



**2017 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey:
Supervisor Perspectives**

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RODGER DeROSE: We're going to go ahead and get started. So if you would like to take a seat, please move up.

Welcome to the Kessler Foundation National Employment Survey that we just recently completed and just put out yesterday in the national news. It's supervisors' perspective. So I think you'll find it very interesting in terms of what supervisors are doing to successfully not only employ, but also retain individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

I'm Rodger DeRose with Kessler Foundation.

If you have a need for captioning, please join us over here.

I wanted to thank our congressional leader, which is Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, who secured this room for us today. I also want to thank Jennifer Sheehy, who will join us in a moment.

The Kessler family is here. I saw Rick and Daphne, his wife. They're here and their daughter Sam. Welcome to the Kessler family. They are the grandchildren of Dr. Henry H. Kessler, a global pioneer in the area of physical medicine and rehabilitation. So when he started the hospital back in 1948, he really set the trend for what we know today as physical medicine and rehabilitation. He was an orthopedic surgeon by background, and he wrote the book "The Knife is Not Enough," with the theme of treating the entire person. How do you treat a person with a disability who comes in for major physical therapy, how do you reengage them back to their community, to their family, to their workforce.

So we have been working on this for about a year now, and we have been in collaboration with Andrew Houtenville from the University of New Hampshire, as well as his colleague Kim Phillips. And John O'Neill is our research director of employment. I think most of you know Elaine Katz who heads up our grant making. Some of you have probably received grants from the foundation. She also heads up our communications department.

This survey I hope will accomplish a few things.

One, I hope it will help us influence policymakers here in D.C. as well as in the states so that we find new ways to not only hire successfully people with disabilities but retain people with disabilities.

I think you all know that the employment rate for people with disabilities still lags able bodied individuals by over 40 points. And our National Trends in Disability Employment survey report that we put out every Jobs Friday has been showing a nice 18-month trend upward every month. But we still have significant work to do.

So this survey for me I hope will help us influence policymakers. I hope that it will help us influence many of our friends in the disability market space, to continue to pursue their efforts in disability employment programs, and I also hope that for us as we have spent about \$40 million from our endowment in the last 13 years on employment programs for people with disabilities. I hope that it will also help us sharpen how we spend our future \$40 million on programs related to employment initiatives for people with disabilities.

If you don't know our foundation, the grant making side is one part of it in terms of funding these employment programs. The other major part of our organization is led by Dr. John DeLuca, who is here and leads the research part of our organization. We are a global leader in the areas of cognition and mobility research. And we strive to get our research right into patient care at Kessler Institute first and then we roll it out to other Select Medical hospitals and then the global rehabilitation community.

So today is our opportunity for us to share with you the latest information that we have from the survey which we hope you'll find useful.

And before we do that, I would like to ask deputy assistant secretary Jennifer Sheehy to say a few words. Jennifer?

JENNIFER SHEEHY: I have a lavalier mic.

Thank you so much, Rodger. It's really great to be here after the first week of what we affectionately know as the National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

And Elaine Katz is holding up our poster, which is bearing our theme "Inclusion Drives Innovation." This was a theme that was created with input from lots of organizations and employers, and certainly we consider the Kessler Foundation a really important partner. I want to thank the Kessler family. Oh my gosh. The first time I've been able to meet them. And what a legacy and amazing work that that wonderful leader has triggered throughout the country and probably internationally.

So I just want to say that we love data. Data of any kind. We get more excited about data this time of month than Halloween candy or federal holidays. So I want to thank Kessler very, very much for taking data that we worked together with our partners at the Department of Labor

back in 2009, our Bureau of Labor Statistics, to add employment figures for people with disabilities.

And the best thing that we could hope for is exactly what Kessler took on, and that is taking that data, those statistics, and then making them understandable and doing analysis and then disseminating that and helping teach people all over what this data means.

We in turn take that information back and identify barriers to the employment that people with disabilities face, and then try to work on those and develop tools and policies that make sense and are relevant. We couldn't do that without data.

So when you do something like a supervisor survey, that's really the front line of what we do. And how do we influence supervisors? What are they hearing? What are they feeling? How are they responding and behaving? We can't make smart policy recommendations without information like this.

So although our theme is "Inclusion Drives Innovation," we really see the whole circle with Kessler, and that's innovation driving inclusion.

So thank you all very, very much, and thank you for letting me be a small part of this exciting event.

[Applause]

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Thank you, Jennifer. Thank you, Rodger.

I'm going to dive right into the survey. That was a very nice introduction by Jennifer and Rodger.

One thing to note is that we're really building on past research. There are researchers from around the country who are doing very similar stuff, but we're all learning from each other and continuing to build. So we're by no means the first ones to look at this, but we learned from things that they've done and we continue to push that down because it's very hard to solicit information from individuals in a confidential way, particularly when it may deal with their practices with their employer. So that's what we set out to do. ODEP is due to be coming out in the next year or two with another major set of studies that's really quite innovative and will have surveys and case studies, really dive across. I'm not sure where that stands but keep in mind that's coming in the next couple of years, so we're really excited that we'll find new things with this research and be able to inform not only just policy making but grant giving, the design of future studies and demonstrations to improve practices within employers.

So the main objectives were to identify the processes and practices used by employers to increase the employment of people with disabilities and the effectiveness of those practices and policies.

