



**2025-2026**  
**DISABILITY AT WORK**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Disability at Work Survey presents a comprehensive analysis of disabled professionals' experiences, focusing on job search, workplace challenges, and the effects of DEI policy rollbacks. Key findings inform recommendations for employers and policymakers to foster inclusive, stable employment.

Amid an increasingly uncertain labor market, disabled professionals consistently demonstrate resilience and a strong willingness to contribute. However, they remain constrained by systems that are frequently inaccessible, inconsistent, and foster mistrust [1,3]. The 2025 survey incorporated supplementary questions on accommodations and psychological safety, focusing on how government and corporate DEI policy rollbacks—such as those resulting from Trump administration executive orders 14151 and 14173—have affected respondents' access to accommodations, their willingness to disclose disabilities, and overall feelings of belonging and trust within their organizations [2].

## KEY INSIGHTS

**Access is pivotal.** Key decision drivers when job searching include accommodations (56.4%), work-life balance (55.8%), and location (54.9%).

**Hiring systems remain misaligned.** Over half report the main challenge is finding jobs they are qualified for (51.2%), while 44.8% struggle to find jobs of interest. Interviewing and requesting accommodations also remain significant obstacles.

**Accommodation processes are a defining barrier.** 60.1% have requested workplace accommodations, and 56.8% found the process very or extremely challenging. Employer responses often fall short: 43.2% reported negative responses to accommodation requests; 26.8% of requests were denied; 22.6% waited over a month for accommodations; and 31.4% received no communication whatsoever.

**Psychological safety and disclosure risk persist.** 76.8% have disclosed a disability in their career; 59.8% believe it harms prospects/treatment; only 13.4% feel fully safe disclosing now.

**Inclusion policy rollbacks have affect employee behavior.** 27.6% are less willing to disclose to an employer, 27.2% are more cautious, and 49.8% report a reduced sense of belonging in the workplace.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Fix accommodation pathways.** Establish clear request processes, response timelines, and consistent communication to ensure accommodations function as access tools.

**Make hiring more transparent.** Clearly explain interview structures, expectations, evaluation criteria, and accommodation options so candidates can navigate the process equitably.

**Strengthen psychological safety.** Reinforce anti retaliation protections, improve manager capability via continued education and mentoring, and maintain consistent leadership commitment to disability inclusion—even amid external pressure.

**Measure what matters.** Track accommodation, accessibility, and inclusion outcomes to move from stated intent to measurable, sustained impact.

Overall, the 2025 survey reinforces a consistent message: disabled professionals are prepared to work, contribute, and advance, yet systems frequently require additional effort to access equal opportunity. Although some tactical improvements have occurred, persistent structural barriers—particularly regarding accommodations and psychological safety—remain prevalent. Employers that prioritize transparent hiring, accountable accommodation processes, and sustained commitments to disability inclusion will be better positioned to attract and retain talent, even as DEI policies encounter external pressures [4].



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# INTRODUCTION

The employment landscape for people with disabilities remains dynamic but challenging. Despite increased attention to inclusion, many disabled job seekers and employees continue to encounter barriers at every stage of the employment lifecycle—from job search and application to accommodations and disclosure [6].

This report presents findings from the 2025 Disability at Work Survey, the second annual national survey by Disability Solutions. Building on the 2024 baseline, this year's survey expanded its scope to include new questions on workplace accommodations and psychological safety. Special attention was given to understanding the impact of recent rollbacks in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies—especially those resulting from Trump administration executive orders 14151 and 14173—by examining how these changes influence disabled employees' ability to request accommodations, their attitudes toward disclosure, and their overall inclusion at work. The aim is to provide actionable, data-driven insights to help remove barriers and advance equity for people with disabilities in the workplace.

## **SURVEY QUESTIONS EXAMINED THREE KEY PHASES OF EMPLOYMENT:**

1. Job search and application, including accessibility of hiring systems and accommodation requests
2. Workplace experience, including access to accommodations, inclusion, and employer responsiveness
3. Disclosure, trust, and psychological safety, particularly in the context of evolving DEI commitments

Respondents provided information regarding disability type, demographic background, education level, and employment experiences, offering a comprehensive perspective on how systems function or fail at various stages of employment. These insights inform the report's findings and recommendations, centering the lived experiences of disabled workers and guiding strategies for employers, policymakers, and advocates seeking more equitable and inclusive workplaces [5].

# DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Survey respondents reflect a diverse cross-section of the U.S. disability workforce, spanning a wide range of disability types, ages, genders, races, and education levels. This diversity underpins the survey’s findings and ensures that recommendations address the real-world experiences of those most affected by workplace barriers.

\*See Appendix for detailed demographic breakdown.

- **DISABILITY TYPE**

Most respondents had mobility/physical disabilities (46.2%), followed by mental health (34.6%), medical/chronic illness (34.3%), and neurological (21.5%).

