



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship

Ready, Willing and Able
Evaluation Report
- Employer Survey Results -

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Introduction

This report is based on the second of two surveys of employers that have hired people with an intellectual disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) under the Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) initiative. RWA is a partnership between the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) and the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance (CASDA) and has been funded by the federal government's Employment and Social Development Canada. RWA reflects the aims of CACL and CASDA which include, among other things, to increase the employment of people with an intellectual disability and people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in competitive employment. RWA was designed to achieve that aim by stimulating employer awareness, interest and demand for job candidates with these disabilities and to ensure employers have the support they need to translate new hires into permanent jobs.

The Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship at the University of British Columbia designed the survey and administered it online from May 24 to June 16 of 2017. The first survey was identical in most respects and was administered from April 27 to June 15 of 2016. This report forms a part of the overall evaluation on RWA undertaken by the Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship. The full report can be found at <https://cic.arts.ubc.ca>.

Some 435 employers that hired one or more individuals under RWA were invited to participate in the second survey, as were 212 in the first. As used in the present report, an "employer" is an entity or person that employs someone else. Some of these employers were members, branches or units within chains or larger companies. Each local store or other operating unit with its own management structure was considered an employer for the purposes of RWA and the present research. Of the employers that were invited to participate in the second survey, 80 managers, owners, or their representatives accepted completed enough of the survey for the results to be used in the present report, up from 68 in the first survey.¹ What follows are the main findings. The terms "employer" and "employer-representative" are used somewhat interchangeably throughout this report.

Where response patterns in the second survey are similar to those in the first, that point is mentioned briefly without delving into specific comparisons; the focus has instead been kept on the responses to the second survey. However, the differences are described where the responses to the second survey stood out from the first.

About the employer-representatives and their work

Their industries

Chart 1 shows that the largest share (44.9%) of the people who responded to the survey were working in the retail trade. Accordingly, the same percentage of individuals with disabilities covered by the survey were hired in that sector. The next-most common industry was food

¹ A few individuals visited the survey but did not answer any of the questions beyond the initial invitation to continue. Of those individuals, a few answered one or two questions then left the survey. None of these individuals' responses have been included in the present analysis.

services (10.2%), followed by professional, science and technical services, and various and sundry “other” services not specifically detailed on the chart (both at 6.1%). The same proportions of respondents were in each of the broad groupings for: arts, entertainment and recreation; health care and social assistance; information and communications technology; real estate; and travel and tourism (each at 4.1%). The remainder were equally divided at 2% in each of: agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; manufacturing; public administration; transportation; and warehousing. The share of people in professional, science and technical services was higher in the second than the first employer survey (6.1% vs 2.4%, respectively). Travel and tourism declined from 7.1% to 4.1%, while real estate rose from 0% to 4.1%.

Chart 1. Survey respondents’ industries

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Administration		2.0%	1
Agricult., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting		2.0%	1
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation		4.1%	2
Construction		0.0%	0
Education & Early Learning		0.0%	0
Finance & Insurance		0.0%	0
Food Services		10.2%	5
Health Care & Social Assistance		4.1%	2
Info & Communications Tech.		4.1%	2
Information and Culture		0.0%	0
Management		0.0%	0
Manufacturing		2.0%	1
Natural Resources		0.0%	0
Professional, Science & Tech. Svcs		6.1%	3
Public Administration (Government)		2.0%	1
Real Estate		4.1%	2
Retail		44.9%	22
Transportation		2.0%	1
Travel & Tourism		4.1%	2
Utilities		0.0%	0
Warehousing		2.0%	1
Other Services		6.1%	3
		Total Responses	49

Their occupations

Chart 2 shows that most survey respondents (53.8%) were managers, followed next by human resources personnel (20%) and owners (18.8%). One person worked in business, finance or administration occupation (1.2%). Various “other” occupations accounted for 6.2% of

respondents. Amongst the latter were a trainer, a General Manager, a Directeur and a person who said the chart reflects all of their involvements with their firm. The share of owners was higher in the second than first survey (18.8% vs 13.6%), as was the share of human resources personnel (20% vs 13.6%). The share of managers declined to 53.8% from 66.1%.

Chart 2. Survey respondents’ occupations

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Owner		18.8%	15
Management		53.8%	43
Business, finance or administration		1.2%	1
Human resources		20.0%	16
Sales or customer service		0.0%	0
Other (Please briefly describe.)		6.2%	5
		Total Responses	80

Types of firms and where they operate

Nearly half of the firms where respondents worked were members of chains (46.8%). Over half, however, were independent businesses (42.9%) or franchise operations (14.3%) (Chart 3). These patterns were similar in the first survey as well.

Chart 3. Type of firm

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Independent business		42.9%	33
Part of a chain		46.8%	36
Franchise		14.3%	11
Don't know / not sure		2.6%	2
		Total Responses	77

Most of the respondents’ firms (64.6%) operate at more than one location. However, fairly small percentages of respondents’ firms have operations in the northern territories. For example, only 11.4% operate in the Yukon, 7.6% in the Northwest Territories and 5.1% in Nunavut. In contrast, roughly four in ten of the firms operate in British Columbia (35.4%) and Ontario (44.3%). About three in ten operate in Alberta (32.9%), Quebec (30.4%), New Brunswick (30.4%) and Nova Scotia (29.1%). About a quarter operate in Saskatchewan (26.6%), Newfoundland and Labrador (26.6%), the United States (26.6%) and internationally beyond the

United States (22.8%). Fewer than one in five (19%) operate in Prince Edward Island (Chart 4). The patterns are similar to those based on the first employer survey.

Chart 4. Places where respondents' firms operate

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
British Columbia		35.4%	28
Alberta		32.9%	26
Saskatchewan		26.6%	21
Manitoba		30.4%	24
Ontario		44.3%	35
Quebec		30.4%	24
New Brunswick		30.4%	24
Nova Scotia		29.1%	23
Prince Edward Island		19.0%	15
Newfoundland and Labrador		26.6%	21
Yukon		11.4%	9
Northwest Territories		7.6%	6
Nunavut		5.1%	4
United States		26.6%	21
Other international		22.8%	18
		Total Responses	79

The companies of the people who filled in this survey tend to be fairly large: 39.7% have more than 500 employees and 16.7% have 100 to 500 employees. However, nearly half of respondents worked with smaller employers that have fewer than 100 employees: 20.5% with less than 20 employees and 23.1% with 20 to 99 people (Chart 5). The share of respondents in companies with less than 20 employees doubled from 11.1% to 20.5% from the first to second survey, while the share in companies with 100 to 500 employees declined from 27% to 16.7%. The share of respondents in firms with 20 to 99 and 500 or more employees held relatively constant across the surveys.

Chart 5. Number of persons are employed at all locations of respondents' firms

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Less than 20		20.5%	16
20 to 99		23.1%	18
100 to 500		16.7%	13
Over 500		39.7%	31
Don't know / not sure		0.0%	0
		Total Responses	78

The respondents' own workplaces

In terms of the respondents' own workplaces (Chart 6), most were in Ontario, a share that nearly doubled from 17.2% to 30.8% from the first to second employer survey. Respondents in British Columbia increased slightly from 10.9% to 12.8%. The share increased more notably in Saskatchewan (from 1.6% to 3.8%), New Brunswick (from 7.8% to 11.5%), Prince Edward Island (from 3.1% to 5.1%), and Newfoundland and Labrador (from 3.1% to 5.1%). The share of respondents declined notably in Alberta (from 15.6% to 7.7%), Manitoba (9.4% to 3.8%), Quebec (10.9% to 5.1%), Nova Scotia (6.2% to 3.8%), the Yukon (9.4% to 6.4%) and the Northwest Territories (4.7% to 2.6%). Respondents in Nunavut increased slightly as a share of all respondents from none in the first survey (0%) to 1.3% in the second.

