



Model Employer Initiative Annual Report



2025

Background

In 2019, Governor Mike Parson issued Executive Order 19-16, officially establishing Missouri as a Model Employer. This initiative was born from a commitment to ensure that the State's workforce reflects the incredible diversity and talent of its citizens, specifically by closing the employment gap for Missourians with disabilities and setting ambitious annual goals for growth and inclusion.

At the heart of this mission is the Office of Administration (OA), which serves as the central engine for implementation. Tasked with oversight, OA manages the voluntary self-disclosure process to ensure progress is tracked accurately while maintaining the highest standards of privacy. By designating State Disability Employment Coordinators and modernizing the state's hiring infrastructure, OA provides the specialized guidance and tools necessary for agencies to improve the recruitment, hiring, and retention of a diverse workforce.

Following the foundation set by Executive Order 19-16, the Missouri General Assembly passed Section 37.980, RSMo in 2023. This statute formalizes the requirement for a transparent review of the state's progress and mandates the reporting of data regarding workforce participation. Accordingly, this report analyzes current participation disparities and documents the specific actions taken by the Office of Administration and state agencies to meet these statutory and executive requirements.

EO 19-16 [Model Employer Executive Order](#)

RSMo 37.980 [Model Employer legislation](#)

Implementation Actions

Office of Administration (OA) Model Employer Work Group

Members of the Office of Administration's 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. In 2025, these efforts focused on:

- Conducting the annual self-disclosure survey of state team members and evaluating data
- Collaborating with agency Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinators and Human Resources (HR) directors to develop agency implementation plans for the Model Employer initiative and create annual action items based on team member feedback in the self-disclosure survey
- Reviewing and assuring accessibility of hiring platforms and state government websites in collaboration with OA's Information Technology Services Division (ITSD)
- Developing a statewide training curriculum on disability awareness, accommodations, accessibility, and employment laws for all state agencies
- Providing training and educational presentations on disability awareness, etiquette, and employment practices
- Hosting inclusive hiring events and targeted outreach activities
 - Talent Showcase Hiring Events
 - Statewide Hiring Events (in person and virtual)
- Hosting statewide awareness events to promote employment inclusion
 - National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) Celebration and Resource Event
 - NDEAM Poster Contest

National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network workgroup

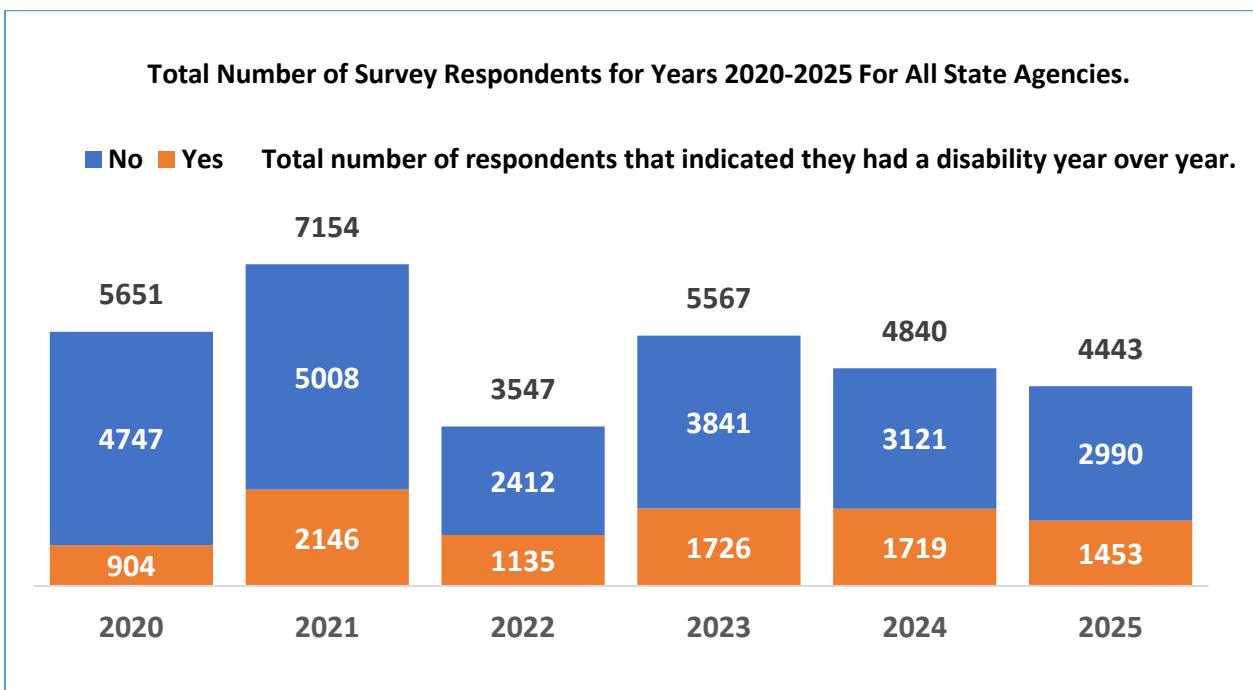
Missouri was selected to participate in the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) initiative which enables government agencies to receive capacity-building support, policy development assistance and ongoing mentoring to increase competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities. Missouri's NEON workgroup is a collaborative workgroup of state agencies and national subject matter experts working in tandem with the OA Model Employer workgroup to carry out the directives of Executive Order, Model Employer legislation, and Employment First legislation. In 2025, the NEON workgroup's efforts regarding the Model Employer initiative focused on:

- Developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between state agencies for the implementation of the Employment First legislation
- Creating a comprehensive training presentation on the Model Employer and Employment First initiative
- Facilitating connections between state agencies and agencies supporting people with disabilities in employment

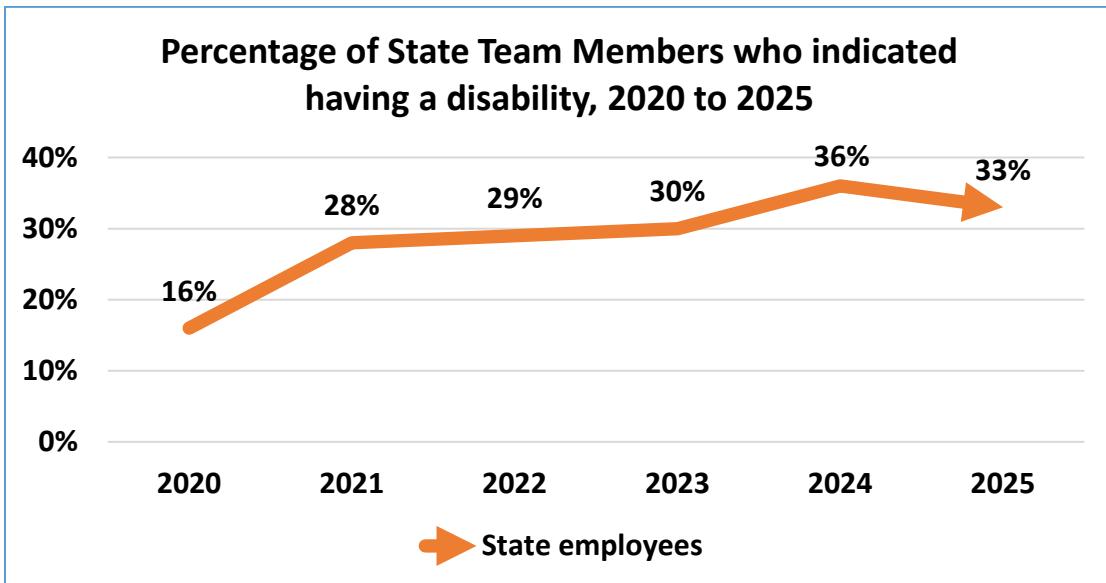
Annual Self-Disclosure Survey

Each year, OA sends out a voluntary self-disclosure survey to state team members to collect information on how the state is advancing this initiative. The annual, voluntary self-disclosure survey was distributed to all state team members from October 1-20, 2025. The 2025 survey had a 9.82% response rate. This response rate represents a 7.27% participation decrease compared to the previous year (2024 – 10.59%), and a 10.07% decrease from the year of inception (2020 survey response rate of 10.92%).