- **AGE**

The largest group represented was 35–44 years old (26.5%), with significant representation from 25–34 (19.2%), 45–54 (22.1%), and 55–64 (20.6%).

- **GENDER**

Majority female (64.5%), male (30.8%), non-binary/non-conforming (3.5%).

- **ETHNICITY**

Predominantly white/Caucasian (59.9%), with Black/African American (18.6%), Hispanic/Latino (7.3%), Asian (3.2%), and others.

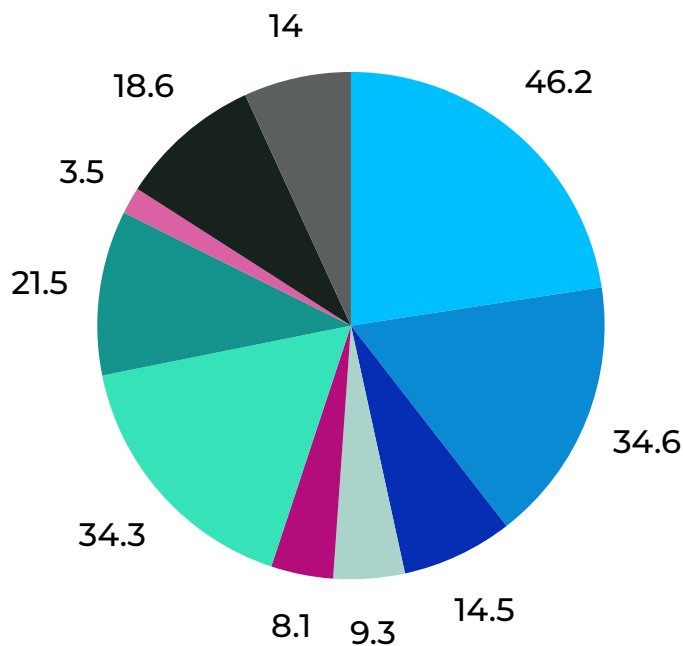
- **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

Mostly heterosexual (76.5%).

- **EDUCATION**

Most had a bachelor’s degree (27.0%), followed by some college (17.4%), master’s degree (17.2%), and high school diploma (14.2%).

## TYPES OF DISABILITIES



- 46.2 - Mobility/physical
- 34.6 - Mental health
- 14.5 - Cognitive/intellectual/learning
- 9.3 - Visual
- 8.1 - Hearing
- 34.3 - Medical/chronic illness
- 21.5 - Neurological
- 3.5 - Speech/communication
- 18.6 - Autism spectrum/neurodivergence
- 14 - Other

# BARRIERS IN THE PURSUIT OF WORK

The job search process continues to present significant barriers for people with disabilities. The 2025 Disability at Work Survey corroborates the 2024 findings: disabled job seekers are motivated and qualified, yet hiring systems remain misaligned with their priorities and needs [6].

## JOB SEARCH PRIORITIES

As in the inaugural survey, accessibility and sustainability drive job search decisions. Respondents overwhelmingly identified the availability of accommodations (56.4%), work-life balance or work hours (55.8%), and location (54.9%) as extremely important when searching for a new role. These priorities closely align with 2024 findings, which found that accommodations and location also ranked among the most critical factors.

Other traditional employment considerations—including salary, benefits, company culture, diversity and inclusion efforts, and professional development opportunities—were also rated as very or extremely important by a large share of respondents. Notably, this year’s data continues to show that compensation alone is not sufficient to attract disabled talent. Instead, job seekers are evaluating whether employers can support long-term success through inclusive practices, flexibility, and accessible environments.

## JOB SEARCH CHALLENGES

Despite clear job search priorities, respondents reported substantial difficulty navigating key parts of the hiring process—particularly at the earliest stages of getting matched to the right roles. As in last year’s findings, finding a job for which someone is qualified remained the most significant challenge, with 51.2% rating it extremely challenging, followed by finding a job they are interested in (44.8%).

Interviewing also remained a significant barrier, with 26.2% of respondents reporting that the interview process was extremely challenging. Similarly, requesting accommodations during the application or interview process remained difficult, with 31.2% describing it as extremely challenging, reinforcing that access needs still create friction at pivotal points in the hiring process.



68%

**FINDING A JOB FOR WHICH SOMEONE IS QUALIFIED IS THE MOST CHALLENGING**

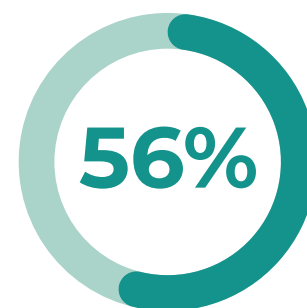
Importantly, this year’s data also identifies significant relationships between disability type and specific job-search barriers, underscoring that barriers are not experienced evenly across the disability community [8]. Respondents with cognitive/intellectual/learning disabilities showed a highly significant association with difficulty finding a job for which they are qualified ( $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests a potential mismatch between actual capability and how “qualification” is being signaled or assessed through job postings,

screening criteria, and early-stage evaluation. This may reflect the cumulative effect of common hiring practices that disproportionately disadvantage some candidates—such as overemphasis on rigid credential requirements, heavy reliance on written communication, timed assessments, and screening systems that reward specific formatting, keyword density, or conventional career paths. The implication is not that candidates are less qualified, but that the hiring process may be less effective at recognizing qualification in accessible, equitable ways.

