



# What American Workers Really Think About Religion: **Tanenbaum's 2013 Survey of American Workers and Religion**

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# What American Workers Really Think About Religion:

## Tanenbaum's 2013 Survey of American Workers and Religion

### American Workers and Religion — Not Always What You'd Expect

With the release of its 2013 Survey of American Workers and Religion, Tanenbaum once again breaks new ground. Conducted in March 2013, the survey provides a comprehensive picture of American workers' experiences with religious discrimination and bias in workplaces, as well as their perceptions of discrimination in American society. As such, it offers American workplaces insights about how to attract and retain diverse talent and enhance morale.

Many of the survey results were what we expected after 15 years working across industries and with Fortune 500 companies to prevent religious bias. But others were more surprising. We anticipated that Americans from minority religious and non-religious groups would experience prejudice; and, as expected, both members of minority religions and atheists reported seeing or personally experiencing bias at work. What is new is that a significant number of people from our nation's majority religious group, Christianity, are also feeling mistreated at work. Today, nearly 6-in-10 white evangelical Protestant workers agree that discrimination against Christians is as big a problem as discrimination against other religious minorities.

Simultaneously, Americans report that their workplaces are diverse across a range of identities, and that they are experiencing more religious conflict related to those differences. One-in-two Americans today works in a company with a moderate or high level of social diversity – meaning that people with different religious beliefs, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations are in contact with one another with considerable regularity. In those diverse settings, more people report religious conflicts than in more homogeneous environments.

Together, these findings suggest that as the U.S. experiences growth in larger, more diverse workplaces, we expect a corollary surge in religious conflicts. In addition to likely problems, however, the survey also suggests solutions. When companies adopt proactive policies that acknowledge and accommodate various religious and non-religious beliefs, employees report improved morale, and this gives companies a powerful point of differentiation for attracting and retaining top global talent.

### About Tanenbaum

Ask someone, "What do you do?" and, if they are employed, they will likely talk about their work.

Ask someone, "Who are you?" and the answer will often include their religion, gender or race.

Religion is one of the most important ways people describe themselves.<sup>1</sup> Since 1992, the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding has been tackling religion as it emerges in daily life and offering programs that combat religious prejudice and build mutual respect.

As a secular, non-sectarian non-profit organization, Tanenbaum addresses the power of religion but neither promotes nor denigrates it. As such, we are not a religious organization, but one that works to ameliorate conflicts and tensions that emerge involving religion.

<sup>1</sup> In the United States, religion plays an important role in many people's lives, even as the country's religious demographics are shifting. According to a 2012 survey by Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), 8-in-10 Americans self-identify as religious, and 6-in-10 Americans say religion is very important to their lives (PRRI, American Values Survey, 2012). However, over the last few decades, church attendance rates have been falling and the number of religiously unaffiliated Americans—those who identify as atheist, agnostic, or claim no formal religious affiliation—now make up one-in-five Americans. In addition, Americans who are affiliated with non-Christian religions now make up 7% of the country, and the Protestant population has decreased to 49% (PRRI, Religion, Values & Immigration Reform Survey, 2013), with 2012 marking the first year in America's history where Protestants made up less than half of the United States population.

## INTRODUCTION

In addition to our work with national and global companies, we offer programs for educators and students, for doctors, nurses and patients, and for religious men and women pursuing peace in armed conflicts.

Our work with global companies concentrates on two realities: First, even though religion is very important to many employees, too many companies fail to include religion in their diversity and inclusion initiatives, focusing instead on other identities such as race, gender, disability and sexual orientation. Second, addressing religious diversity is good for business.

### About the Survey

In 1999, Tanenbaum conducted the first national survey on workers' experiences with religious discrimination in the U.S. Since that early assessment, Tanenbaum has been benchmarking the field and assessing trends. Over the last five years, many leading companies in diversity and inclusion have begun to address religious differences.<sup>2</sup> Given this evolution, we decided it was time to reassess the field and shed light on the current realities of religion in the workplace.

Working with Public Religion Research LLC, an independent research organization based in the District of Columbia, Tanenbaum conducted a nationally representative survey documenting the experiences of American workers. In addition to presenting a clear picture of what is working and not working regarding religious diversity in American workplaces, this survey provides insights into how workers feel about religious discrimination and accommodation and, how they are being treated in general. As such, the survey presents data that suggest future trends and proactive steps companies can take to minimize disruption in years to come.

### Understanding the Survey

Because people interpret words like discrimination and bias differently, the survey only used such words for broad societal questions. In contrast, our workplace-focused questions covered religiously relevant types of incidents such as: whether a company permitted a person to observe the Sabbath or required them to work; whether a person could find food that satisfied their religious requirements at workplace gatherings; or whether a person was permitted to wear clothing or other attire that was religiously significant. Often, these are precisely the religious practices that people want to observe during the workday. If a respondent's company did not permit such practices, we defined the prohibition as a policy that did not accommodate the religious needs of employees. As such, the survey refers to these experiences as "non-accommodation" rather than bias or discrimination.

Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, discrimination on the basis of a range of identities, including religion, is prohibited. In addition, religion is one of only two identities (along with disability, which is covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act) for which employers are required to make accommodations, unless doing so would cause the employer undue hardship. Beyond responding to the law, Tanenbaum has found, and this survey confirms, that such accommodations can have a positive impact on the workplace environment and ultimately the bottom line. Accordingly, we call on employers to adopt an *accommodation mindset*<sup>TM</sup> that will enable employees to follow their beliefs and will simultaneously benefit the company. By this, we mean taking action before a problem emerges and adopting proactive policies, communication strategies, flexible schedules and related employee trainings.

<sup>2</sup>"Ask DiversityInc: How Does Your Company Handle Religious Holidays?" DiversityInc, accessed July 17, 2013, <http://www.diversityinc.com/resource-groups-2/ask-diversityinc-how-does-your-company-handle-religious-holidays/>.

