

State of Florida  
Employment Survey:  
Final Report

JUNE 8, 2010

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The mission of the Florida Office on Disability & Health is to maximize the health, well-being, participation, & quality of life, throughout the lifespan, of all Floridians & their families living with disability.

**Funded by:**

The Florida Office on Disability and Health is funded by the National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U 059 000732).

**Acknowledgements:**

We are grateful to the entire Governor’s Commission on Disabilities, namely the Employment Committee, for their support and direction. We greatly appreciate the feedback, pilot testing, and distribution work done by the state of Florida human resource managers; they made this survey a success.

## **Background**

The Florida Office on Disability and Health (FODH) and the Florida Governor's Commission on Disabilities worked together to develop and field a brief web-based survey of current state employees. The purpose of the Governor's Commission on Disabilities Employment Survey was to estimate the number and percent of State of Florida employees across all agencies who have a disability or use some type of assistive equipment in their jobs. This survey is an integral part of the implementation of Recommendation B – 1 from the Commission's Report to the Governor 2009. The recommendation is: "Require that all state agencies and departments actively recruit, hire, and retain qualified persons with disabilities, and encourage city and county governments to do the same. In addition, data on the hiring and promotion of persons with disabilities should be included in the annual Affirmative Action Program updates that state agencies prepare." The full report from the Governor's Commission can be found at [http://dms.myflorida.com/other\\_programs/governor\\_s\\_commission\\_on\\_disabilities](http://dms.myflorida.com/other_programs/governor_s_commission_on_disabilities). The Governor, the Commission, and the FODH hope that Florida will become a model employer for persons with a disability and this survey is an important first step in understanding the extent of disability among current state employees.

## **Survey Methods**

The FODH and Governor's Commission reviewed the use of disability employment surveys in other states and discussed what content was vital to meeting the objective. The groups decided that using the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) definition of disability was most useful, rather than using questions from one of the national surveys like the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System or the American Community Survey. The ADA often is used in cases when a person with a disability encounters discrimination or inaccessibility in the workplace and it provides a clear definition of disability, both physical and mental, and therefore was appropriate for the purposes of this survey. The 10-item, anonymous survey was conducted through SurveyGizmo, an internet survey hosting site that allows for anonymous data collection and has been rated as accessible to people with disabilities. The full survey appears in Appendix A. The Governor's Commission drafted a letter introducing the survey and describing its purpose and distributed it to human resources managers within each state agency. Each agency was then responsible for distributing the survey information and survey link to its employees. The survey asked for employment (classification, agency), demographic (age, gender, county of residence), assistive technology (use at work), and disability (presence and type – physical and/or mental) information. The survey was launched on December 4, 2009 and was closed on May 25, 2010.

## Results

There were 6,952 completed surveys, though some respondents did not answer some questions. For all tables and figures below, the total number of responses for a given category is reported. Most of the respondents were career service employees (69.1%, Table 1) and female (70.9%, Figure 1), and about half (49.8%) were age 35-54 (Figure 2 and Table 2).

Table 1. Number and percent of employment survey respondents reporting each type of employment (n=6,842).

Employment type	Count	Percent %
Career service	4727	69.1
Contracted services	96	1.4
OPS	469	6.9
SES	1491	21.8
SMS	48	0.7
Volunteer	11	0.2

Figure 1. Gender of employment survey respondents (n=6,824).

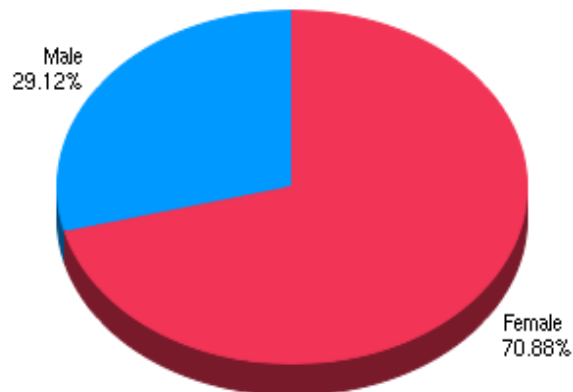


Figure 2. Age category distribution of employment survey respondents (n=6,814).