That's really where we're starting to push the bounds, to identify the effectiveness of these practices.

We also wanted to collect qualitative data. Qualitative information on specific practices and challenges. So what you'll see, and Kim may talk a bit about it too, is that after we find out about effectiveness, we'll ask, well, why? Why was it effective or ineffective? You won't see that qualitative data today. It takes a lot longer. We just got the data less than a month ago. So we're still gearing up to analyze that qualitative data.

But what we hope to do is to learn. Many times existing research lists the same kind of practices. We've seen those talked about before. And we don't know much about what we don't know. Right? So what we wanted to do was use those open-ended questions to maybe find practices that are really promising that are not necessarily addressed by the standard set of questions that are asked.

Furthermore, we wanted to examine upper management commitment, which has been frequently identified as quite important in prior studies. But what is it about that? We're starting to kind of delve a little bit deeper into that angle.

So we surveyed roughly 3,000 supervisors across the country. We just added another 3,000. That's a long story, but we added another 3,000 for free. We haven't analyzed that data yet; that just came in yesterday.

But what we're doing is we're drawing a sample from a business to business panel. If you're not familiar with panels, they're already prerecruited. If you know anything about survey research, you know that the response rate is important. How many people respond to the survey.

The traditional way of using Dun and Bradstreet business directory had really declining response rates. You can't get people at their business to respond to sometimes quite sensitive questions about that business. And if you're going to ask a supervisor, they may say, well, I need to talk to the company's lawyer first before I talk about accommodations.

So we decided to use this business-to-business panel because it's prerecruited, it's weighted to be representative of businesses across the country, and our results are pretty similar to other things that are based on more representative, more randomized studies.

But the idea is that they can answer at any point. They can answer at home, at the business. They don't have to do it at the business. And what we're hoping to do is solicit more active responses. And they're just not trying to hide or shield themselves from revealing too much or give the socially desirable response. So that's a real innovation.

It's also a major cost saving. These panels are much faster than doing a random digit dial. I love paying students to do random digit-dial, but it usually takes several months just to do the dialing.

The subjects we're looking at recruiting and hiring, onboarding. When you join a firm, the initial training people receive. Retention and accommodation practices and policies.

Within the subject areas, we look at practices and policies and their effectiveness. As I mentioned, we ask open-ended questions as well.

So some of the demographics. Roughly greater percentage of female, a greater percentage of white versus nonwhite. Relatively kind of middle ages, 35-55, and more likely to have a college education. We compared this to supervisors in the Census Bureau and we roughly get the same kind of demographic profile.

About their own personal disability experience - 45% had some experience, either themselves or with a family member, around disability. And this may be age related because supervisors are typically more advanced in their careers and are older and disability may be more related to age.

Or they have children or spouses or parents with disabilities. We do have that break down, which we will present today.

Company size. So again, this roughly fits the profile of supervisors across the country. It is possible for more than one supervisor to be from the same company. And we're not able to identify that. So this is not really a representative sample of organizations as it is supervisors. That may play a little role.

So in terms of supervisory experience, how long at the employer. About 32% were in their first five years. And then kind of diminishing thereafter.

How long supervising. So 26% had 11 or more years actually being a supervisor.

And then number of people supervised. Let's say 36% only supervise 1-5 people. So that's the largest group. When we do further analyses, we'll include these kinds of things to break down our analysis and focus on maybe people with a lot more experience or people with only recent experience. So it may be quite different for people who only have recent experience versus people who have long-term experience.

Experience hiring people with disabilities. This is a table that shows not just their experience supervising but also their experience hiring people with disabilities. 10% said they had no experience hiring people with disabilities. Which is pretty small. That was really encouraging to see.

And again, it would be interesting to look at people who only have recent history, because my guess is that I'm hoping they have even more experience because practices have increased.

Experience supervising people with disabilities. 51% said they experienced supervising people with disabilities. And we asked about disability type. Some of our future analyses will look at experiences related to specific disability type. For me, that's probably the next big survey

challenge in terms of designing a survey, to look at specific disability and specific issues. Because many times people will say, oh, yeah yeah yeah, we know all about physical accessibility, but when it comes to mental or physical challenges, that may be the biggest challenge. That may be the next challenge in selecting the information.

Probably the first thing -- you're going to do practices.

KIMBERLY PHILLIPS: Processes.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Yes. One of the first things we did, one of the major things that comes out of literature is the commitment of top management is really key to advancing practices within a company. The 2008 ODEP study really highlighted that.

In terms of highlighting how committed. So this is a person, a supervisor reporting on the commitment of their upper management. And so about 20% said that their upper management was very committed. Somewhat committed was 45. So there was some commitment.

KIMBERLY PHILLIPS: Commitment to?

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Commitment to hire people with disabilities.

So then we asked the person, how important is it to you as an individual? And roughly the same percentages. So it suggests that, okay, hiring is important, they kind of ascribe. So that was a really fascinating finding. And actually surprised me. I would have thought that people would have said that they were much better than their management. Oh, you know, we really care down here. Management doesn't care at all.

But this suggests that there's kind of unanimity, which is nice.

When it comes to supporting individuals when they first come on board, learning how to work within the office or within the confines of their job, upper management was very committed. 43%. So even more commitment to helping people learn their job.

