



Investigating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Provision of Workplace Accommodations in the U.S.

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This study used data from a nationally representative survey that follows people 50 and older over time (the Health and Retirement Study) to test whether the receipt of workplace accommodations by persons with work limitations varies by race. Workplace accommodations can include changes to time (allowing more breaks, allowing different arrival or departure times, or shortening the workday), provision of equipment/assistance (getting someone to help, getting special equipment, arranging special transportation), and changes to work (changing the job, helping to learn new job skills). Using data from 2002 to 2018, we found that 85% of persons with work limitations identified a need for workplace accommodation, but only 32% actually

received accommodations. Our preliminary analysis suggests some differences by race in the likelihood of receiving accommodations and no difference in receipt of workplace accommodations by occupation. Drawing on our past research, we instead used a measure of the physical nature of a job rather than occupation in our final analyses that also considered other factors prior research has suggested are associated with receipt of workplace accommodations (age, gender, education, organizational size).

Our final results, when considering race as well as the aforementioned other factors, did not find any statistically significant differences by race in the likelihood of receiving workplace

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accommodations. For those with a work limitation and controlling for other factors, an estimated 37% of white people received workplace accommodations while 35% of Black, 34% of other races, and 37% of Hispanic people received them. Organizational size was a critical factor, as persons working for organizations that employed 100 or more people were significantly more likely to receive accommodations, when also considering these other factors. This finding

suggests that smaller employers may benefit from training or other supports to increase the availability of workplace accommodations. Workers with disabilities might also benefit from increased education offered by vocational rehabilitation agencies, workforce development programs, and other similar organizations on how to make requests for and implement reasonable accommodations. ❖

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