

## **National Survey Provides New Directions for Expanding Inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Workplace**

*Kessler Foundation Releases Results of First-of-its-Kind Survey*

**EAST HANOVER, NJ – October 10, 2017** – Kessler Foundation released the results of a new national survey that shows that employers are striving to recruit, hire, train, and retain people with disabilities, and reveals areas of opportunity for even greater successes in the workplace. The 2017 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey: Supervisor Perspectives is the first survey to look at the effectiveness of these practices from the perspective of supervisors of employees with and without disabilities. Results of the 2017 Survey, which was commissioned by Kessler Foundation and conducted by the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability (UNH-IOD), were presented by experts today on Capitol Hill.

More than 3,000 supervisors responded to the Kessler Foundation Survey, providing detailed information on the processes and practices used by their employers to promote success in the workplace, and their effectiveness for employees with and without disabilities. When a practice was not available, they were asked whether it would be feasible for their organization to implement the practice. They also answered questions about their own commitment and their perceived commitment of upper management to specific processes and practices that support success of their employees.

Results of the Survey are encouraging, showing that the majority of employers have processes and practices in place for the inclusion of employees with and without disabilities, and that the commitment to the success of employees with disabilities is shared by supervisors and upper management. The findings offer insight into how effective these processes and practices are for all employees, and point to new directions for expanding their availability, and increasing their effectiveness for individuals with disabilities.

The Survey has important implications for employers seeking to diversify their workplaces and improve productivity. “Many companies are having difficulty finding qualified candidates,” said Rodger DeRose, President and CEO of Kessler Foundation, “but are underutilizing practices that can help them achieve these goals. Companies that partner with a disability organization, for example, find this practice overwhelmingly effective for meeting their recruitment needs. Only 27%, however, engage in this practice, although the majority of supervisors see this practice as feasible.”

Supervisors find certain practices, such as outside assistance with job training, are effective for employees with and without disabilities, “While supervisors found short-term assistance by job coaches and temporary training programs to be extremely effective, only 19% of companies utilize such services,” said DeRose.

Encouraging broader implementation of effective practices could expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, according to economist Andrew Houtenville, PhD, Director of Research for the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability. “For example, while most organizations have effective processes for recruiting and supporting new hires,” noted Dr. Houtenville, “these processes are not as effective for candidates with disabilities. We need to look into how these processes can be improved,” he advised. “On the other hand, certain practices are seen as highly effective for employees with disabilities, but are underutilized by employers. The most striking example is a centralized accommodation fund, found to be 97% effective, but maintained by only 16% of employers.”

DeRose concluded: “With its unique view of corporate culture, this Survey gives us new direction for increasing inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. When there is commitment from upper management, and effective practices are in place, all employees and their supervisors achieve success, and businesses reap the benefits of their diverse and productive work force.”

Visit [www.KesslerFoundation.org/kfsurvey17](http://www.KesslerFoundation.org/kfsurvey17) for the Executive Summary, Survey Results, presentation slides, and survey questions.

### **About Kessler Foundation**

Kessler Foundation, a major nonprofit organization in the field of disability, is a global leader in rehabilitation research that seeks to improve cognition, mobility and long-term outcomes, including employment, for people with neurological disabilities caused by diseases and injuries of the brain and spinal cord. Kessler Foundation leads the nation in funding innovative programs that expand opportunities for employment for people with disabilities. Kessler Foundation and UNH issue National Trends in Disability Employment (#nTIDE), a custom monthly report that compares employment data for people with and without disabilities. Learn more by visiting [www.KesslerFoundation.org](http://www.KesslerFoundation.org).

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