## What It All Means

If there is one conclusion to take away from Tanenbaum's 2013 Survey of American Workers and Religion, it is that religion is relevant in the workplace. Not only is it a problem when a person feels unfairly treated on the basis of his or her beliefs – whether religious or non-religious – but tensions around religion are occurring, and are increasingly likely to occur, in our ever more diverse global workplaces. That said, it is important to recognize that the issues raised in this survey are complex and nuanced.

For one thing, unlike most issues addressed by diversity and inclusion efforts, religion is not only about groups that constitute minorities or the less privileged in society or the workplace. People of all faiths, including those who belong to the "majority," have religious needs that require a response in the workplace. That means that the accommodation mindset can be just as important to the man who is a white evangelical Protestant as it is to the woman who is Muslim or to others who follow a minority belief tradition in the U.S. Clearly, the experience of being unfairly treated at work based on one's beliefs is not limited to a few isolated incidents:

- One-third of respondents have seen incidents of religious bias in their workplaces or have personally experienced them.
- Half of non-Christians say that their employers are ignoring their religious needs.
- More than half of American workers believe that there is a lot of discrimination against Muslims.
- Nearly 6-in-10 atheists believe that people look down on their beliefs, as do nearly one-third of white evangelical Protestants and non-Christian religious workers.

It is also clear that when employers adopt an accommodation mindset and implement policies addressing religious diversity of all kinds, their employees experience higher job satisfaction than workers whose employers do not:

- Employees at companies that provide flexible hours for religious observance are more than twice as likely to say that they look forward to coming to work.
- 4-in-10 employees at companies without clear processes for handling employee complaints are looking for a new job, compared to 2-in-10 employees at companies with these processes.
- When companies have policies on religious discrimination, their employees are less likely to be looking for a new job.
- Regardless of a company's size, workers whose companies offer education programs about religious diversity and flexibility for religious practice report higher job satisfaction than workers in companies that do not.

Both the survey and our ongoing benchmarking research show that while it is important to have policies, it is equally important to communicate those policies to your workforce.

## INTRODUCTION

### Looking to the Future

The survey documents a significant American reality: one-in-two American workers has contact with people from diverse beliefs and identities at work – often with considerable frequency – and these interactions often cause conflicts. Our increasingly global economy and growing religious diversity suggest that religious conflicts will continue to rise. As a result, the question for each company is whether to incorporate religious accommodations into its diversity and inclusion strategies or risk losing talent and customers as these changes continue to emerge.

Within this evolving reality, the survey's findings suggest several trends that companies should be prepared to address. From other studies, we know that the number of "Nones" is on the rise.<sup>3</sup> This group includes a wide swath of people – from those who identify as atheist or agnostic to those who consider themselves spiritual but not religious, or who believe in God but reject institutionalized religion. From our benchmarking, we observe that people from this group are emerging in the public forum and are beginning to be heard. And, from the survey, we know that many atheists and agnostics/seculars feel uncomfortable when religion comes up as a subject at work. This suggests the potential for workplace clashes between atheists and evangelical Protestants, given that half of all evangelical Protestants report that they share their religious beliefs with coworkers occasionally.

In addition, our survey documents that when it comes to addressing religion in the workplace, one size does not fit all. A non-Christian may care more about issues around the right to display a sacred object at work or to pray during the day, while a Christian may be more concerned about taking off Sunday as the Sabbath in order to attend church. This complexity is heightened by the growing

number of unaffiliated Americans, many of whom are likely to require different accommodations for their own beliefs and highly individualized practices that are not familiar to their employers.

Finally, when workers cannot conduct the core practices that are part of their faith, it impacts morale and corporate reputations in ways that can have implications for worker recruitment and retention. In the future, as workplaces become increasingly diverse, we expect more and more companies to join global leaders by adopting proactive policies of accommodation. Doing so makes good business sense and will give companies an edge over their competitors as the search for talent becomes increasingly global.

### In Conclusion

Religious diversity is a fact of the American workplace. As a result, employers across the country are facing both challenges and opportunities. The type of accommodation that may be important to people from one religious group is often quite different from the needs and requests of other groups. That is why religious accommodation is important for all employees. Remember: it is not about ignoring the majority, nor is it a matter of privileging one group over another. Religious accommodation is about ending religious bias, prejudice and discrimination. As such, religious accommodation is an opportunity that, if seized, can bring success for employees and the companies where they work.

<sup>3</sup> Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. "Nones on the Rise." October 9, 2012. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>.



# Executive Summary

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**More than one-third (36%) of workers say they have personally experienced or witnessed some form of religious non-accommodation<sup>4</sup> in their workplace.**

- The most commonly experienced or witnessed forms of religious non-accommodation are being required to work on Sabbath observances or a religious holiday (24%) and attending company-sponsored events that did not include kosher, halal, or vegetarian options (13%).
- Nearly half of non-Christian workers (49%) report experiencing or witnessing religious non-accommodation at work.
- White evangelical workers (48%) are equally as likely as non-Christian workers to report experiencing or witnessing religious non-accommodation at work.
- Two-in-five (40%) atheists also report experiencing or witnessing religious non-accommodation at work.

**Roughly 1-in-5 (22%) workers overall share their religious beliefs with other coworkers occasionally.**

**Atheist, agnostic/secular workers and non-Christian workers are more likely than others to say they feel somewhat or very uncomfortable when the topic of religion comes up.**



- More than 4-in-10 (43%) atheist and agnostic/secular workers say they feel somewhat or very uncomfortable when the topic of religion comes up.
- Nearly 3-in-10 (29%) non-Christian workers say they feel somewhat or very uncomfortable when the topic of religion comes up.
- Conversely, nearly 9-in-10 white evangelical workers say they are somewhat (30%) or very (58%) comfortable when the issue of religion comes up in the workplace. Strong majorities of Catholics (84%), black Protestants (83%), white mainline Protestants (75%), and non-Christian religious workers (71%) report that they feel somewhat or very comfortable when the topic of religion comes up at work.

<sup>4</sup> The survey measured nine possible forms of religious non-accommodation: being discouraged from wearing facial hair, certain styles of dress, or clothing that are part of a religious identity; not being permitted to take time off to pray or meditate during the workday; attending company-sponsored events that do not include kosher, halal, or vegetarian options; being discouraged from displaying religious objects, symbols, or quotations in a personal workspace; being expected to attend company meetings or celebrations that include prayer; having jokes made about one's religious beliefs, practices, or dress; being required to work on Sabbath observances or a religious holiday; being discouraged from forming a religious social or professional group at work; being criticized for not attending company-sponsored parties around religious holidays, such as an office Christmas party.