And then when we asked how important is it to the supervisor, probably not surprising, the supervisor really thinks it's important to help people come on board during that initial phase. So 78% said it's very important. Quite a stark difference. It's much more important to them than they view the upper management being committed.

And for providing requested accommodations. So upper management commitment, very, strong. 47% were very committed to providing requested accommodations.

But then when we looked at importance, again, we see a difference. 66% said it was very important to them. So again, not as important to upper management but very important to them. Because accommodation is part of that learning process. It's part of keeping people

involved and making people more effective. So online supervisors, I want my people to be the most effective.

So what this suggests is that maybe for -- and we've talked about this. It's in my own experience that there's a real desire to hire people with disabilities, but when it comes to bringing someone on and customizing a job for that individual, to provide accommodations, it's harder. It's harder than hiring. Because hiring is, I'm looking at résumés. But once the person comes and you have to provide the accommodations or customize the job, it's probably true of everybody that hiring people with disabilities or without is easy, but once you bring somebody on board, the challenges may come. And it's really the supervisors that may face those challenges.

Kim is going to take over and talk about effective processes.

KIMBERLY PHILLIPS: Thanks, Andrew.

RODGER DeROSE: Kim, can I just mention one thing? I failed to mention that there are note cards on your chairs. If you have questions, if you could write them down, we'll be collecting them and sorting them into groups that are similar. Thank you very much.

KIMBERLY PHILLIPS: Thanks, Rodger.

We asked supervisors whether their organizations had particular processes in place. And if so, we asked how effective they felt the processes were. And then we asked if they were seen as effective, well, are they as effective for employees with disabilities.

This approach is key because it provides a context for us to interpret the findings. The effectiveness of organizational processes, as Andrew will share later, also specific practices, with reference to people with disabilities.

As disability researchers, we want to ask about only employees with disabilities often. In doing so, though, we miss an opportunity to see some nuances, and we may risk interpreting findings as cause for celebration when they're actually deficiencies or vice versa. For example, you'll see in a moment, but if we ask, do you have a certain process, yes. Is it effective for employees with disabilities and 50% of respondents say yes, it is, what do we know? Is that great? Or is that horrible?

So asking if it is effective for employees in general, you have a benchmark by which to interpret.

For example, we asked "Does your organization have a recruiting process," and 84% of supervisors said yes.

Of those, almost all felt that their process was effective for recruiting qualified employees.

But only 61% felt that the process was as effective at recruiting qualified employees with disabilities. So here we have a benchmark, we have an opportunity to say that employers are

successful at recruiting but what they're doing isn't working as well for some portion of their applicants.

We asked about organizational hiring goals and found that 57% of supervisors said their organizations have goals for hiring diversity, compared to only 28% who said they had specific goals for hiring disability. And then the last statistic here, 12% indicated that if they had diversity hiring goals but not disability-specific goals, this is their second chance to give the right answer, I call it, well, do you consider disability part of diversity? Only 12% said, yes, we do. Definitely opportunity there.

Then we asked how much effort does your organization spend on recruiting. And we found that 74% said that they spend moderate to a lot of effort on recruiting in general. 69% spend moderate to a lot of effort recruiting for diversity. And 44% spend moderate to a lot of effort recruiting people with disabilities.

We asked do you have a process to help support your employees to learn their jobs? And 86% said yes. Those, nearly all said that their process was effective. And almost three-quarters, 73%, said that it was as effective for people with disabilities. This is encouraging.

We asked "Do you have a process for employees to request accommodations?" Fewer supervisors said yes. 66%.

However, of those, again, almost all felt that the process was effective, which tells us that having a process to request accommodations is a good idea. And this is, this question is specific to employees with disabilities.

And 59% said that when they have a process, it's discussed at new employee orientation. So though the process exists and are effective, certainly there's an opportunity to help organizations do more to disclose those processes for their employees.

We asked "Does your organization have a centralized accommodation fund?" In other words, some amount of money that is specified just to be able to meet requests for accommodation when they arise, and very few said yes. 16% said, yes, we do.

Nearly all of those who do find it's effective. This is another opportunity for perhaps more organizations to uptake this centralized accommodation fund.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: So next we wanted to do specific practices. A little bit deeper dive into the effectiveness of specific ideas and concepts.

So recruiting. Partnering with disability organizations. Only 27% said that they use this practice of partnering with disability organization when they're recruiting during the recruiting process. And so this seems pretty low.

Good news is, of the 27% that did it, 95% said it was effective.

Of the people who said no or don't know, 85% of the 'don't know' said it might be feasible and 66% of the no's said that it might be feasible.

One thing with the open-ended, so this is followed up, if you haven't analyzed yet, with follow-up questions: Well, why wasn't it as effective? Why wasn't it as effective for people with disabilities? And here, why didn't you do it if it was feasible?

Some of these no's could be, we've tried it in the past. So we need to dig deeper into the qualitative results.

Training supervisors in accessible applications and interview techniques. This is frequently cited as a good practice for increasing employment of people with disabilities. 40% said yes, they use the practice. 87% said it was effective.

