

Equal Employment Opportunity Newsletter — Equality is OK!



USAG FORT SILL

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Disability Implications of an Aging Workforce



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EEO Officer

A confluence of demographic, economic, and health factors have intersected to make the employment situation of older Americans a matter of urgent national importance. Demographically, the U.S. labor force is aging. Economically, more and more workers are reaching traditional retirement age only to find that they cannot afford to retire and must keep working to make ends

meet. And, from a health standpoint, as people age they become more likely to acquire a disability or reduced functional capacity, which may affect their ability to remain in the workforce. The challenge for American employers is how to enable an aging workforce to keep working in spite of the labor market, economic, and aging challenges older workers face.

Older workers are not a homogenous group. They span an array of ages, from “younger-older workers” who may be forty-something, to elderly seniors in their eighties. They may be defined differently depending on the industry in which they work. For example, some industries tend to view workers as old in their late forties (such as in construction). Employers may consider workers in this age group as being more at risk of physical limitations. On the other hand, in an

industry such as information technology, supervisors may be concerned that someone in their early fifties is no longer capable of being on the cutting edge of advances in the field. Thus, an extremely complex set of issues around the intersection of aging, disability, and employment exists. Individuals who have had a disability since birth or from a relatively young age who now are aging and need to manage secondary conditions that may be either a function of aging or a result of the progressive worsening of their primary disability comprise one segment of people who are aging. Having grown up with a disability, these individuals may already be well-acquainted with assistive technology, job accommodations, and the vocational rehabilitation system. They may also be familiar with the well-documented challenges facing many job seekers with disabili-

ties regardless of their age. Another aging group are individuals who acquire a disability later in life, which could be related to aging, such as vision or hearing loss, or other physical issues that arise, or to an accident or the onset of illness or a chronic health condition. Other individuals may be coping with learning disabilities, changing intellectual abilities,

or mental health issues that could be related to aging, from memory loss to depression. These last three groups may not identify themselves as having a “disability” and may have little or no knowledge of the resources that exist to help them gain or maintain employment.

Background

The U.S. population and workforce are aging. Demographic

projections show that over the coming decades, the U.S. population will consist of a much greater percentage of older adults than it does today. U.S. Census (2008) projections show that whereas 13 percent of the U.S. population in 2010 was age 65 or older, by the year 2030 that percentage will have risen to 19.3 percent. As the population ages, so does

Special points of interest:

- DISABILITY IMPLICATIONS OF AN AGING WORKFORCE
- ACCOMMODATING AN AGING WORKFORCE
- TIDBIT: PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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Aging Workforce Con't



No Retirement Pastures Here!

“INDIVIDUALS MAY NEED ACCOMMODATIONS RELATED TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF AGING, MOBILITY, FATIGUE, COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS, AND VISION AND HEARING IMPAIRMENTS.”

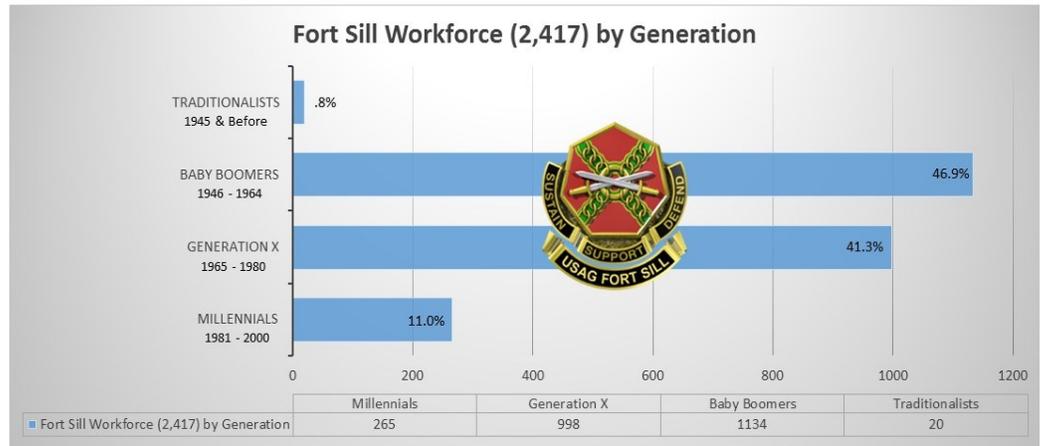
the workforce. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011) projects that whereas about seven million people 65 or older are in the labor force today, by the year 2050 that number will have almost tripled to 19.6 million. Older workers will comprise a greater percentage of the workforce in the future than they do today.

