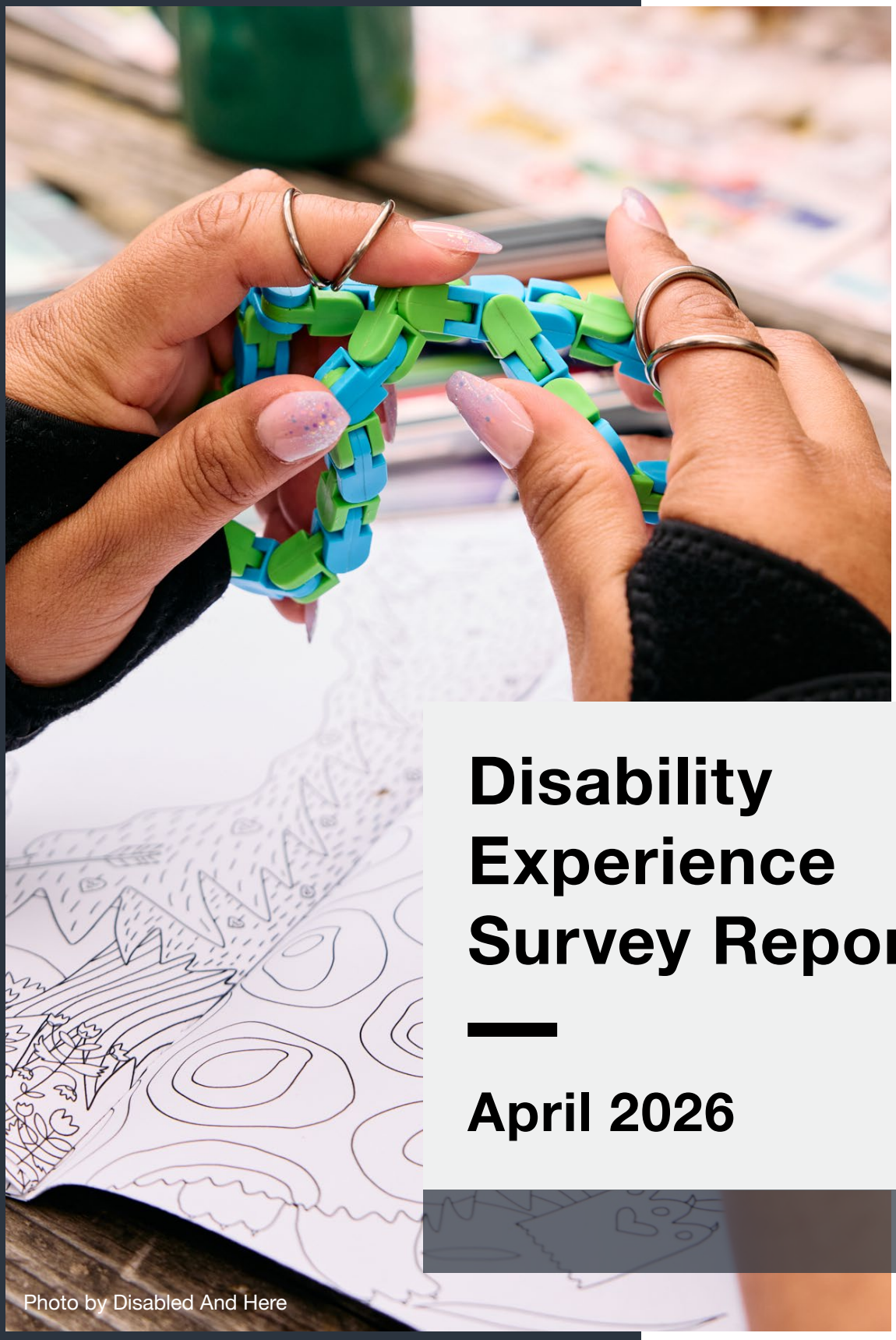
Multnomah County



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Disability Experience Survey Report

April 2026

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Acknowledgments

The Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) greatly appreciates the work of both iterations of our Survey Advisory Groups. Members brought their lived experience, professional expertise, a genuine care for fellow colleagues, and palpable curiosity about the disability experience at Multnomah County.

We would also like to extend our immense gratitude to every respondent who took their time to complete a survey that zeroed in on a very specific aspect of their identity. We appreciate the candor and transparency you offered in your experiences and perspectives.

A huge thank you to all the places and people we were able to engage in the promotion of this survey: County leadership, department directors, equity managers, employee resource groups, managers and employees with disabilities throughout the County.

We also want to offer a shoutout to the Disability Equity Workforce Equity Strategic Plan Workgroup. These folks were the first to recommend this sort of survey. Thanks, also, to the entire WESP Renewal Steering Committee for supporting the inclusion of this benchmark in the 2024-2028 Workforce Equity Strategic Plan.

This report would not be what it is today without the insight and expertise of the Central Communications team. Thank you to Paul Park and Janette Quan-Torres for your extensive edits and magic-making design.

Lastly, thank you to everyone who takes the time to review and digest this report. We all have roles to play in improving the experience of employees with disabilities. Identifying areas of improvement is the first step and we look forward to participating in the implementation of strategies to respond to the recommendations outlined in this report.

Executive Summary

The Disability Experience Survey (DES) was developed to address the lack of disability-specific recommendations in the original iteration of Multnomah County's Workforce Equity Strategic Plan. The survey was administered by the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) to all Multnomah County staff between Oct. 21 and Nov. 17, 2024.

The survey was guided by the Survey Advisory Group (SAG) — a group of employee volunteers with lived or professional experience with disability, as well as an interest in data collection and evaluation. The SAG finalized the survey's 33 questions, including open-ended prompts. A comprehensive communication plan ensured countywide awareness of the anonymous tool and led to wide participation from the intended audience of staff with disabilities across all County departments.

Out of 717 total respondents, 256 respondents did not identify as having a disability or submitted incomplete responses, and were removed from the data set. This left 461 respondents to be included in the analysis.

A look at several key demographic categories of respondents showed that 70% identified as White, 63% as Female/Woman, and 52% as Heterosexual. "Mental Health Related Disability" was the most frequently reported disability type (41%). Half of respondents were Non-supervising/Frontline Staff (51%) and 64% were Regular Represented employees. The Library, Health Department, and Department of County Human Services (DCHS) represented the highest proportions of respondents, and hybrid telework was the most common work arrangement.

Statistically significant[1] ($p \leq .05$) survey findings revealed several themes.

Sense of Belonging

Most respondents trusted their supervisors to respect their decisions to disclose or not disclose their disability status. However, employees who selected that they had "Attention Deficit" — referred to herein as ADHD (Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) — were more neutral about trusting managers, while Hispanic and Latino/a/x employees were more likely to disagree that they

1 **Statistically significant** findings are reported when a relationship is found to be a direct result of the demographics of the respondents, not due to chance. Statistically significant findings are determined by, and reported as, a p-value. If the p-value is equal to or less than .05, it is considered statistically significant. If the p-value is greater than .05 it is considered not to be statistically significant.

trusted their managers to respect their decisions to disclose or not disclose a disability status. Negative reactions from management to disclosure decisions included microaggressions (24%) and reduced professional development opportunities (21%), particularly experienced among employees of color, non-binary individuals, and those with mental health or mobility-related disabilities. Black/African American and Hispanic and Latino/a/x employees reported more negative interactions with co-workers after their disclosure, including decreased engagement and microaggressions, contrasting with White respondents who reported improved relationships. Employee resource group (ERG) participation, especially in the Including Disability in Equity and Access (IDEA) and Promoting Respect in Sexual Minorities (Prism) groups, correlated with negative experiences.

Recruitment and Retention

The top strategies for recruiting and retaining employees with disabilities identified by respondents included involving people with disabilities in decision-making, training managers on accommodations, and simplifying the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation request process.

Training/Education and Professional Development

The County has historically offered training on the ADA and accessing reasonable accommodations from a disability rights lens, most recently in the spring of 2024. However, only 34% of survey participants agreed that the County offers disability rights training, and another 40% neither agreed nor disagreed, suggesting limited awareness on training opportunities addressing these topics. White employees were more likely to agree that disability rights training was offered, while those with mental health conditions were more likely to neither agree nor disagree. Additionally, most respondents (70%) supported developing intersectional disability justice training with external consultants, a practice the County has implemented in the past, most recently in June 2023 with Uprise Collective, a local “Black and Indigenous nonprofit and membership based organization led by and for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color), Queer/Trans and Disabled community.” Employees of color, Hispanic and Latino/a/x, and Gender Expansive/Gender Queer, Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer employees, as well as those with “Other” sexual orientations, noted disparities in access to professional development resources and opportunities (including dedicated time, time off, financial resources, and online resources/meetings).

ADA Accommodations

Thirty-six percent of respondents had initiated an accommodation request, with White participants more likely to have done so. Most people (64%) had their requests approved or approved with a modification. Common reasons respondents reported for not completing accommodation requests included lack of manager support and delays with medical providers. Reasons for not requesting an accommodation despite needing one included not knowing if their disability qualified (26%) and fear of stigma (16%). While 45% of respondents knew where to get support, 39% disagreed with the statement that they knew where to get it. Respondent satisfaction with the accommodation process was split, with no significant demographic differences. The most frequently chosen improvements were providing advocates/support staff and simplifying the accommodations request process.

The report concludes with five recommendations:

- Enhancing trust and support in management-employee relationships
- Fostering inclusive work environments, including improved co-worker interactions
- Strengthening recruitment and retention strategies
- Enhancing training, education and professional development opportunities
- Streamlining and improving the ADA accommodation request process

Introduction

This evaluation report presents a detailed account of the Disability Experience Survey (DES) survey, its key findings, and the resulting recommendations. The report is structured to first provide background information on the rationale for developing the survey, then a description of the employed methodology (which covers the development of survey questions), the process of survey administration, and data analysis. This is followed by the main findings of the evaluation and culminates in a set of actionable recommendations derived directly from the assessment's results.

Background

The first iteration of the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan (WESP) offered a four-year (2018-2022) roadmap for building a new organizational equity infrastructure. However, it lacked recommendations pertaining to the experiences of employees with disabilities. During the 2023 WESP Renewal process to build out a 2024-2028 plan, the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) formed the Disability Equity WESP Workgroup to address this absence.

This workgroup, made up of staff with disabilities and those who had experience navigating the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation process, presented a robust list of recommendations for the next WESP. Many of these recommendations were officially adopted as WESP benchmarks by the Board of County Commissioners in early 2024.

The development and implementation of the Disability Experience Survey marked the completion of a key Phase I WESP benchmark in the "Data" category: "Implement a Disability Experience Survey that occurs every other year and align disability questions from the Countywide Employee Survey to supplement the findings."

The pilot launch of the survey was conducted between Oct. 21 and Nov. 17, 2024.

Survey Advisory Group

A particular recommendation regarding the implementation of this benchmark was the creation of a Survey Advisory Group (SAG) to create and finalize questions for the DES. The Office of Diversity and Equity recruited for this group from a pool of employees who had previously expressed interest in supporting disability equity efforts, as well as representatives from the Disability Equity WESP Workgroup.

The Office of Diversity and Equity convened the SAG, consisting of seven initial members, in January 2024. The SAG met monthly until June 2024, when questions were finalized. The group was facilitated by ODE Disability Specialist Sr. Ashley Carroll and Research and Evaluation Analyst Sr. Ronnie Cano.

The facilitators prompted the question development process by first posing a broader question to elicit conversation and ideas: “What do you want to know about the disability experience at the County?”

The ensuing discussion resulted in 33 survey questions, including 10 demographic questions. The majority of the questions were closed-ended questions for which participants were asked to select from a list of responses or Likert scale options (i.e., a scale running from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). Five questions were open ended, for which respondents were able to type in a free-form response.

> **What do you want to know about the disability experience at the County?**

Methodology

The Disability Experience Survey opened Oct. 21, 2024, and remained open for four weeks. A comprehensive communication plan to spread awareness about the survey and encourage participation included weekly promotional notices in the Wednesday Wire, a Management Monthly article, email templates shared with department directors and equity managers to help promote the DES in their departments, a “roadshow” of presentations to many employee resource groups (ERGs), and an all-staff email sent by the Chief Diversity and Equity Officer.

Concurrent to the survey, ODE began recruiting for a larger and even-more representative iteration of the SAG to discuss the results and presentation formats. This recruitment involved a Wednesday Wire article and an application process.

The reconvened SAG (this time made up of 19 individuals) began meeting in January 2025. The group provided valuable input on what data should be analyzed and presentation formats. The following report is a testament to both survey advisory groups’ dedication, insight, expertise, and experiences.

Disability Experience Survey Promotional Communication Timeline

Sept. 18: Email to department directors — heads up about the Disability Experience Survey

Sept. 19: ODE attends Employee Resource Groups leaders meeting to brief about survey; provide email template for direct messaging to ERG membership

Sept. 19: Email to all Equity Managers — survey is coming; request help promoting

Sept. 20: Email to HR Execs — survey is coming; request help promoting

Sept. 25: ODE attends FAM ERG meeting to brief about survey

Oct. 1: ODE attends Prism ERG meeting to brief about survey

Oct. 8: ODE attends IDEA ERG meeting to brief about survey

Oct. 8: Management Monthly story — survey is coming

Oct. 14: ODE attends Equity Managers meeting to brief about the survey

Oct. 16: Wednesday Wire story — survey is coming

Oct. 16: ODE attends IRERG meeting to brief about survey

Oct. 20: ODE attends QTPOC ERG meeting to brief about survey

Oct. 21: Survey opens

Oct. 21: All-staff email from Chief Diversity and Equity Officer — survey is open

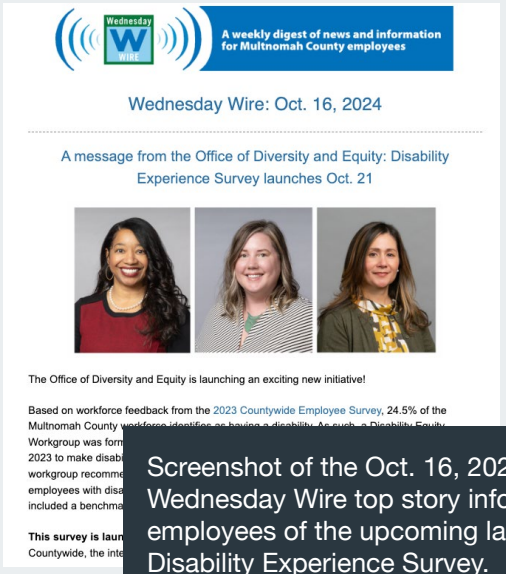
Oct. 21: Follow-up email to department directors — provide email template for direct messaging to department staff

Oct. 23: Wednesday Wire story — survey is open

Nov 4: Email to all County staff who had previously requested an accommodation, as tracked in Workday — encourage participation in survey

Nov. 13: Wednesday Wire story — final call and Survey Advisory Group recruitment

Nov. 17: Survey closes


Wednesday WIRE

A weekly digest of news and information for Multnomah County employees

Wednesday Wire: Oct. 16, 2024

A message from the Office of Diversity and Equity: Disability Experience Survey launches Oct. 21

The Office of Diversity and Equity is launching an exciting new initiative!

Based on workforce feedback from the 2023 Countywide Employee Survey, 24.5% of the

Screenshot of the Oct. 16, 2024, Wednesday Wire top story informing all employees of the upcoming launch of the Disability Experience Survey.

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey was created in Qualtrics, a cloud-based platform used to build, distribute, and analyze surveys and other feedback mechanisms. Once the survey closed, data was pulled directly into an Excel spreadsheet to prepare for cleaning before analysis. **Data cleaning** is the process of identifying and fixing or removing inaccurate, corrupted, incomplete, improperly formatted, or duplicate data from a dataset to ensure its accuracy, consistency, and quality for analysis.[2]

Once data was prepared for analysis, descriptive statistics for each question, including counts and frequencies, were run to determine how many respondents completed the survey and their demographic information. **Descriptive statistics** illustrate the distribution of demographic characteristics across the survey participant sample.

That analysis was then used to determine between demographic variables using sample data to draw conclusions about population characteristics while accounting for sampling variability.[3] **Inferential statistical analysis** allows for responses from survey participants who identify with one group in a demographic category (i.e., race/ethnicity) to be compared to other groups in the demographic category to determine if there is a relationship or pattern in how members of that demographic group responded. Inferential statistics show whether the results from the survey participant sample can be generalized to all County employees with disabilities.