So this suggests that there's -- sometimes I'm happy when there's a small percentage that use it. Those people they say it's effective. And then the people who don't know or don't use it, a lot of them say it's feasible. So that suggests opportunity. If they said no, it's not feasible, then that would be concerning. It would be, well, we have this effective practice, but for some reason people are feeling it's not feasible for their company to do. So do I want to see a big yes in the first column? Maybe. But maybe that's when we're like finishing up, when we've claimed success. But for the future, for deciding policy for the future, and designing practices, having this kind of feasibility, having an audience that could take it up.

In terms of training -- oops, I went backwards.

Hiring practices. Reviewing or auditing hiring to ensure accessibility. Again, 43% said that they actually do it. So this is something like making sure that your web-based tools are accessible. 86% said that was effective. And then of the people who don't know or no, about 85 to 64% said that it was possibly feasible. So again, something that we can talk about in terms of motivating change in those firms that don't use it.

Training short term assistance. So things like an initial job coach. Different internal training programs, onboarding programs. 19% said yes, they use these processes. 25% said they do sometimes. 56% said no.

Of the people who have used it or sometimes used it, about 80 some percent said it was effective. The people who don't use it -- oh. Sorry. Was it as effective for people with disabilities? A high ranking. So short-term supports are effective. If they said it wasn't effective, we asked them why.

Of the no's, 70% said it was feasible. So this sounds like a really good possibility, that bringing in short-term supports, outside assistance, and many of the programs that ODEP and NIDILRR and Kessler investigate are bringing in short-term assistance.

You should have just told me to turn on my microphone.

[Laughter]

Sorry, everyone.

Job shadowing, 61% said they use it. 27% said they use it sometimes.

Very effective for the folks who have used it. Good marks here.

Of the people, 12%, who don't use it, 70% said it's feasible. So this might be something that maybe there's not a lot of work to be done on how job shadowing is implemented in companies. This seems like it's relatively successful. In the qualitative, we might find out some very specific things related to specific disability types. We're not sure what we'll find, but we've got almost 6,000 responses. So we'll find out something.

On-site training by supervisors and coworkers. 73% said they did it. 97% of those people said it was effective. Similar results for people who said sometimes. Highly feasible for the 5% that said they didn't do it.

Again, this is a place where these numbers are pretty good, but we might want to look into it to look into specific instances that might be important for certain sub populations of people with disabilities.

Accommodation practices. Job sharing is an accommodation practice. Very few use it.

Job sharing is probably something that has to be customized. Depends both on the person with a disability and the other person that they may be teaming with.

Although 95% said it was effective, the ones that did use it, and of the ones that sometimes use it, 86% said it was effective. So this is a real possibility. Was it as effective for people with disabilities? Yes, for the most part. Now, this is a real possibility, right? Of the 57% who never use it, so job sharing for me sounds very much like customized employment or individual employment planning. So what do you think the percentage feasible is?

>> 48.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: How did you get it?

>> I win.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: No way. You were looking at his slides. No way.

JOHN O'NEILL: He's not the director of research for nothing.

[Laughter]

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: So flexible work schedule. This is a frequently used, although not as frequently as I would have thought. 25% said yes. 52% said sometimes. Was it effective? Very. Was it as effective for people with disabilities? For the most part.

Of the 23% that said no, 48% said it was feasible. So that's not a lot of opening, but again, qualitative results might bear some interesting information.

In terms of accommodations working from home specifically, at the least some of the time, 18% said yes, I'm going to only imagine this is going up as people are more working at a distance. 38% said sometimes. 45% said no.

Not as effective as flexible time. And that's not surprising. And marginally effective, more effective for the people who use it and said they use it rather than sometimes use it.

In terms of the no, only 21% said it was feasible. And that's not surprising. We do have company size and industry, so we could look at the industries in which this is pertinent, but there are a lot of jobs where it's not feasible to work at home. This isn't a big surprise, but it will be interesting to see what kind of companies have these kinds of policies.

Cultural competency training. 43% said they regularly use cultural competence training for employees. 27% said they used it in the past. 30% said they never use it.

Is it effective for retaining people with disabilities? 95%, you know, most of the people who use it said it's effective.

Is it feasible? 80% said it's feasible. This is something they say is effective. Is it effective at reaching its goals? Probably. Is it effective at overall change? That would be something that if someone wanted to do specific research around cultural competency and how not just for disability but for all differences, cultural differences, it would be great to see that disabilities is one of those elements.

All right. So that's the main results.

Again, we do have all these qualitative results.

We also have the ability to recontact these individuals. That's something that we have to go through the qualitative results, and we may find some people who we need to reach out to. But this really provides potential for following up. If there was a set of people who faced a similar issue, or at the end of the survey, we also asked them for successes. So what are some - this is where we kind of asked, okay, you've heard the whole thing. What are some things we missed? Because we just took the existing literature and started asking what the existing literature had been talking about. But now we want to know, what else is there? What other practices are there? What other challenges have we not talked about? That's where we may find things on specific disability types or specific instances, specific types of jobs and tasks, right? And with 6,000 or so respondents, we can then draw from -- well, I think we can only draw from the second 3,000. That's why we have the second 3,000; they forgot to ask the recontact question. So felt bad. They gave us an extra 3,000 people.

And so we can ask those individuals for follow up.

We can also ask, you know, you said it's effective. Is it still effective? So we could treat this like a longitudinal question. You said it was effective X number of months or years ago; how's it going? Right?

