Report of Main Findings

Kessler Foundation · East Hanover, NJ

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**Survey Conducted by
the University of New Hampshire
Institute on Disability**

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2024 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey: Hospitality Industry

Executive Summary

Synopsis. Kessler Foundation (Foundation), in partnership with the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability (UNH-IOD), conducted the 2024 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey: Hospitality Industry (2024 KFNEDS:HI). The aim was to investigate effectiveness of employer practices related to recruiting, hiring, and providing workplace accommodations within the hospitality industry. Supervisors provided information about the most frequently used employer practices, the effectiveness of these practices, as well as specific experiences utilizing these practices.

Objectives. To further improve the employment of people with disabilities, the Foundation and UNH-IOD have continued their survey series to inform and promote effective employer practices within the hospitality industry. The innovative design of the 2024 KFNEDS:HI sharpened the focus of previous KFNEDS supervisor surveys in three important ways:

- Focused on an industry where many people initially enter the workforce and obtain their first résumé entry—the hospitality industry
- Concentrated on practices central to the workforce entry of employees with disabilities—recruiting, hiring, and workplace accommodation practices
- Chronicled specific experiences of supervisors who successfully or unsuccessfully utilized these practices—collected information, findings, and recommendations directly applicable to supervisors

Furthermore, focusing on one industry allowed the KFNEDS:HI questionnaire to delve into important factors specific to the hospitality industry including (a) differences between front-of-house and back-of-house positions—where workers with disabilities may be concentrated in certain positions—and (b) differences between the food services sector and the traveler accommodation sector—each of which may have unique experiences implementing certain practices.

Methods. The 2024 KFNEDS:HI was conducted using common and replicable survey methods. From June 21, 2024, to July 13, 2024, the survey was incorporated into the Qualtrics Business-to-Business panel. A quota of about 800 respondents was sought based on cost and feasibility. Initially, 4,863 respondents ages 18 and older agreed to participate in the survey, based on consent procedures approved by the UNH Institutional Review Board. Among these 4,863 consenting respondents, 4,050 respondents (83.3 percent) were excluded because they did not match the inclusion criterion. The final sample consisted of 813 supervisors, ages 18 and older, working in the U.S. for companies in the hospitality industry that employed 25 people or more.

Sample Characteristics. The survey focused on examining the employment practices in the hospitality industry, specifically those in traveler accommodations and food services. Findings from the 2024 KFNEDS:HI describe the prevalent employment practices regarding people with disabilities in the hospitality industry. Most surveyed participants worked in the restaurant or food services segment of the industry. Businesses represented primarily operated under a franchise network or as a private corporation.

Employer Practices. Most of the companies represented in this survey had a process for requesting workplace accommodations (78 percent). Of the companies with a process, nearly 90 percent of supervisors reported that the processes were somewhat or very effective and somewhat or very easy for people with disabilities to use. Respondent supervisors generally felt somewhat or very confident in understanding the process (85 percent) and most reported experiencing training on how to provide workplace accommodation (67 percent). One-third of supervisors indicated that their companies had a centralized workplace accommodation fund. *Note: most workplace accommodations can be provided without any direct expense, and those that do involve a cost typically incur a one-time median expense of $300* (Office of Disability Employment Policy [ODEP], 2023).

Specific Employer Practices. Supervisors were asked to provide information on recruiting, hiring, and workplace accommodation practices utilized by their companies. The most-cited recruitment practices for employing people with disabilities included partnering with or seeking assistance from disability organizations and establishing internships and mentorship programs. In contrast, utilizing state vocational rehabilitation

services (VR) was the least-cited practice or resource for hiring people with disabilities, even though respondents ranked utilizing state VR as the third most effective when used.

Workplace accommodations included flexible work schedules, building accessibility, and modified job duties. By far the most infrequently offered accommodation was remote or work-from-home options, which was not entirely surprising given the nature of jobs in the hospitality industry. Regardless, nearly half of all supervisors surveyed reported a moderate-to-large increase in the percentage of paid employees working from home, with even more supervisors expecting this percentage to increase in the coming years.

Additional patterns emerged when supervisors were asked about their detailed experiences with specific employees, including:

- Proactively recruiting people with disabilities resulted in more successful employees
- Promising avenues for proactive recruiting were identified as disability-related job fairs and partnering with or seeking assistance from disability organizations
- Workplace accommodations improved employee success. While workplace accommodations that helped adjust job duties and tasks were beneficial, workplace accommodations that assisted workers successfully perform tasks and duties were even more advantageous
- Barriers to providing workplace accommodations included perceptions of the high cost of accommodations, coworker attitudes, and complicated or no processes in place to request accommodations. These answers suggest the need for improved training on how to provide low-cost accommodations in the workplace

Conclusion. Overall, the results of the 2024 KFNED:HI support the need for efforts to increase proactive recruitment, expand partnerships with disability organizations, enhance awareness of accommodation costs, and streamline accommodation processes. These efforts will benefit the hospitality industry and tap workers who are striving to work—people with disabilities.

Introduction

Kessler Foundation (Foundation), in partnership with the University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability (UNH-IOD), conducted the 2024 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey: Hospitality Industry (2024 KFNEDS:HI) to investigate the effectiveness of employer practices related to recruiting, hiring, and providing workplace accommodations within the hospitality industry. Supervisors provided information about the most frequently used employer practices and the effectiveness of these practices. The survey also collected supervisors' narratives detailing the successes and challenges of recruiting, hiring, and accommodating workers with disabilities.

Hiring people with disabilities strengthens teams, boosts profitability, and demonstrates organizational responsibility (Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012). The 2015 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey: Worker Perspectives (KFNEDS:WP) showed that people with disabilities were striving to work and overcoming barriers to employment (Sundar et al., 2018). The 2017 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey: Supervisor Perspectives (KFNEDS:SP) highlighted the practices that supervisors found most effective for recruiting, hiring, training, accommodating, and retaining people with disabilities while also identifying opportunities for improvement in these employment practices. The 2022 Supervisor Perspectives Survey (KFNEDS:SP2) added questions about changes that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 survey identified increased use of flexible work arrangements in 2022 compared to 2017. While their companies may have supported the *goal* of employing people with disabilities (Kessler Foundation, 2022), supervisors reported less commitment and support from upper management.

The 2024 KFNEDS:HI expanded upon the findings of the 2022 KFNEDS:SP2 survey by focusing specifically on the hospitality industry. Approximately 10 percent of people with disabilities are employed in the leisure and hospitality industry (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2024). Prior research (Jasper and Waldhart, 2013) noted employee abilities and workplace accommodations as employer concerns when hiring people with disabilities in the leisure and hospitality industry.

To gain further insights into this industry's employment of people with disabilities, the 2024 survey used a modified version of the 2022 survey to closely examine the hiring, training, workplace accommodation, and retention practices.

Both surveys used the same innovative design to identify effective practices. Both asked supervisors whether their organization used a particular employment practice, and if so, whether it was effective. To evaluate the potential of adopting a currently unused practice, respondents in both surveys were asked to evaluate the feasibility of using it. Additionally, both surveys explored organizational views on employing people with disabilities. The 2024 survey went further by examining worker placement in greater detail, differentiating between front-of-house and back-of-house roles. It also gathered comprehensive information about the types of disabilities among employees and collected stories of both successes and challenges in employing workers with disabilities.