A **statistically significant** finding is reported when a relationship is found to be a direct result of the demographics of the respondents, not due to chance. Statistically significant findings are determined by, and reported as, a p-value. If the p-value is equal to or less than .05, then it is considered statistically significant. If the p-value is greater than .05, it is considered not to be statistically significant, meaning there is no causal relationship between the demographics of the respondents and how they answered the questions.

The open-ended questions were analyzed using **thematic analysis**, a process through which the data is examined by identifying and interpreting patterns. Codes are created to represent the general concepts found in participant

2 Cunningham, Solveig A., and Jonathan A. Muir. “Data Cleaning.” Chapter. In The Cambridge Handbook of Research Methods and Statistics for the Social and Behavioral Sciences: Volume 1: Building a Program of Research, edited by Austin Lee Nichols and John Edlund, 443–67. Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

3 Casella, G., & Berger, R. (2024). Statistical Inference (2nd ed.). Chapman and Hall/CRC. https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003456285

responses, then grouped into broader themes. These themes are discussed in the following Results section of the report. Themes are accompanied by relevant quotes found within the survey responses that help contextualize the findings.

Results

Survey Demographics

A total of 717 employees responded to the survey. Of those, data from 112 of employees were removed due to incomplete surveys (i.e., surveys in which only a few demographic questions, and no other questions, were answered). Of the 605 remaining respondents who completed the full survey, 144 responded "No" to having a disability. Their demographic information was kept in the data set in order to provide a complete demographic landscape of all employees who engaged with the survey.

Race/Ethnicity

The survey included a demographic question asking participants which of the REALD (Race, Ethnicity, Language, and Disability) racial or ethnic identity categories best describe them. REALD is a set of standardized questions, used often by the State of Oregon, that breaks out racial and ethnic categories into seven main categories with numerous subcategories under each. The REALD requires participants to select from the list of subcategories. For example, the "Hispanic and Latino/a/x" category includes four subcategories: Central American, Mexican, South American, and Other. (For a full illustration of all the available subcategories, refer to Appendix A, Question 1.)

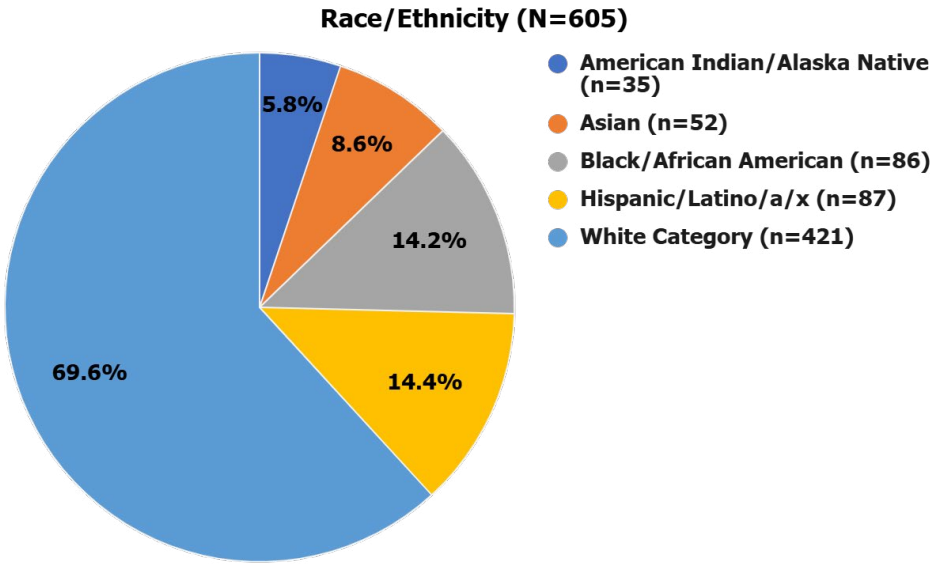
The racial and ethnic category most commonly reported by respondents was White (70%), followed by Hispanic and Latino/a/x and Black/African American at 14% each. Among White subcategories, Western European and Other were the most commonly

Main REALD Race and Ethnicity Categories

- Hispanic and Latino/a/x
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander
- White
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Black and African American
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Asian

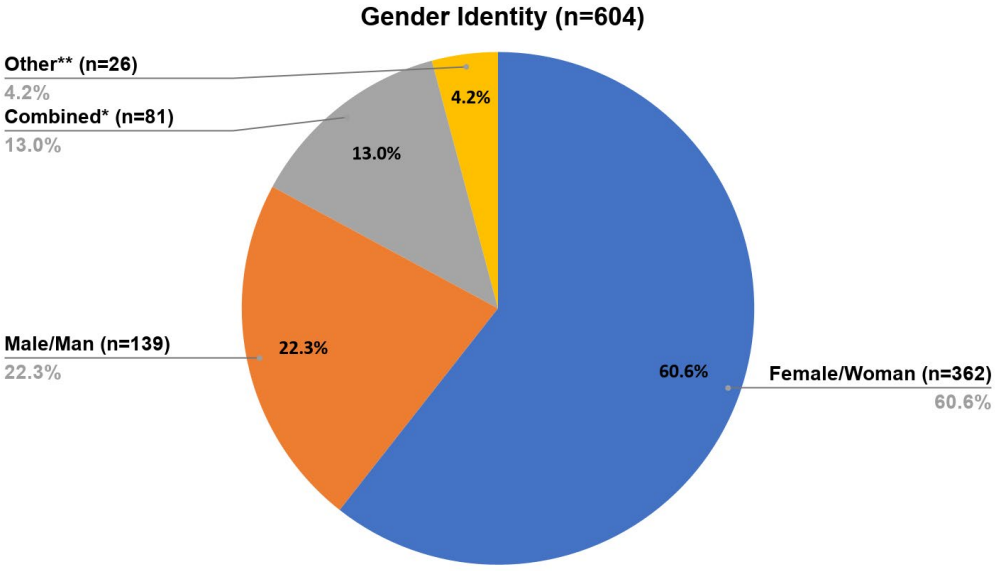
(Refer to Appendix A, Question 1 for full list of subcategories)

identified by survey participants, at 36% and 30% respectively. Among Hispanic and Latino/a/x subcategories, Mexican was the highest, followed by Other, at 8% and 4% respectively. Among the Black/African American subcategories, African American was the highest at 13%.



Gender Identity

Demographic survey questions also included a question on gender identity. The provided response options were based on input from the SAG and taken from other surveys administered across the County, such as the Countywide Employee Survey. Of the 12 response options provided (including “Other” and “Prefer not to answer”), the most commonly reported was Female or Woman (63%), followed by Male or Man (23%). Due to the small sample size for many of

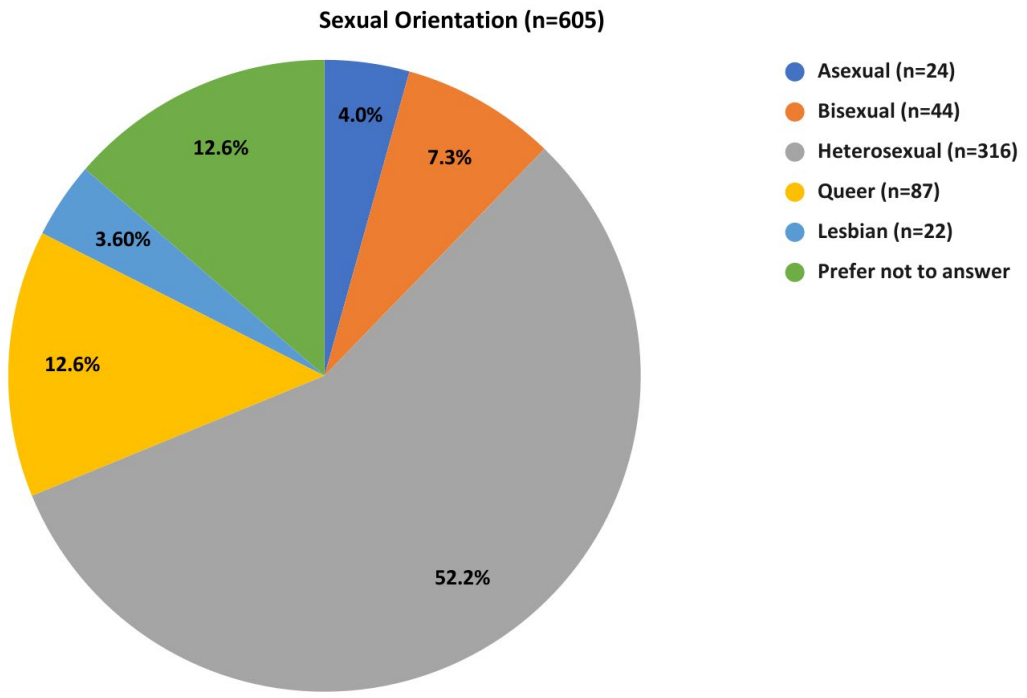


the remaining response options under this question, a breakdown of the other categories is not included to ensure the confidentiality of survey respondents. However, a “combined identities” category was developed to illustrate the diversity of gender identities of the survey respondents.

Respondents were allowed to select more than one identity, so the sample size of respondents calculated by the number of responses does not equal the total number of respondents for this question. (For a full illustration of all the available subcategories, refer to Appendix A, Question 2.)

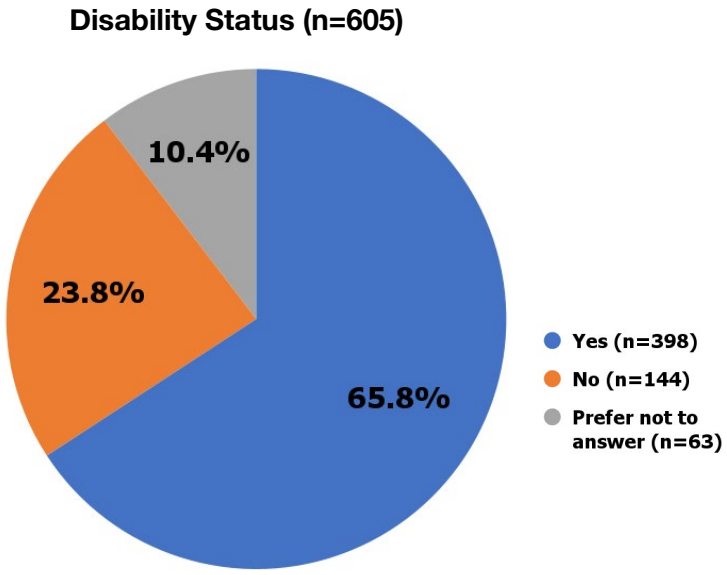
Sexual Orientation

A demographic survey question on sexual orientation was also included, providing nine response options, including “Other” and “Prefer not to answer.” The most commonly selected response was Heterosexual (52%), followed by Queer (14%) and “Prefer not to answer” (13%). (For a full illustration of all the available subcategories, refer to Appendix A, Question 3.)



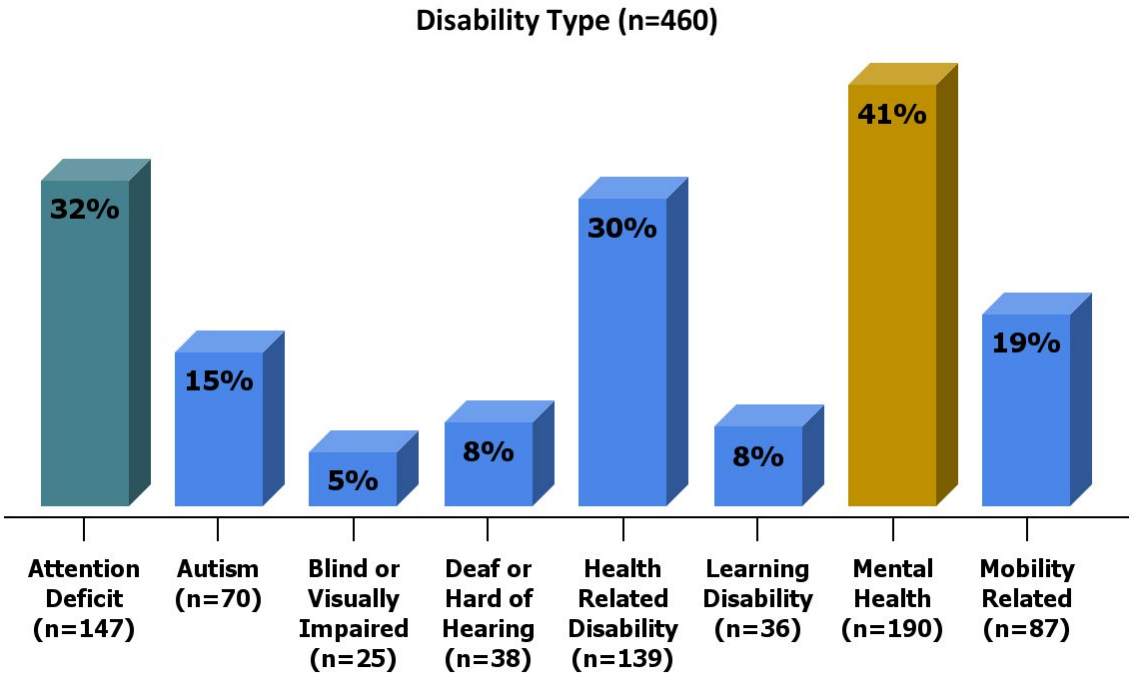
Disability Status

Of the 461 respondents who completed the survey and answered the question about identifying with having a disability, 398 responded "Yes" and another 63 selected "Prefer not to answer." Those who selected the latter were included in the analysis, as all 63 provided responses to the disability-related questions throughout the survey.



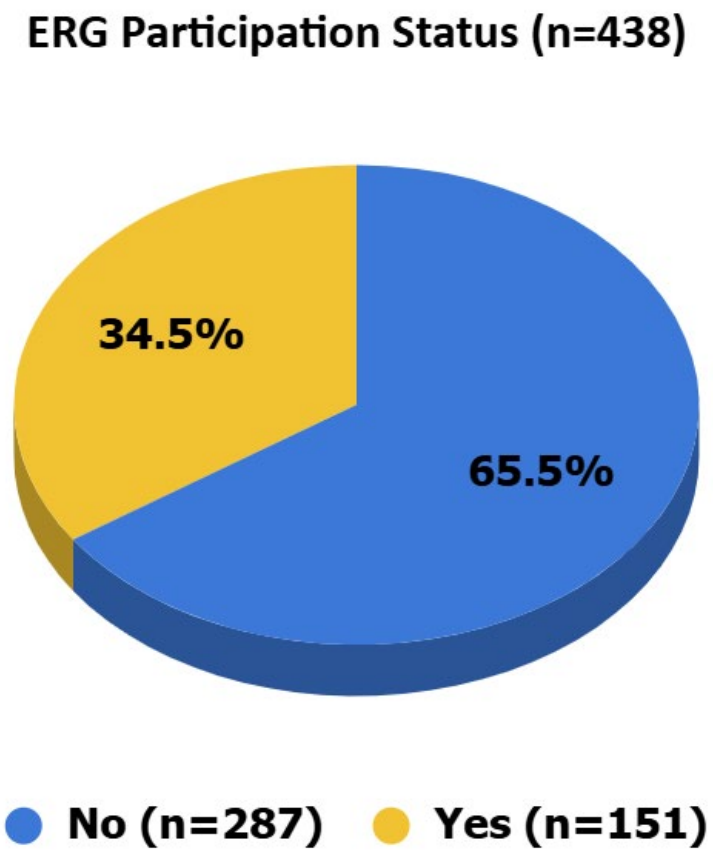
Type of Disability

The survey included a question on disability type, with nine response choices listed along with an "Other" option, which respondents could use to type in a free-form response. Forty-one percent reported a "Mental Health Related Disability," followed by 32% who reported Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (or ADHD, and referred to as "Attention deficit" in the survey options), and 30% who selected a "Health Related Disability." Survey respondents were allowed to select more than one response to this question.



