

# Rise Up and Be Counted: Strategies to Increase Self- Identification

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- Submit your questions to the EARN TA Team at [askearn@cornell.edu](mailto:askearn@cornell.edu)
- An archived recording of the webinar will be posted to AskEARN.org in a few weeks

# Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)



**Susanne Bruyère**  
National Project Director  
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Resource Network on Disability  
Inclusion (EARN)

# About EARN

- A no-cost resource for employers seeking to proactively recruit, hire, retain and advance qualified employees with disabilities
  - Access trainings, webinars and numerous publications
- Funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy
- Collaborative of multiple partners with expertise in technical assistance, training and research
- Visit website at <http://AskEARN.org>

# National Industry Liaison Group (NILG)



**Kevin Carpenter**  
NILG Board Member  
VP & AA Consultant  
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# Agenda

## *Welcome*

- Kevin Carpenter, NILG Board Member

## *DOL Agency Updates*

- Jennifer Sheehy, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Disability Employment Policy
- Bob Gaglione, Deputy Director, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs

## *Engaging Employees to Measure Success: Innovative Approaches to Encouraging Self-Identification of Disability*

- Michael Murray, Director, Employer Policy Team, ODEP
- Margaret Kraak, Branch Training Chief, OFCCP



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Deputy Assistant Secretary  
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U.S. Department of Labor





**Bob Gaglione**  
Deputy Director  
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# Rise Up and Be Counted: Strategies to Increase Self-Identification



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# What is “Self-Identification?”

*Self-Identification* (Self-ID) is:

- Voluntarily and confidentially providing information about disability status that is used for statistical purposes only (i.e., data collection and reporting purposes).
- Not the same as “self-disclosure” (or just “disclosure”).

# Self-Identification vs. Disclosure

- “Disclosure” means sharing information about one’s disability in any context *other* than through a formal self-ID program.
  - May include disclosing to specific personnel to personally benefit oneself (e.g. presenting documentation to obtain a reasonable accommodation or to participate in a targeted program that takes disability into account.
  - May also include disclosing to simply help create a welcoming environment for others, such as during a presentation.

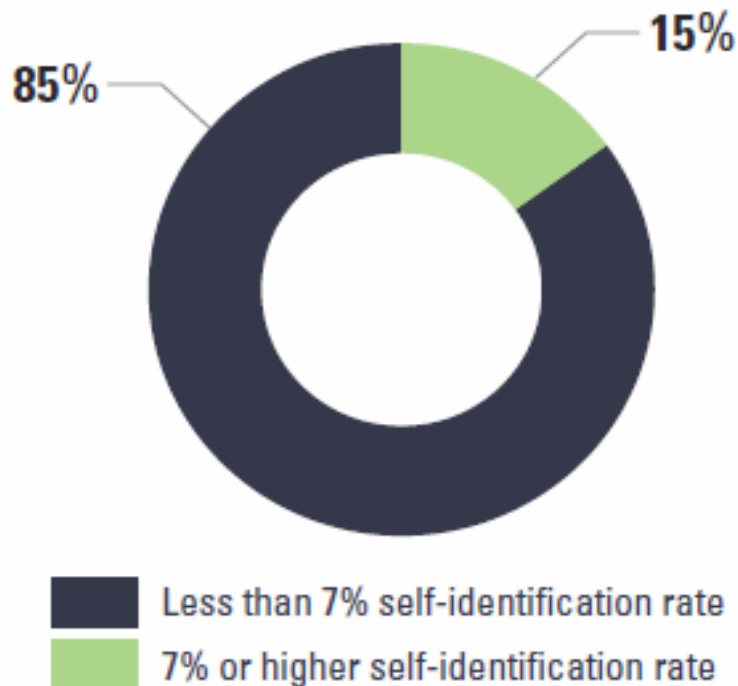
# Why Self-Identify?

- A strong self-ID program can encourage employees to bring their ‘whole selves’ to work; is thus an essential component of a workplace that is truly inclusive.
- Under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Federal contactors are required to collect disability demographic data.

# Federal Contract Successes and Challenges

- “How do we encourage self-identification?” is the most common question we hear from employers.
- In 2019, NILG conducted a survey of its members, focused on self-identification practices:
  - 43% conduct self-ID campaign every five years; 23% do so annually.
  - Most companies see 1-2% of their workforce identifying as a person with a disability
  - Only one-third of companies have seen an increase in their data since implementing Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act.

# Federal Contract Successes and Challenges



Source:

von Schrader, S., & Bruyère, S. M. (2018). Survey report: What works? How federal contractors are implementing Section 503. Ithaca, NY: Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability.