The aims of the 2024 KFNEDS:HI were as follows:

- Understand the processes and practices employers use to recruit, hire, train, accommodate, and retain employees with disabilities in the hospitality industry
- Learn supervisors' perspectives about the effectiveness of employer practices related to the employment of people with disabilities in the hospitality industry
- Generate actionable information to support the national adoption of promising practices in the hospitality industry to positively influence employment outcomes for people with disabilities

Methods

Sample Design

In order to achieve these goals, the sample for the 2024 KFNEDS:HI was generated from a pre-screened panel of business respondents maintained by Qualtrics and its partners, which followed the processes for 2017 KFNEDS:SP and 2022 KFNEDS:SP2 surveys. Respondents were not asked to disclose their employers. Beyond the anonymity of

the employers, supervisors contacted through this approach were more likely to respond honestly because the surveys were completed on their own time and not as a part of their paid workday.

Using a pre-screened panel dramatically reduced costs and allowed for a larger, more-focused sample. The survey design asked respondents about the strategies used by their companies to support employees with disabilities. This approach helped overcome one of the biggest barriers in disability research: gathering information from employers. With its focus on processes and practices used and deemed effective, the 2024 KFNEDS:HI highlighted feasible approaches to improve employers' ability to successfully recruit, hire, train, accommodate, and retain qualified and talented employees with disabilities in the hospitality industry.

Survey and Questionnaire Design

The 2024 KFNEDS:HI was developed as an online survey of supervisors from U.S. organizations employing at least 25 workers at all locations, the minimum size of companies responsible for complying with guidelines set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The questionnaire aimed to gather supervisors' perspectives about employment practices, the processes and practices used by their companies to employ people with disabilities, and the effectiveness of those practices. The questionnaire was designed by researchers at the UNH in consultation with Kessler Foundation. The survey protocol and procedures were approved by the UNH Institutional Review Board.

The main topic areas covered by the survey included the presence and effectiveness of the employment practice areas of recruitment, hiring, retention, and provision of workplace accommodation to employees in the hospitality industry. Within each employment practice area, supervisors were asked whether their organization implemented various practices (e.g., "Does your company proactively recruit job applicants who are people with disabilities?"). If a practice was used, then supervisors were asked how often it was used and if it was effective. If a practice was not used, then supervisors were asked whether it would be feasible to use it. The survey helped identify promising practices by highlighting two areas: (a) the methods employers used and found most

effective and (b) those practices that, while unused, were considered feasible for future adoption.

Questions regarding workplace accommodations focused on gaining an understanding of who received accommodations and when they were implemented. Supervisors were asked if specific workplace accommodations were provided to front-of-house staff (such as waiters and front desk staff), back-of-house staff (such as line cooks and housekeepers), or both. Clarifying questions followed to determine if those accommodations were automatically offered to all employees, or if they were available only upon an employee's request.

Supervisors were then asked to reflect on specific workers with disabilities, both past and present, who had either successfully performed their job functions (*Worker X*) or encountered challenges (*Worker Y*). To maximize the amount of information collected, respondents were allowed to select *Worker X* and *Worker Y* based on a variety of experiences: (a) workers they supervised at their current company, (b) workers with whom they regularly interacted but did not supervise, or (c) workers they supervised at a previous company in the hospitality industry where they were employed.

Supervisors were asked about specific recruitment, hiring, and workplace accommodation practices related to these employees, as well as the successes and challenges the organization experienced when employing them. This approach offered deeper insight into company practices concerning workers with disabilities, highlighting factors that contributed to employee successes or difficulties in performing their job functions. Lastly, the survey asked supervisors to share their views on the potential benefits of employing people with disabilities and to reflect on the barriers and challenges their company faced in doing so.

Data Collection and Final Sample

The 2024 KFNEDS:HI was conducted using common and replicable survey methods. From June 21, 2024, to July 13, 2024, members of the Qualtrics Business-to-Business panel were invited to take the KFNEDS:HI survey. A quota of about 800 respondents was sought based on cost and feasibility. Initially, 4,863 respondents ages 18 and older consented to participate in the survey, based on consent procedures approved by the UNH Institutional

Review Board. Among these 4,863 consenting respondents, 4,050 respondents (83.3 percent) were excluded because they did not match the inclusion criterion: (a) 2,036 respondents did not work in the hospitality industry, (b) 638 respondents did not work for a company with at least 25 employees at all locations combined, (c) 113 respondents were underage, (d) 20 respondents did not find the definition of disability (provided in the questionnaire for baselining responses) made sense, (e) 378 respondents did not supervise any employees, (f) 778 respondents gave rushed or inattentive responses, and (g) 87 respondents did not respond correctly to a quality check question. The final sample consisted of 813 supervisors, ages 18 and older, working in the U.S. for hospitality industry companies that employed 25 people or more. Lastly, among the 813 respondents, 710 (87 percent) indicated sufficient experience to respond to questions about both a Worker X and a Worker Y and were included in the analysis comparing the two types of workers.

Sample Characteristics

Demographic and Social Characteristics. The responses of the 813 supervisors in the final sample were analyzed using R software (R Core Team, 2024). Of the 813 supervisors, approximately 36 percent were male, 63 percent were female, and around 1 percent were transgender, nonbinary, or other genders (Table A2 in the Appendix provides greater detail). Forty-two (42) percent were between the ages of 35 and 50. Most (69 percent) had less than a college degree, and 76 percent earned less than $75,000 annually. Non-Hispanic, white respondents comprised 71 percent of the sample; 25 percent were non-Hispanic, Black/African American, and 14 percent were Hispanic. Many of the supervisors surveyed had some personal experience with or exposure to disability: 20 percent experienced a hearing, vision, ambulatory, or cognitive disability themselves, and 54 percent reported that someone close to them (e.g., family member, friend, colleague) had a disability.

When compared to national benchmarks—estimates for managers in the hospitality industry using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Survey (ACS)—the 813 supervisors in the final sample were more likely to be middle-aged women, (ages 35 to 50), non-Hispanic, Black/African American, less educated, had a lower annual

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Table 1. Company Size (N=813)

Paid Full-Time Employees	Percent	
	Their Location	All Locations
Less than 25	22	NA
25 to 99	46	30
100 to 499	21	32
500 to 999	6	13
1,000 or More	5	25

Table 2. Company Type (N=813)

Company Type	Percent[1]
Restaurant & Food Services	**73**
Full-Service Rest.	60
Limited-Service Rest.	20
Other Food Service	20
Traveler Accommodations	**26**
Hotel/Motels, ex. Casino	74
Casino Hotel	10
Other Traveler Accom.	15
Don't Know	**1**

[1]Sub-type is calculated as a percentage of number of respondents in main type.

household income, and reported a disability. These differences from national benchmarks may reflect patterns for participants in paid online surveys, as well as the differences between "supervisors" and "managers." Unfortunately, the ACS does not allow for the identification of supervisors directly (**Table A2** in the Appendix provides greater detail).

