

The Central Massachusetts Workforce Needs Assessment

Autism Services in Massachusetts

- Policies such as **Autism Omnibus Law (2014)**, **Act Relative to Insurance Coverage for Autism (ARICA)**, and **Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE)** help individuals with the cost of therapies
- In Massachusetts, there were 60 resources for **transitioning** to adult services for people with autism
- The **AFAM** employment task force's goal was to increase employment opportunities for people with autism. To obtain that goal, they were provided a range of **job training and job development opportunities**.
- **Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (1984)** enables people with developmental disabilities to receive employment-related services, such as **job coaches**

The Survey

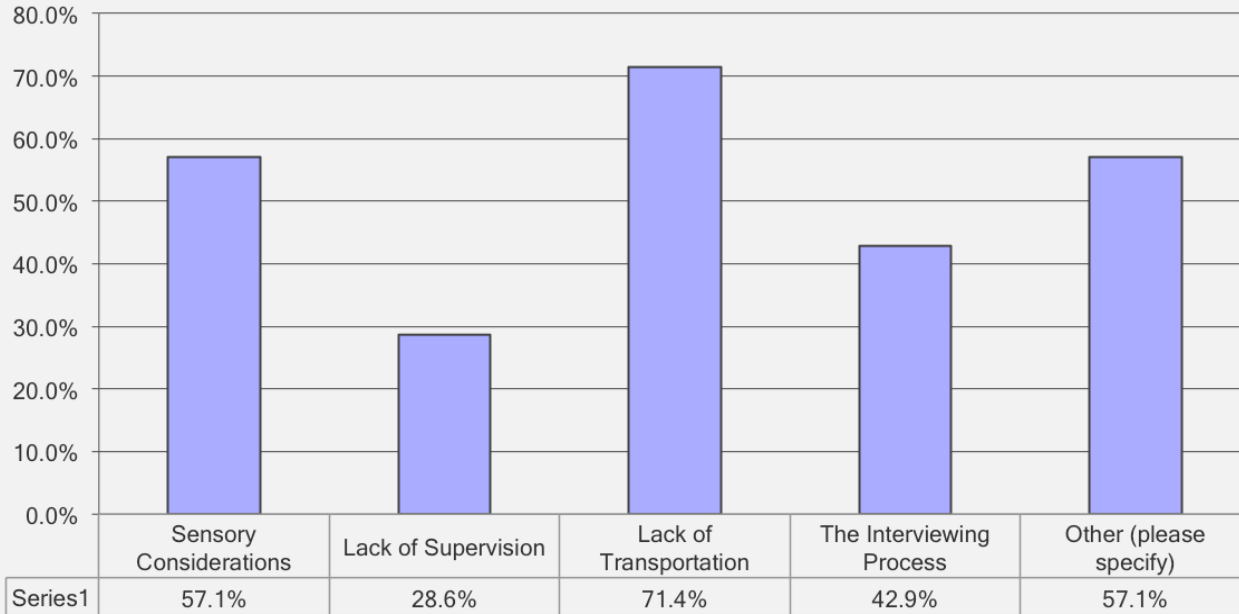
- We based our survey on the Bureau of Autism Services's survey for Pennsylvania.
- We believe that using this survey as a guide would produce the most beneficial results to accommodating needs for employment for individuals with autism.
- We chose survey questions that generate a discussion on providing individuals diagnosed with autism with the services and support they need to becoming employed.
- More information about the survey and results can be found at: HMEA.org