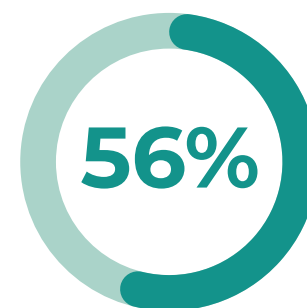
Respondents with mobility/physical disabilities were significantly more likely to report challenges in finding a job they are interested in ( $p = 0.010$ ), suggesting a different dynamic: access barriers may be shaping interest itself. “Interest” is not just preference—it can reflect whether a role feels realistically workable given location demands, commuting requirements, physical environment expectations, travel, or unclear signals about flexibility and accommodations. When jobs are designed or described in ways that make accessibility uncertain, candidates may self-select out before applying. This finding reinforces the idea that barriers often operate upstream, influencing which opportunities disabled job seekers even view as viable.

Conversely, several procedural aspects of the job search were perceived as less burdensome in 2025. Thirty-five percent (35.0%) rated the use of application technology as not challenging at all, compared to 29.9% in 2024. Tasks such as completing applications, creating resumes, and writing cover letters were also generally reported as less difficult. These trends may indicate modest improvements in usability, increased familiarity with hiring platforms, and the expanded availability of AI-enabled tools for drafting application materials. Nevertheless, reduced friction in these steps does not address the broader structural barriers that continue to impede qualified candidates, particularly when accessibility, bias, or unclear accommodation pathways affect screening and interview outcomes [9].

## MOST IMPORTANT WHEN SEARCHING FOR A NEW JOB



### AVAILABILITY OF ACCOMMODATIONS



### WORK-LIFE BALANCE/WORK HOURS



### LOCATION

# THE REALITY OF REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

This year’s survey makes clear that accommodation experiences—both during hiring and on the job—stand out as one of the most significant and consequential barriers to employment. Findings point to persistent and systemic breakdowns in workplace accommodation processes, with delays, denials, negative employer responses, and poor communication shaping whether qualified candidates can advance or remain in roles [10]. A majority of survey respondents (60.1%) reported having requested a workplace accommodation at some point, underscoring both the prevalence of access needs and the willingness among disabled workers to engage in formal processes when support is required. Together, these patterns reinforce that accessibility is not merely a compliance requirement, but a determining factor in employment outcomes and long term workforce participation.

## WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS



However, accommodation pathways remain difficult to navigate. More than half of respondents (56.8%) described the process of requesting accommodations as very or extremely challenging. The most commonly requested accommodations included workplace supports (62.7%), assistive and accessible technologies (58.0%), and environmental adjustments (34.2%)—many of which are widely recognized as reasonable, low-cost, or standard supports under existing guidance.

Employer responses to accommodation requests are a critical pain point. Only 22.1% of respondents reported that their request was received positively, while 43.2% experienced a negative response from their employer. In many cases, these responses were compounded by delays and denials. Nearly one quarter of respondents (22.6%) waited more than a month to receive accommodations, and more than one in four (26.8%) reported their request was denied outright.

Communication throughout the accommodation process was frequently cited as inadequate. Nearly one third of respondents (31.4%) reported receiving no communication or status updates after submitting a request. Among those whose requests were denied, 34% indicated that the explanation provided was unclear or insufficient, and many reported receiving no explanation at all (54%). Together, these findings highlight a lack of transparency, consistency, and accountability in the evaluation and implementation of accommodations [3].

Overall, the accommodation data underscores a key theme: policies alone are insufficient. In the absence of clear processes, timely responses, and informed managers, accommodation systems risk becoming additional barriers that undermine trust, psychological safety, and long-term retention [3].

## WORKPLACE SUPPORTS

When asked what support has been most helpful during the job search, respondents emphasized practical, human centered assistance. The most frequently cited supports were job search and career planning guidance (51.4%), followed by employment services, training, and skill development (37.9%). Interview and communication support (35.5%) and an accessible application process (31.5%) also ranked highly—reinforcing a consistent theme across the survey: barriers are often less about capability and more about navigation, transparency, and access.