Chart 6. Where respondents work (main workplace)

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
British Columbia		12.8%	10
Alberta		7.7%	6
Saskatchewan		3.8%	3
Manitoba		3.8%	3
Ontario		30.8%	24
Quebec		5.1%	4
New Brunswick		11.5%	9
Nova Scotia		3.8%	3
Prince Edward Island		5.1%	4
Newfoundland and Labrador		5.1%	4
Yukon		6.4%	5
Northwest Territories		2.6%	2
Nunavut		1.3%	1
		Total Responses	78

While many respondents reported that their firms had over 500 employees (Chart 5), few respondents were in workplaces with so many employees (7.7% – Chart 7). A quarter (25.6%) were in workplaces with less than 20 employees – up from 17.2 % in the first survey. About a third (35.9%) were in workplaces with 20 to 99 employees – down from 45.3% in the first survey. Nearly a third (30.8%) were in workplaces with 100 to 500 employees – down slightly from 35.9% in the first survey.

Chart 7. Number of employees at respondents' workplaces

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Less than 20		25.6%	20
20 to 99		35.9%	28
100 to 500		30.8%	24
Over 500		7.7%	6
Don't know / not sure		0.0%	0
		Total Responses	78

About four in ten respondents to the second survey had been with their firm for more than 10 years – 15.6% for 11 to 15 years and 27.3% for 15 years or more (Chart 8). Another four in ten had been with their firm for 3 to 10 years – 20.8% for 2 to 5 years and 22.1% for 6 to 10 years. The largest share of respondents (27.3%) had been with their firm for 15 years or more (like 38.3% in the first survey).

Just over half (57.9%) of respondents in the second survey were women, while in the first the gender split was equal at 50% men and women.

Chart 8. Duration of respondents’ employment with their present firm

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Less than 1 year		2.6%	2
1 - 2 years		11.7%	9
3 - 5 years		20.8%	16
6 - 10 years		22.1%	17
11 - 15 years		15.6%	12
15 years or more		27.3%	21
		Total Responses	77

How employers found out about RWA

The most widely-reported way that respondents’ firms found out about RWA was through their firms’ involvements in a national partnership under the program (for 25.4% of respondents – Chart 9). This was down considerably from 41.7% in the first survey. The next most widely-reported ways that employers found out about RWA were through individual contact by someone from an employment agency (14.9% – down from 20.8% in the first survey) or from some other community agency (11.9% – up from 8.3%). The write-in responses that described various and sundry “other” routes (which accounted for 19.4%) generally involved direct contact by a staff person working for RWA or for a community organization. Employer forums accounted for a small but increased share over the first survey (10.4% vs 8.3%). The Internet also accounted for a small but increased share – 6% up from 0%. Individual contact by another employer accounted for a small share in the first survey (4.2%) and none in the second (0%).

Chart 9. How employers found out about RWA

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Employer forum		10.4%	7
Individual contact from another employer		0.0%	0
Individual contact from an employment agency		14.9%	10
Individual contact from someone at another kind of community agency		11.9%	8
The Internet		6.0%	4
Firm's involvement in a national partnership		25.4%	17
Other (please briefly describe)		19.4%	13
Don't remember		11.9%	8
		Total Responses	67

About the people hired under RWA

Numbers hired

About half of survey respondents (48.7% – Chart 10) indicated that their firms had hired one or two individuals as a result of RWA. Nearly a quarter (23.1.6%) said that three or four individuals had been hired. These proportions were similar in the first survey. In the more recent survey, one in six (16.7% – up from 10.9%) said that their firm had hired from five to nine individuals. Another 7.7% had hired 10 or more, up from 0%. Respondents generally had some idea about the hiring of RWA participants at their firms, with only 3.8% indicating that they did not know or were not sure how many had been hired.

Chart 10. Number of people hired at respondents' firms as a result of RWA

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
1 or 2		48.7%	38
3 or 4		23.1%	18
From 5 to 9		16.7%	13
10 or more		7.7%	6
Don't know / not sure		3.8%	3
		Total Responses	78

Types of disability

Some 37.3% of respondents said that their firm had hired one or two people with an intellectual disability under RWA; the firms of nearly half (44.7%) hired this many people with ASD (Charts 11 and 12). However, 16% said that their firm hired three or four individuals with an intellectual disability, compared with 6.6% for people with ASD. Some 17.3% of respondents' firms hired 5 or more people with an intellectual disability, compared with only 6.6% of firms that hired this many people with ASD.

Chart 11. Number of people hired in respondents' firms with an intellectual disability

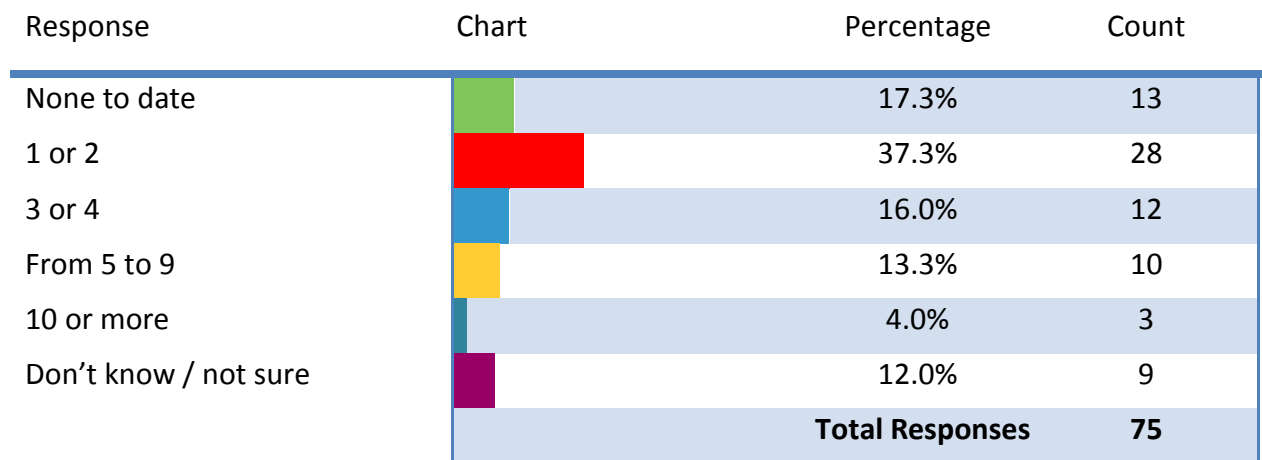
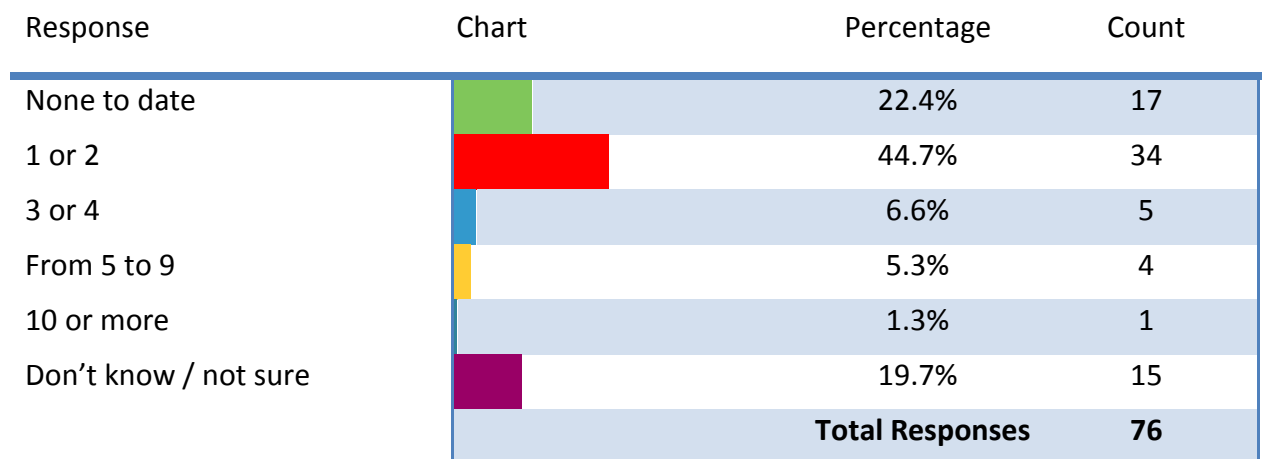