<https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/edicollect/1363/>

# Addressing Self-Identification

	Persons <u>with</u> a disability (N=598)
Risk of being fired/not hired	<b>73.0</b>
Employer may focus on disability	<b>62.0</b>
Risk of losing health care	<b>61.5</b>
Fear of limited opportunities	61.1
Supervisor may not be supportive	60.1
Risk being treated differently	57.8
Risk being viewed differently	53.8
No impact on job ability	44.0
Desire for privacy	27.9

“Very important”  
factors when deciding  
NOT to disclose a  
disability to an  
employer

Source:  
von Schrader, S. Malzer, V., Erickson, W., &  
Bruyère, S. (2010). *Emerging Employment  
Issues for People with Disabilities: Disability  
Disclosure, Leave as a Reasonable  
Accommodation, Use of Job Applicant Screeners.*



# Engaging Employees to Measure Success: Innovative Approaches to Encouraging Self-Identification of Disability



- This new resource from EARN and NILG focuses on proven strategies and employer solutions to encourage employees to self-identify.
- Addresses the five most common reasons for not self-identifying and provides a list of strategies.
- Download at:  
<https://askearn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Encouraging-Self-ID-of-Disability.pdf>

# Engaging Employees to Measure Success: Innovative Approaches to Encouraging Self-Identification of Disability

- The five sections include:
  - Ensuring Opportunities for All
  - Creating a Welcoming Environment
  - Supporting Health and Wellness
  - Ensuring Privacy
  - Explaining the Reasons for Self-ID

## *Communicate your commitment to employees and the public*

- Include disability in the company's diversity mission statement.
- Explain how data collected is used to improve the representation of people with disabilities in the company.
- Extend recruitment efforts to specifically target jobseekers with disabilities.
- Establish and communicate fair systems and procedures.
- Include disability in broader diversity and inclusion initiatives.

## *Help your employees build success*

- Implement professional development programs for employees with disabilities.
- Encourage employees with disabilities to engage in career development initiatives, including detail assignments, coaching, individual development plans and mentoring.
- Create accessible workplaces, spaces, processes and opportunities.
- Share successes. Make disability ordinary by highlighting stories of employees with disabilities or videos in which leaders self-identify.

# Creating a Welcoming Environment

- Foster supportive staff-supervisor relationships.
- Conduct disability awareness and diversity training for all employees.
- Avoid focusing solely on disability or holding employees with disabilities to different (higher **or** lower) standards.
- Administer voluntary surveys to assess employee perceptions of inclusion.
- Seek input regarding the existence of an accessible and disability-inclusive workplace environment (via employee surveys, focus groups, discussions, and employee resource groups (ERGs) or affinity groups).

# Supporting Health and Wellness

- Allow employees to meet criteria for wellness program incentives in a variety of ways to avoid unintentionally excluding people with disabilities from those benefits.
- As required, do not discriminate against employees with disabilities when offering and providing health insurance coverage.
- Ensure that HR officials and supervisors understand available benefits.
- Include statements of nondiscrimination on benefits information.
- Show commitment to employee health by highlighting a range of employee health benefits, including mental health services and benefits, wellness initiatives, employee assistance programs, and other healthcare services.

# Explaining the Reasons for Self-ID

- Explain the benefits of self-identification, including access to resources, accommodations, and a community of other employees with disabilities. Emphasize a desire to create and foster an inclusive work environment.
- Be clear that self-ID information helps your business identify gaps in recruiting, hiring, retention, and promotion of people with disabilities. Without this data, the business won't know how to target future diversity efforts.



# Explaining the Reasons for Self-ID (cont'd)

- Emphasize that this information is used to help build budgets for disability-related activities, including reasonable accommodations and the disability ERG. Accurate information will help your business provide the right supports for people who need them.
- Include a statement on the self-identification form explaining the company's desire to diversify its workforce, support all employees equally, and learn more about employees to assess whether efforts to recruit and retain people with disabilities are effective.
- Assign the disability ERG a key role in communicating the importance of self-identification. For example, an ERG representative might talk about the value of self-identification during onboarding presentations.

# Ensuring Privacy

- Be open about the ways in which the information will be used if an employee self-identifies (i.e., statistical purposes only, and viewed only in aggregate).
- Provide employees the option to self-identify within a secure/confidential online system where they maintain changes to tax deductions, paycheck allocations, etc. (i.e., separate from electronic personnel documents, performance evaluations, etc.).
- Explain that self-identification is voluntary and how anonymity, confidentiality and privacy will be protected.
- Keep demographic data separate from the application and in data analyses files (rather than in medical files of individual employees).
- Monitor that these protections are maintained on a regular basis.

# Thank You!

Visit us at [AskEARN.org](https://www.AskEARN.org)