Employers can respond by making the process more predictable and easier to navigate—especially at the points candidates report as hardest [11]. For example, an “Applicant Help” or “Interview Accessibility” page can reduce uncertainty around interviewing, which 26.2% rated extremely challenging, and clarify how to request accommodations during the hiring process, which 31.2% rated extremely challenging. Clear previews of what the job actually entails can also help address the survey’s biggest challenges: finding a job for which respondents are qualified (51.2% extremely challenging) and finding a job they are interested in (44.8% extremely challenging).

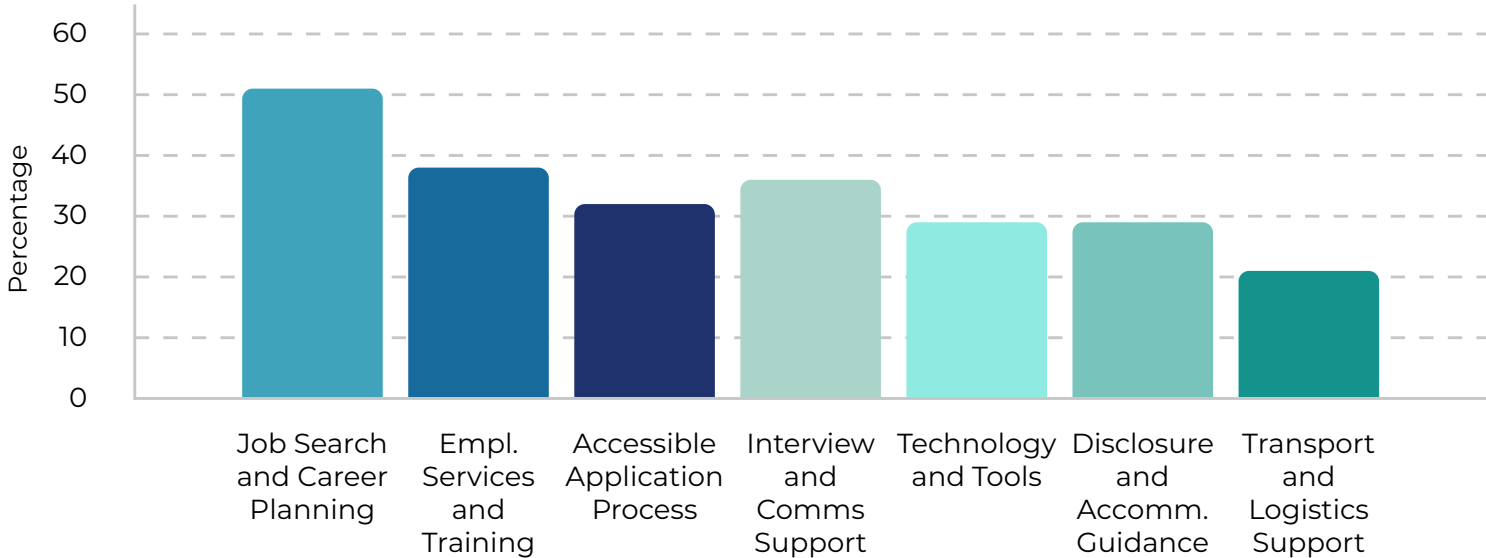
Respondents also highlighted the value of direct, relationship based guidance, such as resume review, interview preparation, and career planning. Employers do not need to deliver all of this support alone; partnering with workforce agencies, vocational rehabilitation providers, and disability focused nonprofits can expand access while reducing burden on internal teams [12]. Offering interview preparation sessions,

sample questions, or short informational webinars about the hiring process can further lower barriers—especially for candidates navigating anxiety, cognitive load, or unfamiliar systems.

Finally, support should extend beyond hiring into onboarding and employment, where access breakdowns are most costly. Sixty percent (60.1%) of respondents have requested workplace accommodations, and 56.8% found the process very or extremely challenging. Employers can reduce friction by proactively listing available supports, naming a real point of contact, and setting expectations for response and follow up—especially given that 31.4% reported receiving no updates after submitting an accommodation request.

Collectively, these findings indicate that employers can eliminate significant barriers by establishing explicit, consistent, and supportive processes. Such changes do not necessitate lowering standards; rather, they create clearer, more accessible pathways for disabled candidates to demonstrate qualifications, engage in hiring processes, access necessary supports, and succeed in their roles [13].

### MOST HELPFUL SUPPORTS WHILE JOB SEARCHING



# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY, DISCLOSURE, AND THE IMPACT OF DEI ROLLBACKS

The previous Disability at Work Survey included supplemental analysis of structural shifts such as remote work and return-to-office policies. The 2025 survey addresses an equally consequential issue: psychological safety at work, and the influence of broader political and organizational retreats from diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) commitments on disclosure decisions and workplace experiences for people with disabilities.

