Employment Barriers Among Latinos with Disabilities

Brigida Hernandez, PhD

YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities
460 W. 34th Street
New York, New York 10001
212-273-6239
brigida.hernandez@yai.org
Disability Rates

- 18.3% of Whites have a disability
- 20.9% of Latinos have a disability

*US Bureau of the Census, 2005*

By 2050, Latinos projected to make up 24.4% of the US population

*US Bureau of the Census, 2004*
Employment Rates

- 79.7% individuals without and 37.7% with disabilities are employed
- 40% Whites (non-Hispanic), 37% Whites (Hispanic), and 30% Blacks (Hispanic) with disabilities are employed

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics (2007)
Vocational Rehabilitation Outcomes

- Latino VR clients have poorer employment outcomes than White VR clients

*Hayward & Schmidt-Davis, 2003*

Latinos...
- were more likely to remain in a referral/applicant status
- were more often ineligible for services
- received less academic training

*Giles, 1992*
Purpose of the Study

- Explore the employment barriers, using focus groups, among
  - 45 Latinos with disabilities
  - residing in a large mid-west city
  - of working-age (18-64)
  - employed or actively seeking employment
Participants

- 30 male; 15 female
- 51% had a monthly income of under $1000
- 40% had only a high school diploma
  22% had less than a high school education
- 84% had a previous employment history
  11% were employed at the time of the focus group
## Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Disability</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical (mobility)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual/Developmental</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical (medical)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus Group Questions

Factors affecting their ability to get a job...

- level of formal education
- vocational training
- accessibility of the home
- transportation
- family members
- child care
- difficulties with the English language
Employment Barriers

- lack of or unreliable transportation (36%)
- difficulties with speaking the English language (24%)
- lack of formal education (24%)
- negative employer attitudes toward workers with disabilities (24%)
- negative employer attitudes toward Latinos (11%)
Undocumented workers...

- limited job opportunities ("word-of-mouth")
  - dangerous positions, short-term, no insurance coverage
- competition for jobs among Latino workers
  - undocumented workers will work for less pay
  - undocumented workers reduce job opportunities
- unable to receive VR services
- difficulties with the English language
Conclusion

- Employment challenges are more pronounced for Latinos with disabilities
- Research related to undocumented workers with disabilities is sparse
- More research needs to focus on their unique needs