ERG Participation

Survey participants were asked if they participated in an employee resource group (ERG). Of the 461 participants who completed the survey and answered the question about having a disability with either an affirmative or neutral response, 62% indicated that they did not participate in an ERG while 38% said they did participate. The ERG with the greatest representation among survey respondents was the Including Disability in Equity and Access (IDEA) ERG, at 32%. This was followed by the Employees of Color (EOC) and Prism ERGs, at 28% and 24%, respectively. All other ERGs had participation of less than 10% of respondents.



List of All Multnomah County Employee Resource Groups

Employees of Color (EOC)

The Employees of Color ERG supports Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color (BIPOC), including Latiné, Pacific Islanders, Arabs and Asians, as well as immigrants and refugees of color. EOC facilitates personal and professional growth for County employees of color who share lived experience and non-dominant identities. EOC works toward improving retention by providing a strong sense of safety, trust and belonging.

Family Advocates of Multco (FAM)

FAM advocates for families through workplace policies, practices, and initiatives that promote work-life balance, equity, awareness, and support.

Including Disability in Equity and Access (IDEA)

IDEA is made up of individuals for whom disability (their own or someone else's) has a daily impact on their lives. IDEA promotes a culture of inclusion by providing leadership, raising awareness, valuing differences, identifying barriers and encouraging an accessible workplace that fosters equity, dignity, and respect.

Immigrants and Refugees (IRERG)

The Immigrants and Refugees Employee Resource Group (IRERG) identifies the challenges and barriers that County employees who are immigrants or refugees face, and also highlights beneficial opportunities. IRERG helps employees gain better self-awareness, advances their knowledge about the American workforce, and helps enhance and utilize their skills.

Mamuk Tillikums

Multnomah County's newest ERG, established in October 2023. Mamuk Tillikums is the first Native American/Alaskan Native ERG within the County. Members have deep connections to Indigenous cultures, traditions, and communities, enriching their collective experience and perspective.

Managers of Color (MOC)

The Managers of Color ERG works to improve the work environment, support managers of color, and to enhance cultural and racial diversity, equity, and inclusion in Multnomah County. The ERG promotes and assists in enhancing cultural and racial diversity, multi-cultural competence, and equity in the organization by providing a forum and voice for managers of color to facilitate, lead, support, and actively participate.

Prism

The Prism ERG focuses on ensuring equity and inclusion for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) County employees and providing a place for LGBTQ+ employees to support each other's professional growth. Prism members come from many different backgrounds and work at all levels and all departments throughout the County.

Queer and Trans People of Color (QTPOC)

QTPOC ERG works to celebrate Queer and trans staff of color at Multnomah County. The ERG works to bridge the gap between racial and LGBTQ+ issues by using an intersectional approach to advocate for equity, inclusion, and fairness in the workplace. QTPOC envisions a workplace where staff who identify as both people of color and LGBTQ+ can bring their full selves to work in order to thrive in the workplace.

Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG)

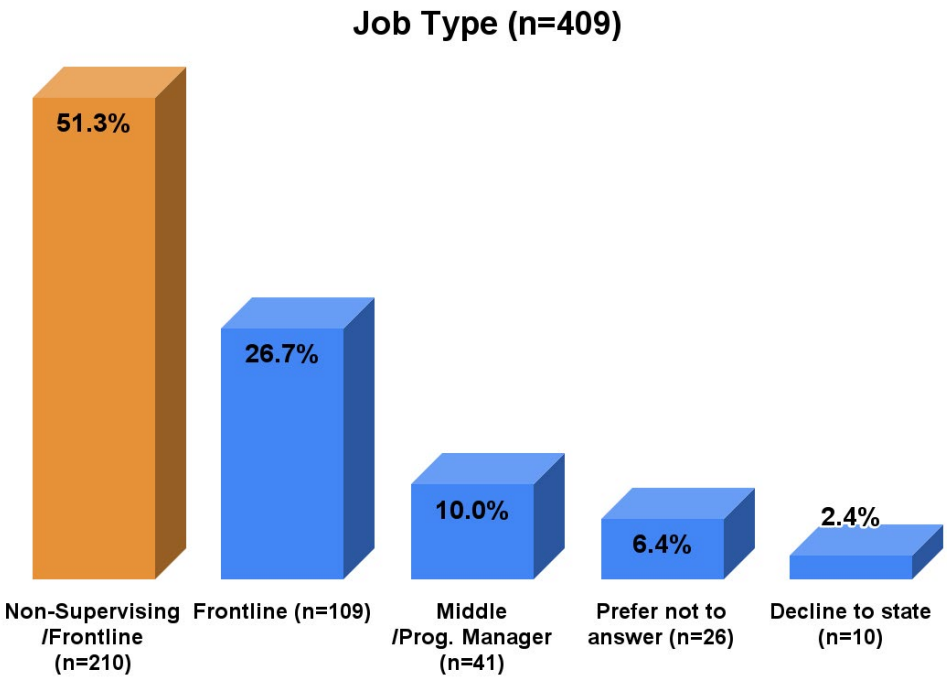
The Veterans Employee Resource Group is open to employees who have served in the armed forces, their spouses, family members, or anyone who supports the mission of this group. VERG identifies challenges and opportunities faced by this employee group in order to gain better self-awareness, advance their ability to leverage skill and experience in the County work environment to achieve their full potential, assist group members in career development, and facilitate further development of Multnomah County workforce.

Vital Aging Network (VAN)

Currently inactive. Previously supported employees considering the end of their careers and after retirement.

Job Type & Employee Type

Survey participants were asked about their job and employee types. Half of respondents identified as Non-Supervising/Frontline Staff (51%). This was followed by Frontline Staff (27%) and Middle/Program Manager (10%). The most frequently selected employee types were Regular Represented at 64% and Regular Non-Represented at 12%.



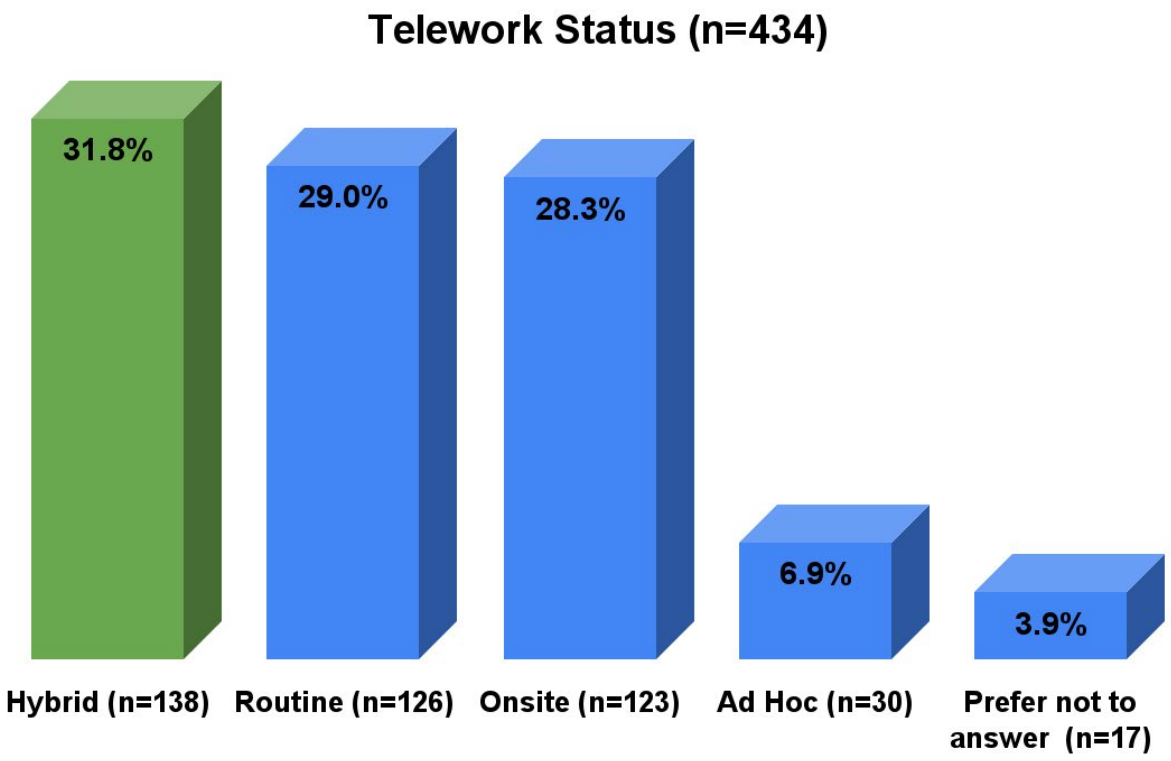
Department

Staff of the three largest County departments by employee count also made up the highest proportions of survey participants, with Library staff accounting for 25% of all respondents, the Health Department 19%, and the Department of County Human Services (DCHS) 15%. The breakdown of survey participants among the remaining departments is: Department of Community Justice (6%), Department of County Assets (6%), Homeless Services Department (5%), Department of County Management (4%), Department of Community Services (4%), Multnomah County Sheriff's Office (2%), and Non-departmental offices (2%). The department with the smallest representation in the survey was the District Attorney's Office, at less than 1%.



Telework Status

There was slight variation in telework status across survey respondents, with Hybrid telework being the most common at 30%, followed closely by Routine telework (27%), and Onsite/Not telework (27%). Less than 10% of respondents worked an “Ad Hoc” telework schedule.



Inferential Analysis

The findings discussed in this section of the report focus on those results that were statistically significant ($p \leq .05$). Findings that did not meet the statistical significance threshold are generally not included.

These questions were designed by the Survey Advisory Group (SAG) to determine participants' sense of belonging both within their departments and at the County in response to anecdotal reports that employees experienced unwanted disclosures of their disability status by their supervisor.

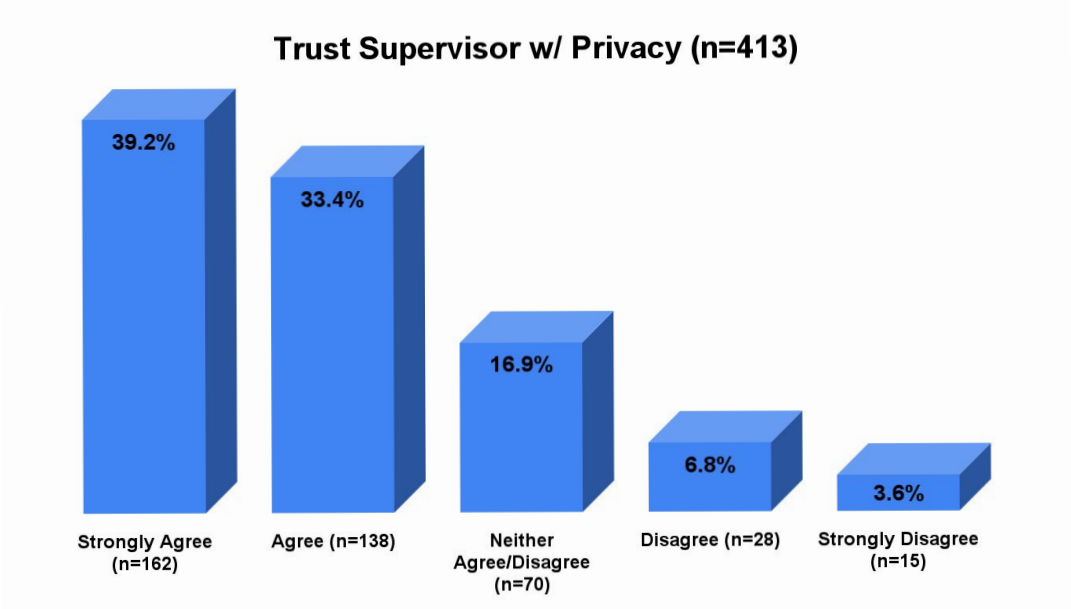
Sense of Belonging

The first survey section included a set of questions asking participants to consider their experiences with disclosing their disability to management and to co-workers, including perceived changes in behavior after the disclosure and if management respected their privacy.

These questions were designed by the Survey Advisory Group (SAG) to determine participants' sense of belonging both within their departments and at the County in response to anecdotal reports that employees experienced unwanted disclosures of their disability status by their supervisor. This set of questions inquired about employees' experiences regarding management respecting their privacy, as well as any perceived changes in behavior in their manager and their colleagues, after self-disclosure.

For the first question in this set, participants were asked to rate on a Likert scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "**You trust your supervisor to respect your privacy regarding your disability/disabilities status**." Of the 413 participants who responded to this question, 73% either agreed or strongly agreed, indicating they trusted their supervisor to respect their privacy.

Analysis of this question by demographic categories suggests that survey respondents who identified as having ADHD were statistically significantly more likely to not have an opinion one way or the other (neither agree nor disagree) with the question ($p=.004$). Furthermore, the result that Including Disability in Equity and Access (IDEA) employee resource group (ERG) members were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they trusted their supervisor with their privacy than those who were not IDEA members was on the cusp of significance ($p=.054$). This finding suggests further inquiry into a potential relationship between IDEA ERG membership and the perceived trustworthiness of management in regard to respecting the privacy of their direct reports' disability status.



Survey participants were also asked to rate their level of agreement regarding their perceptions on whether their manager had respected their decision to disclose or not disclose their disability status to others in their work unit and/or the County. Out of the 413 who responded to this question, 59% were in agreement (either agreed or strongly agreed), while 33% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Analysis of this question's response by demographic categories indicated that participants who identified as Hispanic and Latino/a/x were significantly more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that their manager respected their decision to disclose their disability (p=.005).

Analyzing responses by sexual orientation suggests that those who identified as heterosexual were significantly more likely to agree that their managers respected their decisions to disclose their disability (p=.016).

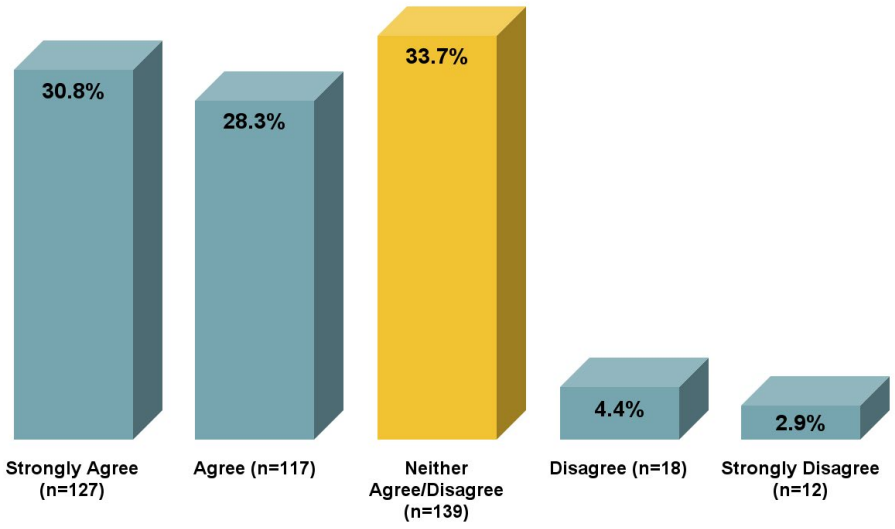
Participants were also asked to describe any perceived outcomes to their disability disclosure to management through 10 options:

1. Communication decreased
2. Non-requested changes in scope of work
3. Reduced opportunities for professional development (e.g., training access, leadership roles, access to resources)
4. Microaggressions related to your disability/disabilities
5. Relationships with management improved
6. I was informed of resources available to me (e.g., ADA accommodation process)

1. Other (followed by an open-ended question)
2. None of the above
3. Not applicable
4. Other

Respondents who selected “Other” were able to input a free-form response. The response options — reviewed and approved by the SAG — stemmed from previous survey research with County employees in which respondents were asked to list all the perceived outcomes they experienced after disclosing their disability.

Manager Respected Disclosure (n=413)



The most commonly selected response was “I was informed of resources available to me” (48%), an arguably positive reaction from management.

However, this was followed by responses that reflected negative reactions from management, including “Microaggressions related to your disability/disabilities” (24%) and “Reduced opportunities for professional development” (21%).