Chart 12. Number of people hired in respondents' firms with ASD









In terms of the balance of people with an intellectual disability-to-ASD in survey respondents' firms, when the "don't know/not sure" responses are removed from Charts 11 and 12, 80.3% of the firms hired at least one person with an intellectual disability compared with 72.1% that hired at least one person with ASD. Where respondents indicated that their firm had not yet hired someone with a given one of these conditions (e.g., intellectual disability), the firm had hired at least one person with the other condition (i.e., ASD).

Agency Involvement

Employment agencies tended to be involved in assisting either the people hired under RWA or their employers. For many of survey respondents' firms, only one agency was involved (for 39.5% – Chart 13). For about one in five firms (21.1%), two agencies were involved and for a very few firms, three agencies (1.3%) or more (2.6%). For about one in five firms, however (21.1%), no agencies were involved. About one in seven respondents (14.5%) did not know about agency involvement.

Chart 13. Number of employment agencies that provided any help to the respondents' firms OR to the individuals their firms hired through RWA

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
None. No agencies were involved.		21.1%	16
1 agency		39.5%	30
2 agencies		21.1%	16
3 agencies		1.3%	1
4 agencies or more		2.6%	2
Don't know / not sure		14.5%	11
		Total Responses	76

Some 49 survey respondents indicated that agencies were involved with their firms or with people hired under RWA (64.5%). Where agencies were not involved (16 cases), their firms had generally not asked for agency involvement (in 15 of the cases). Very few respondents answered the follow-up questions about why their firms did not ask for such involvement. The most-frequently given reasons were that the people responsible for the decision did not think of asking for help (38.5%), did not think the firms needed any help or had “no real reason” (both at 15.4% – Chart 14). In another 15.4% of cases the respondents did not know or were unsure why their firms had not asked for agency help, leaving only a few (7.7%) who gave “no real reason” or that it was not the firms' policy to ask for help from employment agencies (7.7%).

Of some interest, in the first survey, one of the leading reasons why firms did not ask for agency help was because the individuals hired did not seem to need it. In the second survey, no respondents gave that as a reason, which indicates that the people hired later in the RWA initiative probably had somewhat more complex employment-related needs than those hired earlier.

Chart 14. Reasons for not asking an employment agency for help *

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
The individual(s) didn't seem to need any help from an employment agency		0.0%	0
The firm didn't think it needed any agency help		15.4%	2
It's the firm's policy not to ask for help from employment agencies		7.7%	1
Didn't think of asking		38.5%	5
Other reason		7.7%	1
No real reason		15.4%	2
Don't know / not sure		15.4%	2
Total Responses			13

* More than one response was possible

Employer experiences under RWA

How the hired individuals performed

The survey asked respondents to rate the people hired under RWA on several measures, taking their firms' "average employee" as the standard of comparison. Overall, those ratings were very positive. Chart 15 provides results for people who provided opinions, which were the vast majority of the respondents. Table 1 (below) provides details while Appendix Table 1 provides unfiltered results that include people who did not know or were unsure how to answer the questions. Among respondents who had opinions about the questions that were asked, a derived measure based on the all responses found that 94.9% rated the RWA employees as on par with or better than the average employee overall.

Indeed, over 60% of respondents rated RWA employees as "a little better" or "much better" than the average employee in the areas of:

- punctuality;
- attendance;
- use of sick days;
- turnover;
- attitudes towards their work;
- getting along with coworkers;
- getting along with management; and
- contributing to positive workplace morale and spirit.

If only 76.1% of respondents rated RWA employees as average or better in terms of productivity (65.3% in the first survey), 88.5% rated the people hired under RWA as average or better in terms of contributing to their firm's profit margin, which was up from 84.7% in the first survey (Chart 15).