And so this kind of ability to ask a follow-up has a lot of potential, because a lot of these things we want to know about how it changed. The best thing that could happen is we had a big recession. And then we could go back to them and say -- sorry. A big recession. Then we can say, well, how did it break down when things went south? Or okay let's say we have a huge booming growth period. Recessions are always interesting, as an economist. But let's say booming growth. Things go through the sky. 10% growth rates. Employers are scrounging around for every possible worker, creating universally designed spaces they've never done before. We could follow up after that period and say, how did you adjust to that?

One of the things we really want to do is look at disability type. We also want to look across the different sizes, company size always plays a role in all past studies.

Years of experience of that individual, as I mentioned earlier.

And also kind of other factors. I'm really fascinated to look at, you know, given our own experience with disability, either with themselves or a family member, and we have that kind of specificity, does that make a big difference in how effective? It might actually dampen effectiveness. They may have much higher expectations. We could look at their responses and qualitative responses and find out more information about why something wasn't effective or in the converse why it was effective.

So we have lots more to look into.

One of the things that I also want to mention in terms of the future is that we're doing right now, it's supervisors. We want to one day expand that to the workers. We did a workers survey, but it was more on job search and things people do to strive for. We didn't ask for employer practices in those. But we could go back to workers and say, did they have this practice, was it effective for you as a worker with a disability.

We could have coworkers though we're still trying to figure out what we really want to tap coworkers in to learn about.

And then we also might go after senior leadership. We might go after HR professionals. This kind of survey is really powerful to locate those individuals because recruiting those people using a random digit dial is just not feasible. So we have lots of ideas and as Rodger said, if you want to write down questions or ideas and your name or not, we would be happy to consider that.

JOHN O'NEILL: Myself, John, and Elaine, we're going to comment for a minute or two, and then we'll start taking questions.

ELAINE KATZ: Can you go to the next slide.

You know, we're from a practice point of view, which is my side of the house in program management. We're really excited about this because, you know, we're a foundation, we collaborate with a lot of foundations, we're invested in working with corporations and small provider agencies that are really looking at how to get their people, their clients, how to source, provide them source for businesses. And we think the survey is very exciting because it really shows that what agencies are doing and using the best practice in the fields are really effective.

So I think, you know, when you talk to the researchers, what they take out of it, and what the practice people take out of it say little bit different. So to us, the fact that when corporations partner with disability organizations, they may not all do it, but when they do it it's just really effective, that says a lot for the field. You have Amazon, Sears, Pepsi. When those companies work with their community partners, it really helps on board and get those people in jobs and working in those companies.

The other point that we would like to pull out too is the whole accommodation fund. We all know that, I mean, I'm preaching to the choir in this room, accommodations can really cost less than \$500, less than \$250, may not cost anything.

I've said to other groups the big thing now is providing standing desks now, special back chairs.

But to have a central accommodation fund that we called out in the survey really showing it was effective, means something. When you give somebody the tools to do the job, they can do the job well, whatever that tool may be.

So again, we're really, really excited that this can provide some arguments and concrete evidence that when provider agencies go to make those relationships in the communities, with their business partners, they can say, you know, this is the data we've seen; let's try it and see how it works for you.

I'll turn it over to John with those few comments.

JOHN O'NEILL: One observation Andrew has already made, but I would like to emphasize a little bit, there are a number of underutilized practices but practices that are felt to be very effective with people with disabilities. Such as partnering with disability organizations such as training supervisors in accessible application and interviewing techniques, reviewing and auditing hiring practices, etc. There are several more.

But the fact that the supervisors that are not using them, a high proportion of those individuals feel they are feasible. And that provides an opportunity for people, for professionals, who are engaging with employers to implement these effective practices.

There also happens to be kind of a universal design theme I think running through some of the findings. Job shadowing, on-site training by supervisors and coworkers, flexible work schedules are being used by many employees with and without disabilities. They're seen as effective for all employees, and they're seen as almost equally effective for people with disabilities.

And I think that is saying something about the changing workplace. Without the benchmark of the effectiveness of these practices for people without disabilities, we would not have known this theme, or this theme would not have emerged.

So...

ELAINE KATZ: What's also continuing, even though disability advocates are saying that disability is part of diversity, that message is still not getting across to business. You're still seeing the traditional groups being part of diversity and people with disabilities not in that group. So I think the survey points had a lot of areas where, as Andrew mentioned, there is promise for growth. It means everybody is on the right track. All the things we pilot and test in the field, different groups do it different ways, different parts of the country do it differently, but everybody is on the right track, to give that business the knowledge and assistance they need to hire, on board, and train individuals is the right thing to do.

The question is the push-back from businesses. Whether they pay a consultant or get it for free. But we do see it is effective.

So with that, we're going to open it for questions. Rodger will field all the questions.

RODGER DeROSE: Okay. I have my queue now.

While we're waiting for the questions, Andrew, from your point of view, if you had to I guess write a headline or a sub headline for this study, what do you think it would be?

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Boy. So I have a couple ideas that come to mind. It's picking the one.

I might try to go with the theme that John mentioned, and that's universal design. That there are many practices that employers are using that are as effective for people with disabilities as in general. So I might say that that's a really nice theme.

