

MISSOURI SHELTERED WORKSHOPS



Prepared for
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Steering Committee

Julie Warm, Ph.D.
UMKC Institute for Human Development

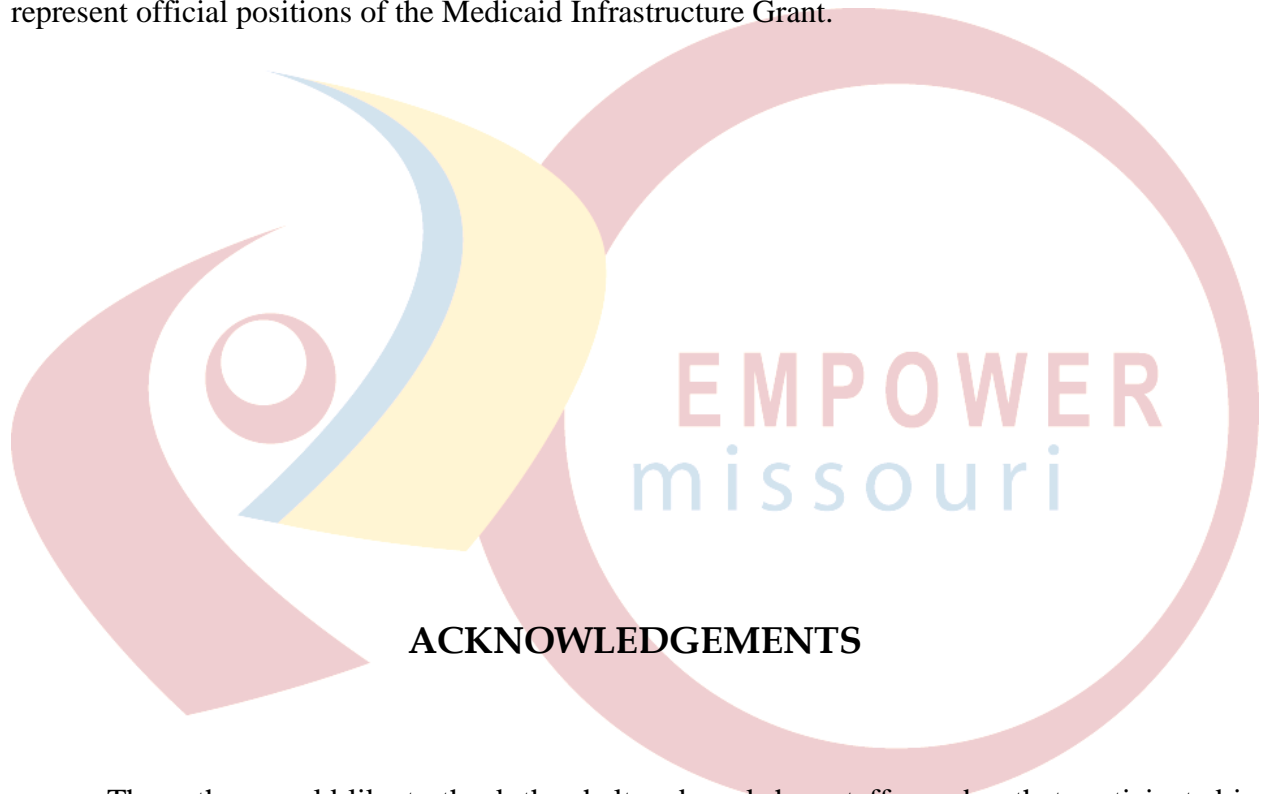
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PREFACE

UMKC Institute for Human Development, A University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research and Service (UCEDD), 2220 Holmes Road, Kansas City, MO 64108, (816) 235-1770