## White evangelical Protestants have a unique footprint in how they treat religion in the workplace and in their attitudes about religious discrimination.

- White evangelical Protestants report sharing their religious beliefs with coworkers much more often than workers from other religious backgrounds. Half (50%) of all white evangelical Protestants say they share their religious beliefs with other coworkers occasionally, compared to 22% of workers overall.
- White evangelical Protestants are at least as likely to believe that they themselves experience a lot of discrimination (40%) as they are to believe any other group experiences a lot of discrimination.
- Nearly 6-in-10 (59%) white evangelical Protestants agree that discrimination against Christians has become as big a problem as discrimination against other religious minorities.

## Nearly half (48%) of American workers are employed at companies with moderate to high social diversity.

- According to a newly developed Workplace Social Diversity Scale,<sup>5</sup> 35% of American workers are a part of moderate social diversity workplace environments, while 13% are a part of high social diversity workplace environments.
- Just over half of American workers report that they are part of minimal social diversity (21%) or low social diversity (31%) workplace environments.

## Americans working in moderate or high social diversity workplaces report experiencing or witnessing more incidents of religious non-accommodation.

- Workers who are a part of moderate social diversity (42%) or high social diversity (45%) or workplace environments are more than twice as likely as workers in minimal social diversity workplace environments (21%) to report that they have experienced or witnessed some form of religious non-accommodation.



35% of American workers are a part of moderate social diversity workplace environments, while 13% are a part of high social diversity workplace environments.

<sup>5</sup> Workplace social diversity (high, moderate, low, and minimal) was determined using measures of frequency of workplace social interactions with the following: Muslims, Jews, atheists, followers of Eastern religions, African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) people. These interaction frequencies were combined into a composite scale.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**Americans working in moderate or high social diversity workplaces also report experiencing or witnessing more incidents of religious conflict between employees.**

- About 1-in-5 workers in moderate social diversity (21%) or high social diversity (18%) work environments report witnessing or experiencing conflict between religious and non-religious employees.

**Less than half of all workers report that their companies have the following key policies related to religious diversity:**

- Flexible work hours to permit religious observance or prayer (44%);
- Materials explaining the company's policy on religious discrimination (42%);
- A policy to allow employees to "swap holidays" (21%); or
- Programs to teach employees about religious diversity (14%).

**Americans who work at companies with processes to handle complaints and with key policies that address religious discrimination report higher job satisfaction than workers who do not.**



- Workers at companies without clear processes for handling employee complaints (41%) are nearly twice as likely as workers who say their companies do have these processes (22%) to be looking for a new job where they would be happier.
- Similarly, workers at companies without materials explaining the company's policy on religious discrimination (32%) are significantly more likely than workers at companies that offer these materials (25%) to be looking for a new job.
- In addition, workers at companies that do not provide flexible hours for religious observance are more than twice as likely (28%) as workers at companies that do provide this flexibility (13%) to say they do not look forward to coming to work.



# Survey Report

# A Profile of American Workers

## Single vs. Multiple Jobs

Nearly 9-in-10 (86%) workers report that they are working only one job compared to 14% who report working two or more jobs.<sup>6</sup>

Most American workers (58%) are paid an hourly rate, while less than 4-in-10 (39%) hold a salaried position. A small group (2%) is paid by the job and 1% refused to answer the question.

## Industry and Occupation

Despite the considerable diversity of industries in the country, a few sectors employ a significant percentage of the American workforce. Health care is the largest single sector, employing 14% of American workers, followed by education and educational services (10%), construction and manufacturing (10%), retail and trade (9%), community and social services (6%), finance and insurance (5%), transportation (5%) and food service (5%).

More American workers are employed in professional occupations (40%)—a category that includes architecture and engineering, life and social sciences, education, business, finance, and the legal profession—than any other single occupation category. By comparison, less than 1-in-5 (18%) work in service or sales, and less than 1-in-10 work in an administrative capacity (9%), in an unskilled labor profession, which includes transportation and building and grounds maintenance (5%), or in a skilled labor profession, which includes installation and repair positions, construction, and precision production (i.e. machinist, welder) (7%).

Roughly one-third (31%) of American workers have a

position that requires a college or advanced degree. A nearly equal number (32%) say that their job does not require a college degree but does require them to have specialized training. Thirty-six percent of workers say their job does not require a college degree or any form of specialized training.

About 1-in-3 (31%) American workers report that they have been with their current company for three years or less, and 12% report they have worked for their company for three to five years. A majority (55%) of American workers report that they have worked for their current company at least five years, and one-third (34%) report that they have worked for their employer for at least 10 years.

## Company Size

Nearly half of American workers are employed by companies with at least 1,000 workers (39%) or 500 workers (9%) across all locations. Roughly 1-in-5 workers (19%) say they work for companies with a total workforce of between 100 and 500 workers, while one-third (33%) say they work for small businesses with fewer than 100 total employees.

Workers employed by larger companies are more likely to work with people living outside the United States. About one-quarter (24%) of all American workers report that in their current job, they work with coworkers, clients, or vendors who live outside the U.S. Nearly one-third (31%) of workers in companies with 1,000 or more employees say they work with coworkers, clients or vendors who live outside the U.S., compared to less than 1-in-5 (19%) of those working for companies with fewer than 100 total employees.

## Job Satisfaction

Most Americans report that they are satisfied in their current position. Approximately 8-in-10 say that most days they look forward to coming to work (79%), feel good

<sup>6</sup> This report is based on a random sample of “American workers,” which were defined as adults (18 years of age or older) currently living in the United States who report working as a paid employee. Americans who report working more than one job were only asked to talk about their experiences in the job at which they work most often.

about the work they are able to get done (89%), and feel their work is valued (85%). However, despite these reports of satisfaction, close to 3-in-10 (27%) say they are currently looking for another job where they would be happier, and a majority (56%) report that there are few opportunities for promotion or career advancement in their current position.