Three Main Points of Individual Survey

1. Barriers to getting a job
2. Type of support wanted
3. Successful support provided by employer

Barriers to Getting a Job

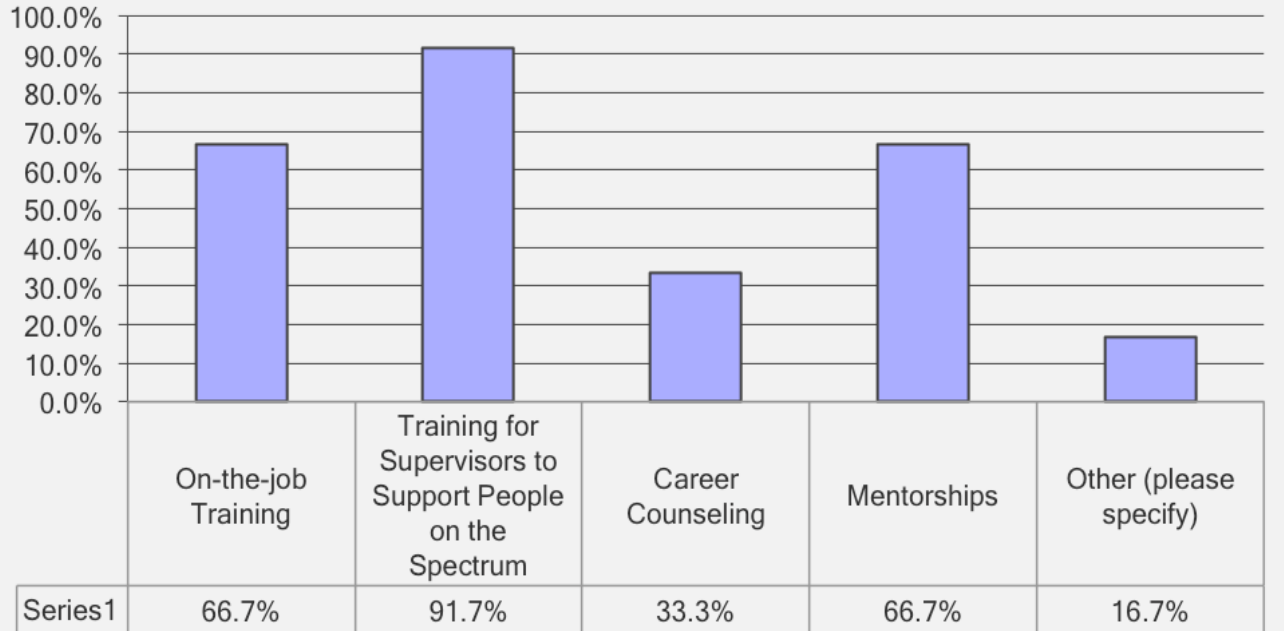
If no, what are the barriers to getting a job?



Other included:
having no experience or education, needing a 1:1 aid, and not Understanding directions.

Support Needed at Work to be Successful

If yes, please indicate what type of support:



100% of participants answered “yes” to thinking that they need support at work to be successful.

Support by the Employer found Successful

If you have been receiving supports, please indicate which of the following has been supportive:



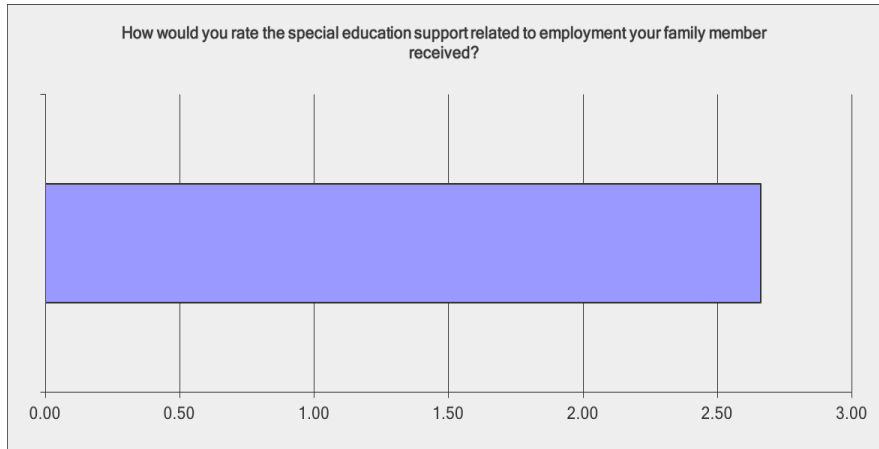
Other included:
a job coach to match the individual's skills, and the individual's parents.