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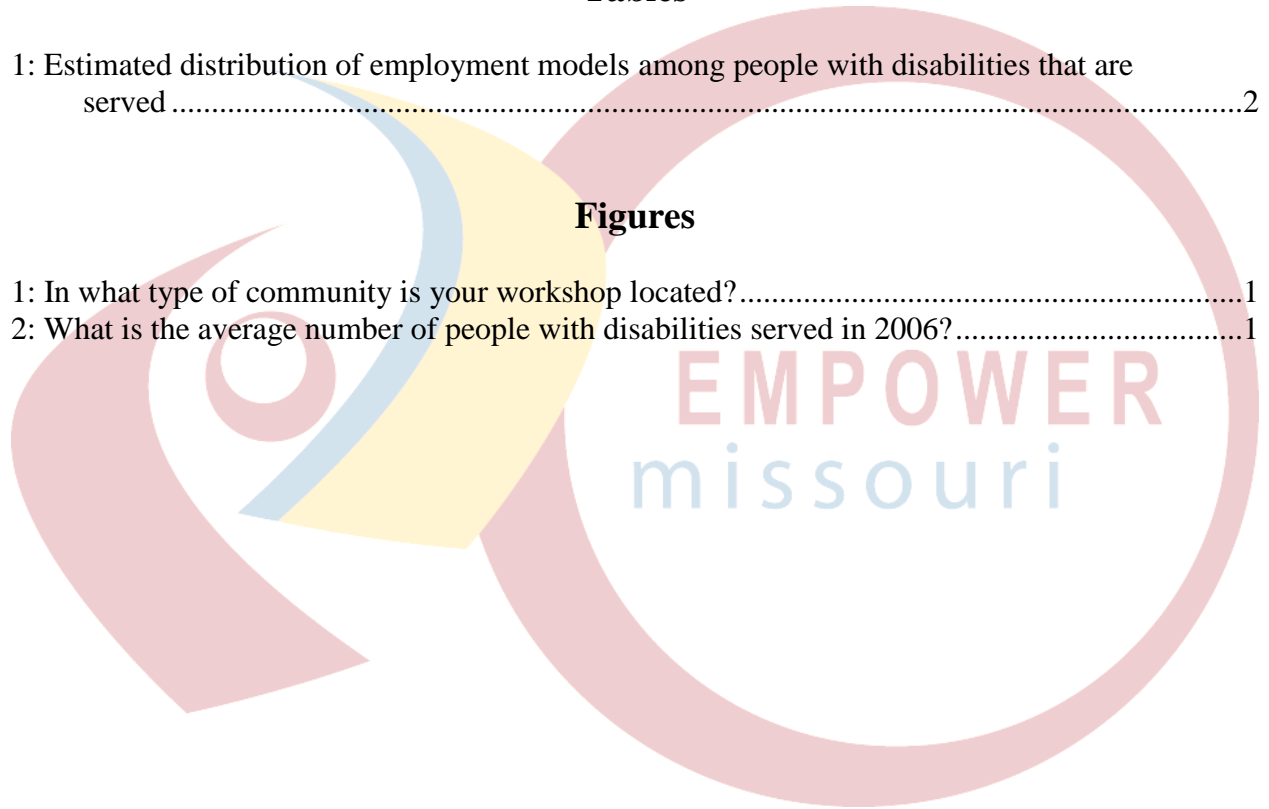
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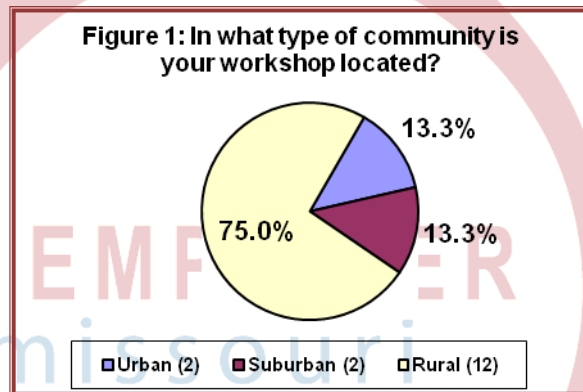
Introduction

The University of Missouri – Kansas City Institute for Human Development conducted a survey of Missouri Sheltered Workshop. The purpose of the survey was to understand the role of Missouri sheltered workshop in different types of employment for people with disabilities work. The results from the survey will be posted on the Empower Missouri website (www.empowermo.com) and a copy will be sent to the Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshop Managers. There were 133 surveys sent and 16 respondents completed the survey. This indicates a return rate of only 12%. The following describes the findings.