### The Workplace Social Diversity Scale

Despite the growing racial, ethnic, and religious diversity that has become a hallmark of U.S. society, many Americans work for companies with relatively little diversity. In order to measure workplace diversity, a composite workplace social diversity measure was developed based on frequency of interaction with a range of minority groups in the workplace. The workplace social diversity scale reveals four distinct levels of workplace diversity in the U.S. A majority of American workers report that they are part of minimal (21%) or low (31%) social diversity workplace environments. More than one-third (35%) are a part of moderate social diversity workplace environments, while

**Close to 3-in-10 workers (27%) say they are currently looking for another job where they would be happier.**

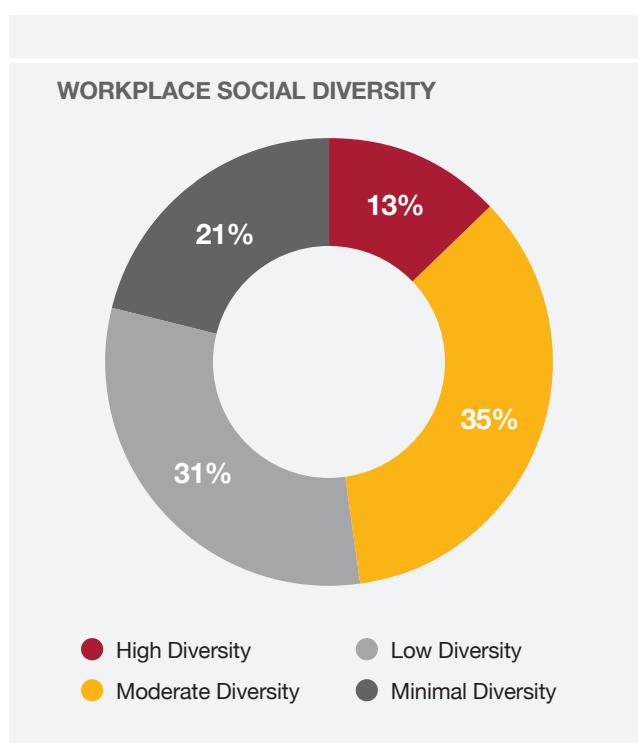
just 13% are a part of high social diversity workplace environments.

Workers in the West are more likely than workers overall to report being a part of a high social diversity workplace (20%), while workers in the Midwest are more likely to report being a part of a minimal social diversity workplace (26%). Workers in the South and the Northeast closely mirror workers overall.

Not surprisingly, larger companies are more likely to have socially diverse workplaces than smaller companies.

More than 6-in-10 workers at companies with 1,000 employees or more say they work in a high (19%) or moderate (44%) social diversity workplace environment. By contrast, more than 7-in-10 workers at companies with 100 employees or less say they work in a low (37%) or minimal (34%) social diversity workplace environment.

Employees who report they are part of high social diversity workplaces are also more likely than other workers to report having colleagues, clients, or vendors who live overseas. Forty percent of workers in high social diversity workplaces report having such contacts, compared to only 14% of those who are a part of minimal social diversity workplaces.



# Social Interactions in the Workplace

## Conversations Across Lines of Difference

Overall, workers are more likely to report that they have frequent or occasional conversations at work with members of racial or ethnic minorities than with religious minorities.<sup>7</sup>

Majorities of workers say they have frequent workplace conversations with someone who is African-American (55%) or Hispanic (52%), and 35% have frequent conversations with someone who is Asian. Fewer workers report frequent workplace conversations with someone who is Jewish (26%), an atheist (24%), a follower of an Eastern religion (16%), such as Buddhism or Hinduism, or a Muslim (16%).

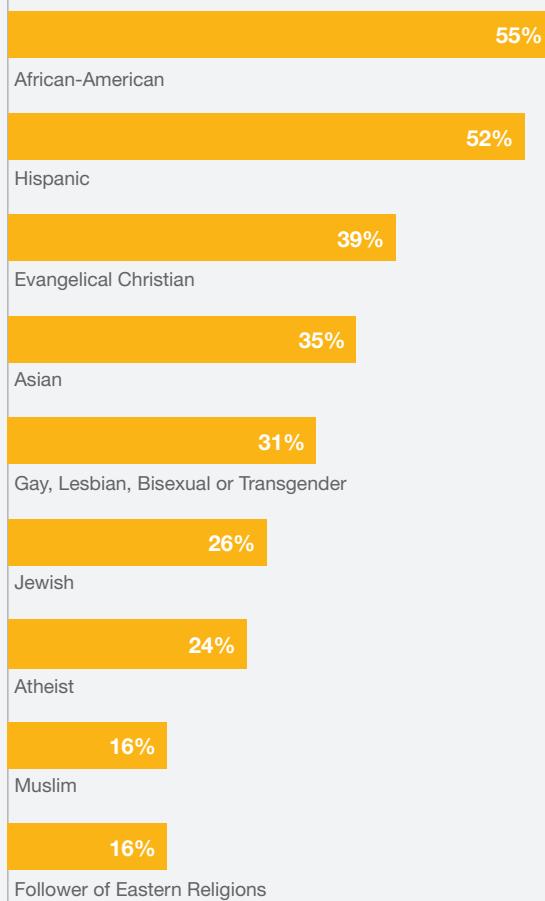
Approximately 3-in-10 (31%) workers report that they have frequent workplace conversations with someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT).

However, there are differences in reported interactions according to company size and region. Workers employed by large companies (1,000 or more employees) are about twice as likely as workers employed by small companies (100 employees or less) to say they have frequent interactions with LGBT coworkers (39% vs. 21%). Workers in the West (40%) are more likely than workers in the Midwest (24%) to report frequent conversations with LGBT people at work. Workers in the Northeast and South do not differ from workers overall in their frequency of social interaction with LGBT coworkers.