Three Main Points of Family Survey

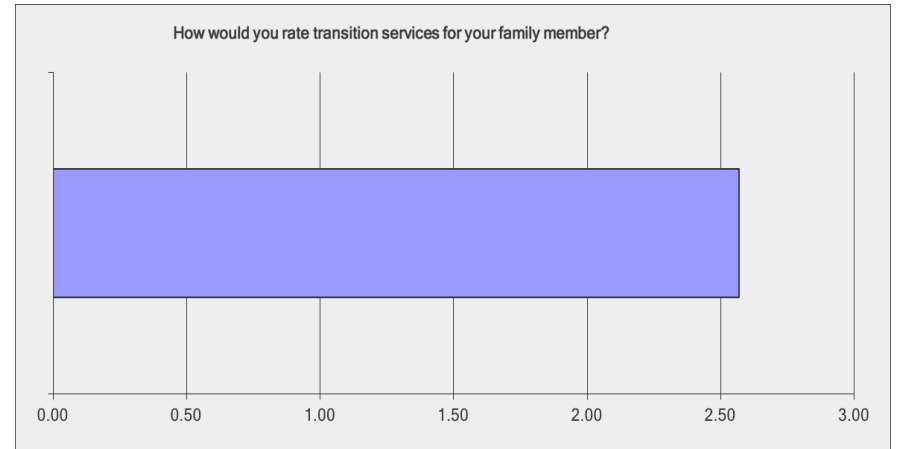
1. Individuals with Autism need more supports from employers
2. Supports that have been helpful for their family member
3. Barriers their family member with Autism have faced when finding employment

Do Families Receive the Proper Support for Success?

When family members were asked to *rate the special education support*, the average rating was 2.66 out of 5, with 5 being excellent.

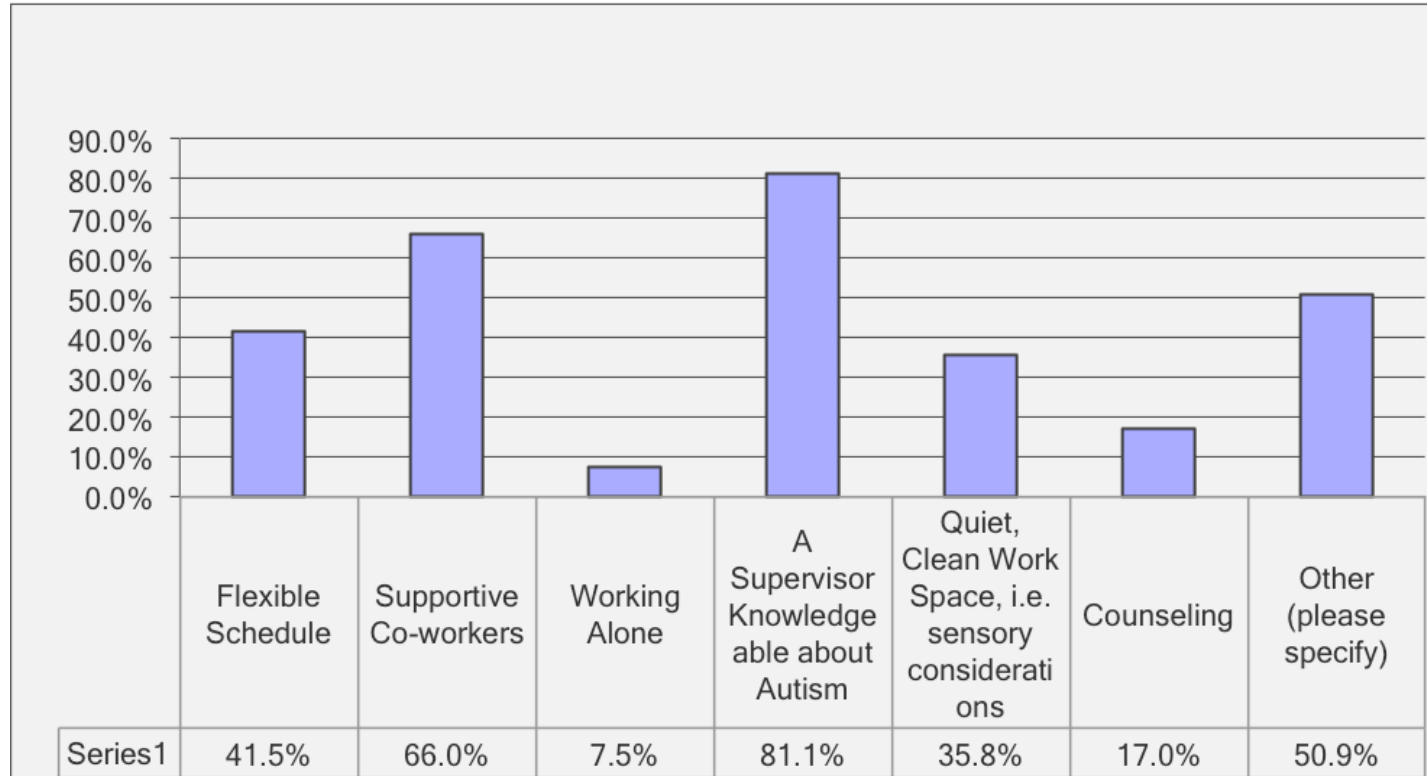


When family members were asked to *rate the transition services* available, the average rating was 2.57 out of 5, with 5 being the excellent.