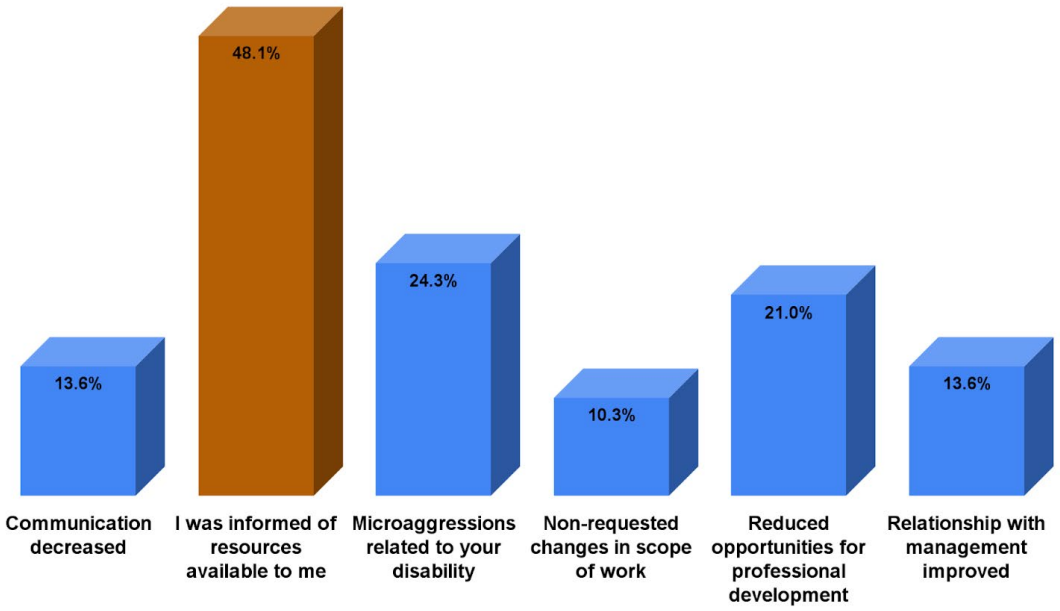
The most commonly selected response was “I was informed of resources available to me” (48%), an arguably positive reaction from management.

However, this was followed by responses that reflected negative reactions from management, including ‘Microaggressions related to your disability/disabilities’ (24%) and ‘Reduced opportunities for professional development’ (21%).

Sixteen people selected the “Other” option. Of them, 31% reported a lack of support, 25% reported feeling generally supported, and 19% reported inconsistent reactions across managers. The remaining 19% reported perceiving a lack of training by managers, retaliation, or no change after disclosure.

Responses to this question were also put through an analysis by demographic categories. However, due to the small sample sizes for some of the race/ethnicity categories across the “Other” responses, all employees who identified as other than “White” were collapsed into an “Employee of Color” category for the purpose of statistical analysis.

Reactions to Disclosure From Management (n=214)



Findings suggest that survey respondents who identified as employees of color were significantly more likely to report being informed of resources available to them than their White peers (p=.048). Although all non-White respondents were combined into an “Employee of Color” group for the primary analysis of this subset of responses, we were able to analyze race/ethnicity groups with greater representation among survey responses, namely Hispanic and Latino/a/x respondents. After doing so, findings indicated that employees who identified as Hispanic and Latino/a/x were significantly less likely to report being informed of resources available to them after disclosing their disability to management (p=.045) and significantly more likely to report experiencing reduced opportunities for professional development (p=.026).

Analysis by gender identity suggests that survey participants who identified as female/woman were significantly less likely to report experiencing microaggressions related to their disability than their peers who did not identify as such (p=.032). Participants who identified as non-binary were significantly more likely to report experiencing reduced opportunities for professional development after disclosing their disability to management (p=.033).

Analysis by sexual orientation suggests that survey participants who identified as heterosexual were significantly less likely to report communication decreasing after disclosing their disability to management (p=.009).

When the question was analyzed by disability type, findings indicate that participants who identified as having a mental health disability were significantly more likely to report experiencing communication decreasing from management after disclosing their disability (p=.036). Similarly, participants who reported a mobility-related disability were significantly more likely to report experiencing a communication decrease from management (p=.039).

When the question was analyzed by disability type, findings indicate that participants who identified as having a mental health disability were significantly more likely to report experiencing communication decreasing from management after disclosing their disability (p=.036). Similarly, participants who reported a mobility-related disability were significantly more likely to report experiencing a communication decrease from management (p=.039). Furthermore, survey participants who identified as having autism were significantly more likely to report experiencing microaggressions related to their disability after disclosing their disability to management (p=.009).

Analysis of the relationship between ERG membership and the perceived reactions of management to a person's disclosure of their disability revealed several findings. Survey participants who reported not participating in ERGs were significantly less likely to report experiencing an unrequested change to their scope of work after disclosing their disability status to management compared to their peers who do participate in ERGs (p=.026). On the other hand, respondents who reported being a part of the IDEA and Prism ERGs were significantly more likely to report experiencing unrequested changes to their scope of work after disclosing their disability status to management (p=.028 and p=.003, respectively).

Perception of management reactions after an employee's disclosure of disability was analyzed by departments, but due to the small sample of respondents of

several departments, data from respondents of only the three departments most represented among survey participants — the Department of County Human Services (DCHS), the Health Department, and Library — underwent statistical analysis. Findings suggest that survey participants from DCHS were significantly more likely to report experiencing microaggressions related to their disability than those from the Library or Health Department (p=.006).

Within this first section, participants were also asked to categorize their experiences after disclosing their disability to their co-workers by answering the question, "**In your personal experience, once you disclosed your disability status to your co-workers, did any of the following occur?**" The question provided a similar set of response options to the previous question regarding management reaction:

1. Communication decreased
2. Microaggressions related to your disability/disabilities
3. Decreased engagement to partake in work unit activities (e.g., all staff events, team meetings, retreats, meals, etc.)
4. Relationships with co-workers improved
5. I was informed of resources available to me (e.g., ADA accommodation process)
6. None of the above
7. Not applicable
8. Other

Respondents who selected "Other" were able to input a free-form response.

Reactions to Disclosure From Co-workers

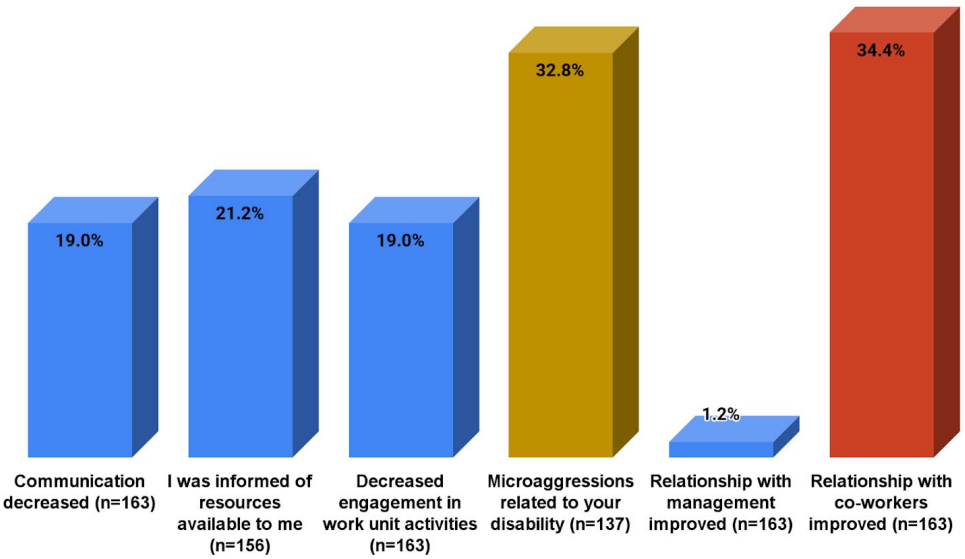




Photo by Disabled And Here

Analysis by race/ethnicity suggests that participants who identified as Black/African American were significantly more likely to report being informed of resources available after disclosure of their disability to their co-workers (p=.033). Conversely, participants who identified as White were significantly less likely to report being informed of resources available after disclosure of their disability status to their co-workers (p=.023).

Participants who identified as Black/African American or Hispanic and Latino/a/x were statistically significantly more likely to report a decrease in engagement with work unit activities[4] after disclosure to co-workers (p=.019 and p=.002, respectively).

In terms of microaggressions, participants who identified as Black/African American were significantly more likely to report experiencing microaggressions related to their disability after disclosing their disability to their co-workers (p=.034). Furthermore, Black/African American respondents were significantly less likely to report improvement in their relationships with co-workers after disclosing their disability status (p=.036), whereas participants who identified as White were significantly more likely to report improvement in their relationships with co-workers after disclosing their disability status (p=.009).

Analysis by race/ethnicity suggests that participants who identified as Black/African American were significantly more likely to report being informed of resources available after disclosure of their disability to their co-workers (p=.033). Conversely, participants who identified as White were significantly less likely to report being informed of resources available after disclosure of their disability status to their co-workers (p=.023).

4 While "work unit activities" was an umbrella term meant to include opportunities such as team meetings, meals, celebrations, trainings, and other team-oriented professional development or connection options, the Office of Diversity and Equity received feedback from respondents that the terminology was confusing and unclear.

Analysis by disability type indicates that survey participants who reported autism or a mental health condition as a disability were significantly more likely to report experiencing a decrease in communication from their co-workers once they disclosed their disability to them (p=.019 and p=.032, respectively). Participants who identified with having a learning disability were significantly more likely to report experiencing microaggressions related to their disability after disclosing their status to co-workers (p=.025).

In addition, analysis by ERG participation indicates that respondents who reported not participating in an ERG were significantly less likely to report decreased communication (p=.011), while IDEA ERG members were significantly more likely to report experiencing decreased communication (p=.037), as well as less likely to report being informed of resources available to them after disclosing their disability to co-workers (p=.045).

Participants who reported not participating in any ERG were also significantly less likely to report experiencing a decrease in engagement to partake in work unit activities after disclosure to co-workers (p=.000). On the other hand, respondents who participated in the IDEA ERG were significantly more likely to report experiencing a decrease in engagement after disclosure to co-workers (p=.009).

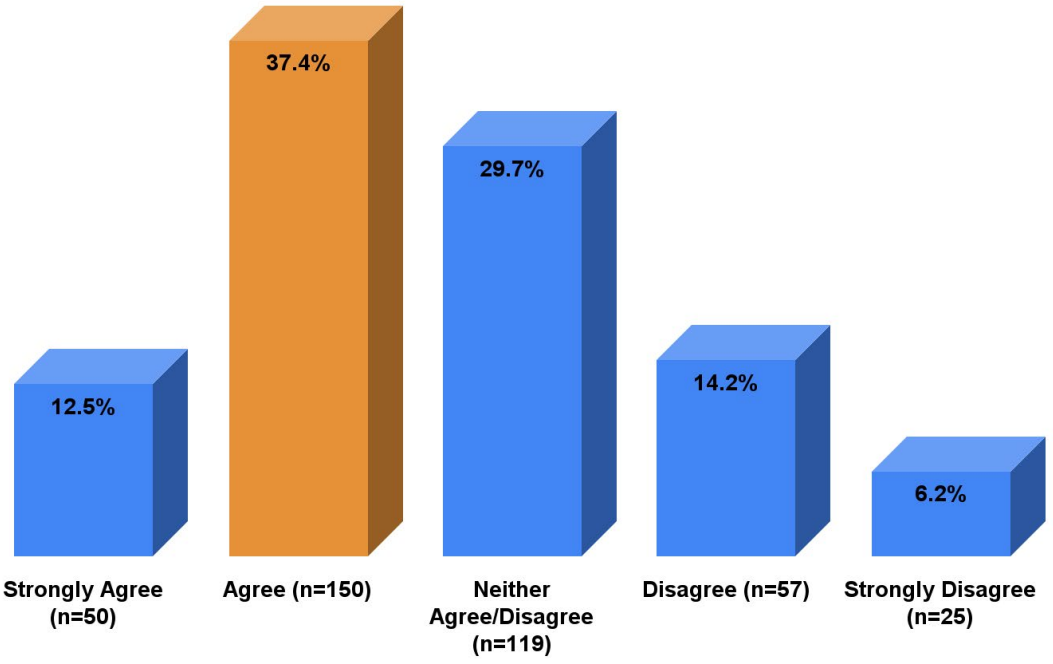
These findings suggest a significantly higher rate of negative experiences by those participating in ERGs, specifically the IDEA ERG, compared to their peers who do not participate in any ERGs — and may be an area for further inquiry into the cause for these differences.

When analyzing data for differences by respondents (from the three largest departments: DCHS, the Health Department, and Library), participants from DCHS and the Library were significantly more likely to report improvement in their relationship with co-workers after disclosing their disability status to them (p=.001).

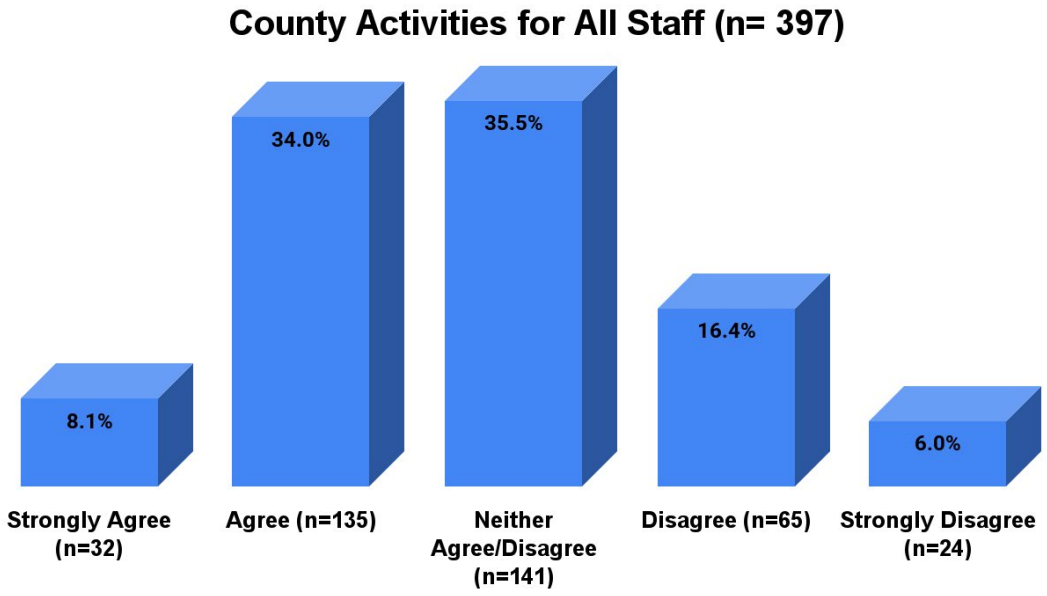
The “Sense of Belonging” section of the survey also asked for agreement levels for work unit activities through the statement, “**In your personal experience, your work unit creates activities that are accommodating to all staff, regardless of their disability status.**” Agreement levels were high among most participants, with half reporting agreement and slightly less than one-third neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement.

Analysis by demographics indicates that sexual orientation and ERG participation were the two demographic categories that produced any statistically significant results. Participants who selected “Prefer not to answer” to describe their sexual orientation were significantly more likely to agree that their work unit created activities that were accommodating to all staff, regardless of disability status (p= .046). Respondents who reported participating in the Family Advocates of Multnomah (FAM) ERG were significantly more likely to “Neither agree or disagree” that their work unit created activities that were accommodating for all staff (p=.038).