Not only are a greater number of older workers likely to be in the labor force in the future, they are likely to participate in the labor force at a much higher rate than younger individuals. For example, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011) projects that over the next 10 years, the number of individuals

in the labor force who are at least 65 years old will grow by 75 percent, while the number of workers ages 25 to 54 will grow by only 2 percent.

While the general population consists of a greater number of older adults than in the past, a greater percentage of older adults participating in the labor force than ever before also is evident. The percentage of the population age 65 and older that is in the labor force will grow over the next 10 years from about 17 percent to 22 percent. Beginning in 2020, this percentage will level off and hold at roughly 22 percent of the labor force through 2050. Fort Sill has an aging work-

force. The two largest employee generations are the Baby Boomers and the Gen Xers. They comprise 88.2% (2,132 employees) of the Fort Sill workforce. Baby Boomers are the largest generation of employees at 1,134 (46.9%) followed closely by Gen Xers at 998 (41.3%). They range in age from 35 to 69. Together, the generations claim 1,366 (56.6% of the workforce) Vietnam-Era and Post Vietnam-Era veterans in the composite ranks. Baby Boomer's median age is 58 years and Gen Xer's is 44 years. ~NTAR Leadership Center



FY15 Data



Older workers can serve as mentors for workers with less experience

Our Aging Workforce: Benefits of Job Accommodation

Today, more than 35 million Americans are over age 65, and that number is expected to double over the next 30 years as baby boomers age. Whether for monetary or social reasons, many individuals continue working after age 65. There are several federal employment laws that could protect these older workers from discrimination. These include the Civil

Rights Act of 1964, the Older Americans Act of 1965 (OAA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which requires employers to provide accommodations for older workers with disabilities. Though it may be a legal requirement that employers make accommodations for their aging workforce, it also makes good eco-

nomical sense. Older workers are a vital segment of today's workforce. An Older Workers Survey reported several possible advantages to hiring older workers; these benefits include that older workers:

- Are more willing to work different schedules,
- Serve as mentors for workers with less experience,
- Have invaluable experience,

Benefits of Job Accommodation Con't

- Are more reliable,
- Have higher retention rates,
- Have more knowledge and skills, and
- Are more productive.

Some older individuals have retired from one form of work and chose to switch careers or work part-time to earn extra money and maintain insurance benefits, keep active, learn new skills, or socialize. With the aging of the baby boomers, the average age for workers will increase, and the likelihood that more employees will be managing disability increases.

Many individuals will continue to work at full production with no

accommodations. However, aging may contribute to limitations that can easily and cheaply be accommodated. Age-related limitations can involve a wide range of conditions, including depression and anxiety, repetitive use injuries, and other cognitive, sensory, and physical limitations.

Individuals may need accommodations related to the psychological aspects of aging, mobility, fatigue, cognitive limitations, and vision and hearing impairments. For ideas on how to accommodate older workers, see JAN's Effective Accommodation Practices Series on Accommodations for the Aging Work-

force at <http://askjan.org/media/aging.html>.

As many of us age, our limitations may be from aging, returning to work after an injury, the occurrence of a primary disability, the exacerbation of a long-term impairment, and/or prevention of a secondary impairment. However, employing an aging and productive workforce brings invaluable knowledge, diversity, reliability, and experience to a workplace. Accommodating and employing aging workers can be an easy way to improve teamwork and morale, which can foster success in every workplace.

By Beth Loy Ph.D.

Tips for Interacting with Individuals with Disabilities

Appropriate etiquette when interacting with people with disabilities is based primarily on respect and courtesy. Below are a few tips to help you communicate effectively.

When speaking with a person with a disability, talk directly to the person, not his or her companion.

This applies whether the person has a mobility impairment, a speech impairment, a cognitive impairment, is blind or deaf and uses an interpreter.

Extend common courtesies to people with disabilities. Extend your hand to shake hands or hand over business cards. If the individual cannot shake your hand or grasp the card, he or she will tell you, and direct where you may place the card.

If the person has a speech impairment and you are having difficulty understanding what he or she is saying, ask the individual to repeat, rather than pretending to understand. Listen carefully, and repeat back what you think you heard to ensure effective communication.