## PERCEPTIONS OF DISABILITY AND EMPLOYER COMMITMENT

Survey findings show that many disabled professionals continue to perceive disability as a barrier to employment opportunities and advancement. Nearly half of respondents (46.2%) strongly agreed that their disability impacts their job prospects. At the same time, confidence in employer commitment remains low. Only 10.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that employers are genuinely committed to hiring people with disabilities, while nearly two-thirds

(63%) disagreed. Concerns about employer understanding further compound these perceptions. A substantial majority of respondents (74.8%) do not believe employers genuinely understand disability related needs in the workplace. These attitudes are reinforced by daily experience: more than half (53.4%) reported encountering accessibility barriers at work often or always. Taken together, these findings suggest that psychological safety is undermined not only by individual interactions but by a broader pattern of unmet access needs and perceived indifference at the organizational level.

## DISCLOSURE OF DISABILITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Despite these challenges, most respondents (76.8%) reported having disclosed a disability to an employer at some point. However, disclosure does not reliably lead to positive outcomes. Nearly 30% reported that disclosure was received negatively, compared to just 19.9% who experienced a positive response; the most common experience was a neutral reception (36.1%).

Importantly, disclosure is widely perceived as carrying risk. Nearly 60% (59.8%) of respondents believe that disclosing a disability negatively affects their job prospects or treatment at work.

Under the current political climate, only 13.4% reported feeling fully safe disclosing a disability, while 31.6% stated they do not feel safe at all. The most frequently cited barriers to disclosure included fear of discrimination (71.1%), past negative experiences (55.0%), and lack of trust in organizational leadership (53.4%). This data reinforces a critical dynamic: disclosure decisions are influenced not solely by willingness, but also by trust, prior negative experiences, and perceptions of whether organizational systems will provide protection rather than impose penalties.



## DEI ROLLBACKS AND THEIR EFFECTS

The national and organizational backlash against DEI initiatives is directly influencing how people with disabilities experience the workplace [14] More than half of respondents indicated that DEI rollbacks have affected their disclosure behavior: 27.6% reported being less willing to disclose their disability, while another 27.2% said they are more cautious than before.

These shifts are also reflected in

employees' sense of belonging [3] Nearly half of respondents (49.8%) reported that the national backlash against DEI has negatively affected their sense of inclusion at work. When asked whether employers are actively working to maintain safe and inclusive environments for employees with disabilities despite external pressures, only 13.4% agreed—underscoring a widespread perception that commitments to inclusion are fragile or conditional.

## ACCOUNTABILITY, DATA, AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Against this backdrop, respondents expressed strong support for mechanisms that reinforce accountability and transparency. A majority (57.6%) believe that employers—particularly federal contractors—should continue tracking disability data to support inclusive hiring and workplace practices. Far from viewing data collection as intrusive, respondents largely see it as a tool for measurement, accountability, and progress.

Respondents were also clear about what would make them feel more supported [3]. The most frequently identified needs included stronger enforcement of anti-discrimination and accommodation policies (70.4%), more training for managers on disability rights and inclusion (70.8%), protections against



retaliation (61.8%), and clear, confidential disability disclosure processes (58.5%). Many also emphasized the importance of visible representation of disabled employees in leadership (58.1%), signaling that psychological safety is tied not only to policy, but to who holds power and influence within organizations.

## **KEY TAKEAWAY**

The supplemental findings demonstrate that psychological safety has become a defining factor in disability inclusion at work. As DEI commitments fluctuate, disabled employees are reassessing the information they disclose, their trust in employer intentions, and the extent to which workplaces are safe for full participation. Building inclusive environments will require more than stated values; it will necessitate sustained leadership commitment, transparent systems, and enduring protections, even when inclusion is politically contested.

# DISMANTLING WORKPLACE BARRIERS

People with disabilities continue to face preventable barriers across the employment lifecycle—from sourcing and screening to interviews, onboarding, and long term retention [16]. The 2025 survey findings reinforce that these barriers are not primarily driven by capability, but by systems that lack transparency, accessibility, and psychological safety [15]. While some tactical steps of the job search appear less burdensome than in 2024 (e.g., higher “not challenging at all” ratings for application technology), the most consequential obstacles remain: difficulty accessing appropriate roles, inconsistent accommodation processes, and persistent mistrust around disclosure.

The following recommendations reiterate the core themes from the previous report: building trust, enhancing transparency, and designing systems with disability in mind. They also address the most prominent issues identified in the 2025 data, including accommodation breakdowns, disclosure risk, and the chilling effect of DEI rollbacks on psychological safety [17].

## **BUILD A CULTURE OF TRUST AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**

A culture of trust is foundational to inclusion, because it determines whether employees feel safe asking for what they need—and whether candidates feel safe moving forward in the hiring process [3]. In 2025, only 13.4% of respondents reported feeling fully safe disclosing a disability under the current political climate, while 31.6% reported not feeling safe at all. Nearly 60% (59.8%) believe disclosure negatively affects job prospects or treatment at work. These numbers make clear that feelings of psychological safety materially influence workplace participation, performance, and retention [18].