Work Unit Activities for All (n= 401)



Similar to the question that focused on employee work units, participants were also asked their level of agreement to the statement, “**In your personal experience, the county creates activities that are accommodating to all staff, regardless of their disability status.**” Most respondents were unsure about this question, with 36% reporting “Neither agree nor disagree,” followed closely by “Agree” at 34%. Overall, almost half (42%) showed a level of agreement, while less than one-quarter (22%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

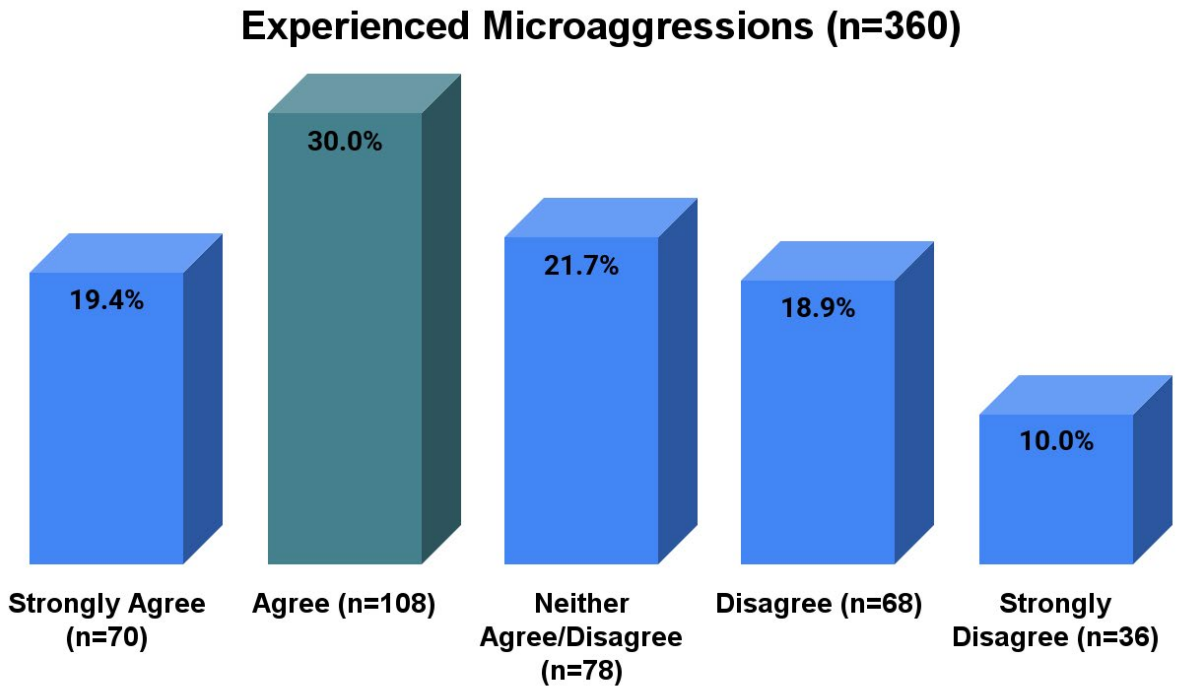


Analysis by sexual orientation suggests that participants who selected the "Prefer not to answer" option were significantly more likely to agree that the County created activities that were accommodating to all staff (p=.040). Additionally, analysis by disability type suggests that participants who reported having a mobility-related disability were significantly more likely to "Neither agree nor disagree" (p=.002).

Analysis by job type indicates that middle managers were significantly more likely to agree that the County creates activities that are accommodating to all staff regardless of disability status (p=.032). Findings by the department category indicate that survey participants from the Health Department were significantly more likely to show agreement (p=.024) with the statement than their peers at Department of County Human Services and the Library.

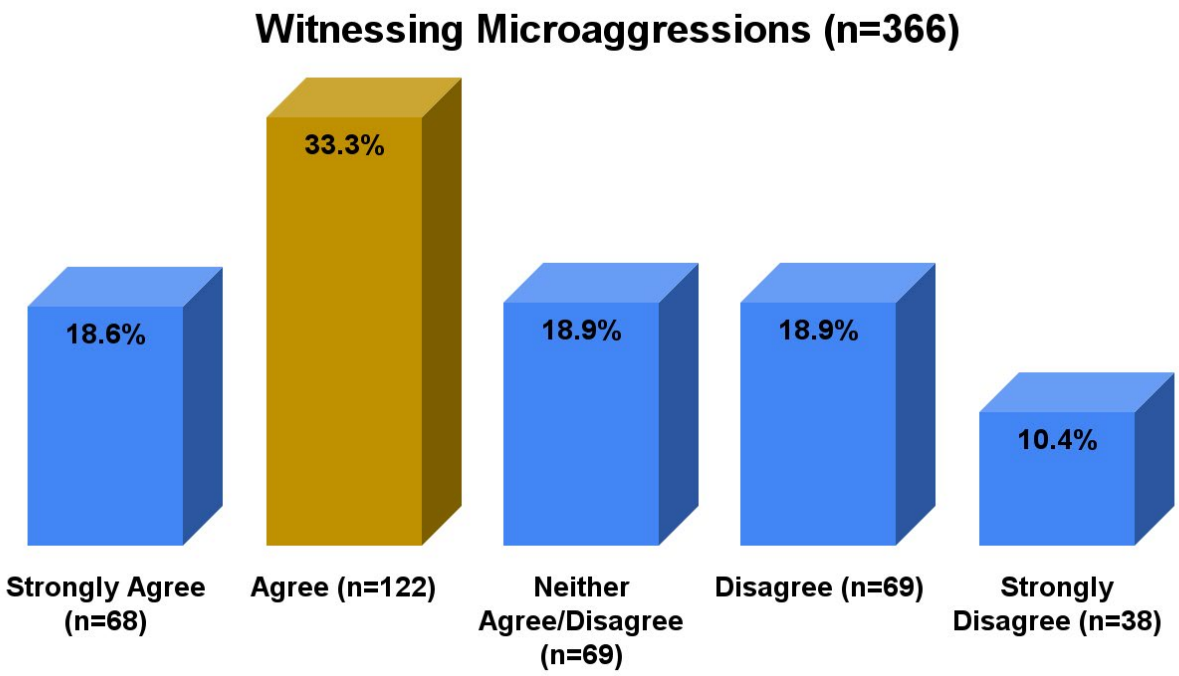
The last two questions in the "Sense of Belonging" section of the survey asked respondents about their levels of agreement with statements regarding their experience of receiving and/or witnessing microaggressions.

Nearly half of all respondents (49%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had experienced microaggressions, whereas less than 30% reported a level of disagreement. Analysis by demographic categories did not yield any statistically significant findings.



Over half of respondents (52%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had witnessed someone else experiencing a microaggression related to their disability, compared to 29% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Analysis of these responses across demographic categories indicates that when comparing by disability type, participants who identified as having ADHD were significantly more likely to agree that they had witnessed someone else experience a microaggression related to their disability or disabilities (p=.045). Respondents who participated in ERGs were also significantly more likely to agree that they had witnessed someone else experience a microaggression related to their disability or disabilities (p=.032).

> **Nearly half of all respondents (49%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had experienced microaggressions, whereas less than 30% reported disagreement. ... Over half of respondents (52%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had witnessed someone else experiencing a microaggression related to their disability...**



Recruitment & Retention

The survey asked participants about their views on the County's recruitment and retention strategies for employees with disabilities. In particular, participants were asked to rank from a list of six strategies the top three they believed would improve recruitment and retention for County employees with disabilities. The six options were:

1. Infuse long-term disability justice in county policies and the budget process.
2. Conduct a review of the ADA accommodations process and request outcomes (i.e., tracking accommodation request outcomes).
3. Include people with disabilities in decision-making on county policies, budgets, etc.
4. Make the ADA accommodation process more supportive and less cumbersome.
5. Provide different disability type options in Workday.
6. Train managers/supervisors on strategies to help make work units more accommodating to staff with disabilities.

The following table illustrates how the strategy options were prioritized by survey participants (see Table 1). The mean (average) value helps delineate which

recruitment and retention strategies were more strongly prioritized in relation to others based on how they ranked their top three choices. Each numerical position value is assigned a priority rank (i.e., 1=highest priority; 2=second-highest priority; 3=third-highest priority). Lower mean values indicate higher priority, while higher mean values indicate lower priority.

Of the six options, the top-ranked strategy was “Include people with disabilities in decision-making on county policies, budgets, etc.,” which had the lowest mean at 2.73. This was followed by “Train managers/supervisors on strategies to help make work units more accommodating to staff with disabilities” with a mean of 3.08. The third-highest rated strategy was “Make the ADA accommodation process more supportive and less cumbersome,” with a mean of 3.11.

Table 1. Recruitment & Retention Strategies Ranking

Strategy Type	Mean	Rank
Include people with disabilities in decision-making on county policies, budgets, etc.	**2.73**	**1**
Train managers/supervisors on strategies to help make work units more accommodating to staff with disabilities.	**3.08**	**2**
Make the ADA accommodation process more supportive and less cumbersome.	**3.11**	**3**
Infuse long-term disability justice in county policies and the budget process.	**3.29**	
Conduct a review of the ADA accommodations process and request outcomes (i.e., tracking accommodation request outcomes).	**3.59**	
Provide different disability type options in Workday.	**5.08**	



Photo by Disabled And Here

Training & Education

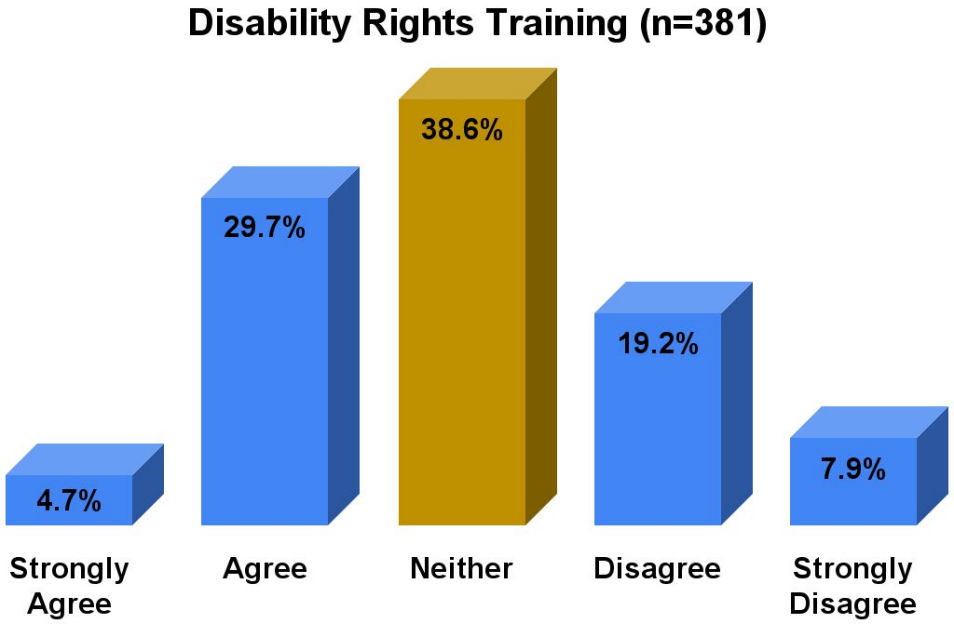
Survey participants were asked to share their views on training opportunities related to disability rights and disability justice at the County.

Disability rights are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal civil rights law that "prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, State and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications."[5]

Survey participants were asked to report their agreement level to the statement, "**The county offers training that discusses disability rights.**" Of the 381 participants who responded, almost 40% were neutral, selecting "Neither agree nor disagree." This was followed by 34% who either agreed or strongly agreed, and 27% who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

5 ADA.gov, 2020

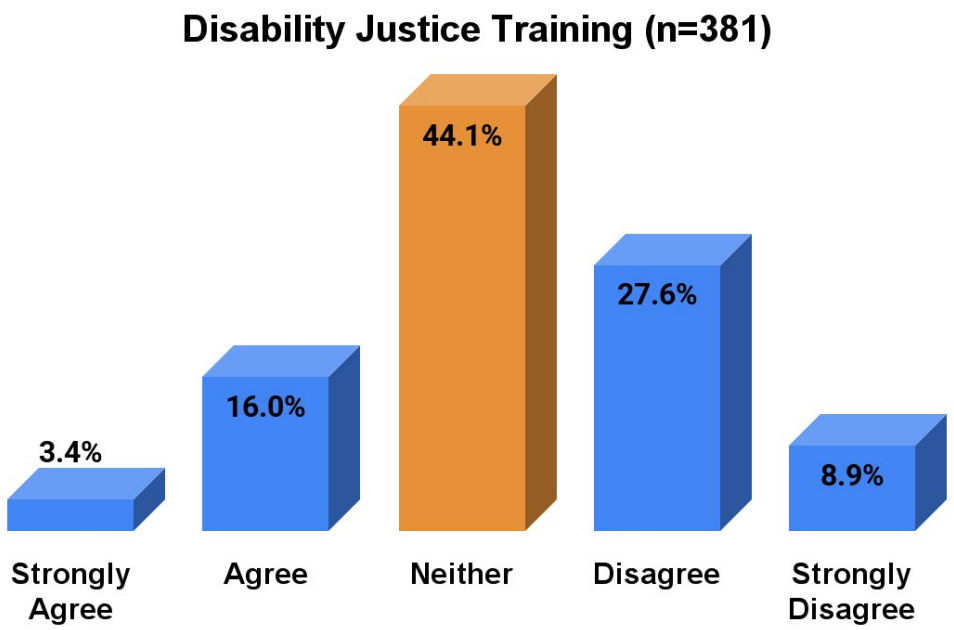
These findings seemingly stem from the intermittent nature of the County's disability-related training offerings for employees. While disability rights and compliance with the ADA are addressed through multiple, recurring training opportunities for managers, the training available to non-managerial employees is currently limited to a brief, on-demand module hosted in Workday. This format provides a baseline introduction, but offers limited depth or opportunity for engagement with evolving disability rights, accessibility practices, and organizational responsibilities. An additional, more comprehensive disability rights-related training, "Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Accommodations," was offered in spring 2024 to all employees, but no ongoing or refresher training has been provided since that time.



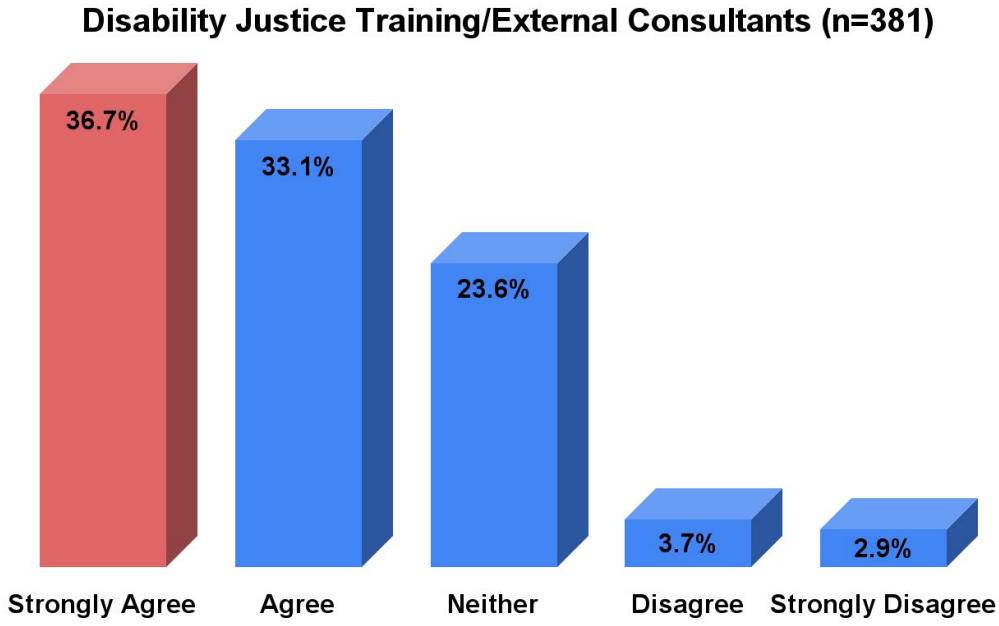
Participants were also asked to select their level of agreement on whether the County offers training on disability justice. **Disability justice** is a social justice movement that focuses on examining disability and ableism as they relate to other forms of systemic oppression and identity such as race, class and gender.[6]

Survey responses to this question closely reflected the agreement levels from the previous question on disability rights. Of the 381 responses, a slightly greater number (44%) selected "Neither agree nor Disagree." Similarly, over one-third (36%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while less than 20% agreed or strongly agreed. These findings appear to relate to the intermittent availability of trainings about disability justice, which was last available through a 2023 contracted collaboration with Uprise Collective, a local "Black and Indigenous nonprofit organization led by and for BIPOC, Queer/Trans and Disabled community.

6 Jampel, C. (2018). Intersections of disability justice, racial justice and environmental justice. Environmental Sociology, 4(1), 122–135. https://doi-org.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/10.1080/23251042.2018.14244



Survey participants were also asked their agreement levels to the statement, "**The county should develop intersectional, disability justice training with external consultants who have experience with disabilities and disability justice work.**" While the County did produce this kind of training in partnership with external partners, most recently in 2023, funding for this purpose has not been allocated since FY 2023.