Interactions between white workers and racial or ethnic minority workers are complex. African-American workers (58%) and Hispanic workers (68%) are significantly more likely than non-Hispanic white workers (48%) to report regular conversations with Hispanic coworkers. Interestingly, while 81% of African-American workers regularly interact with African-American coworkers, white workers (55%) are more likely than Hispanic workers (44%) to report regular conversations with African-American coworkers.

### FREQUENCY OF CONVERSATIONS ON RELIGION WITH COWORKERS OF DIFFERENT IDENTITIES

Percent having conversations with coworkers at least a few times a week



<sup>7</sup> Frequent contact is defined as having conversations at work with a member of a particular group at least a few times a week; occasional contact is defined as workplace conversations that happen once or twice a month.

Notably, there are significant variations related to a worker's religious affiliation.

White evangelical Protestants stand out as the group least likely to report regular social interaction with religious minorities. Only 20% of white evangelical Protestants report having regular workplace interactions with atheist coworkers; nearly 7-in-10 (69%) white evangelical Protestants say they seldom or never have conversations with an atheist coworker. Similarly, few white evangelical Protestant workers report frequent interactions with coworkers who are Jewish (18%), Muslim (9%), or identify with an Eastern religion such as Buddhism or Hinduism (7%).

Workers from non-Christian religions (i.e. Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist) are more likely than any other religious or non-religious workers to report that they have frequent interactions with coworkers who identify with an Eastern religion such as Buddhism or Hinduism (50%), or who are Jewish (39%) or Muslim (37%).

Atheists (67%) are more likely than any other religious group to report that they have frequent workplace interactions with atheist coworkers. Compared to workers overall, atheists report generally higher levels of workplace interactions with coworkers who are Jewish (45%), identify with an Eastern religion such as Buddhism or Hinduism (24%), or Muslim (23%). Atheists are also more likely to report frequent engagement with evangelical Christians (47%) than white evangelical Protestants are to report frequent interactions with atheists (20%).

Atheists (52%) are much more likely to converse frequently with someone who is LGBT than are workers affiliated with religious communities, including white evangelical Protestants (24%), white mainline Protestants (33%), Catholics (26%), and non-Christian religious workers (33%).

Compared to workers in other occupations, workers in professional occupations are significantly more likely to have at least occasional contact with coworkers who are Asian (58%), LGBT (50%), atheist (42%), followers of Eastern religions (33%), or Muslim (32%). Workers in skilled labor occupations are among the least likely to have contact with these types of coworkers.

## Conversation Topics at Work: Religion, Politics, Relationships and Sex

Relatively few workers report that they discuss politics (24%), relationships and sex (20%), or religion (15%) with their coworkers regularly (at least a few times a week). Most workers say they seldom or never discuss politics (56%), relationships and sex (66%), or religion (68%) with their coworkers. Workers who frequently discuss one topic with coworkers are also much more likely to discuss other topics as well.

Workers who identify with the Democratic Party (23%) are no more likely than workers who identify with the Republican Party (24%) to discuss politics with coworkers. Among religious and non-religious groups, white evangelical Protestants (34%) and atheists (31%) are most likely to report that they frequently discuss politics with coworkers, compared to 27% of Catholics, 20% of white mainline Protestants, 15% of black Protestants, and 16% of non-Christian religious workers.

White evangelical Protestants are also more likely than other religious and non-religious groups to discuss religion with their coworkers. One-third (33%) of white evangelical Protestants talk about religion frequently, compared to 16% of atheists, 14% of non-Christian religious workers, 10% of Catholics, and 7% of white mainline Protestants.

Workers in the South (19%) are more likely to report having regular workplace conversations about religion than are workers in the West (15%), Midwest (11%), or Northeast (11%). There are no significant regional differences in frequency of reported workplace dialogue about politics or relationships and sex.

### Worker Comfort with Conversations About Religion and Politics

More than 1-in-5 workers (22%) report that they share their own religious beliefs or views about religion with coworkers occasionally (at least once or twice a month). Close to 8-in-10 workers say they seldom (43%) or never (34%) share their religious beliefs or views about religion with coworkers.

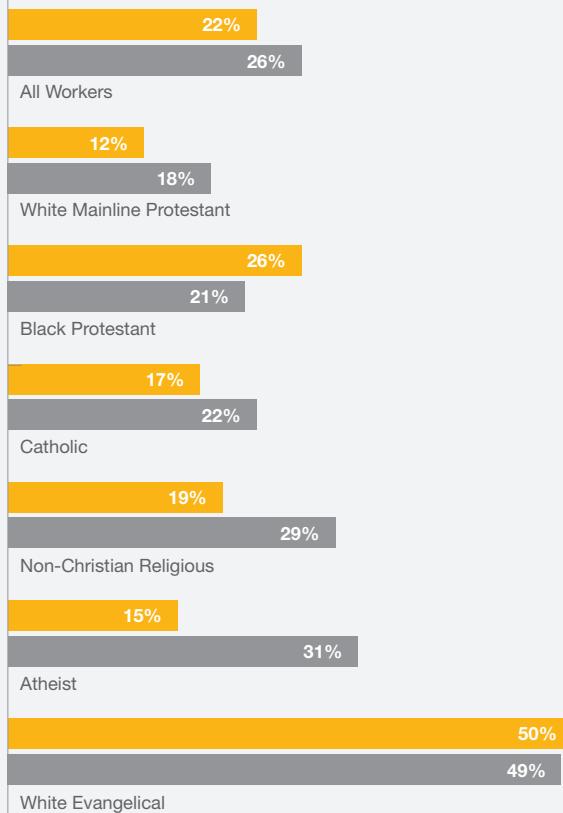
White evangelical Protestants report sharing their religious beliefs with coworkers much more often than workers with other religious backgrounds. Half (50%) of all white evangelical Protestants say they share their religious beliefs with other coworkers occasionally. By contrast, only 19% of non-Christian religious workers, 17% of Catholics, 15% of atheists, and 12% of white mainline Protestants report sharing their religious beliefs with coworkers occasionally.

Although workers overall are not much more likely to report sharing their own religious beliefs with coworkers (22%) than they are to report that coworkers share religious beliefs with them (26%), some groups of workers experience asymmetrical sharing. For example, only 19% of non-Christian religious workers share their own religious beliefs with coworkers, but 29% report that coworkers share their views with them. Similarly, atheists are twice as likely to report that coworkers share religious beliefs with them (31%) than they are to report that they share religious beliefs or views about religion with coworkers (15%).