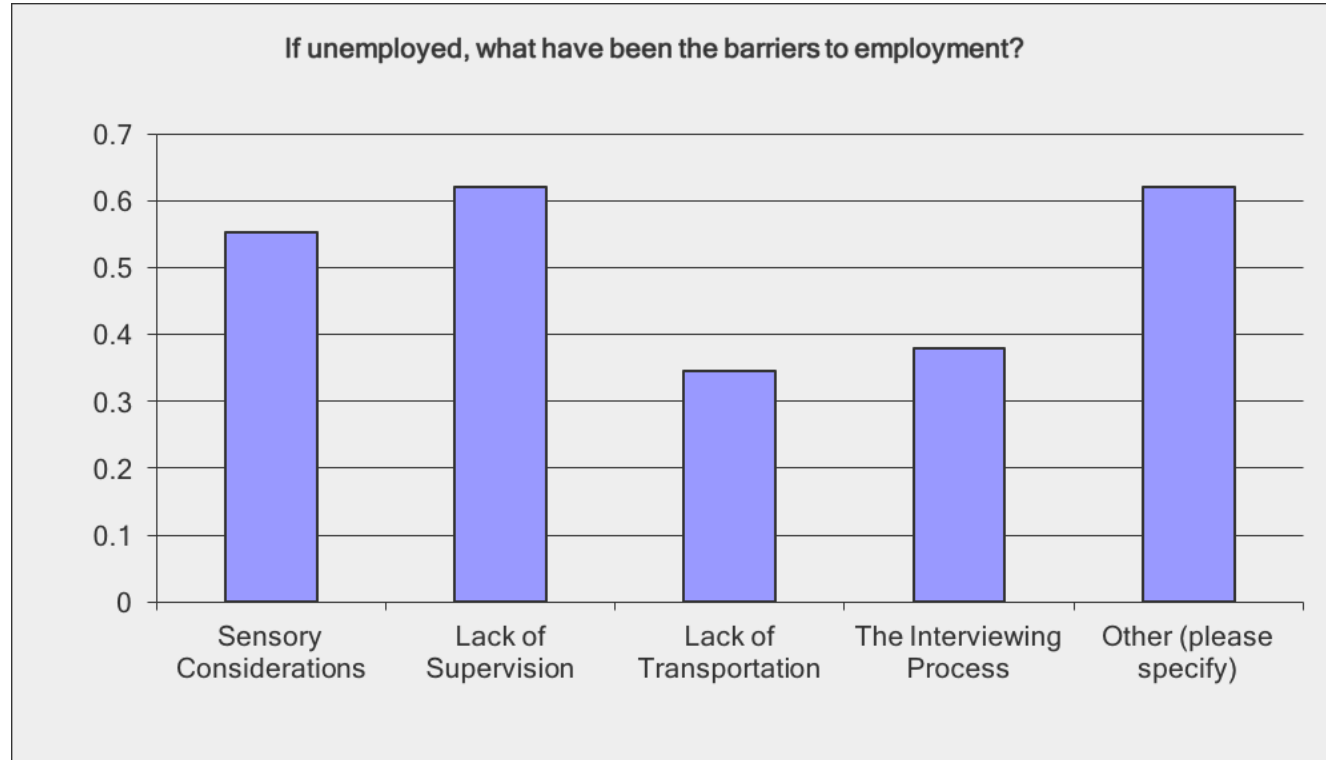
What Supports have been Most Helpful?

When asked to check all services that have been most helpful for their family member, participants indicated that the supervisor's knowledge about autism was most important.



Barriers of Finding Employment

Families indicated that lack of supervision was the biggest barrier to becoming employed.