Of the 381 respondents, 70% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Only 6% of survey participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Analysis by demographic categories suggests that participants who reported mobility issues were significantly more likely to disagree with this statement (p=.043).

Professional Development

The survey asked participants about their perceptions of their access to and awareness of professional development opportunities at the County. The first question in the section asked participants to share their agreement level with the statement, "**I believe I have the same opportunities as my colleagues to engage in professional development activities in the county.**"

Of the 381 participants who responded to this question, over half (57%) agreed or strongly agreed, indicating a sense of equality regarding professional development opportunities. Nonetheless, 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 22% selected that they "Neither agreed nor disagreed," indicating a possible need to increase awareness of these activities or enhance access. Statistical analysis for this question did not uncover any significant findings by demographics.

In addition to capturing agreement levels on access to and awareness of professional development activities and opportunities, the survey also asked participants to identify the types of professional development resources available to them. Of the five response options provided, participants could select all that apply:

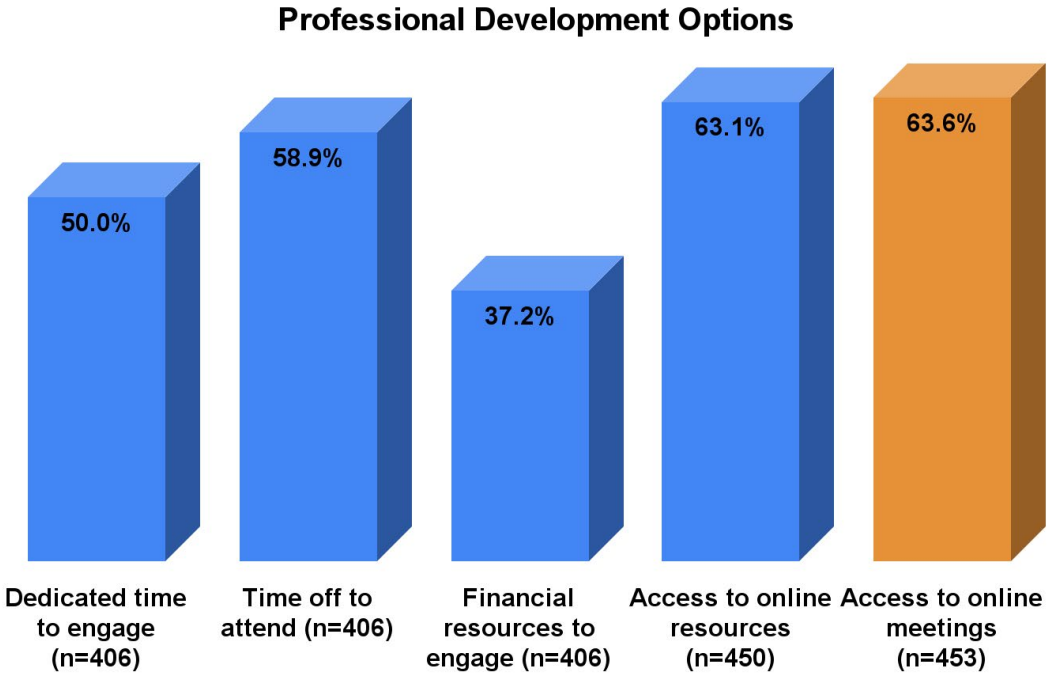
- Dedicated time to engage in professional development (i.e., time during the work day)
- Time off to attend professional development opportunities (i.e., conferences, workshops, ERG activities)
- Financial resources to engage in professional development opportunities (i.e., compensation for registration fees, course fees, etc.)
- Access to online resources (i.e., webinars, toolkits)
- Access to online meetings, trainings, and events

An "Other" option through which participants were able to respond with free-form text was also provided.

Of the five response options, "Access to online meetings, trainings, and events" was the most commonly selected at 64%, closely followed by "Access to online resources" at 63%. The professional development resource option least frequently selected was "Financial resources to engage," at 37%.

Survey results were analyzed to see which groups of employees felt they had time for professional development. In some cases, smaller racial and ethnic

groups were combined into a broader “employees of color” category so the data could be analyzed accurately. Overall, employees of color were significantly less likely to report having dedicated time for professional development (p=.045).



When larger racial and ethnic groups were examined separately, respondents who identified as Hispanic/Latino/a/x and those who identified as White were also less likely to feel they had dedicated time for these opportunities, p=.023 and p=.018 respectively.

Differences were also found based on sexual orientation. Respondents who identified as heterosexual were significantly more likely to report having dedicated time to engage in professional development opportunities (p=.007) while those who selected “Other” sexual orientation were significantly less likely to report having time to dedicate to professional development opportunities (p=.048).

When looking at disability status and employee resource groups (ERG), respondents with ADHD were significantly more likely to report having dedicated time to engage in professional development opportunities (p=.040). Members of the Immigrants and Refugees ERG also reported significantly more access to dedicated time for engaging in professional development opportunities (p=.030).

Results varied by job type, as well. Middle managers and program managers were significantly more likely to report having time to engage in professional development opportunities (p=.036), as were employees in regular represented and regular non-represented positions (p=.003).

Similar patterns were found when employees were asked specifically about "time off to attend professional development opportunities." Employees of color were significantly less likely to report that time off was available to them (p=.043), and this difference was also seen among respondents who identified as Hispanic and Latino/a/x (p=.040).

Respondents who selected "Other" under the sexual orientation demographic category were also significantly less likely to report not having time off to attend professional development opportunities (p=.001). Conversely, respondents with a health-related disability were significantly more likely to report having time off to attend these opportunities (p=.040).

Survey results also examined financial resources available for professional development. Respondents who identified as Gender Expansive/Gender Queer were less likely to select this option (p=.037). In contrast, respondents who identified as having ADHD (p=.044) or a mental health condition (p=.026) were more likely to report that financial resources were available to them.

Access to online resources for professional development opportunities also varied across demographic groups. Employees of color were less likely to report having access to online resources (p=.002), including respondents who identified as Hispanic and Latino/a/x (p=.043). Respondents who identified as White were more likely to report having access to online resources for professional development opportunities (p=.025). Respondents who identified as Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer (p=.013) or selected "Other" (p=.031) were less likely to select this option, while respondents who identified as heterosexual (p=.046) or gay (p=.030) were more likely to report access to online resources for professional development.

When analyzed by job type, regular represented, regular non-represented, and non-supervising/frontline staff were more likely to report having access to online resources (p=.000). Similar patterns appeared when respondents were asked about "Access to online meetings, trainings, and events" for professional

development. Employees of color were less likely to report having access (p=.004), while respondents who identified as White were more likely to report having access (p=.049). Respondents who identified as Two-Spirit or Indigiqueer (p=.021) or “Other” (p=.028) were less likely to report having access to online meetings, trainings, and events for professional development.

Respondents with a health related disability were more likely to report having access to these online resources (p=.034). Middle managers and program managers were also more likely to report access (p=.038), as were regular represented, regular ron-represented, and non-supervising/frontline staff (p=.000).



An illustration of the six steps of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation process at Multnomah County.

ADA Accommodations

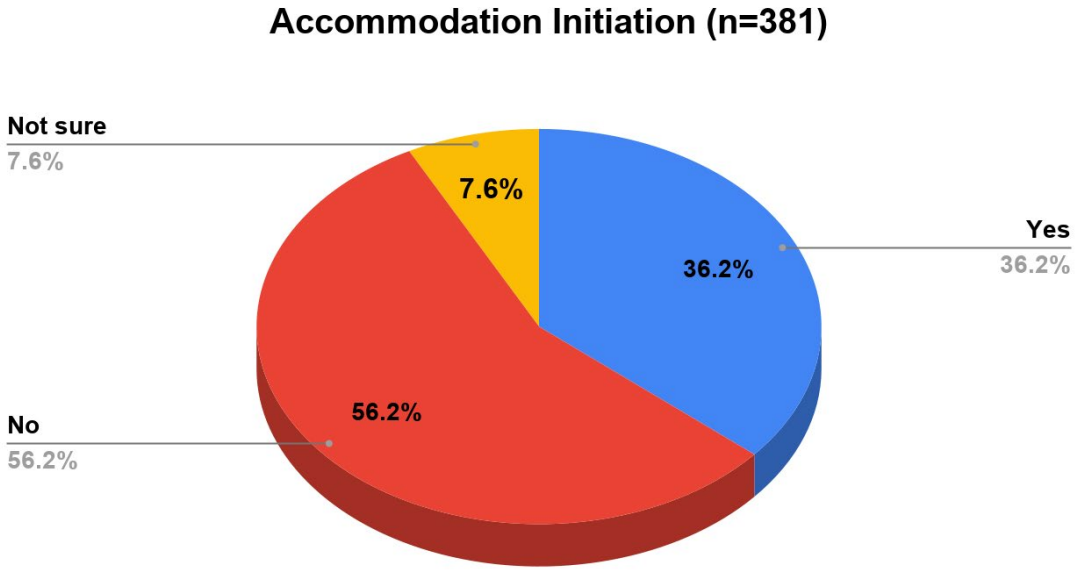
The last section of the survey explored survey participants’ experiences with the County Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation process.

The County’s process of obtaining an ADA accommodation starts with the employee, who submits a formal request to Human Resources via a verbal or written request. The employee then works with Human Resources and their medical provider to submit the requisite medical documentation.

This is followed by the next step, known as the “interactive process” — the legal term for the discussions and individualized evaluation that happen between the employee, their manager, HR, and the medical provider. After reviewing potential accommodation options, the County will choose an accommodation to try first, and an approval letter is sent to the employee. The employee’s manager is responsible for implementing the approved accommodation in the work unit.

The employee can withdraw from this process at any time. All paperwork and medical information is kept confidential by HR.

The first question of this section of the survey asked respondents whether they had ever begun an accommodation process at the County. Of the 381 respondents to this question, over half of respondents (56%) said they had not begun an accommodation process. This was followed by 36% who had begun the accommodation process, and 8% who were unsure.



Analysis by demographic categories indicates that respondents who identified as White were significantly more likely to have begun an accommodation request (p=.045). Additionally, respondents who said they had a health-related disability were significantly less likely to have begun an accommodation request (p=.003).

Survey participants who affirmatively selected that they had begun an accommodation request were also asked to describe the outcome of the request. This question provided five response options that reflect the official accommodation outcomes designated by Human Resources:

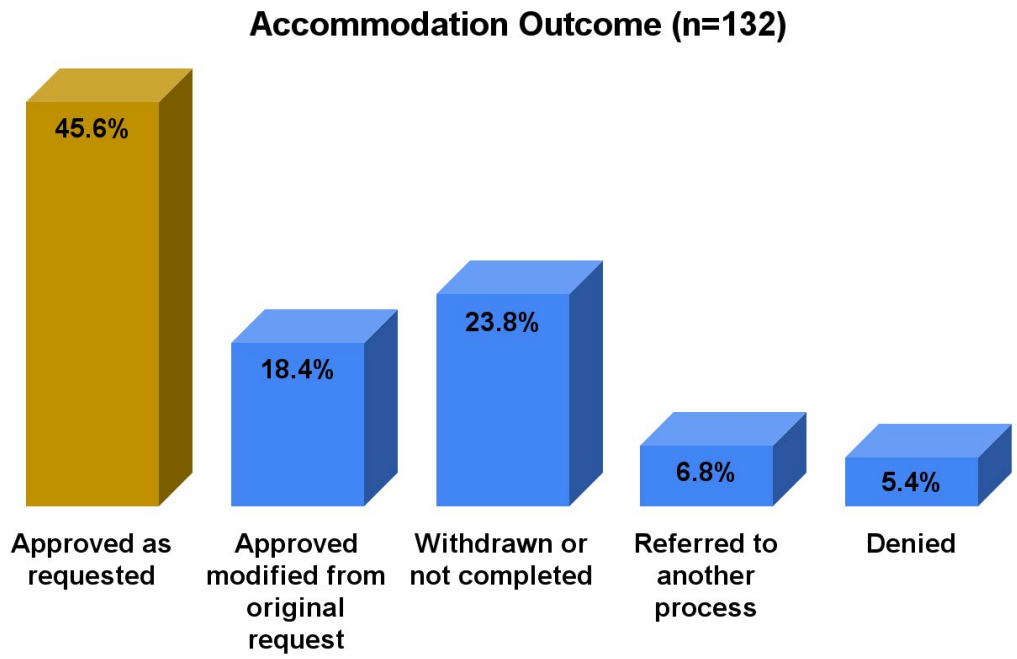
- Approved as requested
- Approved modified from original request
- Denied
- Referred to another process
- Withdrawn or not completed

Accommodation Outcomes Designated by Human Resources

- **Approved as requested:** an accommodation that is approved the same as it was requested
- **Approved modified from original request:** an accommodation that is approved after an alternative effective accommodation has been found
- **Denied:** an accommodation request that could not be implemented or poses an undue hardship
- **Referred to another process:** an accommodation request that can be met outside of the formal ADA accommodation process
- **Withdrawn or not completed:** an accommodation request that was withdrawn by the employee or not completed

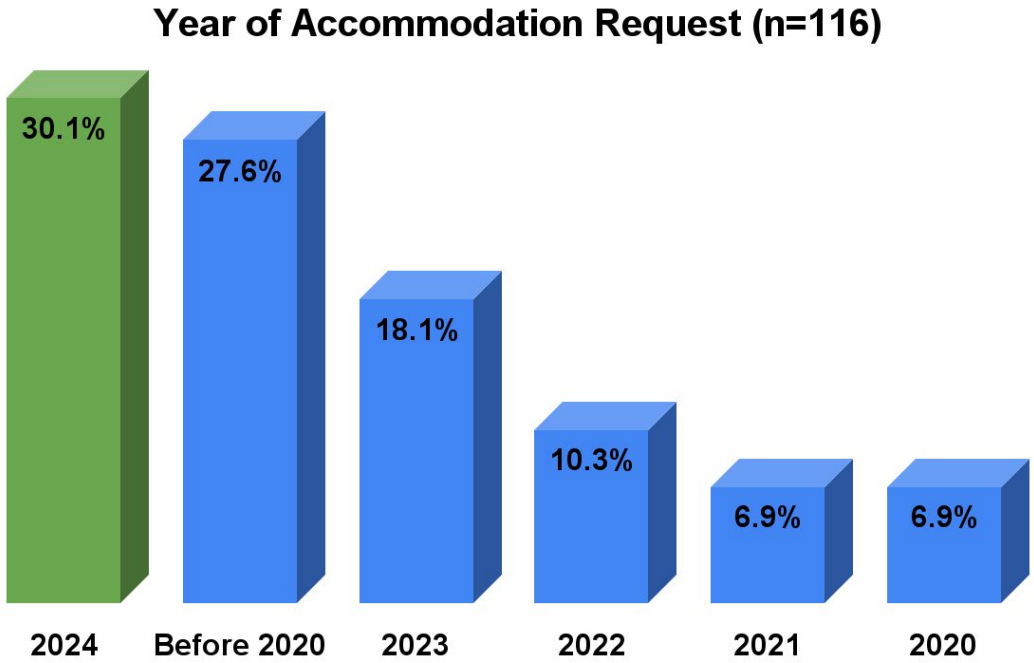
Of the 132 responses provided for this question, 67% of the respondents selected that their request was approved either as requested or with a modification from the original request. This was followed by 20% of respondents who either withdrew or did not complete their accommodation request, 7% who were referred to another process, and 6% who were denied. Analysis by demographic categories did not result in any statistically significant differences across these outcomes.

Of the 132 responses provided for this question, 67% of the respondents selected that their request was approved either as requested or with a modification from the original request.



Respondents who completed an accommodation request were asked to provide the year in which they completed their request process: either before 2020, the year Office of Diversity and Equity hired a Disability Specialist position to partner with Human Resources to streamline the ADA accommodation process, or in any of the years following, inclusive of 2020.

Findings indicate that most respondents' accommodation requests were completed in 2024 (30%). This was followed by requests completed "Before 2020" (28%) and 2023 (18%). Analysis by demographics did not yield any statistically significant results.