Among workers overall, religious and political conversations at work do not seem to generate a great deal of discomfort. When the topic of religion comes up, most workers report feeling somewhat (40%) or very (37%) comfortable. Similarly, when the topic of politics comes

#### FREQUENCY OF CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RELIGION WITH COWORKERS Percent having conversations at least once or twice a month

- You share religious beliefs with coworkers
- Coworkers share religious beliefs with you



More than 1-in-5 workers (22%) report that they share their own religious beliefs or views about religion with coworkers occasionally.

up, nearly three-quarters of workers say they are somewhat (44%) or very (30%) comfortable with these conversations. Less than one-quarter of workers say they feel somewhat or very uncomfortable when religion (22%) or politics (24%) comes up at work.

There are few differences between workers with different religious backgrounds on how comfortable they feel when politics comes up at work, but there are sizable differences when the topic turns to religion. Nearly 9-in-10 white evangelical workers say they are somewhat (30%) or very (58%) comfortable when the issue of religion comes up in the workplace. Strong majorities of Catholics (84%), black Protestants (83%), white mainline Protestants (75%), and non-Christian religious workers (71%) also report that they feel somewhat or very comfortable when the topic of religion comes up at work. By contrast, a narrower majority of atheists (55%) and agnostic/secular workers (55%) say they feel somewhat or very comfortable when the topic of religion comes up at work, while more than 4-in-10 (43%) workers in both groups say they feel somewhat or very uncomfortable.<sup>8</sup>

Workers who are part of high social diversity workplaces are not any more likely to report being comfortable than those in lower social diversity workplaces when the topics of religion (71%) or politics (71%) arise. Workers who are a part of minimal social diversity workplaces are roughly as comfortable when coworkers discuss issues concerning religion (70%) or politics (72%).

Workers also report high levels of comfort about specific personal experiences of religious sharing. Overall, nearly 9-in-10 (86%) workers report that when a coworker shared their religious beliefs with them, they were somewhat or very comfortable with the conversation. However, as above, smaller numbers of atheists (68%) and agnostic/secular workers (64%) say they were somewhat or very comfortable when a coworker shared their religious beliefs with them.

## Experiences with Workplace Discrimination

### Company Diversity Policies and Programs

Most American workers report that their company has a clear process for handling employee complaints (65%), provides flexibility about when personal days can be used (69%), and has an official policy related to dress and facial hair (55%). However, fewer workers report that their company has flexibility in work hours to permit religious observance or prayer (44%), materials explaining the company's policy on religious discrimination (42%), a policy to allow employees to "swap holidays" (21%), or programs to teach employees about religious diversity (14%).

Workers who are part of high social diversity workplaces are much more likely to report that their company has policies and programs related to religious diversity and discrimination. Roughly 6-in-10 workers in high social diversity workplaces report that their company has materials explaining their policy on religious discrimination (57%), flexibility in work hours for religious observance or prayer (60%), and a policy on dress and facial hair (62%). By contrast, workers who are a part of minimal social diversity workplaces are much less likely to say their company has materials explaining their policy on religious discrimination (28%), flexibility in work hours for religious observance or prayer (42%), and policies on dress and facial hair (42%). Workers in high social diversity workplaces are also more likely than workers in minimal social diversity workplaces to report that their company has a clear process for handling employee complaints (83% vs. 52%) and to say their company has programs to educate workers about religious diversity (25% vs. 9%).

<sup>8</sup> The "agnostic/secular" category is defined as those who self-identify as "agnostic" (unsure if there is a God) or those who identify with no religion in particular but are not atheists or agnostics.

Workers in urban settings (45%) are more likely than workers in non-urban settings (37%) to report that their company provides flexibility in work hours for religious observance or prayer.

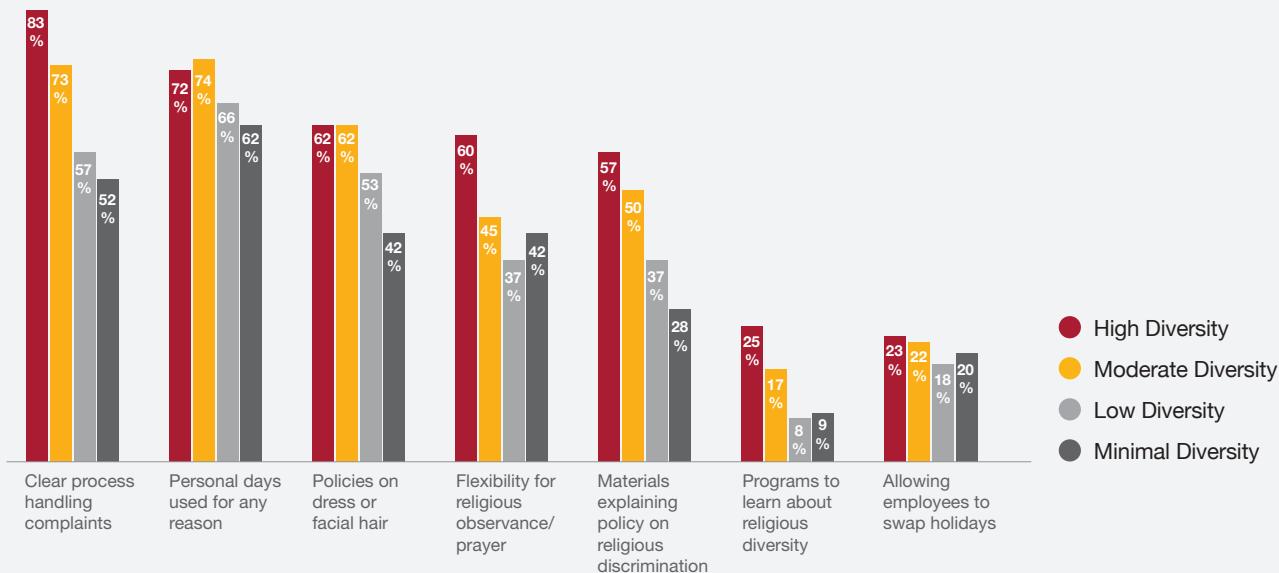
### The Impact of Workplace Diversity and Company Diversity Policies on Job Satisfaction

Levels of workplace social diversity seem to have little direct impact on job satisfaction. Workers in environments with varying levels of social diversity report similar levels of job satisfaction. For example, approximately 8-in-10 workers in high diversity (83%), moderate diversity (78%), low diversity (77%), and minimal diversity (80%) workplace environments report that they look forward to coming to work on most days. Similarly, majorities of workers in high diversity (52%), moderate diversity (58%), low diversity (55%), and minimal diversity (57%) environments say they have few opportunities for promotion or career advancement.