1. Total number of survey respondents from 2020 to 2025 with a breakdown of team members who indicated having or not having a disability:



2. Percentage of state government workforce identifying as individuals with disabilities, from 2020 to 2025:

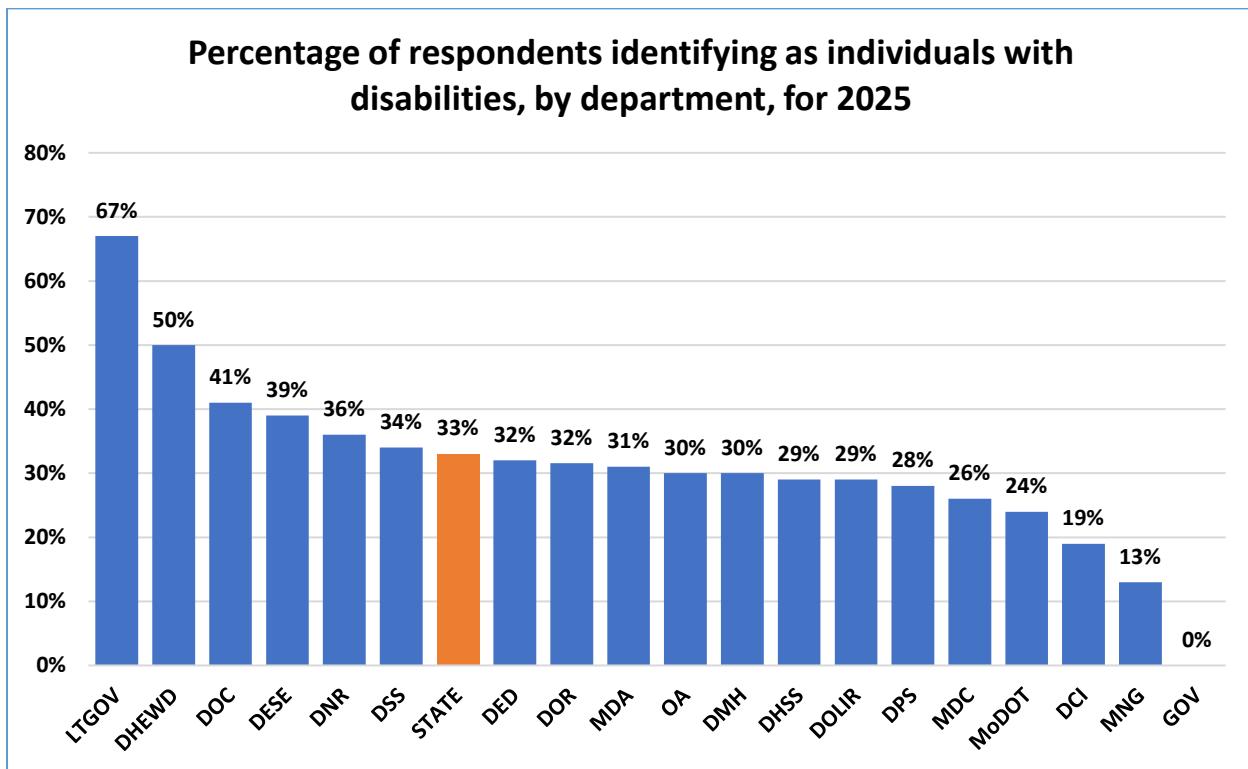


The Executive Order requires an analysis of any disparity that may exist, between the percentage of individuals in Missouri who disclose disabilities compared to the percentage of individuals in the state workforce who disclose disabilities.

Data provided by the US Census American Community Survey and the National ADA Network (DisabilityStatistics.org), shows the following percentages of Missourians with disabilities:

Population in Missouri	Total Estimated Number	Percentage
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population	6,142,552	
With a disability	948,947	15%
Under 18 years	1,366,801	
With a disability	72,974	5%
18 to 64 years	3,709,464	
With a disability	483,294	13%
65 years and over	1,169,201	
With a disability	389,679	33%