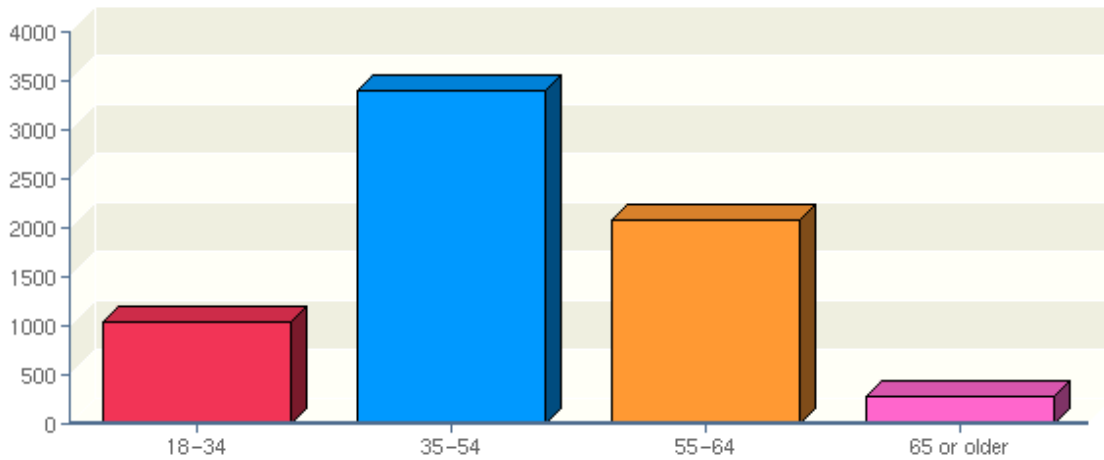


Table 2. Number and percent of employment survey respondents reporting each age category (n=6,814).

Age category	Count	Percent %
18-34	1,049	15.4
35-54	3,394	49.8
55-64	2,089	30.7
65 or older	282	4.1

Nearly one in ten respondents (9.2 %) said they used assistive technology or an assistive device (like speech recognition software or alternative keyboards) while at work (Figure 3). Nearly a third of respondents (31.4%) considered themselves to have a disability based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) definition: “a person with a disability is someone who: has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, performing manual tasks, caring for oneself, working, etc.); has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment” (Figure 4). Those respondents who considered themselves to have a disability were then provided the ADA definitions of physical and mental impairments and asked whether they considered themselves to have either or both of these types of disability. Most respondents with a disability said they had a physical impairment (78.5% , Figure 5); mental impairment was less common among respondents (16.6%, Figure 6).

Figure 3. Assistive technology or assistive device use among state employee survey respondents (n=6,868).

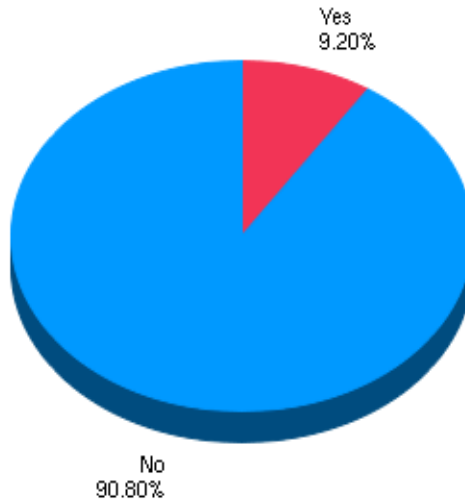


Figure 4. State employee survey respondents who consider themselves to have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (n=6,864).

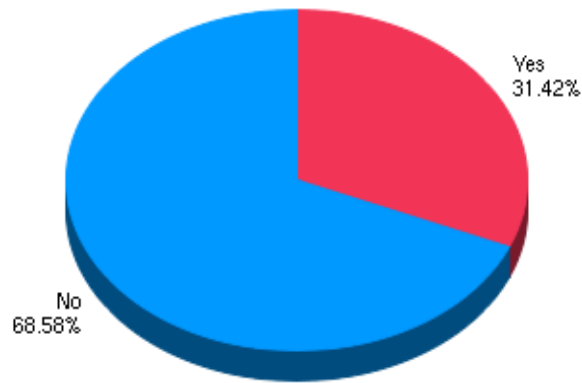


Figure 5. Among those with a disability, state employee survey respondents who consider themselves to have a physical impairment as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (n=2,170).