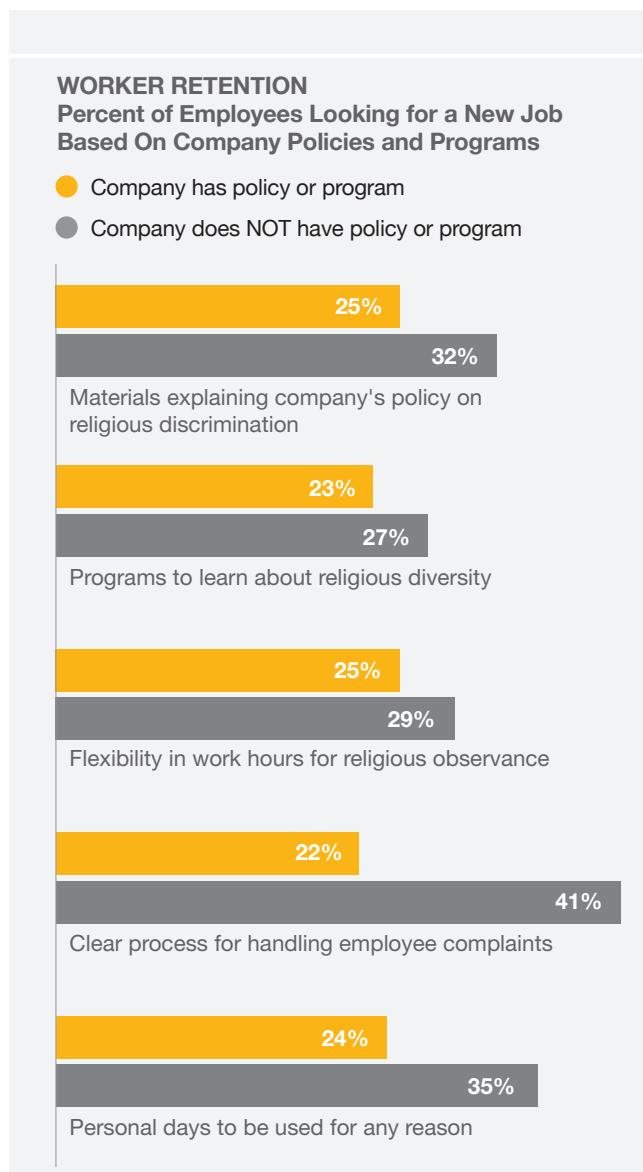
While social diversity itself seems to have no direct effect on job satisfaction, workplace policies to deal with diversity are positively correlated to measures of greater job satisfaction. Workers who report that their company has policies or programs that address religious accommodation and diversity issues also report greater job satisfaction. Workers who report that their companies offer materials explaining the company's policy on religious discrimination, programs to learn about religious diversity, flexibility in work hours for religious observance, clear processes for handling employee complaints, and personal days to be used for any reason are less likely to be seeking a new job where they would be happier, and are more likely to say they look forward to coming to work.

For example, workers at companies without clear processes for handling employee complaints are nearly twice as likely as workers who say their companies do have these processes to be looking for a new job where they would be happier (41% vs. 22%). Employees at companies without personal days to be used for any reason are more likely than workers at companies that do offer this policy to say they are looking for a new job (35% vs.

**COMPANY DIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROGRAMS BY LEVELS OF WORKPLACE SOCIAL DIVERSITY**



24%). Similarly, workers at companies without materials explaining the company's policy on religious discrimination are more likely than workers at companies that offer these materials to be looking for a new job (32% vs. 25%).