And then I would say there are practices that are very promising, and there is room for growth or room for advancement. There are some practices that are seldomly used but viewed as very effective. I'm not sure how to get that; I would have to work with Carolann to get that into a headline, but we would go back and forth. But those would be the two themes I would pick: Universal design but room to improve. I wouldn't use "but."

RODGER DeROSE: And Elaine, as we think about investment that we've made as an organization, as we look to the future in terms of our future spending on employment initiatives, how will this help you and the grants committee and Kessler Foundation in terms of targeting our investments even more effectively from your perspective?

ELAINE KATZ: One of the things we've been doing is working with organizations, especially New Jersey, we have a grant right now that works with local not-for-profits and helps them train their own staff in what's the best way to work with business and how to approach them with

the right messaging. Everybody here knows it's not the pity party. Hiring people with disabilities who are good and capable can move your organization ahead to the future.

So I think as we look towards the community, it's going to be more dependent on those community partners to really get the right message to the businesses so that they can target and find individuals within their communities.

I think there's also the gap between, because you hear all the time how do you find that information. We had a project in New Jersey this summer where Pfizer came to us through people we knew and they were looking for STEM students, science, technology, engineering, and math, for summer interns. They had never had their internship program target young college students with disabilities, and it was really pointing out to them how you do it, who you connect with. They got students. They were extremely happy. Those students are coming back for future internships.

So it really is providing the way to those businesses, to guide them in a very professional way on how they can capture employees that will help them improve their businesses.

RODGER DeROSE: We have a number of questions that have been put into groups.

So John, with regards to the data itself, will the data be available for other -- will this data be available for download analysis in the future?

And I wonder too, John, after you talk about that, and Andrew, John, could you talk about how you use the 2015 study that we completed for the 25th anniversary of Kessler Foundation, and how you used that to leverage new grant activity in the future?

JOHN O'NEILL: Sure. Sure.

The Kessler Foundation 2015 survey of individuals with disabilities related to employment, one of the themes was striving to work. And instead of only talking about barriers and overcoming barriers, we also wanted to sort of look at how people with disabilities are striving to work, wanting more hours, having worked since the onset of disability, working but looking, not working but looking. Those are all striving activities.

And as we put together the results, it was pretty clear that -- [STATIC]

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Who has the bubble wrap?

JOHN O'NEILL: Maybe I'm speaking too loud. I don't know.

We found that 60 some odd percent of people with disabilities amongst our sample were striving to work. And we are -- we leverage the concept around striving to work to apply for a Department of Defense grant. It's a qualitative research grant where we will be looking at veterans in terms of those who are striving to work and finding, looking at the reasons and the

processes behind striving to work. We're going to take a deep dive into the qualitative experience of veterans who are striving to work.

And we're collaborating with the Tampa VA system, with Lisa Ottomanelli. So that was one grant opportunity.

The question about whether the data will be available to share. Other data sets that we've had, or have, have been available. We like to get our studies, our major research studies out and published first, and then on an individual basis, we have considered sharing the data with others.

There hasn't been a really large request, but we have considered that in the past. We haven't had the conversation about this data set yet, but we will.

ELAINE KATZ: Also, if you visit our website, kesslerfoundation.org, you'll be able to find press briefings and copy of the report and other information about the survey available on our website.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: If you're interested in specific results, you can call us. These are sensitive data. We don't want to necessarily give them out. We're going to have to think about that very carefully.

But if you want a specific run, like you want to look at an industry or there's a question you want to know more about, certainly the quantitative results we could provide and do a quick thumbnail analysis for you.

The qualitative we have to be more careful because people may be disclosing their names. So before we release any of that qualitative data, we need to look for identifiable data, which is quite a bit longer for us to release.

RODGER DeROSE: Andrew, I think this question is about the tactics used to recruit, staffing firms attempt to hire.

And then secondly, what role has the 503 regulation played in behaviors from your perspective.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Well, we haven't looked at -- we didn't ask about specific recruiting methods. We do expect to see them in the open-ended results. We didn't have like a list of "did you use this, did you use that."

I think others have addressed that question in the past, so if the person or people want to contact me, we probably have some information from the prior studies about that, particularly some prior ODEP studies.

In terms of 503/8, whatever.

TARI: 503.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: 504.

503. We had a question early on looking at disclosure. And the processes that companies use for disclosure.

And did we -- we didn't keep those, did we?

KIMBERLY PHILLIPS: We did ask the disclosure question.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: We did ask the disclosure question.

The interesting thing would be to look at the goals and the goal set. We don't have before and after 503. So we wouldn't be able to answer the direct impact. Do we have federal versus state? We have sector. So whether it's federal, state, local government. So we could look at differences in goal setting by that. That may give us some information about 503, but I would really love to have that before and after 503 to see.

RODGER DeROSE: And were there any questions encouraging self-identification for people with disabilities?

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: No. We had one on self-disclosure, yeah. We could look at whether that's more likely to be done in federal versus nonfederal government and versus private. We could do that. We could do it by company size. But we don't have whether they're a federal contractor.

RODGER DeROSE: Another question was how do you find which type of training is most effective regarding different disabilities? Tough one.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: That's the next grant, right?

[Laughter]

So this is really -- this is the kicker in the question. We can with our existing data look at people who have experience with only one disability type and look at their responses. This survey kind of went a little further, but not far enough to be able to answer those specific questions.

