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EMPLOYER ATTITUDES AND EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO HIRE DEAF WORKERS

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This study was an investigation of employer attitudes and their willingness to hire deaf workers in a metropolitan area in a mid-Atlantic state. It was expected that employers might have negative attitudes toward deaf workers. The sample population consisted of 200 hiring managers and 100 personnel managers from the following types of institutions: financial service; hospital/nursing homes; universities/colleges; manufacturing; distribution; food service; and retail. Of the 300 managers surveyed, 102 responded. Two parts of a survey were utilized to gather data: 1) three job descriptions with two applicants for each position (one hearing and one deaf); and, 2) a five-point Likert Scale that measured attitudes toward deaf workers in general. The results of the

investigation shows that attitudes of managers surveyed were generally negative with managers frequently agreeing with statements reflecting common stereotypes about deaf workers. On the other hand, employers in the role of hiring and personnel managers from the seven different kinds of institutions surveyed indicated that they would be just as willing to hire deaf applicants as hearing applicants for the three positions described in the survey, if they had equivalent skills and experience. There was no correlation between responses on the attitude scale and the hiring preference of the managers. There were no significant differences on either measure between hiring managers and personnel managers, or among managers from the different types of institutions.