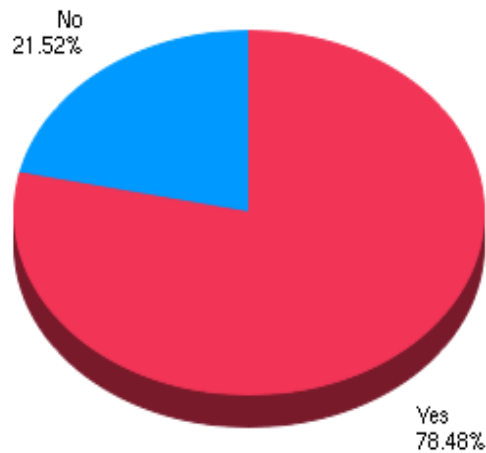
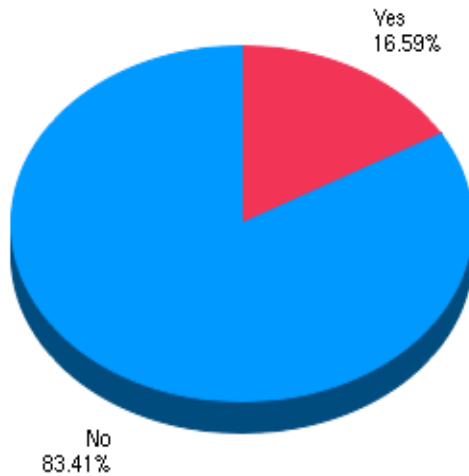


Figure 6. Among those with a disability, state employee survey respondents who consider themselves to have a mental impairment as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (n=2,158).



Employment survey respondents came from a variety of state agencies and regions of the state. The number of respondents with a disability and the percent of all respondents from each state agency appear in Table 3. Note that the percentages in Table 3 do not represent the percent of each agency's employees who responded to the survey but rather are the percent of total survey respondents from each agency. Department of Health employees represented the largest group of survey respondents (37.0%), followed by Department of

Children and Families employees (12.6%). Table 4 displays the county of residence reported by employment survey respondents.

Table 3. Number of employment survey respondents from each state agency and the percent of all respondents contributed from each agency (n=6,868).

<b>Employing agency</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Administration Hearings (DOAH)	12	0.2
Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS)	342	5.0
Business & Professional Regulation (DBPR)	6	0.1
Children & Families (DCF)	866	12.6
Citrus (CIT)	7	0.1
Community Affairs (DCA)	20	0.3
Corrections (DC)	375	5.5
Education (DOE)	210	3.1
Elder Affairs (DOEA)	25	0.4
Emergency Management (DEM)	28	0.4
Environmental Protection (DEP)	243	3.5
Financial Services (DFS)	206	3.0
Fish & Wildlife Conservation (FWC)	70	1.0
Florida Guardian Ad Litem Program	1	0.01
Governor's Office (EOG)	18	0.3
Health (DOH)	2,539	37.0
Health Care Administration (AHCA)	149	2.2
Justice Administration Commission (JAC)	1	0.01
Juvenile Justice (DJJ)	2	0.03
Law Enforcement (FDLE)	168	2.5
Legal Affairs (DLA)	74	1.1
Lottery (LOT)	1	0.01
Management Services (DMS)	38	0.5
Parole Commission (FPC)	9	0.1
Persons with Disabilities (APD)	389	5.7
Public Service Commission (PSC)	2	0.03
Public Defenders	1	0.01
Revenue (REV)	565	8.2
School for the Deaf and Blind (FSDB)	15	0.2
State (DOS)	45	0.7
State Attorneys	3	0.04
Veterans' Affairs (DVA)	2	0.03



Workforce Innovation (AWI)	291	4.2
Other	145	2.1

Table 4. Number and percent of employment survey respondents who work in each county (n=6,762).

County of residence	Count	Percent %
Alachua	170	2.5
Baker	16	0.2
Bay	53	0.8
Bradford	26	0.4
Brevard	103	1.5
Broward	228	3.4
Calhoun	16	0.2
Charlotte	42	0.6
Citrus	53	0.8
Clay	68	1.0
Collier	36	0.5
Columbia	36	0.5
Dade	223	3.3
De Soto	17	0.3
Dixie	10	0.1
Duval	258	3.8
Escambia	115	1.7
Flagler	28	0.4
Franklin	12	0.2
Gadsden	186	2.7
Gilchrist	4	0.1
Glades	4	0.1
Gulf	20	0.3
Hamilton	5	0.1
Hardee	22	0.3
Hendry	16	0.2
Hernando	61	0.9
Highlands	39	0.6
Hillsborough	384	5.7
Holmes	10	0.1
Indian River	33	0.5