- Reaffirm disability inclusion publicly and internally so employees are not left guessing where leadership stands. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated they want public reaffirmation of leadership's commitment (54.2%) and more visible disabled representation in leadership (58.1%).
- Separate support-seeking from performance judgment. Make it explicit that requesting accommodations or disclosing disability will not negatively affect performance ratings, promotion eligibility, or job security—then back it with clear anti-retaliation safeguards (a top support need at 61.8%).

- Normalize access conversations early. Embed accessibility and accommodation language into job postings, recruiter scripts, interview invites, and onboarding materials as a real pathway with a named contact and a clear process.

## **ENCOURAGE EDUCATION, TRANSPARENCY, & COMMUNICATION**

The 2025 data highlights a sharp credibility gap: 74.8% of respondents believe employers do not genuinely understand disability-related needs. Only 10.2% agree or strongly agree that employers are committed to hiring people with disabilities. This is not simply a perception issue; it is reinforced by lived experience—over half (53.4%) encounter accessibility barriers at work [3].

- Train managers on disability rights and practical execution. “More training for managers on disability rights and inclusion” was one of the strongest support needs (70.8%). Training should include how to respond to accommodation requests, how to run accessible interviews, and how to evaluate performance equitably when accommodations are in place.
- Make hiring predictable and legible to candidates. Add an “Applicant Help” / “Interview Process” page describing interview stages, question style (e.g., behavioral/STAR), what “success” looks like, and how to request accommodations—reducing ambiguity and increasing fairness.
- Create feedback loops that employees trust. Use anonymous surveys, ERGs, and structured listening sessions to identify friction points in hiring and accommodations. Then close the loop—share what was heard, what will change, and when.



**BELIEVE EMPLOYERS DO NOT GENUINELY UNDERSTAND DISABILITY RELATED NEEDS**

# BUILD WITH DISABILITY IN MIND: FIX HIRING SYSTEMS AND ACCOMMODATION PATHWAYS

The 2025 survey shows that accommodations have become one of the most consequential barriers to equitable employment outcomes [19]. A majority (60.1%) have requested workplace accommodations, yet 56.8% found the process very or extremely challenging. Employer responses are frequently negative (43.2%), requests are often denied (26.8%), and many wait over a month (22.6%)—with communication frequently absent (31.4% report no updates). These patterns indicate systemic process failure rather than isolated incidents [3].

- Standardize a single accommodation intake pathway (one portal or email + a named team), and publish it in multiple formats. Ensure candidates can request accommodations during the application/interview process as easily as employees can on the job.
- Set response timelines and service expectations. Provide acknowledgment within days, a clear timeline for next steps, and interim accommodations where needed. With 31.4% receiving no updates, basic communication standards alone would reduce harm and rebuild trust.
- Require an interactive process for denials, not a dead-end “no.” When denials occur, provide a clear rationale and discuss alternatives—especially given that 34% report unclear explanations when denied.
- Invest in accessible tools and workplace supports. The most requested accommodations were workplace supports (62.7%) and assistive/accessible technologies (58.0%). Proactively offering these supports—rather than waiting for requests—reduces delays and normalizes access.
- Audit early-stage screening and job design. The 2025 data found significant associations between disability type and specific job-search challenges. Employers should examine whether rigid qualification filters, unclear essential functions, location requirements, or inaccessible assessment methods are disproportionately excluding qualified talent [20].

## PRIORITIZE EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

In 2025, many respondents signaled that disability inclusion requires durable accountability—especially during periods of DEI backlash [21]. A majority (57.6%) support continued disability data tracking for accountability and inclusive practices. At the same time, DEI rollbacks have created a chilling effect: 27.6% are now less willing to disclose, and 27.2% are more cautious. Nearly half (49.8%) report a negative impact on belonging from the national backlash against DEI, while only 13.4% agree that employers are actively maintaining safe and inclusive environments.

- Track what matters and publish progress. Measure time-to-accommodation, approval/denial rates, communication SLAs, accessibility issues, and retention/promotion outcomes. Tracking is not enough—use the data to identify breakdowns and fix them.
- Embed disability into DEI governance—even when DEI is under pressure. Include disabled employees in decision-making (a key support need at 48.8%) and ensure disability is explicitly represented in inclusion strategies.
- Increase visible representation and sponsorship. Respondents emphasized the value of disabled leadership visibility (58.1%) and leadership reaffirmation (54.2%). Representation is a signal that disclosure is accepted, and advancement is an achievable pathway.
- Support ERGs and safe channels. While not a standalone solution, ERGs can provide peer support and early signals of systemic issues; respondents still cited continued ERG support as important (37.9%).