Employment Characteristics. Most supervisors (86 percent) worked at their current company for 10 years or less, although 3 percent worked at their current company for more than 20 years. The majority (79 percent) were in a supervisory role for 5 years or less. Half (52 percent) of the respondents supervised 10 or fewer direct reports, although 20 percent reported supervising more than 20 employees.

Company Characteristics. A minority of supervisors (11 percent) were from companies with 500 or more employees at *their location*, while 38 percent of supervisors were from companies with 500 or more employees at *all locations* (**Table 1**). Compared to recent data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (Highfill and Cao, 2022), the survey sample slightly overrepresented mid-sized companies: 32 percent of respondents came from companies with 100 to 499 employees compared to 10 percent nationally. The remaining 30 percent represented smaller companies with 25 to 99 employees, approximately 38 percent nationally.

Most (73 percent) of the supervisors worked in restaurants and food services, while 26 percent worked in traveler accommodations (**Table 2**). Of those who worked in restaurants and food service, 60 percent worked in full-service restaurants, 20 percent worked in limited-service restaurants (e.g. fast-food restaurants), and 20 percent worked

in other food service venues, such as mobile food places, drinking places, food service contractors, caterers, cafeterias, snack and non-alcoholic beverage bars. As a percentage of those who worked in traveler accommodations, 74 percent worked in hotels (except casino hotels) and motels, and 26 percent worked in other lodging places such as casino hotels, bed-and-breakfast inns, recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps, boarding houses, dormitories, and others.

Figure 1. Location Where Supervisors Worked (N=812)

- Front-of-House
- Back-of-House
- Both
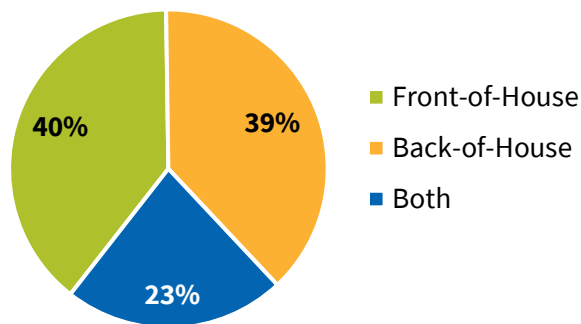
Location Within Facility.

Supervisors were relatively evenly split between the front- and back-of-house (**Figure 1**). Forty (40) percent reported primarily supervising employees in the front-of-house, while 39 percent reported primarily supervising employees in the back-of-house, while 23 percent primarily supervised

employees in the front- and back-of-house (More detail is provided in **Table A3** in the Appendix).

Findings

The 2024 KFNEDS:HI asked supervisors in the hospitality industry about their employers' practices regarding recruitment, hiring, and the provision of workplace accommodations. Once processes and specific practices were identified, a set of follow-up questions was used to discover whether these processes and practices were considered effective for workers with disabilities, specifically. To gain deeper insight into the effectiveness of employer practices, the survey also asked supervisors questions to

Table 4. Recruiting Qualified Applicants (N=813)

Response	Percent		
	Proactively Recruit PwD	Recruited PwD in Past Year	PwD with Company for 2+ Yrs
Yes	26	52	61
No	53	32	27
Don't know	20	15	12

describe a worker who successfully performed their job duties and another worker who encountered challenges in doing so.

Recruiting and Hiring Practices

Finding Qualified Applicants. More than half of the supervisors (53 percent) reported that their company did not proactively recruit job applicants who are people with disabilities (**Table 4**). Most supervisors reported that their companies (52 percent) had recruited new employees with disabilities in the past 12 months. Most supervisors (61 percent) reported that workers with disabilities have been with the company for 2 years or longer.

Recruiting Strategies. Supervisors were asked how frequently their company used certain strategies to recruit new employees with disabilities. When asked about *partnering with or seeking assistance from disability organizations*, 59 percent reported their

Table 5. Recruiting Strategies (N=813)

| Frequency of Strategy Use | Percent[1] | | |
	Partner/Seek Disability Org.	Contact State VR	Internships/ Mentorships
Sometimes/Often/Always	**59**	**48**	**58**
Effective	84	78	80
Rarely/Never/Don't Know	**41**	**52**	**42**
Feasible	60	54	48

[1]Effective is calculated as a percentage of number of respondents reporting sometimes/often/always. Similarly calculated for feasible.

companies sometimes, often, or always used this strategy, and 84 percent of these supervisors reported that this strategy was effective (**Table 5**). Among the 41 percent of supervisors who reported their companies rarely or never used this this strategy (or did not know), 60 percent of these supervisors reported that this strategy was feasible.

When asked if their company *contacted state vocational rehabilitation agencies (VR)*, 48 percent reported they sometimes, often, or always used this strategy, and 78 percent of these supervisors found it effective (**Table 5**). Among the 52 percent of supervisors who

reported their companies rarely or never used this this strategy (or did not know), 54 percent of them reported that this strategy was feasible.

When asked whether their company *established internships and/or mentorships programs,* 58 percent reported their companies sometimes, often, or always used this strategy, and 80 percent of these supervisors reported that this strategy was effective (**Table 5**). Among the 42 percent of supervisors who reported their companies rarely or never used this this strategy (or did not know), only 48 percent of these supervisors reported that this strategy was feasible.

Hiring Strategies. Supervisors were asked how frequently their company used specific strategies to improve the accessibility of hiring process of job applicants with disabilities. When asked about whether their company *offered training for hiring supervisors regarding accessible application and interview practices,* 72 percent reported their companies sometimes, often, or always used this strategy, and 82 percent of these

Table 6. Hiring Strategies (N=813)

Frequency of Strategy Use	Percent[1]			
	Training Hiring Supervisors on Accessibility	Specialist for Hiring PwD	Review/Audit Hiring Practices for Accessibility	Accessible Interview Location
Sometimes/Often/Always	**72**	**54**	**68**	**77**
Effective	82	85	85	87
Rarely/Never/Don't Know	**28**	**46**	**32**	**23**
Feasible	60	48	56	48

[1]Effective is calculated as a percentage of number of respondents reporting sometimes/often/always. Similarly calculated for feasible.

supervisors reported that this strategy was effective (**Table 6**). Among the 28 percent of supervisors who reported their companies rarely or never used this strategy (or didn't know), 60 percent of supervisors reported this strategy was feasible.

When asked about whether their company has *a person specialized in hiring individuals with disabilities*, 54 percent reported their companies sometimes, often, or always used this strategy, and 85 percent of these supervisors reported that this strategy was effective (**Table 6**). Among the 46 percent of supervisors who reported their

companies rarely or never used this strategy (or did not know), 48 percent of these supervisors reported that this strategy was feasible.

When asked whether their company *reviewed or audited hiring practices to ensure they were accessible*, 68 percent reported their companies sometimes, often, or always used this strategy, and 85 percent of these supervisors reported that this strategy was effective (**Table 6**). Among the 32 percent of supervisors who reported their companies rarely or never used this this strategy (or did not know), 56 percent of these supervisors reported that this strategy was feasible.

When asked whether their company has *interview locations accessible to individuals with disabilities*, 77 percent reported their companies sometimes, often, or always used this strategy, and 87 percent of these supervisors reported that this strategy was effective (**Table 6**). Among the 23 percent of supervisors who reported their companies rarely or never used this this strategy (or did not know), 48 percent of these supervisors reported that this strategy was feasible.