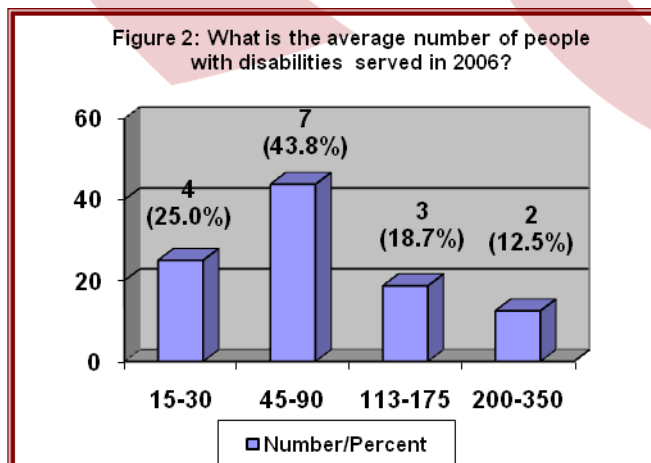
Survey Results

Community Workshop Location

Participants were asked to indicate the location of the workshop in their community. The majority (73%) stated their workshop was located in the rural area. (See Figure 1.)



Number of People Served



Participants were asked to provide the average number of people with disabilities they served in 2006. (See Figure 2). Of the respondents, the typical sheltered workshop served between 45-90 people with disabilities in 2006.

Distribution of Employment Models

Next participants were asked to estimate the percentage of distribution of employment models among people with disabilities that they serve. (See Table 1.) The in-house supervision had the highest percentage (mean of 73.15) with a (range of 5-100). Competitively employed - employment at a competitive wage received the second highest percentage (mean of 35.17). The lowest rating was (a mean of 8.33) for the item Hybrid: combination of one or more employment models.

Table 1: Estimated distribution of employment models among people with disabilities that are served

Employment Model	Percent of Range	Mean	Percent of Total
Competitively employed: employment at a competitive wage	1-95	35.17 (6)	38%
Enclave or mobile work unit: a small group of people with disabilities work at a host company or off-site location, either in teams or individually	1-100	30.00 (6)	38%
Hybrid: combination of one or more employment models	1-22	8.33 (3)	19%
In-house supervision	5-100	73.15 (13)	81%
Self-employed	-0-	-0-	-0-
Volunteer	1-30	11.00 (3)	19%
Not sure, don't know	-0-	-0-	-0-

Subjective Responses

The participants had several comments and suggestions regarding the people they serve at their workshop. Comments and suggestions are below.

What is the biggest challenges for employment that people with disabilities that you serve face? Responses are summarized below by categories.

Acceptance: Only one participant stated *acceptance in the community* as being their biggest challenge.

Benefits/insurance: There were cited questions about benefits, funding, and insurance by five people. One cited the loss of benefits. Another talked about maintaining benefits such as: health care, housing, income support. Handicapped accessible housing was also mentioned. There was some concern about employees losing other funding because of employment. One mentioned high insurance cost (health, liability, workman's comp and unemployment).

Finding jobs: There are fears that the individual with a disability will not be able to find a job. For one it was finding employment/work that matches interest and abilities. Two mentioned finding enough jobs to do. One simply said finding work. Three participants responded that (1) community employment in a small town, (2) most of our jobs have been sent to Mexico and (3) employers without patience as down falls to why a person with a disability cannot find a job.

Worried that people with disabilities can do the job: There was some worry about whether the person with a disability could do the job. These include: (1) difficulty understanding jobs; (2) not enough years around work; (3) unable to meet production requirements and poor attendance; (4) understanding complex job tasks and staying on task; and (5) lack of trust that they can do the job well.

Support system: One person mentioned having a support system to get them ready to come to work.

Behavioral/personal health: Two respondents mentioned personal health and behavioral. One expanded and stated personal hygiene practices conducive to good health and insufficient quality and quantity of nutritional meals. For another it was behavioral component of dually diagnosed consumers.

Transportation: Five people noted some form of challenges with transportation. This was especially common in the rural communities.

Can you share a story with us to help us understand the challenges that the people with disabilities with whom you work face? These stories are grouped by theme but not summarized so as to not lose the power of the message.