**SAY CORPORATE DEI  
ROLLBACKS HAVE REDUCED  
THEIR WILLINGNESS TO  
DISCLOSE A DISABILITY**

# CONCLUSION

Across all priorities, challenges, and supports, the 2025 data indicate that qualified disabled candidates continue to encounter systems that require additional effort to access equal opportunity. Although modest improvements have occurred in certain areas, such as application tools, the most significant barriers remain unchanged. Ultimately, hiring and employment outcomes are determined less by individual capability and more by the intentionality, clarity, and accessibility of workplace structures [23].

Notably, this year's findings elevate workplace accommodation experiences as one of the most significant and persistent barriers across the employment lifecycle [24]. Delays, denials, negative employer responses, and unclear or absent communication continue to undermine otherwise qualified candidates—eroding trust, discouraging disclosure, and limiting long term retention and advancement. These patterns echo the challenges identified in the inaugural survey, underscoring that progress has been uneven and, in some cases, stalled [3].

Collectively, the persistence of these challenges indicates that meaningful progress will require more than isolated solutions or compliance-driven approaches. Employers can dismantle workplace barriers by designing hiring and accommodation systems that are transparent, responsive, and tailored to real human variability rather than idealized workflows [25]. The most effective changes are operational: clear processes, accountable timelines, informed managers, accessible tools, and leadership commitments that remain consistent even when inclusion is politically contested.



# APPENDIX

**TABLE 1.1: DEMOGRAPHICS**

<b>Type of Disability (Multiple Response)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Mobility/physical disability	46.2
Mental health disability	34.6
Cognitive/intellectual/learning disability	14.5
Visual disability	9.3
Hearing disability	8.1
Medical disability/chronic illness	34.3
Neurological disability	21.5
Speech or communication disability	3.5
Autism spectrum disorder/neurodivergence	18.6
Others	13.1
Prefer not to say	0.9
<b>Age</b>	<b>Percent</b>
18 to 24 years old	5.5
25 to 34 years old	19.2
35 to 44 years old	26.5
45 to 54 years old	22.1
55 to 64 years old	20.6
65 to 74 years old	4.7
75 years or older	1.5
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	30.8
Female	64.5
Non-binary / non-conforming	3.5
Transgender	0.9
Prefer not to say	0.3

**TABLE 1.2: DEMOGRAPHICS**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White or Caucasian	59.9
Black or African American	18.6
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3
Asian	3.2
Hispanic or Latino	7.3
Two or More Races/Ethnicities	8.7
Prefer not to say	2.0
<b>Representation</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Heterosexual, straight	76.5
Bisexual	7.6
I use a different term	3.2
Prefer not to say	6.4
Asexual	2.6
Homosexual, gay or lesbian	3.8
<b>Education</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Some high school, no diploma	4.9
High school graduate, diploma or equivalent (for example, GED)	14.2
Some college credit, no degree	17.4
Associates degree	9.3
Bachelor's degree	27.0
Master's degree	17.2
Professional degree	0.9
Doctorate degree	3.5
Trade/ technical/ vocational training	5.5

**TABLE 2: IMPORTANT FACTORS RELATED TO JOB SEARCH**

When searching for a new job, how important are the following	Not important at all	Slightly important	Neutral	Very important	Extremely important
Salary	1.5	5.5	18.3	32.0	42.7
Benefits	4.9	8.4	14.5	30.2	41.9
Retirement savings	7.0	15.1	25.6	23.5	28.8
Paid time off	4.1	10.8	20.9	31.4	32.8
Availability of accomm.	4.9	5.2	12.5	20.9	56.4
Company culture	4.9	8.7	20.3	27.3	38.7
Company diversity and inclusion efforts	7.3	9.3	21.8	20.3	41.3
Location	3.2	7.3	12.5	22.1	54.9
Job title	17.4	23.5	29.9	14.2	14.8
Job responsibilities	5.2	6.1	26.7	30.2	31.7
Work-life balance/hours	3.8	4.4	10.5	25.6	55.8
Professional dev. opportunities	7.3	11.9	23.5	24.1	33.1

**TABLE 3: CHALLENGES IN JOB SEARCH PROCEDURE**

How challenging has each part of the job search process been?	Not challeng. at all	Slightly challeng.	Neutral	Very challeng.	Extremely challeng.
Finding a job for which I am qualified	2.8	11.7	17.3	17.0	51.2
Finding a job I'm interested in	4.0	10.2	17.3	23.8	44.8
Creating a resume	21.4	24.1	24.1	11.4	19.0
Writing a cover letter	18.1	26.3	22.9	13.3	19.5
Filling out an application	24.9	27.4	14.6	11.0	22.1
Using application technology	35.0	20.9	18.6	9.9	15.6
Interviewing	12.1	21.3	23.6	16.7	26.2
Requesting accommodation for the application/ interviewing process	21.7	15.6	18.8	12.7	31.2
Others	31.9	7.7	9.9	4.4	46.2