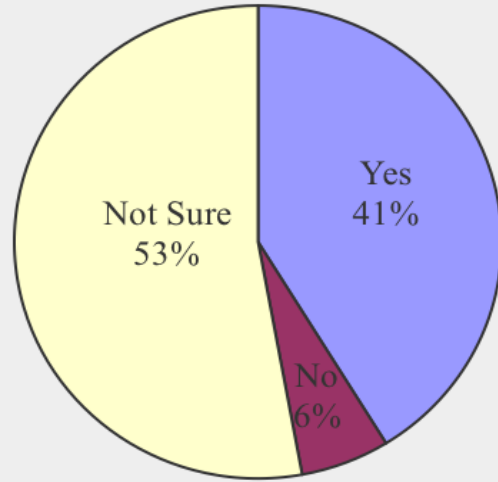


Three Main Points for Employment Survey

1. Knowledge about employees disabilities
2. Support offered within the company
3. Assumptions employers make about the characteristics of people with Autism

Employer Survey: Knowledge about Potential Disabilities

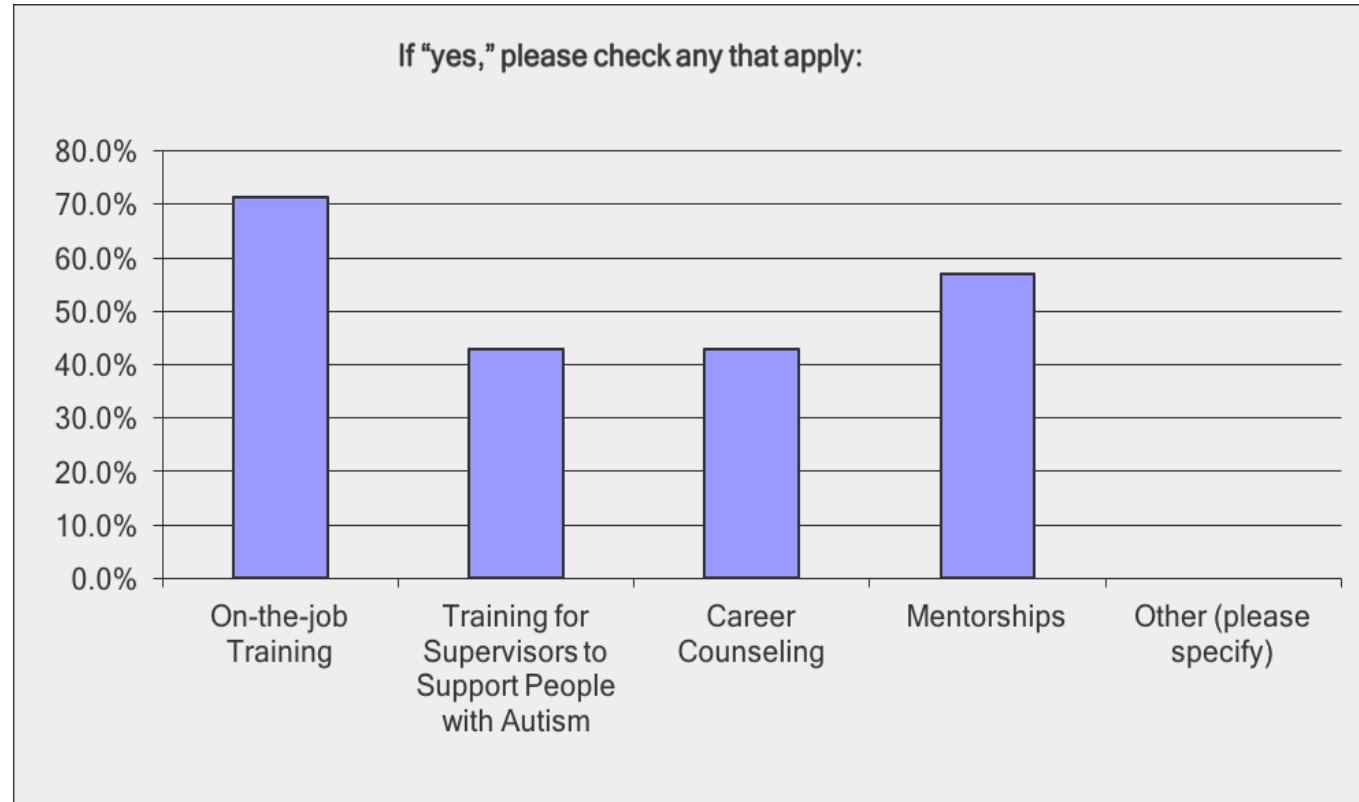
Do you believe your company currently employs people with autism?



