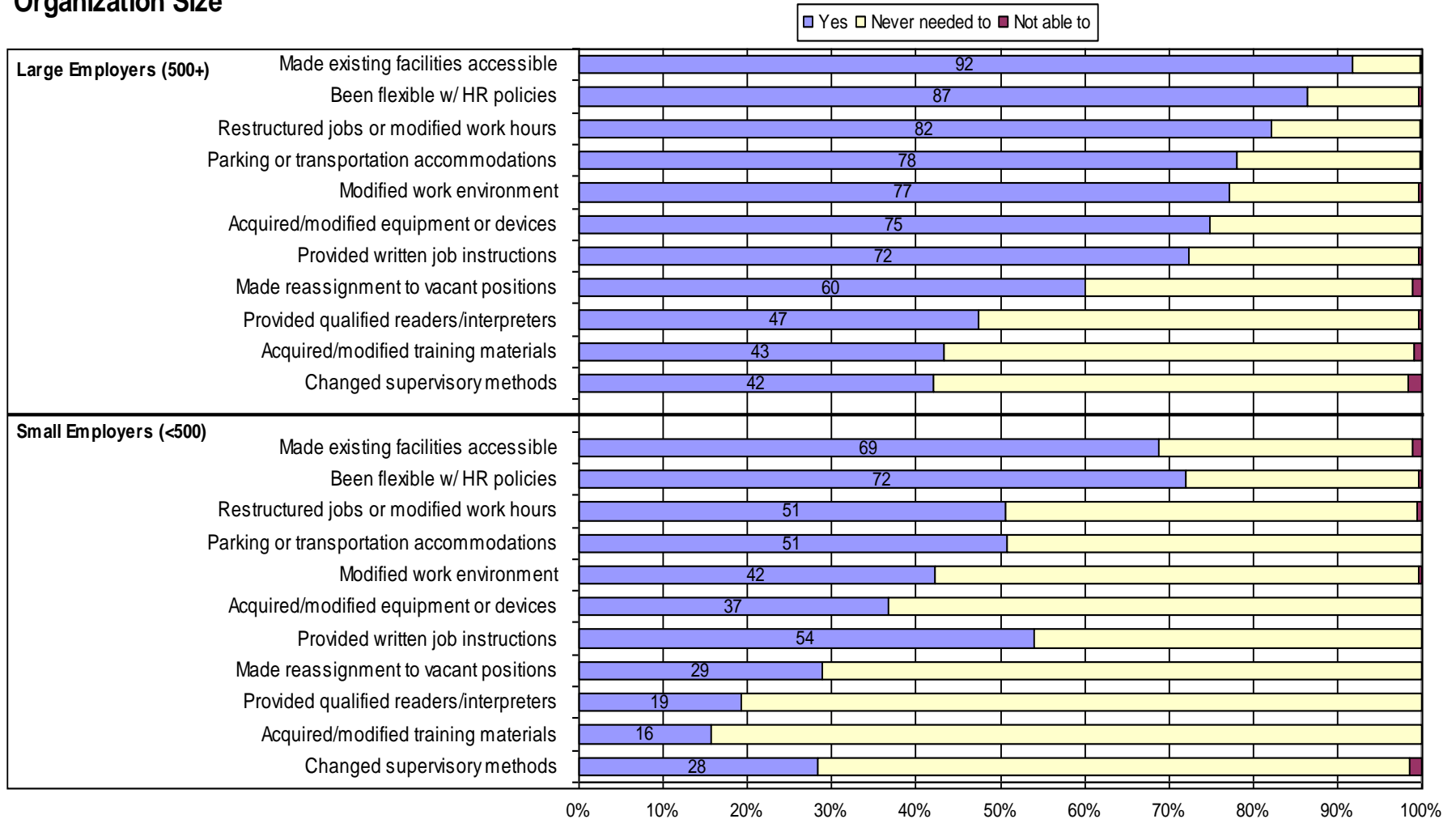
* statistically significantly different by company size (p<.05)
Note: percentages do not include those who didn't make the change..
Survey of 834 HR/EEO respondents

Percent reporting difficult or very difficult

Source: Bruyère, S., Erickson, W., and VanLooy, S. (2006) The impact of business size on employer ADA response. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin* (49),4, p. 194-206.



Types of Accommodations Made by Organizations to Meet the Needs of Employees with Disabilities by Organization Size



Survey of 834 HR/EEO Representatives. Each category statistically significantly different by company size



Federal Supervisors' Perceptions of the Helpfulness of Resources in supporting home-based or telework employment opportunities

	Helpful (of those with possible positions)			
	Total	Blue n=88	White n=703	
Off-site technology support	75%	48%	78%	*
Guidelines for performance assessment of off-site workers	71	43	75	*
Formal flexiplace agreement between off-site employee and supervisor	71	47	74	*
Training for supervisors of off-site workers	66	39	70	*
Initial and ongoing training for off-site workers	66	45	68	*
Guidelines for the design of off-site work	66	45	68	*
Guidelines for supervision of off-site workers	65	30	69	*
Training for coworkers of off-site workers	57	39	59	*

Percent of all valid responses; n=1001

* Helpfulness rated on a 1-5 scale with 1 being very helpful and 5=not at all helpful, Helpful=1,2

* X² test of association, comparing Blue vs. White-collar respondents statistically significant at the p<0.05 level.

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey of the Federal Government on Supervisor Practices in Employment of People with Disabilities. Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities/Cornell University, 2002.



Costs of Accommodations

- Small percentage of employers felt increased costs of training and supervision were barriers to employing people with disabilities (10% and 12% respectively)*
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN) data indicate more than half of accommodations cost employers nothing**
- Many employers gave changing a work schedule as an example of a no-cost accommodation**
- 42% of employers reported median cost of \$600 to accommodate**

*Brannick, A., & Bruyère, S. (1999). *The ADA at work: Implementation of the Employment Provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act*. Alexandria, VA: SHRM.

**Job Accommodation Network (2005). *Workplace Accommodations: Low Cost High Impact*. Morgantown, WV: Author.



Examples of Conditions Benefiting From Workplace Flexibility

- Musculoskeletal conditions
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Psychiatric disabilities
- Traumatic brain injuries



Examples of Accommodations Using Workplace Flexibility Practices

- Periodic rest breaks
- Worker rotation
- Flexible start/end schedules to take advantage of workers most productive times.
- Part-time or job sharing
- Flexible rather than scheduled break times
- Opportunity to work from home when symptoms severe

Visit www.hrTips.org for more information on accommodations for people with specific disabilities.



Conclusions

- With an aging workforce, higher incidence of requests for workplace flexibility policies and practices and other accommodation are likely to occur
- Workplace policies and practices that promote flexibility heighten the likelihood of retaining workers with disabilities, as well as older workers
- Most policies and practices that promote workplace flexibility cost little or nothing, and increase worker retention
- Workplace flexibility is in the best interests of people with disabilities, employers, and the general public, therefore an important area for public policy consideration.



Additional Resources

- **Employment and Disability Institute**
www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/
- **EDI Electronic Repository**
digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/
- **Disability and HR Tips for Professionals**
(relating to the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements)
www.hrtips.org
- **U.S. Disability Statistics**
(Prevalence; relative employment rates; household income)
www.disabilitystatistics.org
- **Job Accommodation Network**
<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/links/adalinks.htm>



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