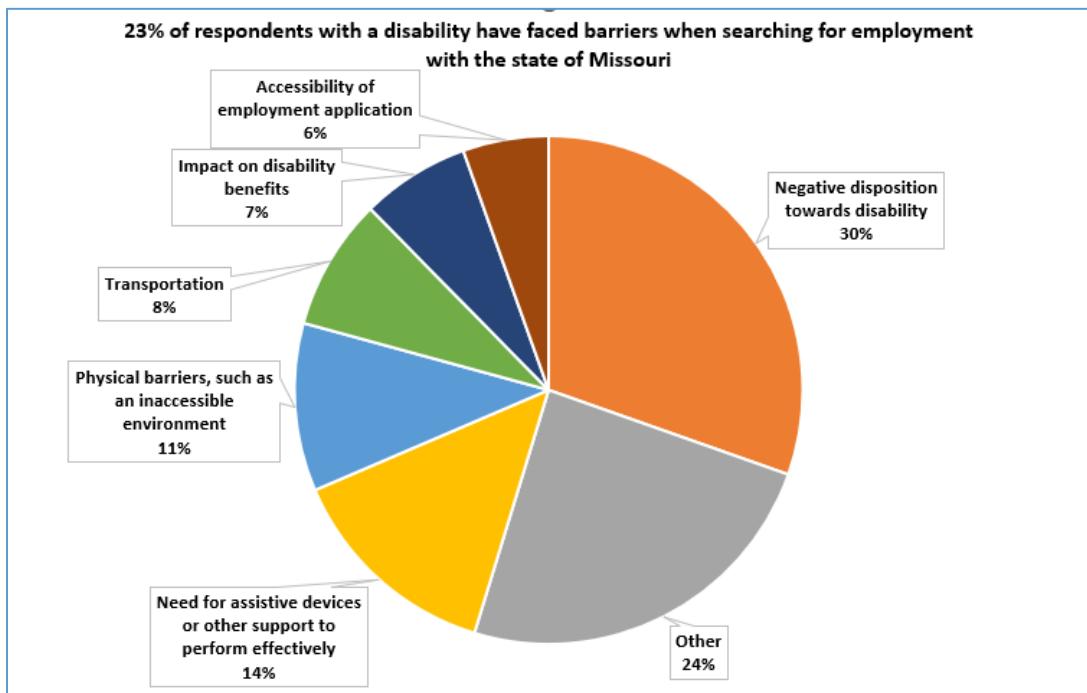
3. Percentage of respondents identifying as individuals with disabilities, by department:



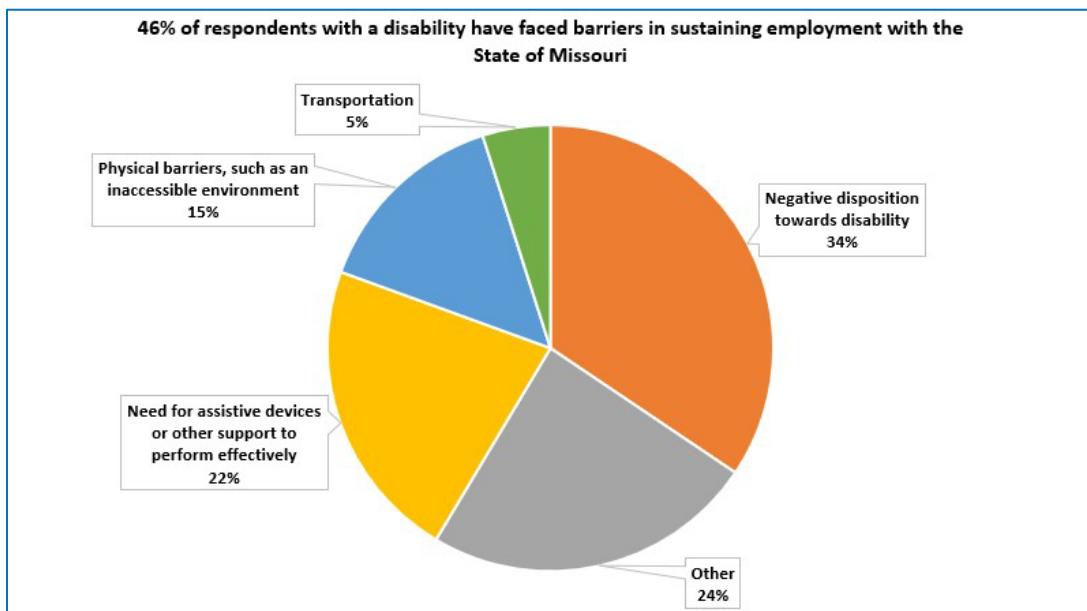
The survey collects additional feedback from those who indicate they currently have a disability. The additional information identifies barriers or challenges experienced by the individuals to obtaining employment, sustaining employment, and ways they believe they would benefit from additional assistance or accommodations.