Workplace Accommodations

Importance of Workplace Accommodations. Providing workplace accommodations was important to supervisors. Some 57 percent of the supervisors reported that they had discussed or arranged workplace accommodations for employees with disabilities that they supervise. Many of the supervisors reported that it was either very easy or somewhat easy (44 percent and 37 percent, respectively) for them to provide workplace accommodations to employees with disabilities.
Regarding training, most respondents (67 percent) reported that their company has training available for supervisors to understand more about providing workplace accommodations. The majority of respondents reported that they were either very confident or somewhat confident (52 percent and 34 percent, respectively) in their understanding of the process for providing workplace accommodations to employees with disabilities within their company.

Regarding cost, half (50 percent) of the supervisors reported that the average cost of providing workplace accommodations to workers with disabilities was less than $500. Meanwhile, a large percentage (42 percent) of the supervisors reported that they were not aware of the cost to provide workplace accommodations to workers with disabilities (**Figure 2**). The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) reported that more than half of workplace accommodation requests come at no cost employers, and accommodations that involved costs typically incurred a one-time median expense of $300 (ODEP, 2023).

Figure 2. Perceived Average Cost of Workplace Accommodations (N=813)

Less than $100	$101 to $300	$301 to $500	More than $500	Don't Know
14%	19%	17%	8%	42%

Accommodation Practices. Supervisors were asked about their company's practices regarding the provision of workplace accommodations. More than two-thirds (78 percent) of supervisors reported that their companies had *a formal process for employees with disabilities to request workplace accommodations* such as specialized equipment, job reassignment, a modified work schedule, or extra assistance. Most of these supervisors (63 percent) felt this process was very effective, while around 30 percent felt this process was somewhat effective. Similarly, most of these supervisors (63 percent) felt this process was *very* easy to use, while around 29 percent felt this process was *somewhat*

Table 7. Accom. Practices (N=813)

Use of Practice	Percent[1]	
	Process for Req. Accom.	Central Accom. Fund
Yes	**78**	**34**
Effectiveness		
Very Effective	63	65
Somewhat Effective	30	30
Ease of Use		
Very Easy	63	62
Somewhat Easy	29	33
Discussed at Orientation		
Yes	76	NA
No, no orientation	10	NA
No	**13**	**30**
Don't Know	**9**	**36**

[1]Percent for sub-responses was calculated as a percentage of number of "Yes" respondents.

easy to use. Furthermore, most supervisors (76 percent) reported that the company's accommodation process was discussed at employee orientations.
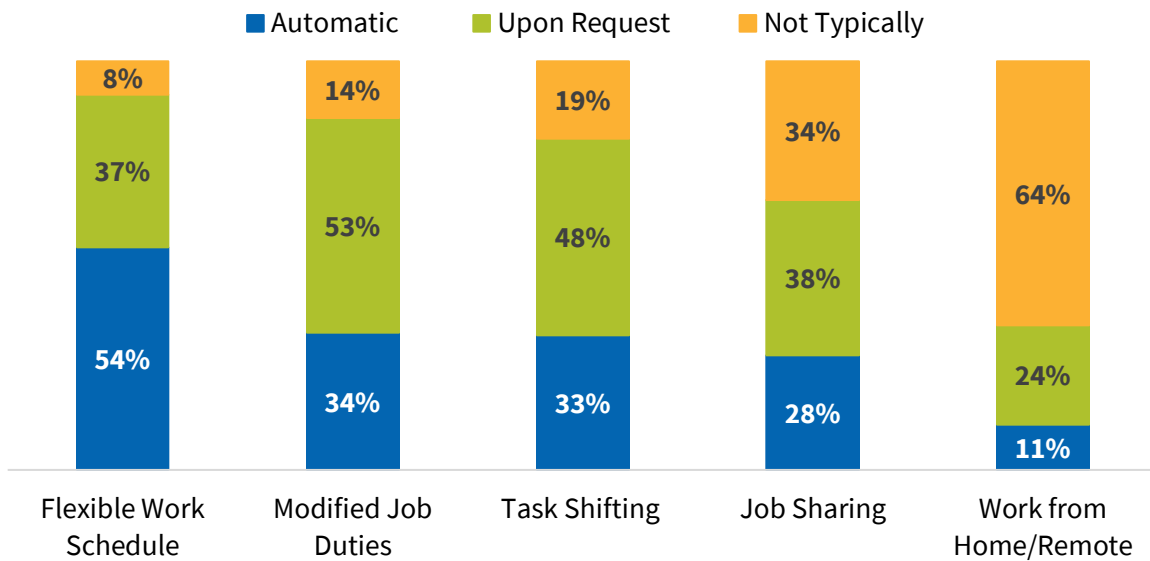
The use of a centralized workplace accommodation fund—a general account dedicated to pay for applicant workplace accommodations that does not directly impact the supervisor's expenditures—was much less prevalent. Only 34 percent of supervisors reported their companies had such a centralized fund. However, they responded that the effectiveness and ease of using a centralized fund was similar to that of the process to request accommodations.

Specific Work Accommodations. Supervisors were asked about the use of workplace accommodations that changed workplace requirements—such as flexible work schedule, modified job duties, task shifting, job sharing, and work from home/remote work, accessible workspace, assistive technology, and job and community support personnel—and whether these workplace accommodations were offered automatically, upon request by employee, or were not typically offered (**Figures 3** and **4**). A *flexible work schedule* was the most frequently offered accommodation. Fifty-four (54) percent of supervisors indicated that flexible work schedules were offered automatically to all employees within their companies, while 37 percent indicated availability upon request by the employee, and only 8 percent indicated not being typically offered (**Figure 3**).

The second most frequently offered accommodation was *modified job duties* (e.g., reduced hours, light duty, less demanding job tasks). Thirty-four (34) percent of supervisors indicated that modified job duties were offered automatically to all employees within their indicated, while 53 percent indicated availability upon request by the employee, and 14 percent indicated not being not typically offered.

Closely related to modified job duties, the third most frequently offered accommodation was *task shifting* (i.e., changes that allowed employees to keep their existing positions but reallocate specific tasks they could not perform). Thirty-three (33)

Figure 3. Requirement-Related Accommodations (N=813)

■ Automatic ■ Upon Request ■ Not Typically

|	Flexible Work Schedule	Modified Job Duties	Task Shifting	Job Sharing	Work from Home/Remote
Not Typically	8%	14%	19%	34%	64%
Upon Request	37%	53%	48%	38%	24%
Automatic	54%	34%	33%	28%	11%

percent of supervisors indicated that task shifting was offered automatically to all employees, while 48 percent indicated availability upon request by the employee, and 19 percent indicated not being not typically offered.

Job sharing (i.e., sharing tasks with other employees) was indicated by 28 percent of supervisors as being offered automatically to all employees, while 38 percent indicated availability upon request by the employee, and 34 percent indicated not being not typically offered.

By far the most infrequently offered accommodation was *work from home/remote work*, which is not entirely surprising given the nature of work in the hospitality industry. Only 11 percent of supervisors indicated that work from home/remote work was offered automatically to all employees, and only 24 percent indicated availability upon request by the employee, while 64 percent indicated not being typically offered.