Employer Survey: Support Offered

41% of companies offer support that could benefit employees with autism.

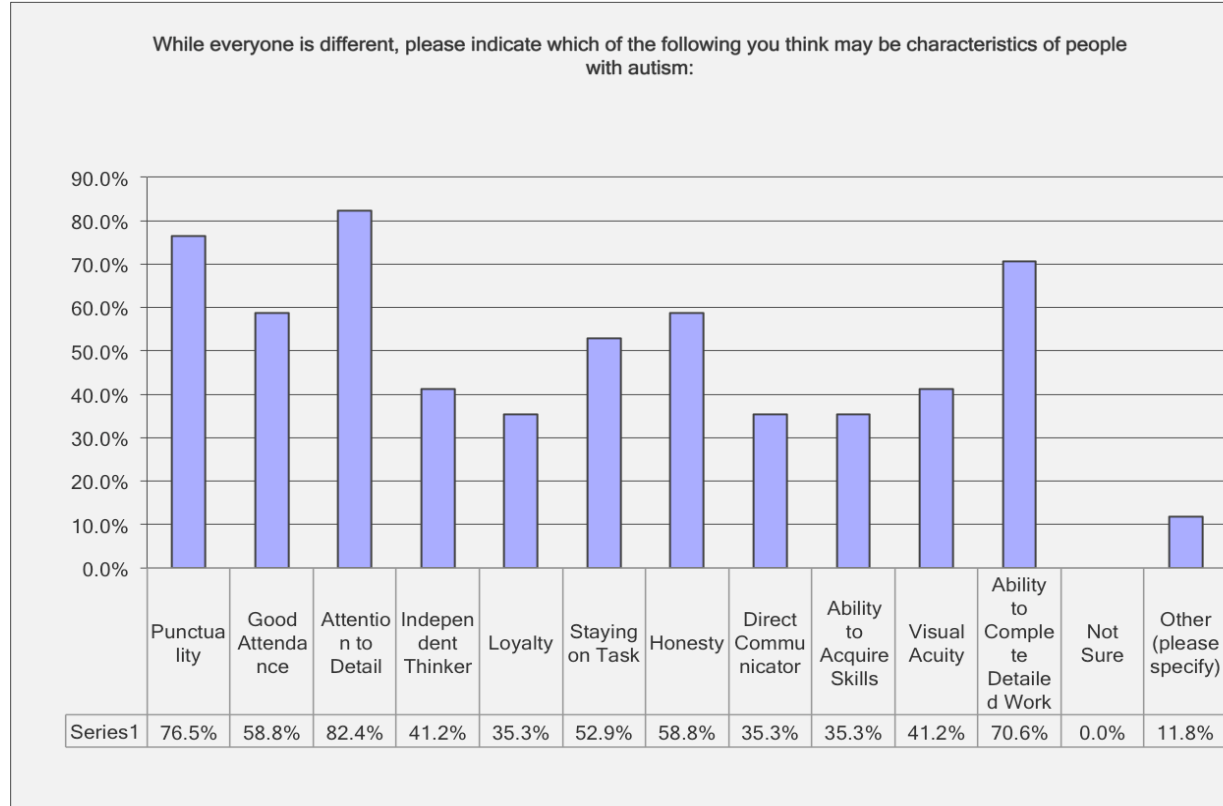
29% of companies stated they did not offer any services, and 30% were unsure.



Employer Survey: Perception of Character Traits Possessed by People with Autism

Employers were asked what traits they felt were characteristics with people with Autism. They could check off as many traits as they felt applied.

The people who checked other reported that they were unsure and felt that they were not knowledgeable enough to answer the question.



Conclusion

- More support from employers and fellow employees
 - Could be achieved through better education on autism, focused in the workplace and the specific challenges than can arise there
- More transparency and communication is needed within companies so that the people in charge have knowledge of the special needs of their employees, to ensure that the workplace is accessible to everyone
- Employers are willing to hire people with autism, and people with autism express a desire to be hired, which shows that the issue is in the actual application and interview process, as well as a lack of accessibility services
- For more information about the results of this study go to: HMEA.org