



2023 MODEL EMPLOYER INITIATIVE REPORT

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BACKGROUND



In 2019, Governor Parson issued Executive Order 19-16 (EO 19-16) which directs executive agencies to implement the “Missouri as a Model Employer” initiative. The initiative aims to reduce discrimination and barriers to employment for people with disabilities within Missouri government and attract talented qualified candidates into state employment.

Through strategies to improve recruitment, hiring, and retention, the State of Missouri looks to serve as a model employer across our communities and achieve the state’s goal to continue to increase the percentage of individuals with disabilities in the State workforce. The EO 19-16 does not require any state employee or candidate to disclose their disability status. Therefore, any data submitted to the State is voluntary self-disclosure.

Members of the Office of Administration Commissioner’s Office, Division of Personnel, Office of Equal Opportunity, and the Governor’s Council on Disability collaborate to assist executive agencies in carrying out the directives of EO19-16. These efforts focus on gathering data on the number of employees with disabilities in state government through the annual voluntary self-disclosure survey and follow up with each state agency on feedback provided by team members in the survey.

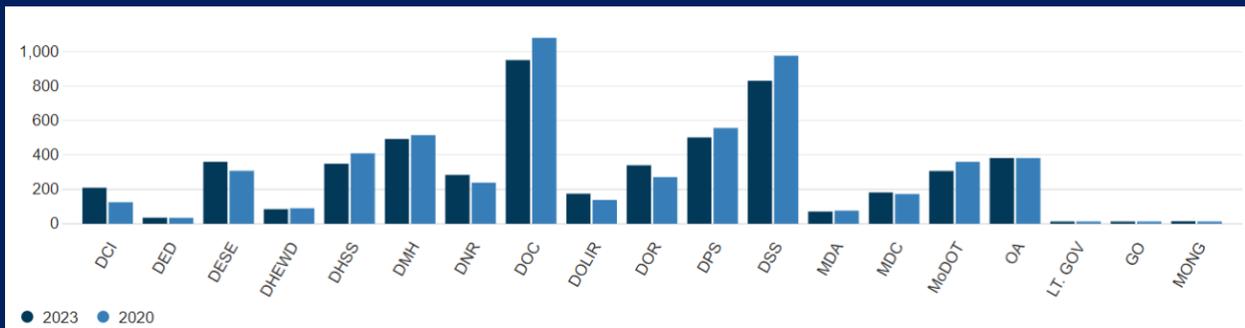
This report provides data and efforts taken by the executive branch to implement this initiative. Section 37.980.1 RSMo. (2023).

DATA

Each year, the Office of Administration (“OA”) sends out a voluntary self-disclosure survey to state team members to collect information on how the state is advancing this initiative. The 2023 state of Missouri self-disclosure survey had a 12.68% response rate. This is up by 4% over the previous year, in 2022, but down slightly, by 0.74%, from the 2020 survey response rate.

Total Number of Survey Respondents by Department

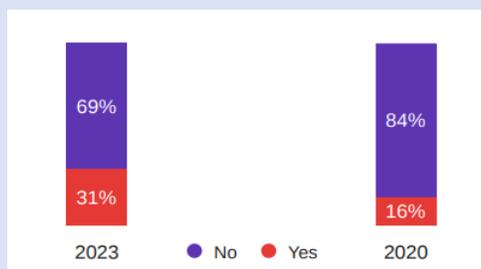
2020 Compared to 2023



In the 2020 self-disclosure survey, 5,634 state team members responded, 16% of those respondents indicated “yes” to having a disability. By comparison, the 2023 self-disclosure survey had 5,567 respondents, 31% of respondents indicated “yes” to having a disability. This is a 94% increase in the number of team members who have indicated having a disability between 2020 and 2023.

Percentage of Survey Respondents Who Indicated If They Had a Disability

2020 Compared to 2023



Total Number of Survey Respondents Who Indicated If They Had a Disability

2020 Compared to 2023

Field	2023	2020
Yes	1,726	909
No	3,841	4,814
Total	5,567	5,723

According to the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) [Disability and Health report](#) for Missouri, approximately 1 in 3 adults, 18 and older, have a disability (2021 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)). Since 2020, the increase by 94% of individuals with disabilities reported in the state's workforce now closely compares with the representation of individuals in Missouri who are currently living with a disability.

The survey collects additional feedback from those who indicate they currently have a disability. The additional information identifies barriers or challenges experienced by the individual to obtaining employment, sustaining employment, and ways they believe they would benefit from additional assistance or accommodations. Analysis of this information can better-inform actions and the state to support all team members.

After analysis, the feedback from the survey respondents from the 2023 survey includes the following general areas of opportunity or improvement:



Mobility/Environmental or Physical Accessibility

- Accessible parking
- Restroom accessibility
- Accessible doorways/building entry



Administrative

- Locating information regarding policy and processes
- Training, education, awareness of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Evacuation plans



Attitudinal Barriers

- Avoidance/unacceptance within teams

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISSOURI



Missouri Awarded National Expansion Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) federal grant to increase competitive integrated employment (CIE) for those with disabilities.

Missouri has been selected to participate in a national initiative aimed at increasing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) tapped Missouri, along with nine other states and Washington, D.C., to take part in the National Expansion Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) initiative with the goal of increasing competitive integrated employment (CIE) for those with disabilities.

As a core state for the NEON initiative, Missouri was awarded 300 technical assistance hours that will include policy consulting and capacity building assistance.

“Being part of the NEON initiative will allow the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (MDHEWD), as well as other state agencies, to establish better policies for CIE and develop a plan for sustaining these efforts to ensure those with disabilities have equal employment opportunities,” said Julie Carter, interim director of the Office of Workforce Development.

Other states selected include California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, New York, Rhode Island, and Tennessee.

NEON launched in 2019 with the primary vision of providing technical assistance to national organizations. By expanding participation to state departments, NEON will be able to make advances at the state level.

“The addition of 10 core states and the District of Columbia to the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network will help support policymaking and other efforts to make competitive integrated employment a reality for more people with disabilities,” said Taryn Williams, assistant secretary for the USDOL Office of Disability Employment Policy. “Now, effective practices used by service providers can support strategies such as blending, braiding and sequencing of funding, strategic planning, benefits counseling, and effective data collection and analysis to promote greater workplace equity.”

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Acting and working towards our goals to reduce discrimination and barriers for people with disabilities is vital to ensure the success of our team members and the state of Missouri.



Each department has identified Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Coordinators to assist both job seekers and current team members with disabilities. The list of these coordinators, along with additional ADA information can be found on the Office of Administration's website here: <https://pers.oa.mo.gov/ada-information>.

In 2023, the Governor's Council on Disability collaborated with the Office of Equal Opportunity to establish an ADA Coordinator Network for all state agency ADA coordinators and facilitated quarterly meetings to provide an opportunity for education, training, networking, and sharing best practices. The ADA Coordinators participated in the annual self-disclosure survey follow up activities by contacting team members who requested assistance within their respective departments and developing action steps for their departments based on survey feedback provided by their team members to improve employment outcomes for team members with disabilities.

Additional steps to continue increasing the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the state of Missouri's workforce includes awareness and outreach activities are planned during National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) and recommended training paths in MoLearning on disability awareness and diversity and inclusion for all state HR and hiring managers, supervisors, and employees is available. The state of Missouri's job board and application portal, MoCareers is accessible, and any necessary enhancements are deployed as needed. More information about the initiative can be found online at <https://disability.mo.gov/model-employer.htm>.