Supervisors were asked about other workplace accommodations that were more related to assisting workers perform tasks: personal assistance services, assistive equipment or device (e.g., accessible computer software, screen-reader software, videophones), and job coach. These three accommodations were provided to a similar degree (**Figure 4**). Twenty-nine (29) percent of supervisors indicated that providing and/or allowing *personal assistance services* was offered automatically to all employees,

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Figure 4. Assistance-Related Accomm. (N=813)
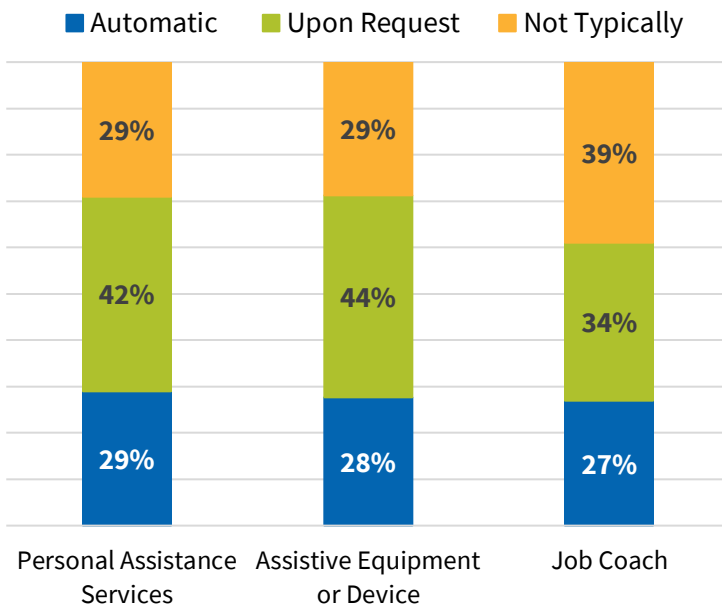
and 42 percent indicated availability upon request by the employee, while 29 percent indicated not being not typically offered. Twenty-eight (28) percent indicated that *assistive equipment or device* was offered automatically to all employees, and 44 percent indicated availability upon request by the employee, while 29 percent indicated not being not typically offered. Twenty-seven (27) percent indicated that providing and/or allowing a *job coach* was offered automatically to all employees, and 36 percent indicated availability upon request by the employee, while 39 percent indicated not being not typically offered.

Employer Practices in Action: Successes and Challenges

Supervisors were asked to reflect on a specific (current or past) worker with a disability who successfully performed their job functions (referred to as "*Worker X*") and a specific (current or past) worker with a disability who faced challenges in performing their job function due to their disability (referred to as "*Worker Y*"). Comparing experiences with and practices related to *Worker X* and *Worker Y* was intended to suggest ways to better support workers with disabilities in the hospitality industry. Supervisors were also asked open-ended questions about *Worker X* and *Worker Y*. These open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide additional context about their experiences supervising workers with disabilities who had either successful or challenging job performance.

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Figure 5. Job Locations for Worker X and Worker Y (N=710)

Worker X (Success)   Worker Y (Challenge)

■ Front-of-House
■ Back-of-House
■ Both
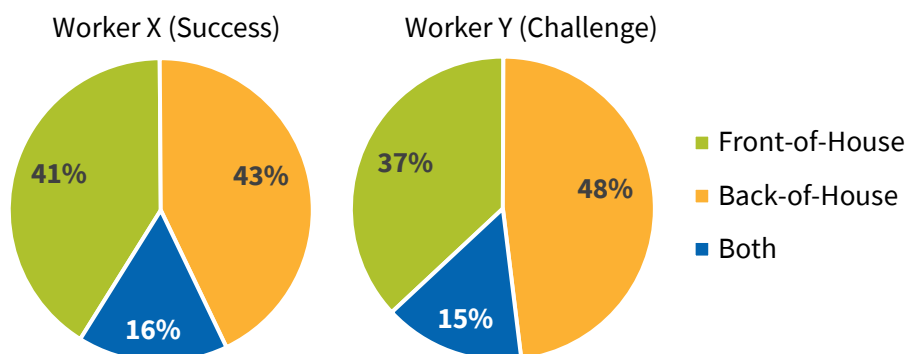
Worker X and Worker Y Characteristics. Interestingly, the personal and job characteristics of *Worker X* and *Worker Y* were quite similar. This is likely because such characteristics were intrinsically linked to the job characteristics of the supervisor and the types of jobs people with disabilities were traditionally assigned. For instance, the locations within the facility where *Worker X* and *Worker Y* were stationed were very similar (**Figure 5**) because each *Worker X*/*Worker Y* pair worked for the same supervisor. When holding front-of-house jobs, both *Worker X* and *Worker Y* were most likely to be hosts/hostesses, servers, bussers, or front-desk agents. When holding back-of-house jobs, *Worker X* and *Worker Y* were most likely to be dishwashers, prep cooks, janitors, and housekeeping staff. (More detail is provided in the Appendix, **Table A4**).

Two differences between *Worker X* and *Worker Y* were (a) whether they were currently employed at the company and (b) how long they had worked for the company. As might be expected, *Worker X* was more likely to be a current employee when compared to *Worker Y* (65 percent and 45 percent, respectively). *Worker X* also worked at the company for one or more years when compared to *Worker Y* (82 percent and 59 percent, respectively).

Table 8. Disability Type, in Descending Order (N=710)

Worker X (Success)		Worker Y (Challenge)	
Disability Type	**Pct[1]**	**Disability Type**	**Pct[1]**
Mental Health Condition	42	Learning Disability	38
Learning Disability	41	Mental Health Condition	38
Intellectual/Development Disability	37	Intellectual/Development Disability	28
Ambulatory Difficulty	19	Communication Difficulty	20
Communication Difficulty	18	Hearing Difficulty	15
Hearing Difficulty	17	Motor Function Difficulty	15
Motor Function Difficulty	15	Ambulatory Difficulty	13
Vision Difficulty	6	Vision Difficulty	5
Other Disability	3	Other Disability	4

[1]The percentages do not sum to 100 percent because selecting more than one disability type was allowed.

