

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**New Report: Most People with Disabilities Witness or Experience Biases in the Workplace**  
*The Institute for Public Relations and Voya Financial surveyed 1,014 employees to determine how organizations support employees with disabilities and caregivers*

NEW YORK, NY, June 20, 2023 – More than half of people with disabilities surveyed reported witnessing or experiencing instances of both intentional hostile statements or actions (macroaggressions) and unintentional statements or actions (microaggressions) at least several times a year in the workplace based on their disability, according to a new study.

The Institute for Public Relations (IPR) and Voya Financial released a comprehensive report, "[Disabilities in the Workplace: Culture, Communication, Support, and Inclusion](#)" that explores how organizations support and communicate about disabilities and caregiving in the workplace. The study, conducted in January 2023, was based on a survey of 1,014 employees who work in organizations with 15 or more people.

**Reluctancy to disclose and impact on retention**

One-third of individuals with disabilities and one-fifth of caregivers were reluctant to disclose their disability or caregiving responsibilities to their employers. This non-disclosure could lead to missed opportunities for support and resources that could enhance their work experience. Notably, a significant proportion of employees with disabilities reduced their working hours (41%) or left their jobs entirely (49%) due to their disability, highlighting the impact on retention rates. Similarly, almost half of the caregivers surveyed had to scale back their hours, and 34% were compelled to leave their positions.

**Awareness and desire to learn more**

More than 50% of employees without disabilities and 72% of employees with disabilities expressed interest in learning more about disability inclusion and programs at their organization, presenting a valuable opportunity for organizations to foster learning and inclusion opportunities. The study also revealed that 40% of employees were not aware of their organization's position or strategic plans related to people with disabilities.

**Fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion**

The study also examined organizational efforts to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion, revealing a disparity between overall sentiment and specific programs. While nearly two-thirds of respondents believed their organizations promoted overall diversity and inclusivity, those numbers significantly decreased when assessing specific support for individuals with disabilities. For instance, less than half of the respondents (46%) indicated their organizations prioritized hiring individuals with disabilities.

**Satisfaction with support**

Sixty percent of people with disabilities said their organization supported them with resources, benefits, and flexible hours, meaning 4-in-10 employees said their organization did not. Additionally, while some employees were aware of general policies and programs, they lacked familiarity with specific policies and programs, such as financial empowerment and how to make technologies more accessible.

### **Sources of support**

Employees with disabilities were more likely to say their immediate supervisors and their colleagues were more supportive than those who they may not have direct contact with as often, such as the human resources (HR) department or the organization as a whole. Caregivers lauded their colleagues as most supportive; people with disabilities rated their executive leadership the lowest.

### **Work location matters**

Across all categories, fully remote and hybrid-work-model employees rated their organizations significantly higher than fully in-person employees, including on how well the organization supports, communicates, and creates an inclusive environment for employees with disabilities and caregivers of people with disabilities.

### **Caregiving offers potential for organizations**

The findings also underscored the untapped potential for organizations to support caregivers, as respondents demonstrated greater knowledge of how their organization supports people with disabilities compared to caregivers. Failure to disclose caregiving responsibilities can lead employers to underestimate the number of caregivers within their workforce and hinder the implementation of effective support measures.

“This report's comprehensive insights can help organizations bridge knowledge gaps and take specific and supportive actions for people with disabilities and caregivers,” said Dr. Tina McCorkindale, President and CEO of the Institute for Public Relations. “Organizations can enhance employee well-being, retention, and productivity by fostering inclusive environments, improving communication and visibility, and implementing targeted programs.”

For the full study, please visit <https://instituteforpr.org/voya-ipr-disability-report>

**Methodology:** A Qualtrics-based sample was used to recruit 1,014 employees who work at organizations with 15 or more employees to participate in a 15- to 20-minute survey in January 2023. Definitions of disability, caregivers, and accommodations were provided to participants in the beginning of the study.

### **Media Contact:**

Brittany Higginbotham  
Digital and Communications Specialist  
[brittany@instituteforpr.org](mailto:brittany@instituteforpr.org)  
352-615-8211

Note: \*IPR is a separate entity and not a corporate affiliate of Voya Financial®

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