Work:

1. How to understand and follow instructions for work requirements. The need for being at work when schedule, and not take off for personal reasons.
2. Our big contract with wood was pulled as they went with Styrofoam. Having a wood business, we had to completely change our scope to find jobs.
3. The lack of jobs around this is a big challenge because we hire employees with disabilities. You can only hire as many people you need for a job so others are on a waiting list.
4. Their limited skill level narrows the opportunity for meaningful employment.
5. We have had employees try to work in fast food industries. The pace is too fast and the bosses do not tolerate mistakes.
6. We serve people with significant behavior challenges. We are somewhat different from other MO workshops. One person we serve has been placed in both supported and competitive employment by our agency (we also do supported employment). The person failed when they attacked staff at the worksite after a long period (six months) of stability. This happened because of a change in a 15 minute break.

Support:

7. There is a man who works and lives in housing. The wages he earns here is his total income. While he was at work someone broke his window out of his housing unit. The housing authority sent him a bill for the damage. Our production manager made several calls before she was able to get them to do away with the charges. He didn't have the ability to handle it himself. Many of our employees cannot count money. If they go to the store they have to trust the cashier to give them correct change.
8. The employees that have a home, group home or care center make it to work. The other employees, not just one story, but many. They get lost in the system, or between the cracks because no one checks in on them to see if they are okay or tried to meet their needs. Families give up on them, and then they are just out there barely existing. If there would be people to check upon the disabled, I would keep 50% of my employees from getting replaced because they just don't show up because no one cares for them when they're not here! Cost of gasoline and distance people drive is becoming harder for the ones that can get here due to finances.
9. Several of our employees have come to work in the same clothes several days in a row. Also, about properly bathed or showered, bad body odor. Having not been adequately or properly taken care of by the staff of the residential facility. Lunches consist of two pieces of bread, one slice of meat, a handful of potato chips, and three or four small cookies; or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Transportation:

10. Our workshop is in a rural area transportation services are not readily available. Oats Inc operates two vans to accommodate 25 employees we are limited to the amount of people with disabilities we can hire.
11. Transportation - cabs in Boonville cost a minimum of nine dollars one way.
12. In our rural area – transportation would be one of the biggest problems.

Health:

13. Many adults with developmental disabilities are unable to find an individually structured environment that will grant them the necessary guidance and supervision to allow them to make the most of their abilities and potential.
14. My Aunt Maxine suffered from polio at age 2. She helped care for all the cousins and we helped her with reading and numbers as we grew old enough to “play school”.
15. Two of the individuals employed in the enclave experience seizures. The excitement and stress of a new work setting contributing to both persons having numerous seizures the first few days at work. It is first of all a challenge for the person to return to work after that experience - a challenge to educate employers and co-workers on what to expect, how to help - a challenge for the job coach to support all involved.

Can you share with us a story to help us understand how you help an individual with a disability obtain or retain employment in the community? Two workshops indicated that they do not support people with disabilities with employment in the community.

1. Close communication with local area agencies that provide services to individuals with disabilities.
2. In October of this year we started an enclave at the Goodwill retail store. Five individuals are transported daily to the work site where they work under the supervision of a job coach.
3. Our current employee, Richard, used to sit idle day after day, with his mother constantly worried about his future. He would constantly tell her that he wanted a job like everyone else. Richard is now gainfully employed with us at Lafayette, and asks his parents if they're proud of him each time he cashes his paycheck.
4. We started our own business using grants, MO Enterprises, and of time and energy. We provide transportation via grants for vehicle from MODOT.
5. Working at the sheltered workshop can sometimes give the individual the courage to try competitive employment. They can also learn job skills that make them employable.
6. Personally accompany the prospective employee to work site and assure the employer of the individual's abilities, problem areas, and his desire to do a good job in the private sector.
7. We are a supported employment vendor for years. We receive referrals through Vocational Rehab and they do community based assessments, job development, site analysis and task analysis, placement, job coaching and follow-up that are open ended. We have many successful placements.
8. We helped Josh [last name] learn work skills and he left here to make more money at Ryan's.
9. We provide transportation to and from work and a meaningful job to our individuals, without a job they would sit at home.
10. We try to add more complex jobs and set time limits to try to get our employees used to faster paced employment.
11. We try to provide training to let our employees understand what is required, if they are going to hold a job in the community. Also, to relate to other people in a job settings like customers or supervisors.
12. We use Vocational Rehabilitation services. We are too small staffed to do the follow up once VR takes over, if it doesn't work out we do take employees back to us.

Comments

Participants were asked to comment on how their sheltered workshop supports people with a disability. Comments are as follows.