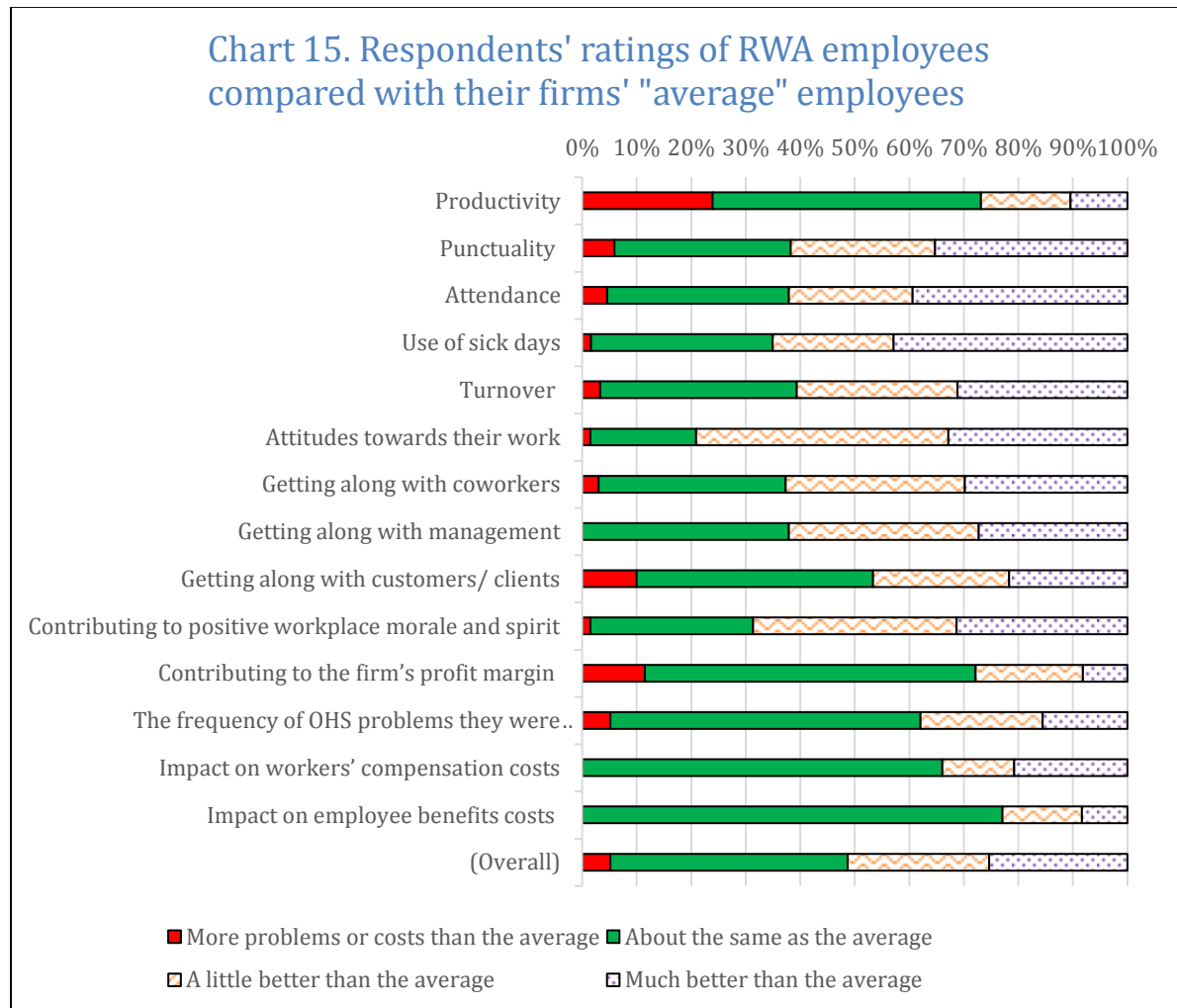


Table 1. Respondents' ratings of RWA employees compared with their firms' "average" employees					
	More problems or costs than the average	About the same as the average	A little better than the average	Much better than the average	Total of valid Responses
Productivity	23.9%	49.3%	16.4%	10.4%	100.0%
Punctuality	5.9%	32.4%	26.5%	35.3%	100.0%
Attendance	4.5%	33.3%	22.7%	39.4%	100.0%
Use of sick days	1.6%	33.3%	22.2%	42.9%	100.0%
Turnover	3.3%	36.1%	29.5%	31.1%	100.0%
Attitudes towards their work	1.5%	19.4%	46.3%	32.8%	100.0%
Getting along with coworkers	3.0%	34.3%	32.8%	29.9%	100.0%
Getting along with management	0.0%	37.9%	34.8%	27.3%	100.0%
Getting along with customers/clients	10.0%	43.3%	25.0%	21.7%	100.0%
Contributing to positive workplace morale and spirit	1.5%	29.9%	37.3%	31.3%	100.0%
Contributing to the firm's profit margin	11.5%	60.7%	19.7%	8.2%	100.0%
The frequency of OHS problems they were involved in	5.2%	56.9%	22.4%	15.5%	100.0%
Impact on workers' compensation costs	0.0%	66.0%	13.2%	20.8%	100.0%
Impact on employee benefits costs	0.0%	77.1%	14.6%	8.3%	100.0%
(Overall)	5.1%	43.6%	26.0%	25.4%	100.0%

Table 2 shows the percentages of people hired through RWA who, according to employer-representatives, performed a little better or much better than the "average" employee as captured in the first and second employer surveys. The table shows that RWA participants performed better across all these measures by 22.9% to 79.1%, and that these ratings improved across all measures from the first to the second survey.

Table 2. Comparison across the two employer surveys of the percentages of people hired through RWA who performed a little better or much better than the firms' "average" employee		
	First survey	Second survey
Productivity	16.4%	26.9%
Punctuality	61.2%	61.8%
Attendance	57.2%	62.1%
Use of sick days	61.2%	65.1%
Turnover	51.0%	60.7%
Attitudes towards their work	63.2%	79.1%
Getting along with coworkers	55.1%	62.7%
Getting along with management	55.1%	62.1%
Getting along with customers/ clients	41.7%	46.7%
Contributing to positive workplace morale and spirit	63.3%	68.7%
Contributing to the firm's profit margin	20.4%	27.9%
Frequency of OH&S problems they were involved in	32.6%	37.9%
Impact on workers' compensation costs	24.4%	34.0%
Their impact on employee benefits costs	20.4%	22.9%
Overall	44.5%	51.3%

How the agencies helped employers

A technical problem in the first survey resulted in respondents not being asked a battery of questions about the nature of agencies' involvements with their firms. That problem was resolved for the second survey. The questions enquired about the involvement of the most, second-most and third-most involved agencies before and after the hiring of RWA employees. Most of the respondents who answered these questions were in firms where only one agency was involved.

Chart 16 shows the number of responses for each question. Overall, 37 respondents indicated that agencies had helped their firms. Only one respondent indicated that an agency was asked for assistance but did not provide any.

Chart 16. How the involved employment agencies helped the firms

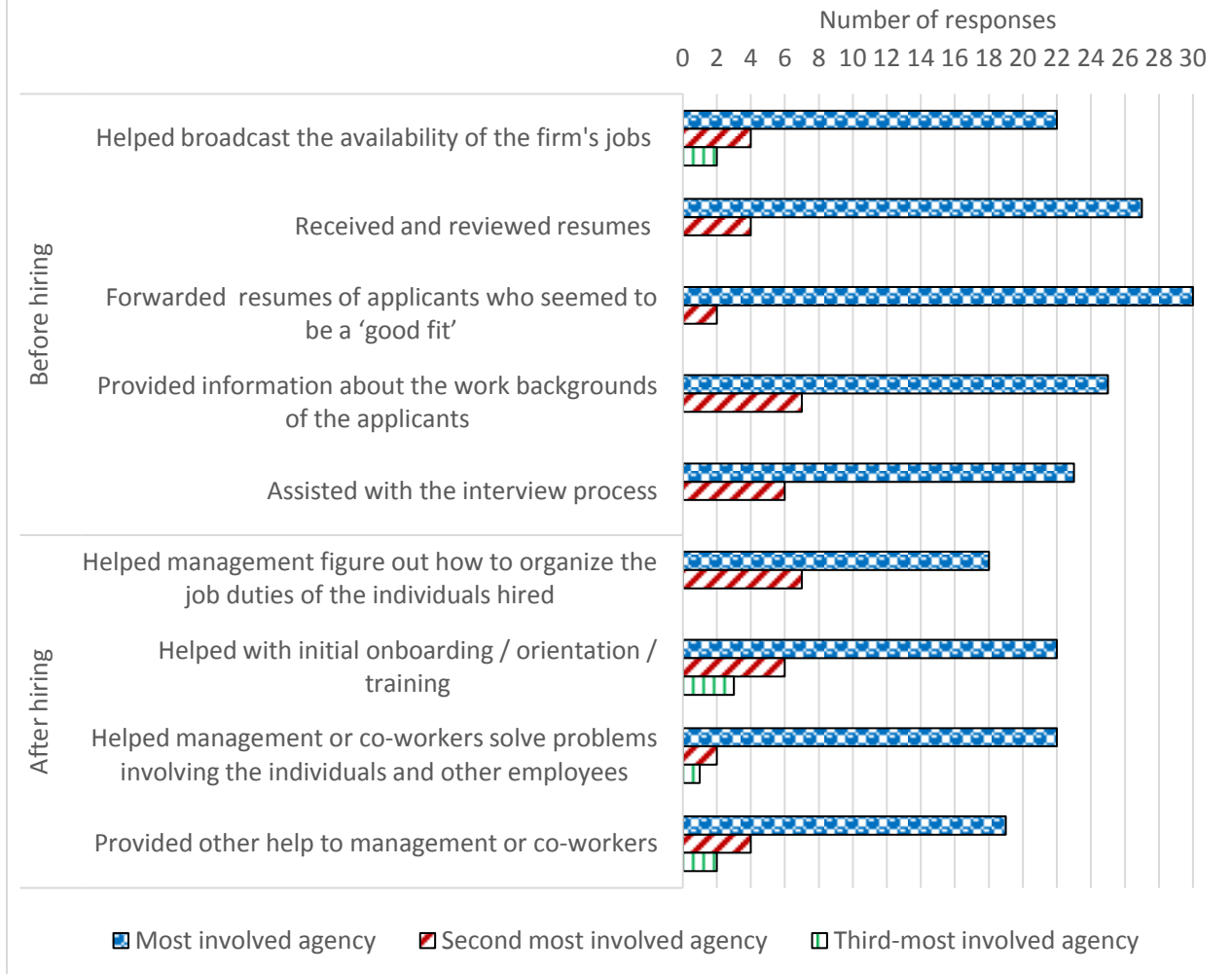


Chart 16 shows that the agencies tended to be more involved with the needs of employers before rather than after the hiring of RWA participants. The most involved agencies received and reviewed applicants' resumés, forwarded resumés of applicants who seemed to be a "good fit" with employers' needs, and provided background information about the job applicants. The two most common agency activities after hiring were to support the initial onboarding (incl. orientation and training) and to assist managers or coworkers to solve problems involving the individuals hired and other employees.