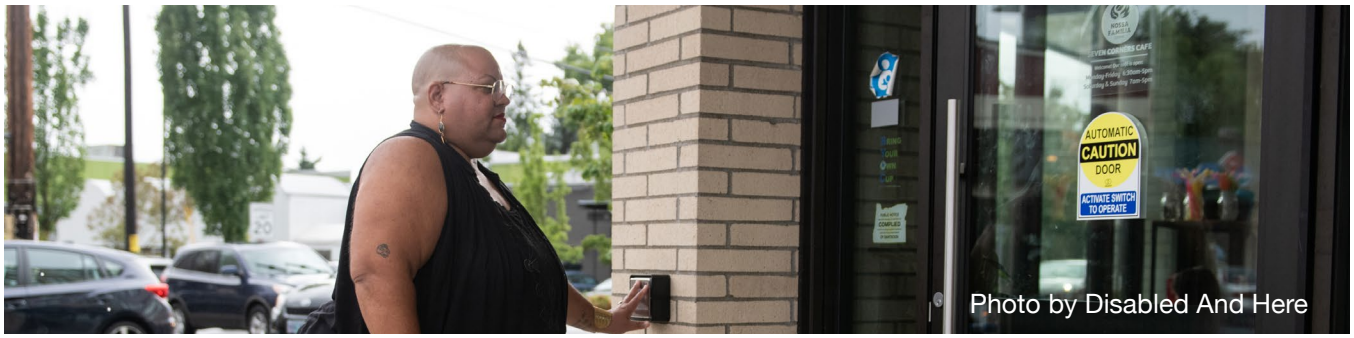


Photo by Disabled And Here

Survey participants who reported beginning an accommodation request but not completing it were asked to select the top three reasons why. The response options for this question were selected from the most common reasons identified in previous County research efforts exploring this topic, and covered perceptions regarding the level of support, the process itself, and the implications of completing a request:

- Lack of support on the ADA process
- Delays with medical provider
- Poor communication from departmental human resources office/staff
- Process was overwhelming and took too much time
- Process was too invasive
- Lack of support from my manager/supervisor
- Fear of stigma or implications on my career at the county

Respondents were also able to select “Other,” through which they could share a free-form response, as well a “Not applicable” option.

Participants ranked “Process was too overwhelming or took too much time” as the most common reason for not completing an accommodation. This was followed by “lack of support on the ADA process,” then “Delays with medical provider.”

Respondents who did not request an accommodation despite needing one were asked to provide a reason why. There were five main response options:

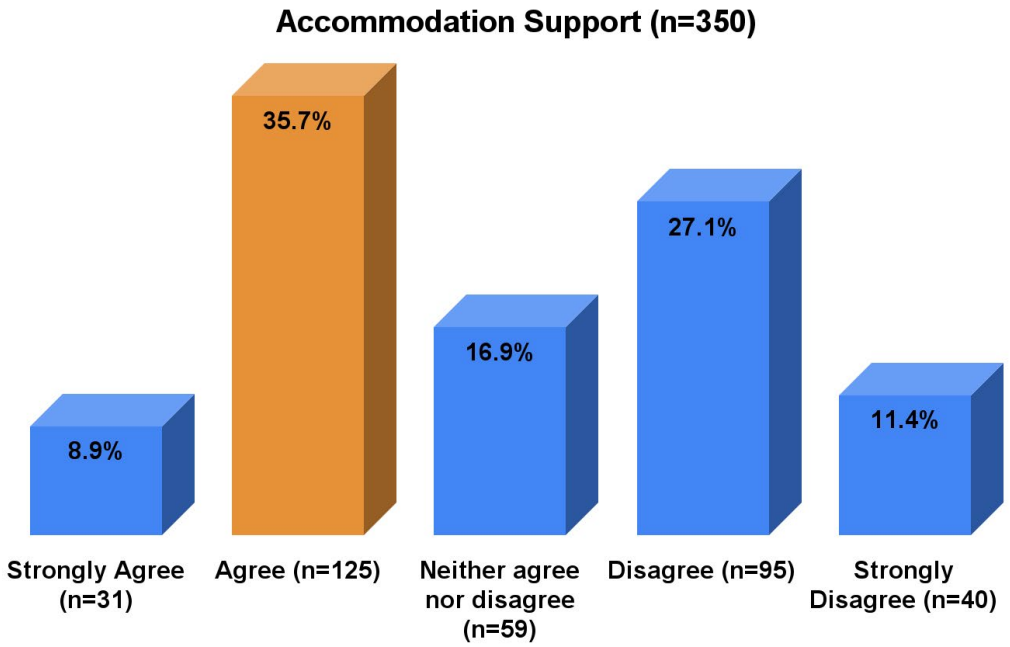
- Process was too overwhelming or took too much time
- Lack of support on the ADA process
- Fear of stigma or implications on my career at the county
- Disability was managed with work-from-home schedule
- I do not know if my disability qualifies

Respondents were also able to select “Other,” through which they could share a free-form response, as well a “Not applicable” option.

Of the 222 respondents to this question, 26% selected “I do not know if my disability qualifies.” This was followed by “Fear of stigma or implications on my career at the County” at 16% and “Process was too overwhelming or took too much time” at 15%.

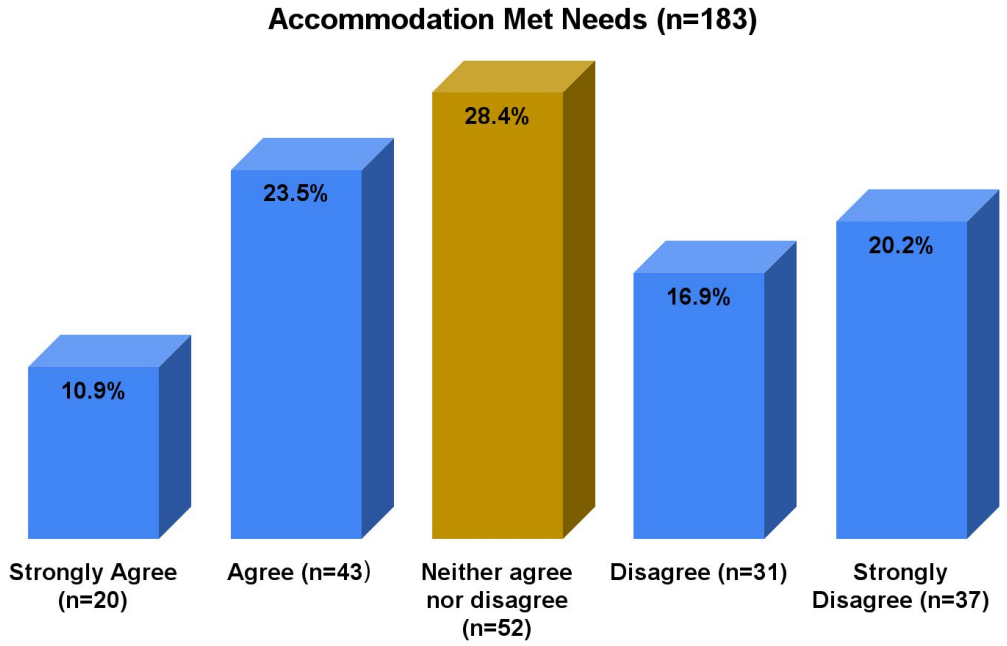
Almost a quarter (21%) of respondents selected the “Other” response. Of the submitted comments, the majority pertained to several distinct themes: the level of support they perceived from their current management, the capacity to manage their disability without requiring an official accommodation, unsatisfactory or inconclusive interactions with Human Resources, and instances where management addressed their needs without formal accommodation.

Survey participants were also asked to rate their agreement level (strongly disagree to strongly agree) with the statement: “**I know where to get support for completing an ADA accommodation request.**” Of the 350 responses to the question, 45% agreed or strongly agreed, while 39% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Less than 20% remained neutral to the question.



Analysis by demographic categories indicates that White participants were significantly more likely to report knowing where to go to get support for completing an ADA accommodation request (p=.038).

Participants were also asked about the extent to which they agreed that the accommodation process had met their needs. Responses for this question were almost evenly split between agreement groupings: 37% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 34% agreed or strongly agreed, and 28% remained neutral. There were no statistically significant differences by demographic categories for this question.

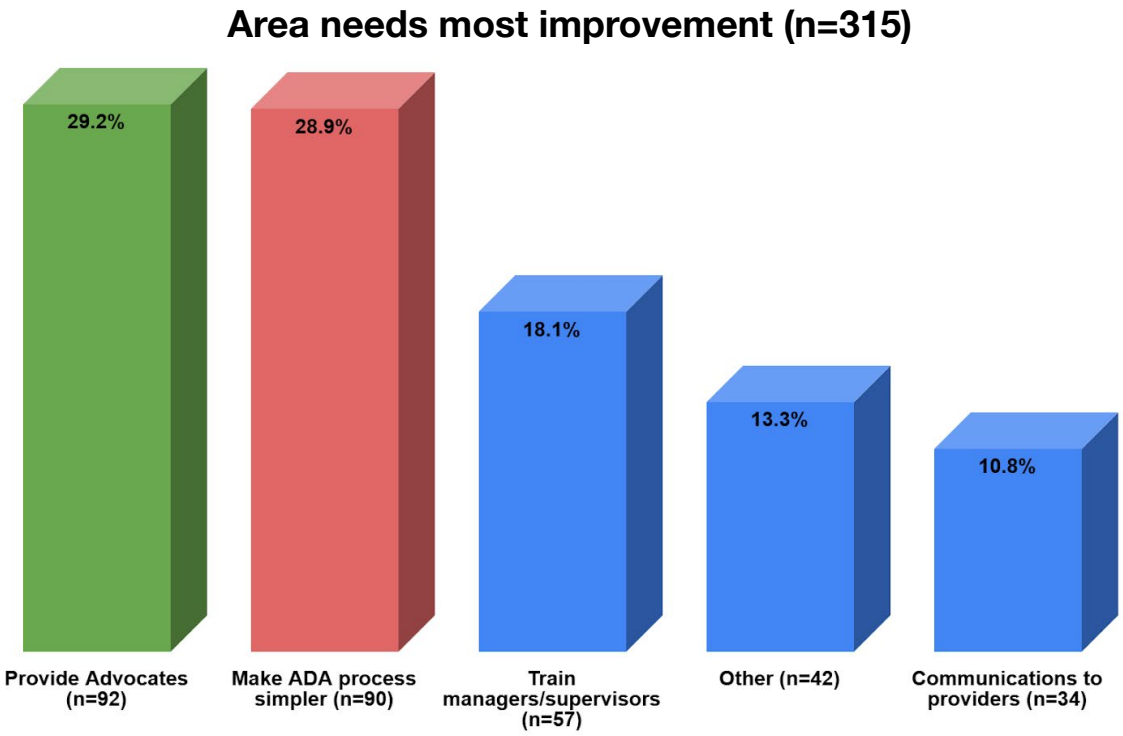


The final question in the ADA accommodations section of the survey gave participants five response options to the question: "**What is the most important part of the ADA accommodation request experience that needs to be improved?**":

- Make the ADA accommodation request process simpler
- Make the ADA accommodation request process faster
- Provide advocates or support staff to assist County employees with completing an ADA accommodation request
- Create communication pathways between County human resources staff and medical providers to speed up medical documentation
- Training managers and supervisors on the process and how to implement accommodations in the work unit

Respondents could also select an "Other" option that allowed for a free-form response.

The most frequently selected option was “Provide advocates of support staff to assist County employees with completing an ADA accommodation request” at 29.2%. This was followed by “Make the ADA accommodation request process simpler” at 28.9% and “Training managers and supervisors on the process and how to implement accommodations in the work unit” at 18%.



Recommendations

Based on the findings of the Disability Experience Survey, the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) submits the following recommendations to enhance the experience of employees with disabilities at the County.

1. Enhance Trust and Support in Management-Employee Relationships

- **Implement comprehensive training for supervisors and managers**: Training should focus on fostering trust, respecting disability privacy, and ensuring equitable treatment after disclosure. Specific attention should be given to addressing microaggressions and preventing the reduction of professional development opportunities. The trainings should emphasize open communication and proactive support, especially for employees with ADHD, mental health-related disabilities, mobility-related disabilities, and autism. These efforts would complement the "Compliance and Support" training — available quarterly through the Learning Journey for Manager Success track — during which the ODE's Disability Resource Specialist provides an overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and how employees access accommodations at the County, as well as the "Disability and Leave Laws" manager training delivered by the County Attorney's Office. An additional "ADA Accommodations: What is the Manager's Role?" training for managers and supervisors was developed in collaboration between ODE and the Central HR Organizational Change team in 2023, was offered through a department-by-department "roadshow" and then quarterly through 2024. It was last delivered in May 2025.
- **Develop clear guidelines and support for disclosure decisions**: Provide managers with resources and protocols to help them respectfully handle disability disclosures, particularly for Hispanic and Latino/a/x, non-binary, and asexual employees, who reported less positive experiences.
- **Address negative impacts of disclosure**: Create specific interventions for employees who experience microaggressions or reduced professional development opportunities after disclosure, with a focus on supporting employees of color, particularly Black/African American and Hispanic and Latino/a/x individuals.

2. Foster Inclusive Work Environments, including Improved Co-worker Interactions

- **Promote inclusive work unit activities**: Continue to encourage and provide resources (such as these accessibility guidelines for events) for work units to create activities that are accommodating to all staff, regardless of disability status. Targeted outreach and support about this effort may be beneficial for Family Advocates of Multnomah (FAM) Employee Resource Group (ERG) members and those who prefer not to answer questions about sexual orientation.
- **Address negative co-worker reactions to disclosure**: Develop initiatives to improve understanding of disabilities and reduce negative interactions for employees with disabilities. These efforts should be implemented with a particular focus on Black/African American and Hispanic and Latino/a/x employees, as well as Including Disability in Equity and Access (IDEA) ERG members, who were more likely to report decreased engagement, microaggressions, and a decline in relationships.
- **Provide specific support for certain disability types**: Implement awareness campaigns or resources to improve co-worker communication and reduce microaggressions experienced by employees with autism, mental health conditions, and learning disabilities.

3. Strengthen Recruitment and Retention Strategies

- **Integrate people with disabilities into County-level decision-making**: Actively involve individuals with disabilities in the formulation and review of County policies, budget allocation decisions, and strategic planning with regard to decisions impacting employees with disabilities. This aligns with the top-ranked strategy identified by survey respondents.
- **Mandate and evaluate manager/supervisor training on accommodations**: Ensure all managers and supervisors receive ongoing trainings on how to effectively implement accommodations and create inclusive work environments, and make these trainings a key component of their performance evaluations to ensure accountability and compliance.

4. Enhance Training, Education, and Professional Development Opportunities

- **Develop and implement comprehensive disability justice training**: Create intersectional trainings that address disability and ableism in relation to other forms of systemic oppression (e.g., race, class, and gender). These trainings should be available to all employees and developed with external consultants who possess lived experience and expertise in disability justice, as strongly recommended by respondents.

- **Increase awareness of and access to disability rights training**: Address the neutrality and disagreement regarding the availability of disability rights training by taking steps to ensure all employees — especially those with mental health conditions — are aware of existing trainings about their rights under the ADA.
- **Mitigate inequitable access to professional development opportunities**: Address disparities in access to dedicated time, time off, financial resources, and online resources/meetings for professional development, particularly among Hispanic and Latino/a/x and other employees of color, as well as those who identity as Gender Expansive/Gender Queer, Two-Spirit/ Indigiqueer, and "Other" sexual orientations.
- **Tailor professional development support**: Recognize and address the differing professional development support needs of various demographic groups. For example, prioritize providing employees of color with additional support for accessing online resources and meetings, ensuring consistent access to online meetings, and providing dedicated time or time off to engage in professional development opportunities.