By choice: One respondent felt a person with a disability should have choices of their own. Choice is as the word implies, up to the individual. I feel that opportunity for

supported or competitive employment should be made available to everyone. I also feel, just as strongly, that we, as professionals should honor choice by not pushing our values on others. I believe we should respect and honor both supported competitive and sheltered employment equally. It's their choice, not ours. If any employment option becomes undesirable, then it will die through attrition. (People won't choose it.) It is up to us to offer choice. It is not up to us to impose our values on others.

Support through agencies: Some felt agencies played an important part in supporting people with a disability. One participant mentioned (1) Goodwill also provides supported employment and other employment services through contracts with MO VR. Persons employed in the workshop can move into other employment programs, when ready. Another person had concerns (2) I am extremely concerned about what I perceive to be a lack of commitment on the part of Vocational Rehab to provide employment services to people with an MRDD diagnosis. We have been a Vocational Rehab vendor for several years (15 or more). Recently we have seen a dramatic shift in the type of referrals we are receiving. We now receive very few referrals for people with an MRDD diagnosis and a great increase in referrals with active drug and alcohol issues with no interest in rehab. Three are convicted felons and people who will state up front that they aren't really interested in working. I thought this might be an anomaly, but as a recent CARF survey (I am a CARF Surveyor) in Kansas. The agency there share our experience and said their Vocational Rehab counselor had made a public statement saying that he wasn't sure VR should be serving the MRDD population and didn't think they would continue to do so for long. He said their emphasis was shifting to what he termed "more normal people". I would be interested in your response.

Provide employment and assistance: There were positive responses about employment and how the sheltered workshop assisted persons with a disability gain or keep employment. One individual felt the sheltered workshop is a great thing for people with disabilities because sometimes the community doesn't except them and having employment makes them feel good about themselves. Another person liked just providing gainful employment and the socialization with people with disabilities. Yet another, we provide the persons with disabilities meaningful with dignity employment in a clean and safe environment. Another mentioned we started two businesses which provide work for people with and without disabilities - an upscale resale store and cardboard/paper recycling. And another stated we try to give less supervision to some employees to see how they react on jobs. If something new comes up we always try to have the employees do it first to see if they can do it. Two respondents were concerned about low skilled jobs remaining in the United States. (1) Low skilled labor jobs have moved overseas, forcing workshops to seek alternate income avenues. (2) We need to stop sending work to China.

Self worth/confidence: Three workshops felt building self worth and confidence is an important instrument. (1) Sheltered employment gives the individual a feeling of self worth and confidence in their abilities. It also keeps some off the streets and out of trouble. (2) The workshop makes them feel like they are part of the community. Feel productive to hold a job. (3) We work to enhance the self-worth of our workers, while providing high-quality service.

Assistance: One participants mentioned supplementary assistance. We have a food pantry, clothes pantry; help with social security and tax problems, small loans to keep electricity, heat, rent, gas, food to exist. Monthly dinners, Christmas gifts - money, clothes etc. Turkey at Thanksgiving, anything else they need to do or help with, i.e. housing.

