



RRTC on Employer
Practices for

Research Summary

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Disabilities

Factors Associated with Employer Hiring Decisions Regarding People Who are Blind or Have Low Vision

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McDonnell, M.C. (2018). Factors Associated with Employer Hiring Decisions Regarding People Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 112(2), 197-203.

A quick look: ■■

Working age individuals who are blind or have a visual impairment have a much lower employment rate than people without disabilities. Among the reasons for this disparity is the biggest barrier to employment for this population: negative employer attitudes toward hiring these individuals. But what causes these negative outlooks on hiring individuals who are blind or visually impaired? This article explores those factors and sheds light on employers' hiring decisions when it comes to this population.

Key Findings: ■■

An online survey, which had 579 eligible respondents, was conducted with people who make hiring decisions such as managers, human resource personnel, and executives to find out what factors go into their decision on whether or not to hire someone who is blind or visually impaired. Here are some key findings from that research:

- ▶ Employers who communicated with a vocational rehabilitation agency or counselor were 24.1 times more likely to hire someone who is blind or visually impaired.
- ▶ Of the employers who reported this communication, 71.2% had hired someone who is blind or visually impaired.
- ▶ Many employers surveyed explained that they had knowledge of how persons who are blind or visually impaired perform a task; however, they did not provide accurate answers in their "how" response.

Putting It into Practice: ■■

- ▶ The data suggests that when Vocational Rehabilitation agencies develop strong relationships with employers, the likelihood that employers will hire someone who is blind or visually impaired increases.
- ▶ Perhaps more knowledge and education should be provided by VR agencies to employers; however, in this study, the lack of knowledge was not associated with hiring decisions in the model.
- ▶ The results of the survey indicate that communication with a VR agency or counselor provides an influential benefit to the employer in making their hiring decision in regards to persons who are visually impaired or blind.

More about this Article (Where to go from here?) ■■

- ▶ "Research has shown that employers are more cautious and have more of a concern when hiring someone who is blind or visually impaired than individuals with other disabilities.
- ▶ Employers tend to have more concern about providing job accommodations if they have never hired someone with a disability.
- ▶ Only 32.3% of working aged people with a visual impairment are currently employed.

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