5. Barriers encountered by team members in obtaining or sustaining employment, emergency preparedness and response

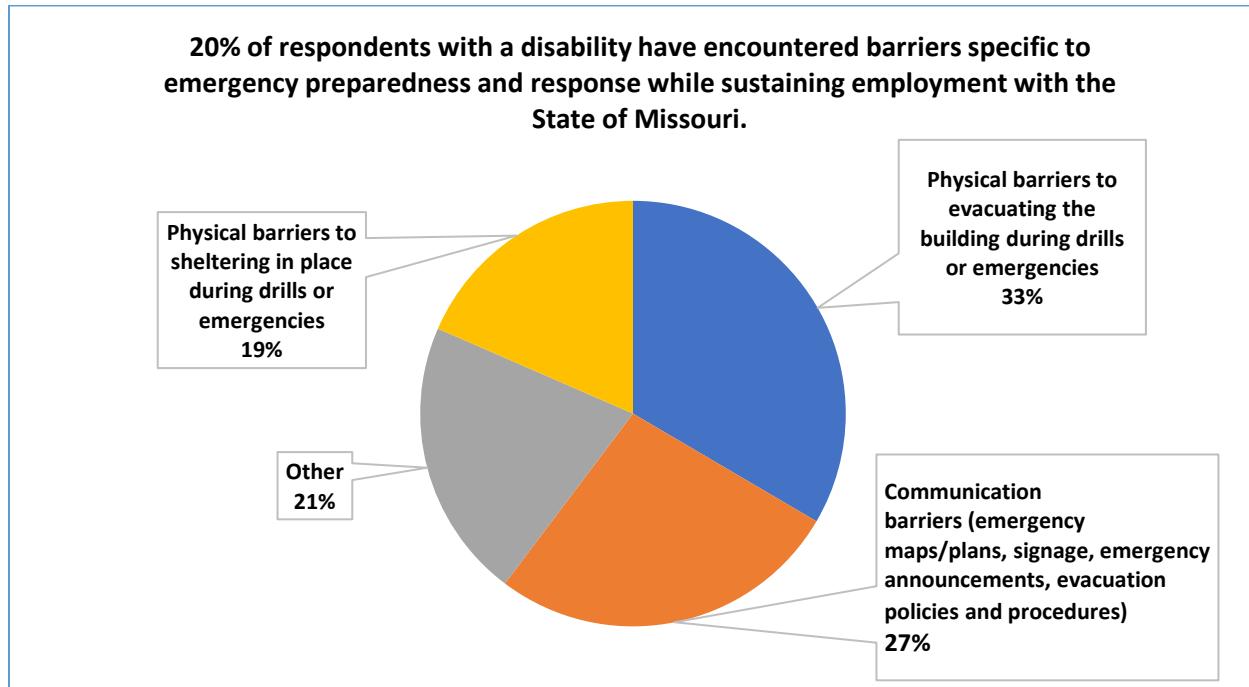
Barriers in obtaining employment:



Barriers in sustaining employment:



Barriers in emergency preparedness and response:



The information related to barriers is analyzed and evaluated in collaboration with the state government ADA Coordinators to develop recommendations and action items for each department to improve employment outcomes for state team members with disabilities.

In 2025, these action items included:

- Improving environmental and physical accessibility in state government facilities
- Promoting understanding and acceptance of disabilities to foster welcoming work environments for all team members
- Providing training and education on disability awareness, etiquette, and ADA requirements
- Providing training and information to state team members and supervisors about ADA and workplace accommodation policies and procedures
- Increasing participation in statewide self-disclosure survey

State agencies are currently developing department action items for 2026 based on the survey feedback provided by team members in the 2025 survey.

Opportunities and Goals for 2026

The focus of the OA Model Employer workgroup in 2026 will be on:

- Launching the statewide training curriculum and resources on disability awareness, accommodations, accessibility, and employment laws for all state agencies
- Continuing to assure accessibility of communications, state agency websites, programs and events
- Maintaining connections between state agencies and agencies/entities that support individuals with disabilities in employment
- Continuing collaboration with state agencies to develop implementation plans for the Model Employer initiative in each state department
- Strengthening state agency continuity plans for emergency preparedness and response by integrating the needs of team members and customers with disabilities
- Continuing collaboration with the NEON inter-agency workgroup
- Continuing and increasing participation in the annual self-disclosure survey through targeted outreach and marketing