One of the things, you know, I keep talking about the open-ended question, and I'm a very quantitative guy. I can't -- I've never done nor do I ever want to do qualitative research. That's Kim's job.

But there's something -- how many people have taken an economics class in their life?

How many people remember the production possibilities frontier?

[Laughter]

Two. Two? Come on!

So the production possibility frontier, you're looking for all possible options and most statistics are based on the mean, right, what's the average or most frequently cited. There are summary statistics about the average.

But what you lose is the frontier, the very specific practices, the specific experiences that people have. And so what I would like to do is actually map out, instead of mapping out the mean or looking at differences in mean between groups, is to actually look at the frontier. Look at the rare cases. Because those rare cases may become tomorrow's norm.

I hope we find some. I really do. I think it's a real challenge, because everything is averaged out, everything is based on prior research, which is appropriate, but how do we find that cutting edge? How do we find out the rare cases that might actually be helpful? Or the rare cases that are really potentially poison pills. Or I don't know what the right analogy is to use, but really problematic for a big firm to have this one specific issue. If it's a big firm and they have these specific issues, if we find 10, just finding 10 out of a sample of 3,000 is still going to be pretty important if it's a large firm, that they have specific issues. That might be really important. So I'm very happy to hear that two people remember their economics class.

ELAINE KATZ: I think this is important. What happens if a company has a bad experience and it influences a supervisor not to hire somebody with a disability. How do you overcome that experience? Everybody has hired I'm sure everybody here who has been a supervisor has hired a problem employee. Doesn't matter what their position or what they've done. That person you either dealt with it through training or behavior modification or they left the organization. So just because of one bad apple, it's one bad apple.

But when it comes to sector employment and you're looking at a group like disability, that could really affect a supervisor's opinion of whether or not they want to take the "risk" to hire somebody outside of the norm, whatever that difference may be.

It's a really interesting issue: How do we use the survey to say, you might have had a bad experience, but that's not what employers necessarily all say.

RODGER DeROSE: Okay. Andrew, what federal policies and/or flexibilities would increase employment for people with disabilities? If you could wave your management wand, what do you believe would be more effective?

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: So not related to this survey, there's one major policy that has yet to be tried, and that is earned income tax credit for people with disabilities. The bipartisan great success of the earned income tax credit program in the welfare reform bill of 1996, having a disability-oriented earned income tax credit. So if you remember the working -- Bill Clinton helping the working poor. That was a Gingrich-led Congress that passed that welfare reform. And that's the big thing. Because if the whole idea is that to support work, to expect work, and nothing like an earned income tax credit says not only do we want you to work, but we'll make sure you get paid more when you do. Social security disability policy is an older policy, based

on kind of this, they can't work so give them money. Right? And you have to promise that you can't work before you get your money. It's a zero one deal. There are people with and without disabilities. Well, that's simply not the case.

And social security struggles with how to address that issue and they are struggling.

That's clear to me.

Now, for employers, I think universal design, keep pushing universal design. It's been very much talked about in the technology world. The push bars are universal design. The handles are universal design. Having -- you know, the ADA was great at getting firms to think about the physical plan, but also the soft side. So HR policies. Are they universally designed? Culturally competent.

You know, because separate but equal, separate has its place. I think every culture, every disability culture, every individual is different. We want to value them.

But you want to have everything designed so that differences don't matter when they don't. Right? It's not that we're trying to create a homogenous 'west world' kind of thing, but you know, somebody is going to have to take over because I'm going to start making jokes.

[Laughter]

RODGER DeROSE: Did you have a comment, John?

JOHN O'NEILL: No.

RODGER DeROSE: Okay. Did we ask any questions about job performance compatibility between people with disabilities versus able-bodied individuals in the study? I didn't seem to recall that we had asked that question.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: No, we didn't.

RODGER DeROSE: Did it come up in any of your qualitative?

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: We haven't looked at the qualitative yet.

ELAINE KATZ: This survey was just completed between July and August. It's really, really new data. We wanted to get it out for National Disability Employment Awareness Month. So we really haven't finished analyzing everything, which you know takes a long time to go through the data.

RODGER DeROSE: And the data on people who see people with disabilities as part of diversity was very important to this listener today. Can you speak more to that point?

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Give it a shot.

KIMBERLY PHILLIPS: No.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Yes, you can.

The idea is that disability is diversity. We gave them two shots to kind of answer - is it a goal? Is diversity a goal in general? Do you have disability as a goal specifically? And then, okay, well, you said diversity. Is disability one of the goals in diversity?

And so surprisingly, very few said it was.

Now, what we would like to do is break that down by -- actually, it would be kind of the upper management commitment question. So we have this finding, right? What we can do is some of the qualitative results aren't really designed at that. I don't think we have qualitative questions following that question. We were kind of stunned actually, that it turned out the way it is.

But what we can do is cross reference it, cross tab it with all the other questions. And so looking at upper management commitment, my guess is when there's upper management commitment and there's more importance to the supervisor, then we'll start seeing diversity -- disability be part of diversity.

And my guess is that it will also be company size that will provide that result. That the company size, you know, small companies are trying to do everything but don't have the ability to hire or specialize within their upper management and focus on specific goals.

So it would be really, really fascinating.