While there were some differences in the extent of the pre- vs post-hiring activities of the agencies, the most involved agencies tended to provide employers with several of the supports and services indicated on the chart. For instance, when asked about the most important thing the agency (or agencies) did to help their firm, one respondent said, "Provide resumés and a little background of the individuals applying and what needs they may need from us. They also provided a job coach until the individual was able to perform the task on their own." Thirty respondents answered the same question about the most important thing that agencies did. Overall, most responses fell within a few categories. The activities that employers said were

most important focused on forwarding to employers the resumés of candidates who would be a good fit with employers' needs; such support for employers accounted for a third (33.3%) of respondents' comments. The next two most important supports were helping with initial onboarding, orientation and training (13.3%), followed by providing the individuals hired with direct support on the job (10%), assisting with the job interview process (10%), providing employers with background information about the job applicants (6.7%) and helping management to figure out how to organize the job duties of the individuals hired (6.7%).

How well the agencies performed for employers

The survey asked how well the most, second-most and third-most involved agencies helped the respondents' firms. Chart 17 shows that the vast majority of the 33 people who rated their most-involved agencies said they performed either very well (60.6%) or quite well (36.4%). Only one respondent gave a "so-so" rating and none said the agencies did "not very well" or "poorly". Performance ratings for the second-most involved agencies were fewer and lower. Only 22.2% of the 18 people who responded said their second-most involved agency performed very well and 38.9% quite well. Three respondents gave a rating of so-so (16.7%) and one said their second-most involved agency performed poorly (5.6%). Among the 10 people who answered the same question about their third-most involved agency, one (10%) said it had performed very well, four (40%) said quite well and one (10%) said so-so; many (40%) did not know or had no opinion, probably because no third agency was involved with their firm in most of those cases.

Overall, the ratings for agency involvement with employers were quite high, with most rated as performing very well or quite well, especially the agencies that were most involved with employers.

Chart 17. How well the employment agency (or agencies) helped the firm

a. Most involved agency

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Very well		60.6%	20
Quite well		36.4%	12
So-so		3.0%	1
Not very well		0.0%	0
Poorly		0.0%	0
Don't know / no opinion		0.0%	0
Total Responses			33

b. Second-most involved agency

Very well		22.2%	4
Quite well		38.9%	7
So-so		16.7%	3
Not very well		0.0%	0
Poorly		5.6%	1
Don't know / no opinion		16.7%	3
Total Responses			18

c. Third-most involved agency

Very well		10.0%	1
Quite well		40.0%	4
So-so		10.0%	1
Not very well		0.0%	0
Poorly		0.0%	0
Don't know / no opinion		40.0%	4
Total Responses			10

When asked what the agency (or agencies) could have done to better help their firms, most respondents (55%) said nothing because they were quite satisfied with the agencies' performance. In the words of one respondent, "Absolutely nothing, this was a huge success", and in the words of another, "They are great, we have a great relationship." A couple of respondents (10%) said they were not sure how the agencies could have been more helpful because they had performed well. Said one, "I am not sure. The 2 companies keep in close contact and 99% of hires have been successful." Another said, "I don't know? She [the agency representative] was pretty helpful."

Among the employer-representatives who responded to the question about how their agencies could have been more helpful, a quarter (25%) suggested more frequent contact, site visits, communication and direct engagement. For instance, one said it would have been helpful if the agency had been, "... more involved in the orientation of the employee and the employer".

Another said that more was needed to, “prepare them [RWA employees] for the reality of feedback from management, day to day goals and targets.” One respondent said it would have been helpful for the agency to “stay a little longer with [the] team to help develop them to their full capacity, and providing job coaches with them until fully not needed.” Another said, “It would've been good to have more regular updates about progress for the new hire.” Reflecting that agencies tended to be providing a range of supports to employers, one respondent suggested that, “More regular involvement, training for anybody to attend, regular visits, information seminars, more public seminars and training....more of a global approach” would have helped.

How the agencies helped individuals

It was understood when the second employer survey was designed that agencies could be providing a range of supports to individuals hired under RWA, such as helping individuals to prepare for and participate in the job interview, helping them navigate the transportation system, job coaching, assistance with problem solving on the job, etc. The survey did not enquire into all the kinds of support that agencies might have provided. However, it did ask about the kinds of supports for individuals that *employers* considered most helpful. The survey captured 20 such responses. In order of importance these supports for individuals were job coaching and the provision of ongoing support (50.0%), helping the individual with onboarding, orientation and training (30.0%), occasional checking up with the individual to ensure things were going smoothly (10.0%), ensuring a good fit between individuals' aptitudes and interests to the skills and other qualities that employers needed (5.0%), and helping individuals with transportation (5.0%).

How well the agencies performed for individuals

Some 28 respondents participated in the battery of questions that asked about the performance of agencies that helped individuals hired under RWA. Respondents generally said their most involved agency did either very well (57.1%) or quite well (39.3%). Of the 12 who answered about the second-most involved agency, a quarter (25%) said very well, a quarter (25%) said quite well and 8.3% said so-so. Among the 9 who responded about the third-most involved agency, nearly a quarter (22.2%) said very well and the same percentage said quite well; many (55.6%) did not know or had no opinion (Chart 18). Overall, then, where respondents expressed their views they tended to rate the agencies as doing very well or quite well with the individuals hired under RWA.

Chart 18. How well the employment agency (or agencies) helped the individual(s) the firm hired

a. Most involved agency

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Very well		57.1%	16
Quite well		39.3%	11
So-so		3.6%	1
Not very well		0.0%	0
Poorly		0.0%	0
Don't know / no opinion		0.0%	0
		Total Responses	28

b. Second-most involved agency

Very well		25.0%	3
Quite well		25.0%	3
So-so		8.3%	1
Not very well		0.0%	0
Poorly		0.0%	0
Don't know / no opinion		41.7%	5
		Total Responses	12

c. Third-most involved agency






Very well		22.2%	2
Quite well		22.2%	2
So-so		0.0%	0
Not very well		0.0%	0
Poorly		0.0%	0
Don't know / no opinion		55.6%	5
		Total Responses	9

When asked what the agencies could have done more effectively to help individuals hired under RWA, survey participants gave 14 responses. More than half of these were that nothing further was needed (57.1%). Several (28.6%) indicated that more follow up with the individual was required. Said one respondent, “The employee agency was good with the employee when she was working on her own, but they did not provide much support when she was working here. The employee had a few behavioral problems that we spoke with them about on the job here, but it was hard for them to do much about it without a case worker being with her constantly.” One respondent (7.1%) said it would have been helpful if the agency had done, “more check ins with the management team”. Another (7.1%) said they would have appreciated it if the agency would, “Help more with funding”.