**TABLE 4.1: WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS AND RELATED FACTORS**

	Percent
<b>Have you ever requested a workplace accommodation?</b>	
Yes	60.1
No	39.9
<b>How difficult was the process of requesting a workplace accommodation?</b>	
Not challenging at all	6.3
Slightly challenging	25.5
Neutral	11.5
Very challenging	26.6
Extremely challenging	30.2
<b>Requested type of accommodation (Multiple Response)</b>	
Environmental Adjustments	34.2
Accessible and Assistive Technologies	58.0
Accessible Communications	26.9
Policy Modifications or Enhancements	17.1
Modified Work Schedule	33.2
Workplace Supports (social and procedural adjustments, and human support: mentors/peer supports, personal assistants/readers/interpreters, modified training methods, step-by-step instructions, or frequent check-ins)	62.7
Job Restructuring	20.2
Others	32.1
<b>How was your request received by your employer?</b>	
Positively	22.1
Neutrally	26.8
Negatively	43.2
Not sure	7.9

**TABLE 4.2: WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS AND RELATED FACTORS**

<b>How long did it take to receive the workplace accommodation(s)</b>	
Immediately or within a few days	14.7
Within 1–2 weeks	11.1
Within 3–4 weeks	11.1
More than a month	22.6
Not yet	13.7
My request was denied	26.8
<b>How long ago did you submit your accommodation request?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 1 week ago	10.9
1-2 weeks ago	6.6
3-4 weeks ago	5.1
Over a month ago	77.4
<b>Have you received any communication or status updates about your request?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes, I've been updated regularly	36.5
Yes, but communication has been unclear or infrequent	32.1
No, I haven't received any updates	31.4
<b>Were you given a clear explanation for the denial? (For those the request was denied)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes, and I understood the reason	6.0
Yes, but the explanation was unclear or inadequate	34.0
No explanation was provided	54.0
I didn't ask for an explanation	6.0
<b>Were alternative accommodations offered or discussed?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	16.0
No	74.0
Not applicable / I did not pursue it further	10.0

**TABLE 5.1: DISCLOSING DISABILITY AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS**

<b>Have you ever voluntarily disclosed your disability to an employer?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	76.8
No	23.2
<b>If you have disclosed your disability, how was it received by your employer/supervisor?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Positively	19.9
Neutrally	36.1
Negatively	29.5
Not sure	14.5
<b>Do you believe disclosing your disability impacts your job prospects or treatment at work?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes, positively	14.9
Yes, negatively	59.8
No impact	7.1
Not sure	18.3
<b>Do you feel safe disclosing a disability at work under the current political climate?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes, I feel fully safe	13.4
Somewhat safe	9.9
Neutral/Unsure	21.7
Somewhat unsafe	23.3
Not safe at all	31.6
<b>Barriers to disclose disability</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Fear of discrimination or bias	71.1
Lack of trust in leadership	53.4
Unclear or unsafe disclosure policies	34.4
Past negative experiences	55.0
Lack of accommodations or enforcement	48.9
Lack of visible disability representation	38.9
Concern about retaliation due to current political pressures	35.7
I do not face any barriers	6.8
Others	9.3

**TABLE 5.2: DISCLOSING DISABILITY AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS**

<b>Have government and organizational rollbacks of DEI (diversity, equity, &amp; inclusion) policies/commitments influenced your willingness to disclose a disability at work?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes, I am now less willing to disclose	27.6
Yes, I am now more cautious	27.2
No, my willingness has not changed	27.6
I do not plan to disclose regardless	5.1
Not applicable	12.5
<b>How has the national political backlash against DEI affected your sense of inclusion and belonging at work?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very positively	4.9
Somewhat positively	4.9
No impact	40.5
Somewhat negatively	24.9
Very negatively	24.9
<b>Do you feel employers are actively working to maintain safe and inclusive environments for employees with disabilities despite external pressures?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Disagree	22.2
Disagree	20.6
Neutral	43.8
Agree	11.4
Strongly Agree	2.0
<b>Do you believe federal contractors should continue tracking disability data to support inclusive hiring and workplace practices?</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes - Tracking helps ensure accountability and inclusion	57.6
No - Employers should not collect this data	10.6
Unsure	28.8
Prefer not to answer	3.0

**TABLE 5.3: DISCLOSING DISABILITY AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS**

What would make you feel supported (Multiple response)	Percent
Stronger enforcement of anti-discrimination and accommodation policies	70.4
Clear, confidential disability disclosure processes	58.5
Public reaffirmation of commitment to disability inclusion by leadership	54.2
More training for managers on disability rights and inclusion	70.8
Access to educational materials that explain workplace disability rights and protections.	54.2
A more visible presence of disabled individuals in leadership roles	58.1
Greater involvement of disabled employees in DEI decision-making	48.8
Continued support for Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)	37.9
Stronger communication about how disability is included in DEI	48.2
Protections against retaliation for requesting accommodations or disclosing	61.8
Mental health resources that acknowledge and support disability-related stress	57.1
Others	7.3
None	2.3

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