Jackson	146	2.2
Jefferson	52	0.8
Lafayette	8	0.1
Lake	81	1.2
Lee	199	2.9
Leon	1506	22.3
Levy	32	0.5
Liberty	23	0.3
Madison	24	0.3
Manatee	68	1.0
Marion	112	1.7
Martin	37	0.5
Monroe	27	0.4
Nassau	29	0.4
Okaloosa	57	0.8
Okeechobee	19	0.3
Orange	255	3.8
Osceola	69	1.0
Palm Beach	246	3.6
Pasco	127	1.9
Pinellas	251	3.7
Polk	182	2.7
Putnam	32	0.5
Santa Rosa	81	1.2
Sarasota	95	1.4
Seminole	109	1.6
St. Johns	60	0.9
St. Lucie	92	1.4
Sumter	29	0.4
Suwannee	27	0.4
Taylor	22	0.3
Union	19	0.3
Volusia	156	2.3
Wakulla	156	2.3
Walton	22	0.3
Washington	18	0.3

The state of Florida does not discriminate on the basis of disability or other factors in employment; however, some people perceive they will be treated negatively in the workplace if they disclose a disability. Therefore, no results are reported with cell sizes smaller than 10 people to protect the anonymity of respondents.

## **Discussion & Future Directions**

This brief survey demonstrates that disability is common among state employees. Based on the 2000 Census and the annual Florida Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, two national surveys that use different definitions of disability, approximately 20% of the Florida population has a disability. Based on this employment survey, 30% of state employees have a disability. Because this survey was completely anonymous and was distributed by state agency representatives, we cannot be certain that it is representative of all state of Florida employees. It is possible that individuals with a disability were more likely to respond to the survey than individuals without a disability, causing the prevalence of disability to appear higher in the survey than it actually is. Among the agencies with a very small number of respondents, several agencies' respondents included only persons with a disability while other agencies included only persons without a disability; therefore, this seems to be an unlikely explanation for the higher prevalence of disability among state employees compared to the general population of Florida. It is also possible that the state of Florida is an attractive employer for persons with a disability and people with a disability therefore seek out state employment. Respondents were not queried about their job satisfaction or why they chose to work for the state of Florida in this survey so we cannot assess this factor in the current survey. Based on these results, most Florida state employees with a disability do not use any assistive technology while at work. From this survey it is not clear whether this is because these employees do not need an assistive device, whether they are not aware that they could make such a request, or whether they have requested assistive technology and that request has been denied.

The Florida Office on Disability and Health was contacted by approximately 10 state employees who were concerned that their disability status might be disclosed to their employer if they completed the survey. Several of these employees felt they would be negatively impacted or fired if their disability was revealed. These employees were told that the survey was completely anonymous so there was no risk in their disability status being disclosed to anyone else. They also were told that the survey was voluntary and was not linked in any way to their job, so they could choose not to participate if they felt uncomfortable doing so. Some of these employees said that they do need accommodations at work but that they did not feel comfortable asking for them. All respondents with a disability who reported needing assistance were referred to the Clearinghouse on Disability Information (**1-877-ADA-4YOU** or [clearinghouse@dms.myflorida.com](mailto:clearinghouse@dms.myflorida.com)). The Florida Office on Disability and Health and the Governor's Commission on Disabilities do not provide direct services to any individuals in Florida.

This survey was completed by nearly 7,000 state of Florida employees and provides valuable information about disability among these employees even if the data do not accurately represent all state of Florida employees. This survey is intended to be an initial step in assessing the state's employment practices related to disability and to quantifying the number of state employees with a disability. In the future, it would be helpful to ask more in-depth questions of employees who identify themselves as having a disability, including questions about job satisfaction, discrimination in the workplace, and the need for and use of specific types of assistive technology in the workplace. It also would be useful to assess hiring practices and to survey or interview human resources personnel in various state agencies to assess their role in hiring persons with disabilities and facilitating workplace accommodations for new employees with disability or existing employees who develop a disability.

## **Summary**

The Florida Office on Disability and Health and the Governor's Commission on Disabilities worked together to create a brief survey of Florida employees to understand the prevalence of disability and special equipment use. This survey provides baseline information that will be helpful in designing more in-depth surveys and in tracking changes in disability among state employees over time. Ultimately, we hope it will be a first step in improving the workplace environment for state employees with disability and for establishing the state of Florida system as a model workplace for persons with disabilities. A total of 6,952 state employees from more than thirty different state agencies and all 67 counties responded to the web-based, ten-item survey. Thirty-one percent of respondents considered themselves to have a disability; of these, 78% reported a physical disability and 16% reported a mental disability. Overall, 9% of respondents said they use some type of assistive device while at work. This survey demonstrates that disability is common among current state of Florida employees. More in-depth studies are needed to identify whether employees who need assistive technology at work are receiving it and whether any barriers to reporting disability or requesting accommodations exist in the state employment system. In order to be a model employer, the state's hiring and employment practices must also be assessed, along with job satisfaction and retention among employees with a disability, including those employees who develop disability after becoming state employees.