Customer feedback

When asked about feedback their firms had received from customers or clients since hiring people with an intellectual disability or ASD under RWA, more than two-thirds of respondents (up from 47.1% in the first survey) said they had received either a lot (38.6%) or some (34.3%) positive feedback. Less than one in five (17.1% rather than 39.6% in the first survey) said that customer feedback was about the same as usual. Only 1.4% said that there had been some negative feedback. No one in the second survey (vs 1.9% in the first) indicated their firm had received a lot of negative feedback. Less than one in ten (8.6% vs 11.3% in the first survey) said they did not know about customer/client feedback (Chart 19).

Chart 19. Feedback from customers/clients about respondents' firms since they hired people with an intellectual disability / ASD under RWA

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
A lot of positive feedback		38.6%	27
Some positive feedback		34.3%	24
About the same kinds of feedback		17.1%	12
Some negative feedback		1.4%	1
A lot of negative feedback		0.0%	0
Don't know / not sure		8.6%	6
Total Responses			70

Employer openness to hiring more people with an intellectual disability or ASD in the future

More than four in ten respondents (42%) said that they would “definitely” be trying to hire more people with an intellectual disability or ASD in the next 12 months (Chart 20). About another one in five (21.7%) said that their firms would “probably” try to hire more of these individuals and another quarter (24.6%) said “maybe”. These results were similar to those in the first survey. Overall, about two thirds (63.7%), said they would “definitely” or “probably” be trying to hire more such individuals in the next 12 months. Only 5.8% said it was “not likely” (down from 8.2% in the first survey) and 1.4% said they would not be trying to hire more such individuals (vs none in the first survey). Some 4.3% said they did not know or were not sure.

Chart 20. Whether firms will be trying to hire more people with an intellectual disability / ASD in the next 12 months

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes, definitely		42.0%	29
Probably		21.7%	15
Maybe		24.6%	17
Not likely		5.8%	4
No		1.4%	1
Don't know / not sure		4.3%	3
		Total Responses	69

Reasons for employer openness to hiring more people

Respondents gave 97 reasons why their firms were open to hiring more people with an intellectual disability or ASD in the next 12 months. Similar or related reasons were grouped for the present analysis. Half of the responses (50.5%) – were related to productivity. For instance, respondents indicated that the people who were hired had the skills and experience that "fit" with the firm's needs (12.4%), were reliable and loyal (7.2%), had a good work ethic and other positive conduct at work (10.3%), displayed positive attitudes (7.2%), contributed to teamwork and morale (5.2%) and to the firm's growth and other aims (8.2%). One employer said, "The loyalty and reliability of these workers and the readiness to work and take on any task is why I chose to hire these workers." Another said that the people hired were, "excellent contributors to the business, very punctual and very friendly with the customers, and always willing to learn new skills and tasks." One respondent commented that, "oftentimes they are very detail oriented, very positive and happy, have a passion to do the job to the best of their ability at all times, [and] determination to excel." One employer said that they were open to hiring more individuals as under RWA because they were looking "to gain long term and loyal employees and to reduce turnover at the same time".

Nearly another half of respondents (45.4%) said their firm was open to hiring more individuals as under RWA because this squared with their firms' values and commitments. Some of these values clustered around furthering diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity within the workplace (13.4%). Some firms were committed to supporting disadvantaged people, including their employment (11.3%). Other respondents said simply that it was the "right thing to do" or pointed to other moral rewards (9.3%), while some indicated that hiring these individuals was consistent with their firms' commitments to reflecting and supporting the community (11.3%).

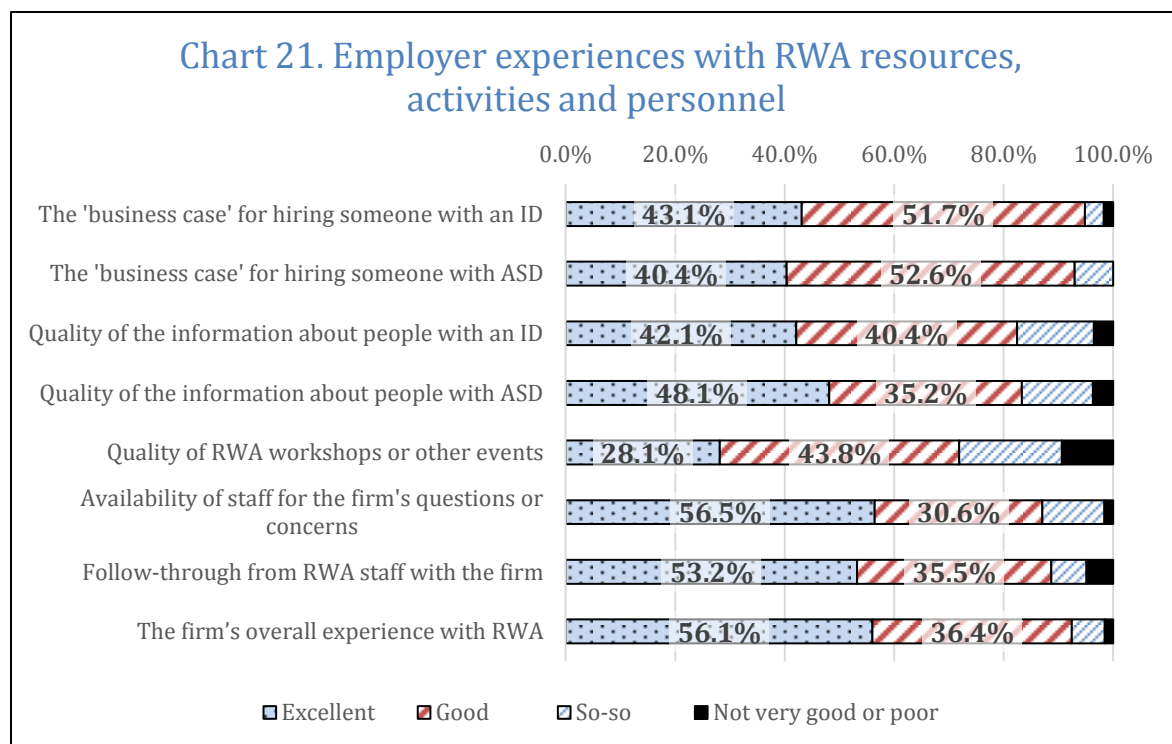
While all of the above responses suggest that RWA as a program had contributed to positive employer experiences, an additional few individuals (4.1%) singled out positive experiences with RWA as the key reason why their firm would be open to hiring more individuals as they had under RWA. In the words of one of these people, "The support from the hiring agency is great. These individuals we hire can do a lot of the same jobs as the average hire."

Similar reasons to all those mentioned above were given in the first survey. In the first survey, however, a few respondents (2.7%) indicated that their firm was open to hiring more people with an intellectual disability or ASD because of the associated funding that might come with the hires, such as wage subsidies. No respondents gave that reason in the second survey.

Eight respondents answered the question, “What are the top one or two reasons why your firm isn't likely to hire (more) people with an intellectual disability / ASD in the next 12 months?” Of these, five gave budgetary reasons or their firm’s present lack of need for more employees. Another respondent said it was because they had sold the business, one said that supervision was an issue in their “large department with a hectic output”, and another said they were, “Happy with the one we have”.

Employers’ experiences with RWA program resources, activities and personnel

The survey asked respondents to give their assessment of RWA as a program and its resources, activities and staff. The following discussion has filtered out of the analysis those few respondents who indicated that they did not know or were unsure about how to answer a given question or that the question was not applicable. Based on the ‘valid’ data, Chart 21 shows the results. Appendix Table 2 presents the unfiltered results.