Regarding disability type, *Worker X* and *Worker Y* were also similar. Emotional or psychological mental health conditions (such as anxiety or depression), learning disabilities (such as ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, or others), intellectual or developmental disabilities (such as down syndrome, autism) were the most prevalent disability types

Figure 6. Proactively Recruited (N=710)

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't Know

(**Table 8**). *Recruitment Practices.* Supervisors were asked several questions about recruitment practices. Fifty (50) percent of supervisors reported that *Worker X* was proactively recruited by their company (e.g., sought assistance of disability organizations) compared to 36 percent for *Worker Y* (**Figure 6**). Furthermore, when actively recruited, both *Worker X* and *Worker Y* were most frequently recruited through *disability-related job fairs* (28 percent and 26 percent, respectively) or by *partnering with or seeking assistance from disability organizations* (22 percent and 23 percent, respectively). When not recruited proactively, both *Worker X* and *Worker Y* primarily applied via *general job posting* (57 percent and 59 percent, respectively).
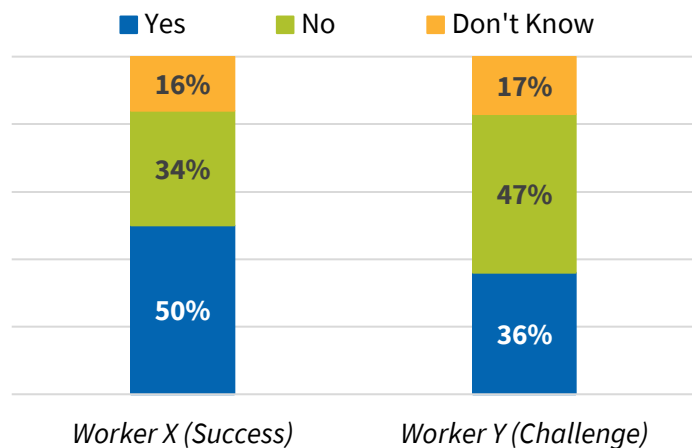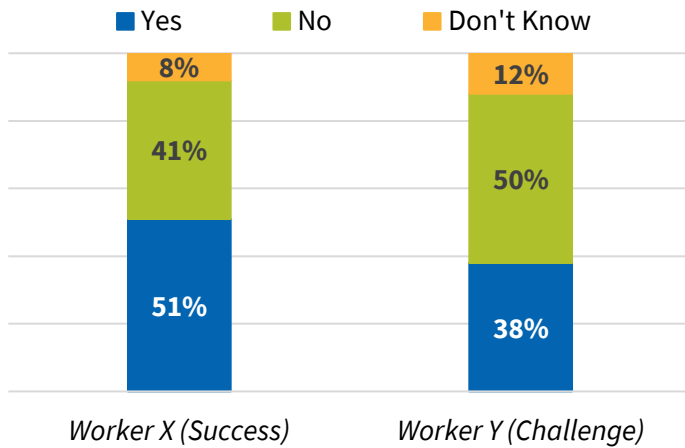
Figure 7. Worker Request (N=710)

Legend: Yes (blue), No (green), Don't Know (orange)

Worker X (Success): Don't Know 8%, No 41%, Yes 51%
Worker Y (Challenge): Don't Know 12%, No 50%, Yes 38%
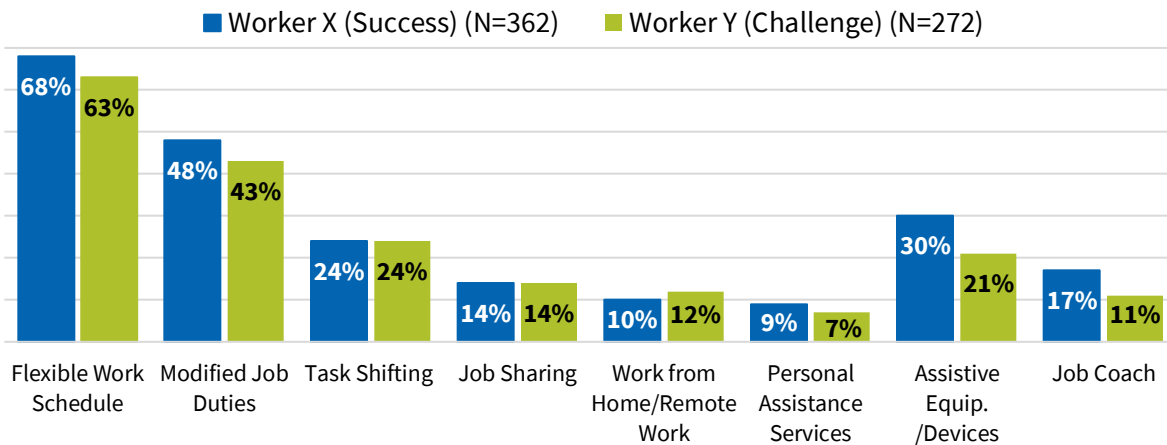
Workplace Accommodations.

Supervisors were asked several questions about workplace accommodations, including whether *Worker X* and *Worker Y*, separately, requested workplace "accommodations to successfully execute their job functions." *Worker X* was more likely to request workplace accommodations than *Worker Y*—51 percent and 38 percent, respectively (**Figure 7**). This suggests that *Worker X* was less reticent to request workplace accommodations and/or *Worker X* needed a greater degree of workplace accommodations.

If workplace accommodations were requested, supervisors were then asked what "accommodations were requested or provided for" the worker. Notable differences emerged (**Figure 8**). The largest differences occurred for *job coach* (17 percent and 11

Figure 8. Workplace Accommodations

Legend: Worker X (Success) (N=362) (blue), Worker Y (Challenge) (N=272) (green)

Category	Worker X	Worker Y
Flexible Work Schedule	68%	63%
Modified Job Duties	48%	43%
Task Shifting	24%	24%
Job Sharing	14%	14%
Work from Home/Remote Work	10%	12%
Personal Assistance Services	9%	7%
Assistive Equip./Devices	30%	21%
Job Coach	17%	11%

percent, respectively) and *assistive equipment/devices* (30 percent and 21 percent, respectively). In both of these cases, supervisors were more likely to request/provide workplace accommodations for *Worker X* when compared to *Worker Y*. Similarly, slight differences were found with respect to *flexible work schedule* (68 percent and 63 percent,

respectively), *modified job duties* (49 percent and 43 percent, respectively), and *personal assistance services (*9 percent and 7 percent, respectively*)*. These patterns suggest that workplace accommodations positively contributed to the ability of workers to be successful, especially workplace accommodations that assisted workers successfully perform tasks and duties as opposed to changing duties.

Interestingly, only *work from home/remote work* was more likely to be requested/provided for *Worker Y* (12 percent) when compared to *Worker X* (10 percent), which may have more to do with the effectiveness of *work from home/remote work*.

Barriers to Managing Accommodations. The survey explored the accommodation process and potential barriers for *Worker X* and *Worker Y.* Supervisors were less likely to report barriers when accommodating *Worker X* then when accommodating *Worker Y* (11 percent and 15 percent, respectively) (**Figure 9**).

Figure 9. Faced Barriers to Accommodations (N=710)

■ Yes　■ No　■ Don't Know

	Worker X (Success)	Worker Y (Challenge)
Don't Know	7%	11%
No	82%	73%
Yes	11%	15%
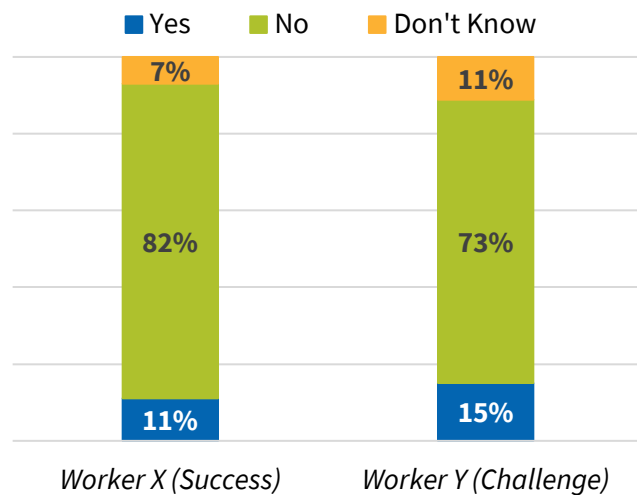
Figure 10. Barriers to Accommodations (If Faced)