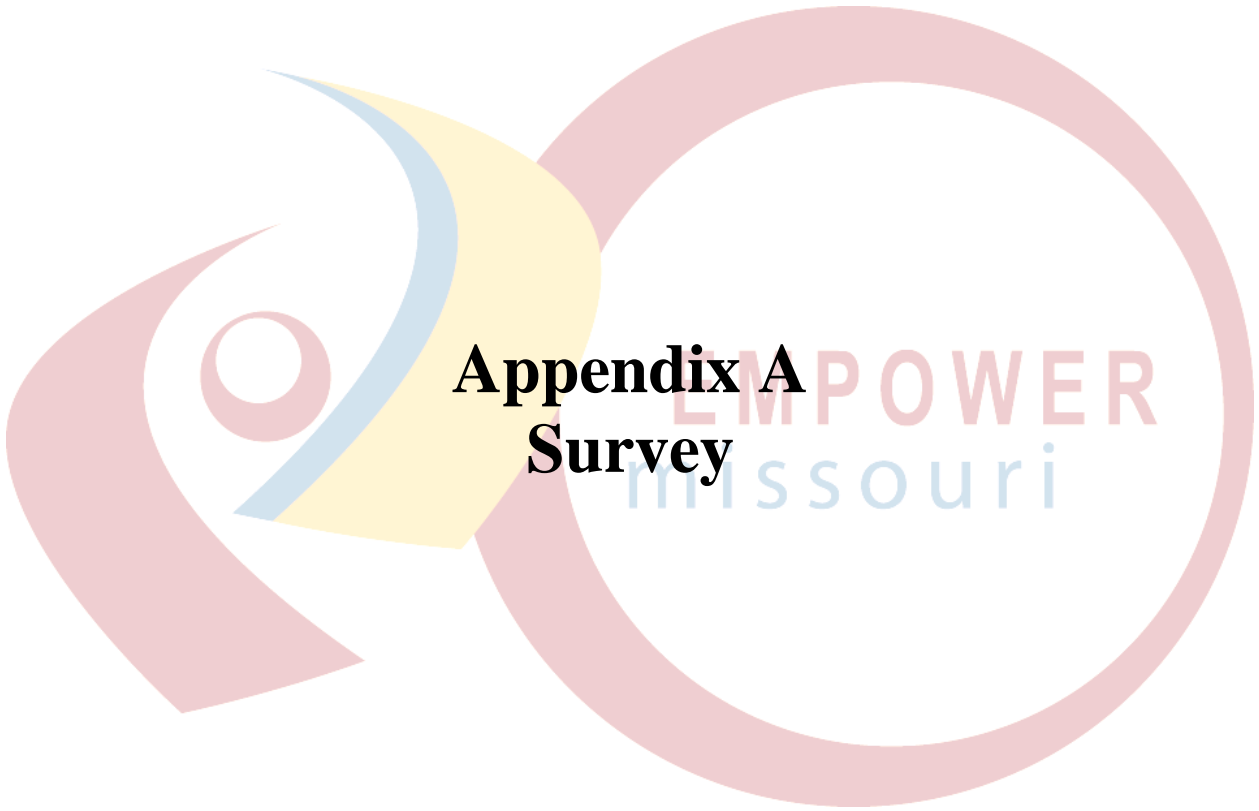
Training: One workshop participant mentions training as there way of supporting persons with a disability. We offer work adjustment training, and provide a meaningful, safe and productive workplace for area adults with a range of disabilities.



SUMMARY

A survey about the interest in understanding the role Missouri sheltered workshops play in helping people with disabilities work was conducted in November 2007. There were 16 forms that were completed. The findings are listed here.

- When asked were sheltered workshop are located in the community, (73%) noted it was in the rural area.
- When asked what the average number of people with disabilities served in 2006, the highest average number was 43.8% with 45 to 90 people served. An additional four (or 25%) had an average between 15 to 30 people served. When combining 113 through 175, three (or 18.7%) was reported as being served. An additional two (or 12.5%) had 200 to 350 persons that they served.
- When asked to estimate the percentage of distribution of employment models among people with disabilities that they serve. The in-house supervision had the highest percentage (mean of 73.15) with a (range of 5-100). Competitively employed - employment at a competitive wage received the second highest percentage (mean of 35.17). The lowest rating was (a mean of 8.33) for the item Hybrid: combination of one or more employment models.
- Challenges for employment for a person with a disability included: Acceptance in the community, benefits, funding, insurance, finding employment, worried about doing the job, having a support system, personal and behavioral health, and transportation.
- Participants shared stories on how to help an individual with a disability either obtain or retain employment in the community.
- When asked how sheltered workshop supports people with a disability, the categories were: by choice, support through agencies, provide employment and assistance, self worth/confidence, assistance, and training



Appendix A
Survey

EMPOWER
missouri

MISSOURI SHELTERED WORKSHOPS

Missouri Infrastructure Grant

November 2007

The University of Missouri – Kansas City Institute for Human Development is interested in understanding the role Missouri sheltered workshops play in helping people with disabilities work. This survey is voluntary and should take about 15 minutes to complete. A self-addressed envelope is included for your convenience. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Christina Rinck, UMKC-IHD, 2220 Holmes, Kansas City, MO 64108, telephone (816) 235-1770/email rinckc@umkc.edu. Thank you for your input.

1. In what type of community is your workshop located?

_____ urban _____ suburban _____ rural

2. What is the average number of people with disabilities you served in 2006?

3. What are the two biggest challenges for employment that the people with disabilities that you serve face?

1.