If you believe that an individual with a disability needs assistance, go ahead and offer the assistance — but wait for your offer to be accepted before you try to help.

If you are interviewing a job candidate with a disability, listen to what the individual has to offer. Do not make assumptions about what that person can or cannot do.

If you are speaking to a person who is blind, be sure to identify yourself at the beginning of the conversation and announce when you are leaving. Don't be afraid to use common expressions that refer to sight, such as, "See you later."

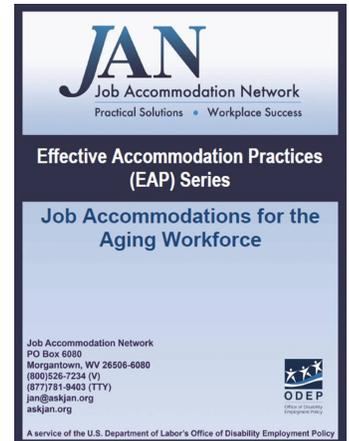
If you wish to get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the person gently on the shoulder or arm. Look directly at the person, and speak clearly in a normal tone of voice. Keep your hands away from your face, and use short, simple sentences. If the person uses a sign language interpreter, speak directly to the person, not to the interpreter.

If you encounter an individual with a service animal, such as a dog, please do not touch or distract the animal. Service animals are working, and it breaks their training to interact with others when they are on duty. When the animal is not working, some owners may allow interaction.

If you are having a conversation with a person who uses a wheelchair, if at all possible put yourself at the person's eye level. Never lean on or touch a person's wheelchair or any other assistive device. A person's assistive device is part of the person's personal space, and it is jarring or disturbing for anyone to have his or personal space invaded.

If you are speaking with an individual with a cognitive disability, you may need to repeat or rephrase what you say. If you are giving instructions on how to perform a task, you may also need to give the instructions in writing.

~Workforce Recruitment Program, Department of Labor



Job Accommodation Network solutions and recommendations available at askjan.org

“WHEN SPEAKING WITH A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY, TALK DIRECTLY TO THE PERSON, NOT HIS OR HER COMPANION.”



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Have an EEO question? Access via EEO website.

<http://sill-www.army.mil/USAG/eeo/index.html>



Jose F. Saucedo
EEO Specialist

PewResearchCenter

“10,000 Baby Boomers a day will turn 65—every single day between now and the year 2030.”

~Paul Taylor—Author, The Next America

Tidbit Corner: The Next America

America is in the midst of two demographic transformations playing out in slow motion. Our population is becoming majority non-white at the same time a record share is going gray. Each of these shifts would by itself be the defining demographic story of its era. The fact that both are unfolding simultaneously has generated big generation gaps that will put stress on our politics, families, pocketbooks, entitlement programs and social cohesion.

America’s racial tapestry is changing. At the same time our population is going gray, we’re also becoming multi-colored. In 1960, the popula-

tion of the United States was 85% white; by 2060, it will be only 43% white. We were once a black and white country. Now, we’re a rainbow.

Immigration is driving our demographic makeover. Our modern immigrants are different from the big waves of newcomers who came in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Back then, about nine-in-ten immigrants were from Europe. Today only about 12% are from Europe.

Who are the Millennials? The Millennials are our youngest adult generation. They’re America’s most racially and ethnically diverse generation

MISSION

Promote an inclusive work environment that ensures equal employment opportunity, fosters a culture that values diversity and empowers individuals to participate constructively to their fullest potential in support of IMCOM’s mission. The Garrison EEO Officer serves as the principle advisor to the Garrison Commander on all EEO related issues and concerns.

VISION STATEMENT

The installation leadership is committed to respect, fairness, and equality for all civilian employees by ensuring a professional work environment free from unlawful discrimination.

Equal Employment Opportunity is provided to all qualified persons. Discrimination based on an individual’s race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age (40 and above), mental and physical disabilities, reprisal for participating in a protected activity and genetic information is unlawful.

Hours of Operation Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. — 4 p.m.

ever. More than four-in-ten are non-white, many the U.S.-born children of the big wave of Hispanic and Asian immigrants who began arriving half a century ago.

Liberal youth, Conservative Elders. Millennials have voted more Democratic than older voters in the past five national elections.

Read the interactive article at Pew Research Center <http://www.pewresearch.org/next-america/>

Pew Research Center is a non-partisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.