As in the first survey, the overall results based on useful data were quite positive. Some 94.8% of respondents rated the 'business case' that RWA representatives made for hiring someone with an intellectual disability as either ‘excellent’ or ‘good’, as did 93% concerning the business case for hiring someone with ASD. For 82.5% of respondents the quality of the information provided about people with an intellectual disability was either excellent or good, a figure that was down from 91.3% in the first survey. Some 83.3% rated the information about ASD as excellent or good, which again was down slightly from 84.2% in the first survey. Some 71.9% of

respondents who knew about RWA workshops or other events rated the quality as excellent or good compared with 82.5% in the first survey.

Some 87.1% in the second survey (like 89.4% in the first) rated as excellent or good the availability of people from RWA to address any questions or concerns the respondents' firms may have had. Nearly the same proportion (87.8%, which was up from 85.1%) gave the same rating for RWA staffs' follow-through on fulfilling their commitments to employers. Overall, 92.4% rated their firm's experience with RWA as excellent or good, up slightly from 90.2% in the first survey.

Improving RWA

When asked what they would recommend for making RWA more effective, respondents provided 44 answers. Three of these 6.8% indicated that nothing further was needed and the respondents were satisfied. One said, "We honestly couldn't have done anything to make this more successful than it was".

However, about a third of respondents (31.8%) indicated that the program would be strengthened by better knowledge of, information and training for, and follow-through with managers and HR professionals. Suggestions in this area were diverse. For instance, one respondent indicated that there was a need for, "Frequent follow ups to see how employers feel about the program and what is being offered to them." Others said that agency staff needed to "continue to learn about the business itself [in order to] to pick right candidates", and conduct a "review of job descriptions [and] responsibilities of positions in [the] organization, and understanding of [its] culture." Another said there was a need for "more support from the agency, not just in the beginning, but if any issues come up." While one person called for, "More training for the management at our firm", another suggested there was a need for, "Getting HRs that work with RWA in contact with each other so we can discuss any issues that arise with people who have potentially dealt with it". Another person thought it would be a good idea if there were a, "Monthly or quarterly newsletter with information for employers about how they could best hire and motivate someone with an intellectual disability."

Indeed, 13.6% of respondents mentioned the need for more information, promotion and visibility within and across firms and with the general public. For instance, one respondent commented favorably about a "... post-work article [which] garnered amazing feedback across our company", and urged that steps be taken to, "advertise this piece as much as possible with prospective employers and the public." Other respondents mentioned the desirability of more media coverage and a focus on local stories about the employment successes of people with an intellectual disability and ASD.

More than one in ten respondents (11.4%) indicated a need to expand the program's funding and to increase its flexibility. Another 4.3% felt the program should be expanded to include people with disabilities aside from an intellectual disability and ASD, and to consider including within the program's ambit social enterprises that focus specifically on hiring people with disabilities.

About a third of respondents (31.8%) said that better support for and follow-through with individuals was needed. Suggestions in this area included the need for better preparation for

individuals' job interviews and for work itself, e.g., "simple things like dress codes. maybe show them appropriate attire, hygiene etc.". Respondents also pointed to a need for better training and understanding of businesses by job coaches, more frequent direct contact between job coaches and the people they were supporting, better follow-through on commitments to the individuals hired under RWA, and availability for ongoing support for as long as individuals need it.

Summary and conclusion

This report is based on the responses of 80 business managers, owners, or their representatives in the second of two surveys that targeted businesses which hired people with an intellectual disability or ASD under RWA. The surveys were components of a broader evaluation of the RWA program.

The businesses of survey respondents tended to be quite large, multi-location firms which together operate in every province and territory, in the United States and internationally. However, the workplaces of the survey participants, and of the people hired under RWA as reflected in the survey, were most commonly small to mid-sized operations with fewer than 100 employees. Most of the businesses were members of chains or were independent businesses.

The most common way that employers found out about RWA was through senior managers who participated in a national RWA partnership and brought the initiative to the attention of other employees. Another common way was from employment agencies and other community agencies that brought RWA to employers' attention. Agencies were typically involved where individuals were hired under RWA, although in about one in five cases no agencies were involved.

Overall, participants gave high ratings for the performance of the agencies that assisted their firms, particularly the agencies that were most involved, which typically received ratings of having done very well or quite well. Respondents said the most important ways the agencies helped their firms was by vetting and forwarding the resumés of job candidates likely to be a good fit with what the firms needed, assisting with onboarding and training, providing individuals with direct support on the job, assisting with the job interview process, providing background information on job candidates and helping managers figure out how to organize the job duties of the people hired.

Respondents also gave high ratings to the performance of individuals hired under RWA across several measures. These individuals were reported as performing as well as or better than the "average" employee in the vast majority of cases, and even little better to much better in the areas of:

- punctuality;
- attendance;
- use of sick days;

- turnover;
- attitudes towards their work;
- getting along with coworkers;
- getting along with management; and
- contributing to positive workplace morale and spirit.

These were the kinds of considerations that led nearly two-thirds of survey respondents to say that their firms would definitely or probably try to hire more such individuals in the next 12 months. Most of the others said “maybe”. Very few said “no” or that it was “not likely”.

Employers provided many reasons for their openness to hiring more individuals as through RWA. Key among these were the productivity of the individuals hired and their contributions to the good functioning of the firms. Many other reasons clustered around how the hiring and employment of these individuals squared with firms’ values and commitments.

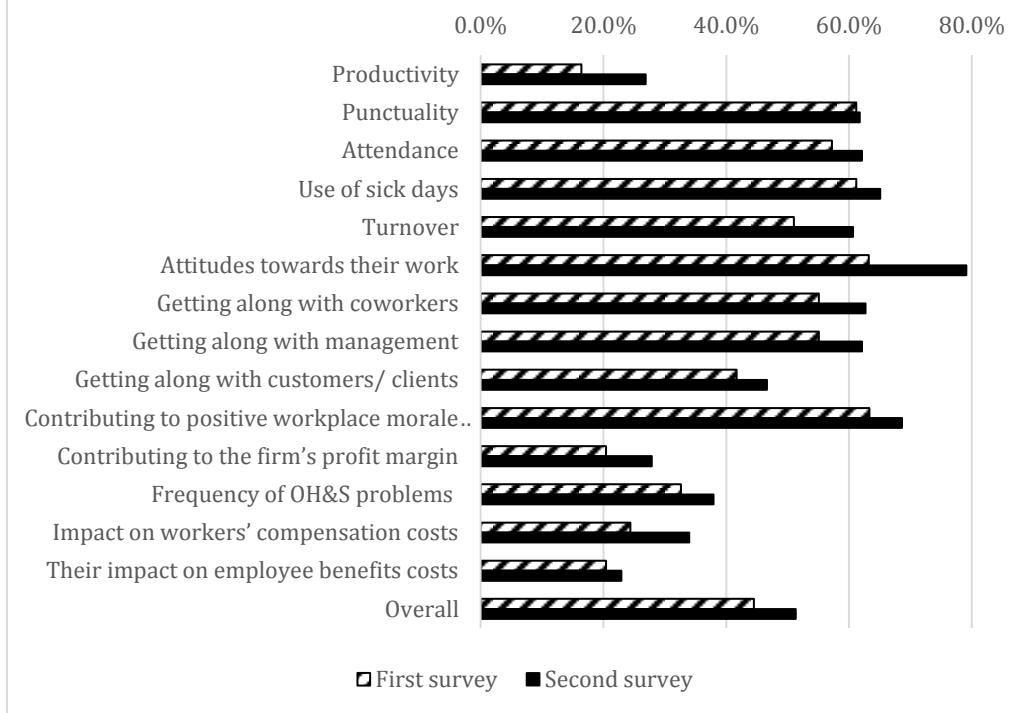
Customer / client feedback no doubt reinforced employers’ positive views: nearly three-quarters of the respondents’ firms received lot of or some positive feedback after hiring people through RWA. Almost no firms received any negative feedback. Employers generally rated the agencies as having done very well or quite well in their efforts to support the individuals who were hired. Respondents indicated that the most important things the agencies did to support the individuals included the provision of job coaching and other ongoing support, assisting with onboarding, orientation and training, and occasionally checking in to ensure the individual’s job situation was going smoothly.