2.

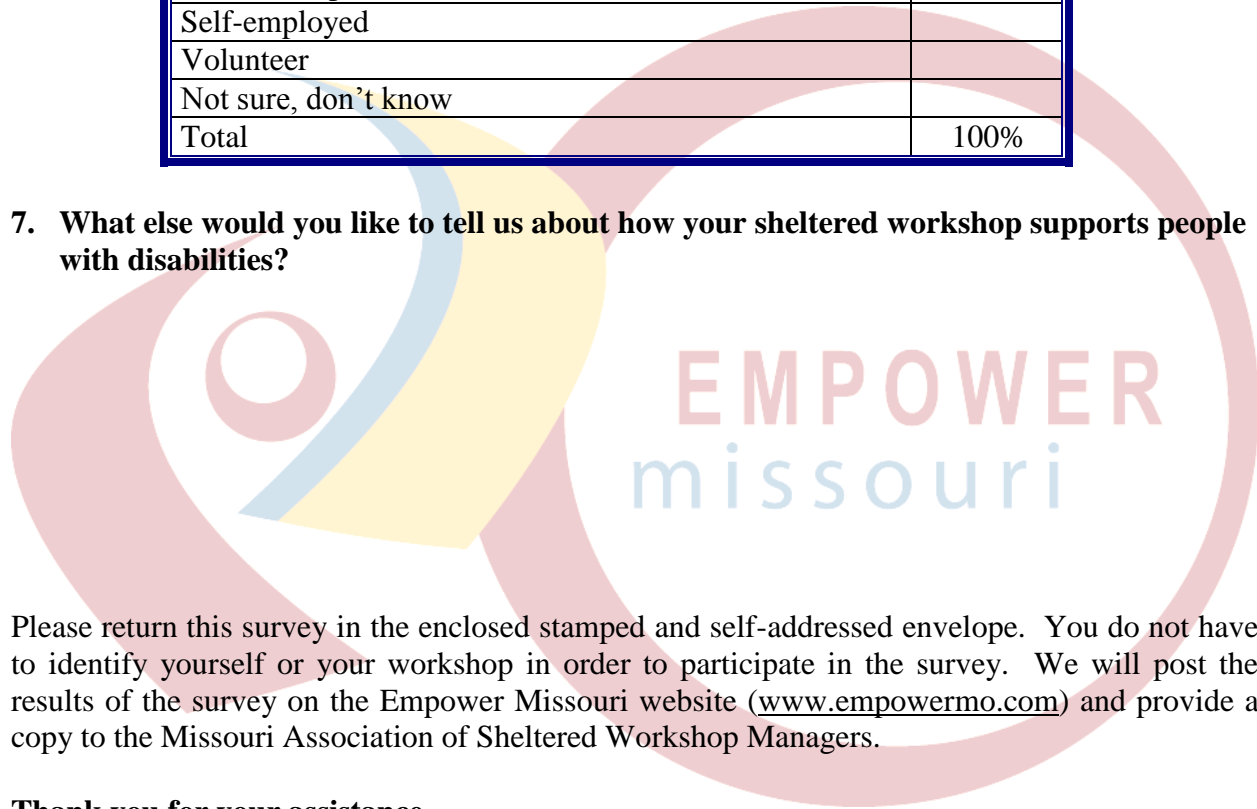
4. Can you share a story with us to help us understand the challenges that the people with disabilities with whom you work face? Please use the space below.

5. Can you share a story with us to help us understand how you help an individual with a disability either obtain or retain employment in the community? Please use the space below.

5. What do you estimate to be the distribution of employment models among people with disabilities that you serve?

Employment Model	%
Competitively employed: employment at a competitive wage	
Enclave or mobile work unit: a small group of people with disabilities work at a host company or off-site location, either in teams or individually	
Hybrid: combination of one or more employment models	
In-house supervision	
Self-employed	
Volunteer	
Not sure, don't know	
Total	100%

7. What else would you like to tell us about how your sheltered workshop supports people with disabilities?



Please return this survey in the enclosed stamped and self-addressed envelope. You do not have to identify yourself or your workshop in order to participate in the survey. We will post the results of the survey on the Empower Missouri website (www.empowermo.com) and provide a copy to the Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshop Managers.

Thank you for your assistance.