RODGER DeROSE: And this is an interesting question for the group. This individual would be interested in knowing about the intersection of age and disability and how attitudes may change regarding older workers with disabilities and/or workers with late onset age-related disabilities.

Now, I don't recall anything in the study on that, but do you have any...

JOHN O'NEILL: There is -- you know, in terms of aging, I would also like to go back to the question about if we could wave our magic wand.

I think in terms of the whole disincentive of social security disability, ODEP is working on something which I think is very important, and that's the stay at work, return to work initiative.

And where the intent is to catch people early on in terms of the onset of the health condition or disability at work, and in other contexts too, like medical rehab, like worker's compensation, like state disability funds. And to prevent folks from sliding in to poverty and having to access SSDI in particular.

I think that has more promise than all the work incentives social security would like to add on to the effort to return people to work, receiving SSDI, to work.

And by the way, that does relate to aging because as we age, there is a higher incidence of disabling conditions.

ANDREW HOUTENVILLE: Yeah, and especially as social security policy changes with regard to their retirement programs, pushing into 70, 72. Older individuals will be more likely to be in the labor market because the baby boomers spent all the money.

Just back to the aging, that's a part of universal design for me. We don't ask specific questions with regard to aging. So that's a really good point. And something that I wish we had thought about beforehand. Because one of the things we took out of that Kessler survey in 2015 striving to work survey was age plays a big role. Many people who say they have some other disability were people in just really difficult jobs who aged into chronic pain, chronic immobility, in part based on working at very difficult jobs.

But for me, that's what I've always wanted to do is say universal design. The more you universally design, I think if I ever wanted to design, I have a hypothesis. I don't have the data to test this out. But I think that the ADA was very good at accommodating -- developing companies and individuals and rehabilitation medicine, all of that have been very good at addressing physical conditions. Physical accommodations.

But things that are cognitive, that technology, the advancement of technology, advancement of rehabilitation techniques and employer practices hasn't addressed that as fully. And that if I was able to look at the employment rates and the trends, the ADA, you would see an increase of employment of people with physical and sensory disabilities, but people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, you might not see that positive jump.

And age is related to that because especially 72-year-olds who are in the workplace, cognition may become -- just being in a job for that long. Having to be in that job. You may choose to stay in your job, but being in jobs for that long a time, especially a repetitive job, may take a toll.

The long story short is that I think universal design particularly around aging issues will help change processes at firms such that they have to fill their staff with people who are older, will help address the sensory and cognitive issues. So I think that's a positive of universal design.

The Swedes have this great -- well, it's got some issues, but they have this great program where everything is universal design, right? Like for people with intellectual disabilities. People with English as a second language can learn the job as well if everything is nonlanguage based and it's all iconography. It's all a way of thinking about universal design, which benefits everybody.

RODGER DeROSE: I know we have a lot more questions. Probably two more here. But a lot of interest from our guests today.

This question is, of the 27% who used the disability organization recruitment, did you drill down to ask what the disability organization did that was most helpful?

KIMBERLY PHILLIPS: Thanks. That's a great question.

We did not ask specifically, you know, in what ways did you partner with the disability organization to recruit qualified individuals with disabilities? However, I think as Andrew has mentioned with some of the other questions that have come up, we may be able to get at that through some of our cross-tab analyses by looking at, for example, the effectiveness question. So if people did this, they were asked was it effective. And then they were asked, if they said yes, it was as effective, they could say it was more effective, or they could say it was less effective.

And if they said it was less or more, we asked why. So mining those responses may give us some insight.

The same may be true for the feasibility question, if they didn't do it, would it be feasible to partner with, and in there, if they said no, we asked why not. If they said yes, we didn't ask them anything else.

But when people are revealing why it would not be feasible from their perspective, they might hint at what they think that partnership would involve. So not directly, but hopefully some suggestions.

RODGER DeROSE: A lot of good questions here.

This will be the final one, unfortunately.

But it's clear that people with disabilities want to work and strive to find work. Can you speak about sheltered workplaces for people with disabilities and employers that hire and pay people with disabilities below minimum wage?

And Elaine, I know that in New Jersey, you know, we've been funding programs that have been moving organizations from sheltered workshops. Do you want to speak to that?

ELAINE KATZ: Well, that's of course the topic on everybody's mind today who works in the area of disability unemployment. Kessler Foundation has taken a stand that every project we fund, people should be earning minimum wage or better.

We've also supported some organizations in New Jersey and also look nationally to help those organizations transition people in traditional work settings, sheltered workshop settings, into the community. So that's where we are right now.

I guess that's all I have to say on that.

RODGER DeROSE: Any other comments on that question?

No?

Okay. Well, thank you so much, everyone, for coming out. I want to thank Andrew and Kim and John and Elaine for their presentations. I hope you found this useful.

Please reach out to us and let us know if there's anything else that we can do to make this information more helpful to you as well. A lot of great questions in this packet here that would probably take us another hour to get through. I appreciate it.

ELAINE KATZ: I was also reminded that November 3, nTIDE, our national disabilities report, will have a special webinar that will feature our survey with special guests. So look for that. If you're not on the mailing list, we'll put you on the mailing list. Kessler Foundation and University of New Hampshire sends out information. There's information in your packets about the webinar.

And there's lunch outside. Thank you again for coming.

[Applause]