Employer experiences with RWA as a broader program were also favorable. The vast majority of respondents provided ratings of “excellent” or “good” for the business cases that RWA personnel presented for hiring people with an intellectual disability and ASD, and the quality of information that the personnel provided about people with these two disabilities. Nearly all respondents also rated as excellent or good the availability and follow-up provided by RWA personnel to address employer questions, concerns and other needs. While most respondents rated the quality of RWA-sponsored workshops or other events as excellent or good, this area of RWA activities was not rated as highly as the others. That said, the vast majority of respondents rated their firms’ overall experiences under RWA as either excellent or good.

A few patterns stand out when the results of the second employer survey are compared with the first:

- The consistently higher-than-average ratings – and improved ratings over time – that respondents gave for the individuals hired through RWA in the areas of punctuality, attendance, use of sick days, turnover, attitudes towards work, getting along with coworkers, getting along with management, contributing to positive workplace morale and spirit, productivity and their contributions to the firms’ profit margins. Chart 22 provides a summary of the information in Table 2.

Chart 22. Percentages of people hired through RWA who performed a little better or much better than the firms' "average" employees



- Employers' perceptions of a greater need for agency involvement to support the people hired through RWA later in the program than earlier. This finding suggests growth over time in the capacity of employers to bring people onstream who presented more significant employment challenges;
- The consistently high ratings that respondents gave for RWA as a program and its personnel;
- The consistently high share of firms that will definitely or probably try to hire more people with an intellectual disability or ASD in the next 12 months;
- An increase in the extent of positive customer feedback that employers received after hiring people with an intellectual disability or ASD.

Respondents said that RWA could be strengthened by ensuring:

- Knowledge of, information and training for, and follow-through with, managers and HR professionals;
- Promotion and visibility of RWA;
- Expanded funding and program flexibility;
- Inclusion of people aside from those with an intellectual disability or ASD; and
- Support, follow-through and ongoing contact with employers and individuals hired.

After the first survey, the research concluded that, from the viewpoints of employers, RWA had been delivering positive results. That assessment holds for the second survey. A few concluding comments by employer-representatives who took part in the survey sum up the gist of employers' experiences:

“At first I was hesitant of hiring someone with Autism because I had never worked with anyone who was autistic. I made a point to give him thorough training and he has made a very positive impact on the day to day here.”

“My RWA representative has sought community resources that could help our firm move toward sustainability. He also talked me through a couple of challenging places. Once he found a way to use RWA to help our firm grow, he has been tremendously helpful.”

“The involvement from RWA has been fantastic. The teams are always willing to go above and beyond [and] are great with communication. We really enjoy working with them.”

Appendix

Appendix Table 1. Respondents' ratings of RWA employees compared with their firms' "average" employees in terms of:						
	More problems or costs than the average	About the same as the average	A little better than the average	Much better than the average	Don't know / not sure	Total Responses
a. Productivity (getting the job done properly and on time)	16 (23.5%)	33 (48.5%)	11 (16.2%)	7 (10.3%)	1 (1.5%)	68
b. Punctuality (showing up on time)	4 (5.8%)	22 (31.9%)	18 (26.1%)	24 (34.8%)	1 (1.4%)	69
c. Attendance	3 (4.3%)	22 (31.9%)	15 (21.7%)	26 (37.7%)	3 (4.3%)	69
d. Use of sick days	1 (1.4%)	21 (30.4%)	14 (20.3%)	27 (39.1%)	6 (8.7%)	69
e. Their turnover (e.g., rate of quitting or termination)	2 (2.9%)	22 (31.9%)	18 (26.1%)	19 (27.5%)	8 (11.6%)	69
f. Their attitudes towards their work	1 (1.5%)	13 (19.1%)	31 (45.6%)	22 (32.4%)	1 (1.5%)	68
g. Getting along with coworkers	2 (2.9%)	23 (33.3%)	22 (31.9%)	20 (29.0%)	2 (2.9%)	69
h. Getting along with management	0 (0.0%)	25 (36.2%)	23 (33.3%)	18 (26.1%)	3 (4.3%)	69
i. Getting along with customers/clients	6 (8.8%)	26 (38.2%)	15 (22.1%)	13 (19.1%)	8 (11.8%)	68

j. Contributing to positive workplace morale and spirit	1 (1.4%)	20 (29.0%)	25 (36.2%)	21 (30.4%)	2 (2.9%)	69
k. Contributing to the firm's profit margin (or other goals)	7 (10.1%)	37 (53.6%)	12 (17.4%)	5 (7.2%)	8 (11.6%)	69
l. The frequency of occupational health and safety problems they were involved in	3 (4.4%)	33 (48.5%)	13 (19.1%)	9 (13.2%)	10 (14.7%)	68
m. Their impact on workers' compensation costs	0 (0.0%)	35 (51.5%)	7 (10.3%)	11 (16.2%)	15 (22.1%)	68
n. Their impact on employee benefits costs (e.g., for LTD, health, dental, etc.)	0 (0.0%)	37 (55.2%)	7 (10.4%)	4 (6.0%)	19 (28.4%)	67

Appendix Table 2. Thinking about RWA and the people from RWA who you had contact with, how would you rate...

	Excellent	Good	So-so	Not very good or poor	Not applicable	Don't know/not sure	Total Responses
a. The 'business case' they made for hiring someone with...							
...i. an intellectual disability?	25 (38.5%)	30 (46.2%)	2 (3.1%)	1 (1.5%)	5 (7.7%)	2 (3.1%)	65
...ii. ASD?	23 (35.4%)	30 (46.2%)	4 (6.2%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.2%)	4 (6.2%)	65
b. The quality of the information they provided about people with...	24 (36.9%)	23 (35.4%)	8 (12.3%)	2 (3.1%)	5 (7.7%)	3 (4.6%)	65
...iii. an intellectual disability?	26 (41.3%)	19 (30.2%)	7 (11.1%)	2 (3.2%)	5 (7.9%)	4 (6.3%)	63
...iv. ASD?	9 (13.8%)	14 (21.5%)	6 (9.2%)	3 (4.6%)	12 (18.5%)	21 (32.3%)	65
c. The quality of RWA workshops or other events?	35 (52.2%)	19 (28.4%)	7 (10.4%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (7.5%)	67
d. The availability of people from RWA to address any questions or concerns your firm may have had?	33 (50.0%)	22 (33.3%)	4 (6.1%)	3 (4.5%)	1 (1.5%)	3 (4.5%)	66
e. Follow-through from the RWA people in doing what they said they would do for your firm?	37 (55.2%)	24 (35.8%)	4 (6.0%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.5%)	67
f. Your firm's overall experience with RWA?	25 (38.5%)	30 (46.2%)	2 (3.1%)	1 (1.5%)	5 (7.7%)	2 (3.1%)	65