5. Streamline and Improve the ADA Accommodation Request Process

- **Standardize and simplify the ADA accommodation process**: Almost one-third of employees who had begun an accommodation indicated that the ADA accommodation process needed to be simplified. Doing so would require providing clearer information on qualifying disabilities, reducing stigma, and offering advocacy or support staff to assist employees throughout the process.
- **Increase awareness and understanding of the ADA accommodation process**: Implement communication campaigns to inform all employees — particularly those with health-related disabilities and non-White employees — of available resources, information about how to initiate an accommodation request, and where to find support.
- **Address reasons for non-completion of accommodation requests**: Focus on improving manager support, streamlining medical provider communication, and demystifying the qualification process for disabilities to reduce the number of incomplete or withdrawn accommodation requests.
- **Provide advocates and support staff**: Implement a system where employees can access advocates or support staff to guide them through the ADA accommodation process. This change was identified by respondents as the most important area for improvement.
- **Conduct regular reviews of ADA accommodation process outcomes**: Establish an accommodation requests and outcomes system review timeline to consistently identify systemic issues and areas for improvement.

Glossary

Disability Concepts

Accommodation Process: The steps a Multnomah County employee takes to request and receive reasonable accommodation under the ADA.

Accommodation Request: The initial submission of an accommodation need in the accommodation process.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): A comprehensive federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, and state/local government services. (Source: ada.gov)

Attention Deficit/ADHD: A common neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and/or impulsivity. (Source: psychiatry.com)

Disability Justice: A social justice movement that focuses on examining disability and ableism as they relate to other forms of systemic oppression and identity such as race, class, and gender.

Disability Rights: Protections afforded under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal and state laws.

Interactive Process: The legal term for the discussions and individualized evaluation that happen between the employee, their manager, Human Resources, and the medical provider during the ADA accommodation process.

Mental Health Disability: A disability or diagnosis under the category of “mental health” (e.g. depression, anxiety, bipolar, etc.)

Reasonable Accommodation: A modification or adjustment to a job, work environment, or policy that allows a person with a qualifying disability to apply for a position, perform essential job functions, or enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. (Source: U.S. Department of Labor)

Stigma: A mark of shame or disgrace that causes people to reject or look down on someone or something (especially common for invisible or mental health disabilities).

Data Analysis

Closed-ended Questions: Questions that have pre-determined options for respondents to select as responses (e.g., Likert scales and drop down menus).

Data Cleaning: The process of identifying and fixing or removing inaccurate, corrupted, incomplete, or duplicate data from a dataset.

Descriptive Statistics: Statistics that illustrate the distribution of demographic characteristics across the survey participant sample.

Inferential Statistical Analysis: Comparison across demographic groups (e.g., race/ethnicity) that assesses if a relationship or pattern exists in how members of one group responded compared to others.

Open-ended Questions: Questions for which respondents can type in a unique or longer response.

Qualtrics: A cloud-based platform used to build, distribute, and analyze surveys and other feedback mechanisms.

REALD: Stands for Stands for Race, Ethnicity, and Language, Disability. REALD is a set of standardized questions, used often by the State of Oregon, that breaks out racial and ethnic categories into seven main categories with numerous subcategories under each.

Statistical Significance: Indicates whether a relationship is found to be a direct result of the demographics of the respondents, or if it's due to chance. Statistically significant findings are determined by, and reported as, a p-value. If the p-value is equal to or less than .05, then it is considered statistically significant. If the p-value is greater than .05, it is considered not to be statistically significant, meaning there is no causal relationship between the demographics of the respondents and how they answered the questions.

Survey Administration: The process of creating questions, promoting engagement, disseminating the survey, analyzing the data, and reporting out survey results.

Thematic Analysis: A process through which the data is examined by identifying and interpreting patterns.

Demographic Information

Demographics: Statistical characteristics related to facets of identity (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender identity, disability status, job type, etc.).

Employees of Color: Employees who identify as Black, Indigenous. or other People of Color.

Gender Expansive/Gender Queer: Individuals whose gender expression differs from traditional gender-based stereotypes. Gender non-conforming or gender expansive individuals may or may not identify as transgender, and vice-versa.

Gender Identity: Every individual's internal, deeply held sense of one's gender, which may be the same or different from one's sex assigned at birth.

Hispanic and Latino/a/x: This notation is designed to make the language more inclusive, acknowledging people of all genders who identify as being of Hispanic or Latin descent.

Sexual Orientation: A person's identity related to the gender(s) they are attracted to (e.g., heterosexual, bisexual, queer, gay, etc.).

Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer: Two-Spirit is a term used to describe an Indigenous person who embodies both masculine and feminine qualities, often encompassing a spiritual and gender identity outside the binary. (Source: Point of Pride) The term "Indigiqueer" honors and celebrates one's sexual and romantic orientation, as well as their gender identity and expression as they both relate to one's indigeneity. (Source: Indigenous Pride LA)

Multnomah County Terminology

Countywide Employee Survey: A general survey that is distributed to all County staff by the Department of County Management Evaluation and Research Unit every other year.

Disability Equity WESP Workgroup: A group of employees with disability experience that met in 2023 to submit recommendations for the WESP Renewal process.

Employee resource groups (ERGs): Employee-led groups where employees gather to focus on specific identities or shared lived experiences (e.g., race, disability, family status, etc.). (See "List of All Multnomah County Employee Resource Groups" inset for a full list of ERGs.)

IDEA Employee Resource Group: The Including Disability in Equity and Access (IDEA) Employee Resource Group is for employees with disabilities and allies.

Hybrid Telework: A work schedule that is some combination of working remotely and in the office.

Job Type: The nature and positionality of the work an employee does (e.g., frontline, middle manager, executive, etc.).

Microaggressions: Regular, indirect, and subtle words and actions that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes about members of a marginalized group. (Source: AFSCME Local 88 contract)

Professional Development Opportunities: Access to training, conferences, certifications, webinars, leadership programs, etc.

Regular Non-represented: A regular status employee who is neither an executive or represented by a union.

Regular Represented: A regular status employee who is represented by a union.

Routine Telework: A work schedule that is exclusively remote.

Survey Advisory Group (SAG): A group of employees that helped create the Disability Experience Survey and analyze results.

Work Unit Activities: An umbrella term that includes activities and opportunities such as team meetings, meals, celebrations, trainings, and other team-oriented professional development or connection events.

Workforce Equity Strategic Plan (WESP): An internal strategic plan focused on workforce equity at Multnomah County.

Appendix

A: Survey Questions and Response Options

Demographic Questions

1. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic identity? Please check **ALL** that apply.
   - ☐ Black and African American
   - ☐ African American
   - ☐ Afro-Caribbean
   - ☐ Ethiopian
   - ☐ Somali
   - ☐ Other Black or African

   Asian
   - ☐ Asian Indian
   - ☐ Cambodian
   - ☐ Chinese
   - ☐ Communities of Myanmar
   - ☐ Filipino/a
   - ☐ Hmong
   - ☐ Japanese
   - ☐ Korean
   - ☐ Laotian
   - ☐ South Asian
   - ☐ Vietnamese
   - ☐ Other Asian

   American Indian and Alaska Native
   - ☐ American Indian
   - ☐ Alaska Native
   - ☐ Canadian Inuit, Metis, or First Nation
   - ☐ Indigenous Mexican, Central American, or South American

Hispanic and Latino/a/x

☐ Central American

☐ Mexican

☐ South American

☐ Other Hispanic or Latino/a/x

Middle Eastern/North African

☐ Middle Eastern

☐ North African

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander

☐ Chamoru (Chamorro)

☐ Marshallese

☐ Communities of the Micronesian Region

☐ Native Hawaiian

☐ Samoan

☐ Other Pacific Islander

White

☐ Eastern European

☐ Slavic

☐ Western European

☐ Other White

2. Which of the following gender identity categories best describes you?
   - Agender or No Gender
   - Female or Woman
   - Femme
   - Gender Expansive or Gender Non-Conforming or Genderqueer
   - Male or Man
   - Non-Binary
   - Questioning or I Don’t Know
   - Transgender Male or Trans Man or Transmasculine
   - Transgender Female or Trans Woman, or Transfeminine
   - Two-Spirit or Indigiqueer
   - Other (text box)
   - Prefer Not to Answer

3. Which sexual orientation best describes you?
    - Asexual
    - Bisexual
    - Heterosexual
    - Lesbian
    - Queer
    - Questioning or I don't know
    - Prefer not to answer
    - Other (text box)
4. Do you identify as a person with a disability?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Prefer not to answer
5. How would you describe your disability? (Select all that apply.)
    - ☐ Attention deficit
    - ☐ Autism
    - ☐ Blind or visually impaired
    - ☐ Deaf or hard of hearing
    - ☐ Health-related disability
    - ☐ Learning disability
    - ☐ Mental health condition
    - ☐ Mobility-related disability
    - ☐ Speech-related disability
    - ☐ Other (please specify, optional)
6. What Employee Resource Group(s) do you participate in?
    - ☐ Employees of Color (EOC)
    - ☐ Family Advocates of MultCo (FAM)
    - ☐ IDEA: Including Disability in Equity & Access
    - ☐ Immigrants and Refugees
    - ☐ Mamuk Tillikums
    - ☐ Managers of Color (MOC)
    - ☐ Prism

- ☐ Queer and Trans People of Color (QTPOC)
- ☐ Veterans
- ☐ Vital Aging Network (VAN)- inactive

7. What is your job level?
   - Elected Official
   - Elected Official Staff
   - Limited Duration
   - On-Call
   - Other (Intern, Volunteer, Contractor)
   - Regular Non-Represented
   - Regular Represented
   - Seasonal
   - Temporary (with or without benefits)
   - Don't know
   - Decline to state
8. What is your employee type?
   - Non-Supervising/Frontline Staff
   - Frontline Supervisor
   - Middle/Program Manager
   - Senior Manager
   - Department Executive Team
   - Directors
   - Elected Officials
   - Don't know
   - Decline to state
   - Additional Category
9. What is your department?
   - DA - District Attorney
   - DCA - Department of County Assets
   - DCHS - Department of County Human Services
   - DCJ - Department of Community Justice
   - DCM - Department of County Management

- DCS -Department of Community Services
- HD – Health
- JOHS - Joint Office of Homeless Services
- LIB – Library
- MCSO - Multnomah County Sheriff's Office
- NOND - Non-departmental
- Don't know
- Decline to state

10. What is your current telework status?
    - On-site/Not teleworking
    - Hybrid telework work schedule
    - Ad hoc telework schedule
    - Full-time/Routine telework
    - Don't know
    - Decline to state

Sense of Belonging

This set of questions are asking you to consider your experiences towards management respecting your privacy (regarding disability disclosure) and perceived changes in behavior after disclosure.

11. You trust your supervisor to respect your privacy regarding your disability/ disabilities status.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12. In your personal experience, has your manager(s) respected your decision regarding disclosure of your disability to others.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. In your personal experience, once you disclosed your disability status to management, did any of the following occur. (Select all that apply)
    - ☐ Communication decreased
    - ☐ Non-requested changes in scope of work
    - ☐ Reduced opportunities for professional development (e.g., training access, leadership roles, access to resources)
    - ☐ Microaggressions related to your disability/disabilities
    - ☐ Relationships with management improved
    - ☐ I was informed of resources available to me (e.g., ADA accommodation process)
    - ☐ Other (followed by an open-ended question)
    - ☐ None of the above
    - ☐ Not applicable

These next set of questions are asking you to consider your experience with your work unit colleagues' behaviors after disclosing your disability/disabilities status. If any of the questions do not apply to you you can select "Not applicable".

14. In your personal experience, once you disclosed your disability status to your co-workers, did any of the following occur. (Select all that apply)
    - ☐ Communication decreased
    - ☐ Microaggressions related to your disability/disabilities
    - ☐ Decreased engagement to partake in work unit activities
    - ☐ Other (followed by an open-ended question)
    - ☐ Relationships with co-workers improved
    - ☐ I was informed of resources available to me (e.g., ADA accommodation process)
    - ☐ Other (followed by an open-ended question)
    - ☐ None of the above
    - ☐ Not applicable
15. In personal experience, your work unit creates activities that are accommodating to all staff, regardless of their disability status.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

These next set of questions are asking you to consider your experience at the county after disclosing your disability/disabilities status to peers. If any of the questions do not apply to you, you can select “Not applicable”.

16. In your personal experience, the county creates activities that are accommodating to all staff, regardless of their disability status.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

17. In your time working for Multnomah County, you experienced one or more microaggressions related to a disability(ies).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

18. In your time working for Multnomah County, you witnessed someone experience a microaggression related to their disability(ies).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Recruitment & Retention

19. Of the strategies listed below, which are the top three that would improve recruitment and retention for county employees with disabilities.
    - ☐ Infuse long-term disability justice in county policies and the budget process.
    - ☐ Conduct a review of the ADA accommodations process and request outcomes (i.e., tracking accommodation request outcomes).
    - ☐ Include people with disabilities in decision-making on county policies, budgets, etc.
    - ☐ Make the ADA accommodation process more supportive and less cumbersome.
    - ☐ Provide different disability type options in Workday.
    - ☐ Train managers/supervisors on strategies to help make work units more accommodating to staff with disabilities.

Training/Education & Professional Development

This next set of questions will address your views on disability and disability training opportunities at the county. Specifically, questions will ask you about disability rights and disability justice. You will also be asked about professional development opportunities for staff with disabilities.

Disability rights are protected under the Federal civil rights law Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which "prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, State and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications."[7]

Disability justice is a social justice movement which focuses on examining disability and ableism as they relate to other forms of systemic oppression and identity such as race, class and gender.[8]

20. The county offers training that discusses disability rights.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

21. The county offers training on disability justice.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

22. The county should develop intersectional, disability justice training with external consultants who have experience with disabilities and disability justice work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

23. I believe I have the same opportunities as my colleagues to engage in professional development activities in the county.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7 ADA.gov, 2020

8 Jampel, C. (2018). Intersections of disability justice, racial justice and environmental justice. Environmental Sociology, 4(1), 122–135. https://doi-org.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/10.1080/23251042.2018.1424497

24. I have a clear understanding of the professional development opportunities that are available to all County employees.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

25. The following professional development opportunities are available to me in my work unit. (Select all that apply)
    - ☐ Dedicated time to engage in professional development (i.e., time during the work day)
    - ☐ Time off to attend professional development opportunities (i.e., conferences, workshops, ERG activities)
    - ☐ Financial resources to engage in professional development opportunities (i.e., compensation for registration fees, course fees, etc.)
    - ☐ Access to online resources (i.e., webinars, toolkits)
    - ☐ Access to online meetings, trainings, and events
    - ☐ Other (please describe):

ADA Accommodations

The following questions will explore your experience with the County accommodation process and any suggestions for improvement. If you have not begun an accommodation request at the County you can reply “No” which will take you to the next set of relevant questions.

26. Have you ever begun an accommodation request at the county? (Skip logic to Q30 if “No”)
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure
27. What was your accommodation request outcome?
    - Approved as requested
    - Approved modified from original request
    - Denied
    - Referred to another process
    - Withdrawn or not completed

28. Select the year when you completed an accommodation:
    - Before 2020
    - 2020
    - 2021
    - 2022
    - 2023
    - 2024

29. If you have begun an ADA accommodation request, but not completed it, what were the three primary reasons for not completing.
    - ☐ Lack of support on the ADA process
    - ☐ Delays with medical provider
    - ☐ Poor communication from departmental human resources office/staff
    - ☐ Process was overwhelming and took too much time
    - ☐ Process was too invasive
    - ☐ Lack of support from my manager/supervisor
    - ☐ Fear of stigma or implications on my career at the county
    - ☐ Other (please describe):
    - ☐ Not applicable

30. If you did not complete an accommodation request but needed one, what was the primary reason.
    - Process was too overwhelming or took too much time
    - Lack of support on the ADA process
    - Fear of stigma or implications on my career at the county
    - Disability was managed with work-from-home (WFH) work schedule
    - I do not know if my disability qualifies
    - Not applicable
    - Other (please describe):

31. I know where to get support for completing an ADA accommodation request.

Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neither Agree or Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**

32. The accommodation process met my needs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

33. What is the most important part of the ADA accommodation request experience that needs to be improved?
    - Make the ADA accommodation request process simpler
    - Make the ADA accommodation request process faster
    - Provide advocates or support staff to assist county employees with completing an ADA accommodation request
    - Create communication pathways between county human resources staff and medical providers to speed up medical documentation
    - Training managers and supervisors on the process and how to implement accommodations in the work unit
    - Other (please describe):

34. Do you have additional comments about your experience as a Multnomah County Employee with a disability? Please bear in mind that we will not be able to respond to individual comments due to the anonymous nature of the survey.