## **APPENDIX A: SURVEY**

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Governor's Commission on Disabilities Employment Survey  
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Welcome to the State of Florida Employment Survey, sponsored by the Governor's Commission on Disabilities and the Florida Office on Disability and Health. The purpose of this survey is to quantify the number of state employees in Florida who have a disability and to understand the types of disabilities among state employees. You must be age 18 or older to participate in this survey. We value your input and appreciate your participation.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer and you may stop this survey at any time. Your identity will not be known and no personal identifying information about you will be recorded through your participation in this survey. There is no risk to you should you choose to participate in this survey. The state of Florida does not discriminate on the basis of disability or other factors in employment; therefore, there are no anticipated risks to study participants. However, in order to protect anonymity, we will not report any results when fewer than 10 people appear in a category. By completing and transmitting this electronic survey, you are acknowledging informed consent and that your participation is completely voluntary. You also are assuring that you are at least 18 years old. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. No compensation will be provided for participating in this survey. The estimated time of completion for this survey is less than 5 minutes.

Survey Gizmo ([www.surveygizmo.com](http://www.surveygizmo.com)) was used to create this survey. Survey Gizmo follows the Privacy Rule and Security Rule provisions of HIPAA. To read more about this Web-based Survey Software's privacy policy, please visit [www.surveygizmo.com/the-fine-print/](http://www.surveygizmo.com/the-fine-print/)

For questions or problems about the survey, please contact Dr. Elena Andresen at [fdh@phhp.ufl.edu](mailto:fdh@phhp.ufl.edu) or call 352-273-5286. For information regarding your rights as a research participant, contact the University of Florida IRB at 352-392-0433.

Thank you for participating in the State of Florida Employment Survey. The first section will ask about you and your employment, and the second section will ask about any disabilities you may have.

1. In which State of Florida department or agency do you work?

- Administration Hearings (DOAH)
- Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS)
- Business & Professional Regulation (DBPR)
- Children & Families (DCF)
- Citrus (CIT)
- Community Affairs (DCA)
- Corrections (DC)
- Education (DOE)
- Elder Affairs (DOEA)
- Emergency Management (DEM)
- Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Financial Services (DFS)
- Fish & Wildlife Conservation (FWC)
- Florida Guardian Ad Litem Program
- Governor's Office (EOG)
- Health (DOH)
- Health Care Administration (AHCA)
- Justice Administration Commission (JAC)
- Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
- Law Enforcement (FDLE)
- Legal Affairs (DLA)
- Lottery (LOT)
- Management Services (DMS)
- Parole Commission (FPC)
- Persons with Disabilities (APD)
- Public Service Commission (PSC)
- Public Defenders
- Revenue (REV)
- School for the Deaf and Blind (FSDB)
- State (DOS)
- State Attorneys
- Veterans' Affairs (DVA)
- Workforce Innovation (AWI)
- Other

2. Please indicate your employment type.

- Career service
- Contracted services
- OPS
- SES
- SMS
- Volunteer

3. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

4. What is your age?

- 18-34
- 35-54
- 55-64
- 65 or older

5. In which county do you live?

- [All 67 counties listed as options in a drop-down menu]

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6. Do you currently use any assistive technology or an assistive device while you are at work?

Examples include speech recognition software, alternative keyboards, etc.

- Yes
- No

7. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a person with a disability is someone who:

has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, performing manual tasks, caring for oneself, working, etc.) ;

has a record of such an impairment; or



is regarded as having such an impairment.

Based on this definition, do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
- No

[Questions 8 & 9 appear only if respondent said "yes" to Question 7]

8. A physical impairment is defined by the ADA as:

"Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine."

Do you consider yourself to have a physical impairment?

- Yes
- No

9. A mental impairment is defined by the ADA as:

"[a]ny mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities."

Do you consider yourself to have a mental impairment?

- Yes
- No

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Thank You!  
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Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Dr. Elena Andresen at fodh@phhp.ufl.edu or call 352-273-5286.

If you have questions about disability services in Florida, including assistive technology, transportation, housing, health care, and many other topics, please contact the Clearinghouse on Disability Information at 1-877-ADA-4YOU or 1-877-232-4968. The Clearinghouse on Disability Information serves as an information and referral source connecting people with disabilities and advocates of people with disabilities to the resources they need that will assist with their issues.