

Arkansas Workforce Center at Little Rock Work Incentive Program Hiring Persons with Disabilities Employment Information Fact Sheet

I am pleased to have this opportunity to share information regarding the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and the great potential for you as an employer to benefit by tapping into this previously untapped labor pool.

The Harris Poll interviewed over 900 managers, and they had this to say about people with disabilities who worked for them:

19 out of 20 managers give employees with disabilities a good" or excellent" rating on their job performance. They say employees with disabilities work as hard as or harder than their employees who do not have disabilities.

39% of line managers rate employees with disabilities as better on attendance and punctuality than non-disabled employees, and 40% rate them about the same.

The average cost of hiring people with disabilities is the same as hiring people without a disability, according to 75% of the employers surveyed.

However, only 43% of Equal Employment Opportunity officers say that their companies have hired people with disabilities.

People with disabilities are just like other workers. They want to do a good job, they appreciate constructive supervision, and they want to get ahead. The myth that people with disabilities are grateful just to work and are happy to stay in entry-level positions is precisely that: a myth. Some people need or want a steady routine, but most enjoy new challenges, and people with disabilities are no exception.

MYTH 1: *Hiring employees with disabilities increases workers compensation insurance rates.*

FACT: Insurance rates are based solely on the relative hazards of the operation and the organization's accident experience, not on whether workers have disabilities.

MYTH 2: *Employees with disabilities have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.*

FACT: Studies by firms such as DuPont show that employees with disabilities are not absent any more than employees without disabilities.

MYTH 3: *Persons with disabilities are unable to meet performance standards, thus making them a bad employment risk.*

FACT: In 1990, DuPont conducted a survey of 811 employees with disabilities and found 90% rated average or better in job performance compared to 95% for employees without disabilities.

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MYTH 4: *Considerable expense is necessary to accommodate workers with disabilities.*

FACT: Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe. Studies by the Office of Disability Employment Policy's Job Accommodation Network have shown that 15% of accommodations cost nothing, 51% cost between \$1 and \$500, 12% cost between \$501 and \$1,000, and 22% cost more than \$1,000.

MYTH 5: *Employees with disabilities are more likely to have accidents on the job than employees without disabilities.*

FACT: In the 1990 DuPont study, the safety records of both groups were identical.

MYTH 6: *It is impossible to determine a fair salary range for workers with disabilities.*

FACT: This is simple. Employees with disabilities should receive prevailing wages and benefits based on productivity and job performance.

MYTH 7: *There is nothing I can do if an individual with disabilities is not the right fit or doesn't work out in my organization.*

FACT: This is the statement everyone is afraid to articulate. They are really trying to say, "I can't fire a worker with disabilities if he doesn't work out." The ADA's intent is to ensure that individuals with disabilities are given the same opportunities and treatment as everybody else. Employers are not expected or encouraged to go easy on workers with disabilities. They should meet the same performance expectations and be subject to the same disciplinary actions as any employee. If they are not doing the job or are falling short of the workplace's criteria, they should be coached, counseled, disciplined and, if necessary, terminated based upon established policies. Just as individuals with disabilities deserve equal consideration in the employment arena, they must be held accountable to the standards and expectations of their employment.

Information provided by the Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

For more information please contact:

Mr. Anderson Dorsey

Work Incentive Program Advisor
Arkansas Workforce Center at Little Rock
300 S. University Ave
Suite M03A
Little Rock, Arkansas 72205
Email: anderson.dorsey@arkansas.gov
Ph: (501) 682-7719
Fax: (501) 537-0729
TTY: (501)682-3331
Web: <http://www.lrwib.org/wig.html>

**Arkansas Workforce Center at Little Rock
300 South University Ave - Suite MO3A - Little Rock, AR 72205
ph 501-682-7719 - fax 501-537-0729 - TDD/TTY 501-682-3331 - www.lrwib.org**