■ Worker X (Success) (N=147)　■ Worker Y (Challenge) (N=202)

	Worker X (Success)	Worker Y (Challenge)
Coworkers Attitudes	24%	30%
Cost Too High	18%	20%
Complicated Process	32%	34%
Upper Mgmt Attitudes	21%	15%
No Process	33%	20%
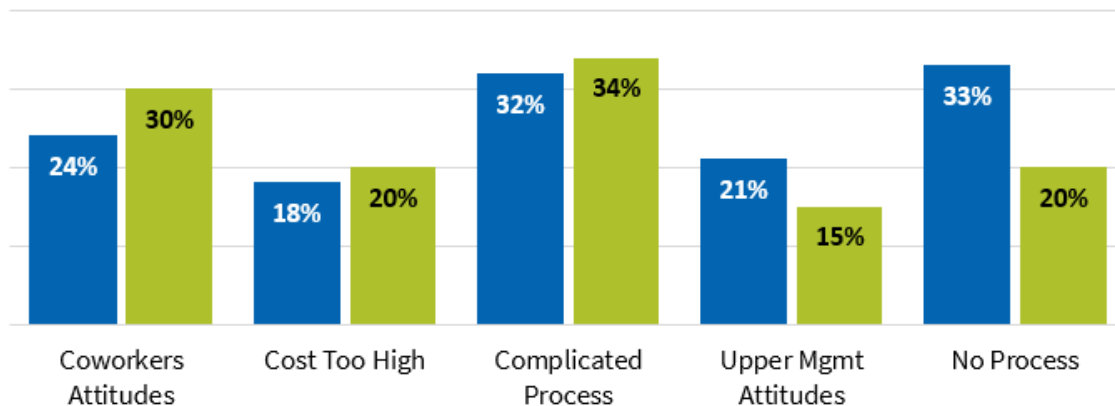
When asked about the underlying barriers, supervisors reported some interesting differences between *Worker X* and *Worker Y*. When barriers were faced, the responses revealed that the barriers to providing workplace accommodations differed between *Worker X* and *Worker Y*, with some barriers being more prevalent for one worker than the other (**Figure 10**). For instance, a higher percentage of supervisors

Table 9. Top Five Potential Benefits (N=813)

Response Options	Percent[1]
Benefit	
Projects a positive image with customers	60
Improves the culture of diversity & inclusion in the company	59
Projects a positive image with prospective employees	47
Increases the pool of qualified candidates	43
Increases morale of employees	43

[1]Sum to greater than 100 percent because multiple responses were allowed.

reported that certain barriers were more challenging for *Worker Y*, such as the *complicated process for requesting accommodations* (32 percent and 34 percent, respectively), coworkers' attitudes (24 percent and 30 percent, respectively), lack of company funds (18 percent and 21 percent, respectively), high accommodation costs (18 percent and 20 percent, respectively), and inadequate supervisor training (11 percent and 12 percent, respectively).

Conversely, other barriers were more frequently reported for *Worker X*. For example, more supervisors cited the lack of a company process to request accommodations as a significant barrier for *Worker X* compared to *Worker Y* (33 percent and 20 percent, respectively). Additionally, more supervisors reported that the process was not discussed at employee orientation (29 percent and 22 percent, respectively), and that upper management's attitude was a barrier (21 percent and 15 percent, respectively).

The findings revealed differences in the recruitment and accommodation practices for *Worker X* and *Worker Y*. Specifically, *Worker X*, who was successful in performing their job functions, was more frequently recruited proactively and had a higher rate of requesting and receiving workplace accommodations compared to *Worker Y*, who faced challenges in performing their job functions. In contrast, *Worker Y* encountered more systemic barriers, including a complicated process for requesting accommodations, less supportive coworker attitudes, and insufficient company funds for accommodations.

Benefits of Employing People with Disabilities

Lastly, making changes in recruiting, hiring, and workplace accommodations practices and employing more people with disabilities more effectively is not done in a vacuum. The potential benefits of employing people with disabilities to companies within the hospitality industry are important to consider. Supervisors were asked about their perspectives on the potential benefits of employing people with disabilities. Sixty (60) percent of supervisors reported that employing people with disabilities projected a positive image with customers, while 59 percent felt that it improved the company's culture of diversity and inclusion (**Table 8**). Additionally, nearly half of the supervisors believed that hiring people with disabilities enhanced the company's image with prospective employees (47 percent) and increased the pool of qualified candidates (43 percent). Moreover, over 40 percent of supervisors noted an increase in employee morale as a benefit, and a significant portion recognized the lower turnover and absenteeism rates among employees with disabilities (31 percent) as a valuable advantage (A full list of potential benefits and challenges is in the Appendix, **Table A10**).

Concluding Remarks

The 2024 KFNEDS:HI was conducted to examine employment practices related to people with disabilities, identify strategies that employers could use to increase their inclusion of workers with disabilities, and gather insights into supervisors' views on the effectiveness of these practices in the hospitality industry. It focused particularly on recruitment, hiring, and workplace accommodation practices. Additionally, the innovative questionnaire design encouraged a deeper exploration of real-world experiences by asking supervisors to reflect on one worker who was successful in their role (*Worker X*) and another who faced challenges in performing their job functions due to their disability (*Worker Y*).

The findings suggest that while there are effective recruitment and hiring practices in place in the hospitality industry, there are also notable gaps where more training opportunities and research are needed. A significant percentage of supervisors reported that their companies did not proactively recruit people with disabilities. While a significant

portion of supervisors reported that their company partnered with disability organizations, this portion was lower when compared to other industries, indicating room for improvement in such partnerships. Despite the generally low cost of providing workplace accommodations, a significant portion of supervisors were unaware of these costs.

When gathering insights from supervisors regarding their interactions with specific staff members, several additional patterns emerged. Proactive recruiting people with disabilities landed more successful employees. Disability-related job fairs and partnering with or seeking assistance from disability organizations were promising avenues for proactive recruiting. Furthermore, workplace accommodations improved employee success. While workplace accommodations that alter job duties and tasks were beneficial, workplace accommodations that assisted workers successfully perform tasks and duties were even more advantageous.

Overall, the results of the 2024 KFNED:HI support the need for efforts to increase active recruitment, expand partnerships with disability organizations, heighten awareness of accommodation costs, and streamline accommodation processes. These efforts will benefit the hospitality industry and tap workers who are *striving to work*—people with disabilities.

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Appendix

Table A1. Sector 72 - Accommodation and Food Services NAICS Codes

NAICS Code	Industry
72111/721110	Hotels (Except casino hotels) and Motels
72112/72110	Casino Hotels
721191	Bed-and-Breakfast Inns
72121/721211	RV (Recreational Vehicle) Parks and Recreational Camps
7231/72310	Rooming and Boarding Houses, Dormitories, and Workers' Camps
72119/721199	Other Traveler Accommodations
722511	Full-Service Restaurants (Providing service while seated and paying after eating services, drinks, and entertainment services)
722513	Limited-Service Restaurants (Fast-food restaurants, pizza delivery shops, take-out places, etc.)
72233/722330	Mobile Food Services (Food trucks, ice cream truck vendors, etc.)
72241/722410	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages, Bars, Taverns etc.)
72231/722310	Food Service Contractors
72232/722320	Caterers
722514	Cafeterias, Grill Buffets, and Buffets (Pay before eating services, grill buffets, etc.)
722515	Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars (Coffee, bagel, donut shops etc.)

Source: Office of Management and Budget, 2022.

Table A2. Sample Demographics and Socioeconomic Information with National Benchmarks from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 American Community Survey

	Sample		U.S. Census
	Number	**Percent**	**Percent**
Total	813	100.0	100.0
Gender			
Male	292	35.9	51.3
Female	510	62.7	48.7
Nonbinary	9	1.1	NA
Transgender	2	0.2	NA
Age			
18 to 34	270	33.2	37.9
35 to 50	339	41.7	33.1
Over 50	204	25.1	29
Race/Ethnicity[1]			
Non-Hispanic, White	575	70.7	74.8
Non-Hispanic, Black	206	25.3	10.8
Non-Hispanic, Other Race	82	10.1	15.3
Non-Hispanic, Two or More Races	43	5.3	8.4
Hispanic	114	14.0	18.1
Education			
Less Than High School	12	1.5	8.1
High School or Equivalent	259	31.9	27
Some College/Technical School	293	36.0	36.6
College Degree	215	26.4	22.9
Postgraduate Degree	32	3.9	5.4
Annual Household Income			

Less than $15,000	47	5.8	4.1
$15,000 to $29,999	138	17.0	5.7
$30,000 to $44,999	181	22.3	7.7
$45,000 to $59,999	131	16.1	9.8
$60,000 to $74,999	119	14.6	9.4
$75,000 to $99,999	112	13.8	15
$100,000 and over	80	9.8	48.3
Disability Status[1]			
Hearing Difficulty	27	3.3	1.6
Vision Difficulty	37	4.6	1.6
Ambulatory Disability	55	6.8	2.7
Cognitive Disability	42	5.2	2.5
Other Type of Disability	166	20.4	--
Emotional, Psychological or Mental Health Conditions	216	26.6	--
Intellectual or Developmental Disability	28	3.4	--
No Disability	449	55.2	96.2

[1]The percentages do not sum to 100 percent because selecting more than one option was allowed.

Table A3. Supervisor by Organization Category and Type (N=813)

Categories and Types	Number	Percent
Restaurants, Food Service, and Drinking Places	**592**	**72.8**
Full-Service Restaurants	352	59.5
Limited-Service Restaurants	120	20.3
Mobile Food Services	12	2.0
Drinking Places	19	3.2
Food Service Contractors	12	2.0
Caterers	13	2.2
Cafeterias, Grill Buffets, and Buffets	37	6.3
Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars	12	2.0
Other	15	2.5
Lodging	**215**	**26.4**
Hotels (Except casino hotels) and Motels	160	74.4
Casino Hotels	21	9.8
Bed-and-Breakfast Inns	15	7.0
RV (Recreational Vehicle) Parks and Recreational Camps	5	2.3
Rooming/Boarding Houses, Dormitories, and Workers' Camps	4	1.9
Other	10	4.7
Don't Know	**6**	**0.7**

Table A4. Location and Positions Held by Workers with Disabilities

Location/Position	Number	Percent
Front-of-House*		
Servers	338	41.6
Bartenders	84	10.3
Hosts/Hostesses	403	49.6
Managers	111	13.6
Bussers	372	45.7
Front Desk Agents	194	23.9
Bellhops	154	18.9
Concierge	93	11.5
Room/Table Attendants	240	29.5
Other	58	7.1
Back-of-House*		
Chefs and Sous Chefs	95	11.7
Line Cooks	235	28.9
Prep Cooks	343	42.2
Dishwashers	602	74.0
Housekeeping Staff	276	33.9
Janitors	345	42.4
Maintenance Staff	231	28.4
Accountants	29	3.6
Marketing Agents	32	3.9
Kitchen Manager	66	8.1
Administrative	59	7.3
Other Manager	19	2.3
Other	28	3.4

*Selecting all that apply.

Table A5. Organizational Business Structure (N=813)

Business Structure	Number	Percent
Private Corporation - Independent	350	43
Franchise Network	375	46
Small Business	69	8
Other	9	1
Doesn't Know	10	1

Table A6. Supervisors' Tenure at Employer (N=813)

Tenure	Number	Percent
5 Years or Less	462	57
6 to 10 Years	233	29
11 to 20 Years	91	11
More Than 20 Years	27	3

Table A7. Supervisors' Management Experience (N=813)

Management Experience	Number	Percent
1 Year or Less	199	24
2 to 5 Years	444	55
6 to 10 Years	109	13
More Than 10 Years	61	8

Table A8. Number of Direct Reports (N=813)

Direct Reports	Number	Percent
1 to 5	174	21
6 to 10	247	30
11 to 20	228	28
More Than 20	164	20

Table A9. Expanded Company Type (N=813)

Company Type	Number	Percent[1]
Restaurants, Food Service, and Drinking Places	**592**	**73**
Full-Service Restaurants	352	59
Limited-Service Restaurants	120	20
Mobile Food Services	12	2
Drinking Places	19	3
Food Service Contractors	12	2
Caterers	13	2
Cafeterias, Grill Buffets, and Buffets	37	6
Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars	12	2
Other	15	3
Lodging	**215**	**26**
Hotels (Except casino hotels) and Motels	160	74
Casino Hotels	21	10
Bed-and-Breakfast Inns	15	7
RV (Recreational Vehicle) Parks and Recreational Camps	5	2
Rooming and Boarding Houses, Dormitories, and Workers' Camps	4	2
Other	10	5
Doesn't Know	**6**	**1**

[1]Percentages reported for subcategories are percentages of principal category.

Table A10. Benefits and Challenges of Employing People with Disabilities (n=813)

Response Options	Number	Percent[1]
Benefits		
Positive image with customers	490	60
Positive image with prospective employees	385	47
Increased pool of qualified candidates	347	43
Improved company culture of diversity and inclusion	480	59
Increased morale of employees	346	43
Lower turnover and absence rates	251	31
Reduced liability for legal issues related to lack of diversity	197	24
Financial incentives for accommodations	159	20
Increased productivity	175	22
Other	13	2
Doesn't know	41	5
Challenges		
Barriers in performing required tasks	345	42
High cost to provide reasonable accommodations	141	17
Flexibility in work hours is not feasible	164	20
Workers are expected to maintain a presentable appearance	136	17
Customers' opinions affect the hiring of people with disabilities	115	14
Management worries about absenteeism	119	15
Concerns about job safety	215	26
Costs of health care coverage too high	56	7
People with disabilities can't multitask	122	15
People with dis. don't apply for the part time work that is available	80	10
Coworker attitudes are a challenge	76	9
Upper mgmt. is not committed to hiring people with disabilities	157	19
Lack of training on how to manage people with disabilities	171	21
Other	25	3
Doesn't know	**91**	**11**

[1]The percentages do not sum to 100 percent because selecting more than one option was allowed.