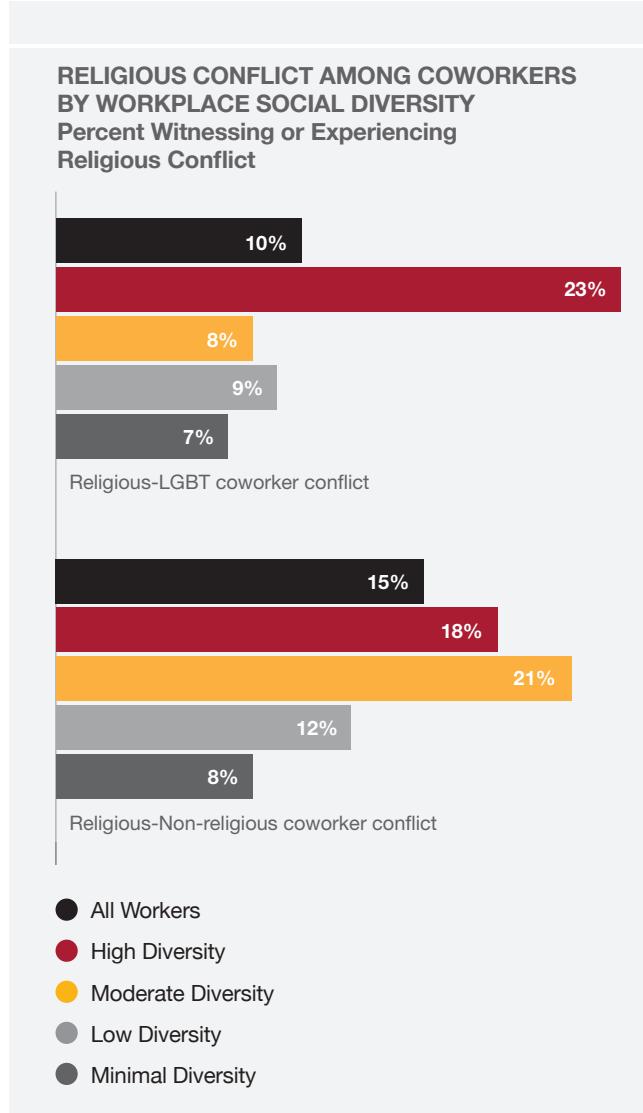


Workers at companies that do not provide these diversity policies also hold more negative views about coming to work. Employees at companies without clear processes for handling employee complaints are more than twice as likely as workers at companies that do provide these processes to say they do not look forward to coming to work (35% vs. 15%). Similarly, workers at companies that do not provide flexible hours for religious observance are twice as likely as workers at companies that do provide this flexibility to say they do not look forward to coming to work (29% vs. 13%).

## Religion-Related Conflict Between Workers

Most workers report that they have not experienced nor witnessed conflict between a coworker with strong religious beliefs and a non-religious coworker (84%) or conflict between a coworker with strong religious beliefs and a LGBT coworker (89%).

However, workers in high social diversity workplaces are significantly more likely to report experiencing or witnessing such conflicts. About 1-in-5 workers in either high social diversity (18%) or moderate social diversity (21%) work environments report witnessing or experiencing conflict between religious and non-religious employees, compared to less than 1-in-10 (8%) workers in minimal social diversity work environments. Similarly, nearly 1-in-4 workers (23%) in high social diversity environments report witnessing or experiencing conflict between religious coworkers and LGBT coworkers. By contrast, only 7% of workers in minimal social diversity environments report similar experiences.



### Types of Discrimination Experienced at Work

Workers are more likely to say that they felt excluded or felt they were treated differently at work because of their age (15%) or race or ethnicity (12%) than because of their gender (7%), religious beliefs or views on religion (5%), or their sexual orientation (1%). However, there are some differences among certain demographic and religious groups.

Young adults (age 18-29) and seniors (age 65 and older) are more likely than other age groups to report that they have felt excluded or treated differently at work because of their age (23% and 32% respectively).

African-American workers (36%) are more likely than Hispanic (25%) and non-Hispanic white (3%) workers to report feeling excluded or treated differently based on their race or ethnicity.

Women (10%) are more likely than men (4%) to report feeling excluded or being treated differently at work because of their gender. Fourteen percent of self-identified LGBT workers report feeling excluded or treated differently because of their sexual orientation.<sup>9</sup>

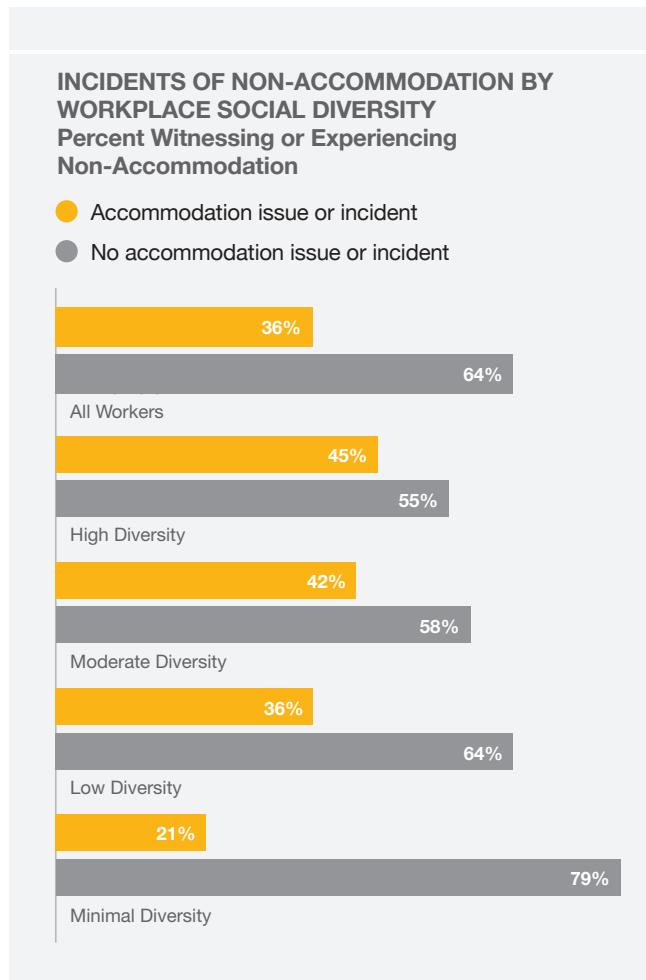
Non-Christian religious workers (13%) are substantially more likely than members of any other religious group, including atheists (5%), to say they have felt excluded or felt they were treated differently at work because of their religious beliefs or views on religion.

### Experiences with Religious Non-Accommodation in the Workplace

More than one-third (36%) of workers say they have personally experienced or witnessed at least one of nine measured forms of religious non-accommodation in their workplace. Nearly two-thirds (64%) say they have not. The two most commonly experienced or witnessed forms of religious non-accommodation workers report are being required to work on Sabbath observances or a religious holiday (24%) and attending company-sponsored events that did not include kosher, halal, or vegetarian options (13%).

Among religious groups, non-Christian religious workers (49%) and white evangelical Protestants (48%) are most likely to report experiencing or witnessing non-accommodation incidents, followed by atheists (40%), Catholics (35%), and white mainline Protestants (32%). Only about 1-in-5 (22%) black Protestants report that they have experienced or witnessed some form of religious non-accommodation.

<sup>9</sup> Results for LGBT workers are based on fewer than 100 respondents and should be interpreted with caution.



Although both non-Christian religious workers and white evangelical Protestants report significant incidents of non-accommodation, the incidents reported are quite different. Nearly 1-in-5 (17%) non-Christian religious workers report experiencing or witnessing employees being discouraged from wearing facial hair or clothing that is part of their religious identity, compared to 2% of white evangelical Protestants. One-third (33%) of non-Christian religious workers report incidents involving attendance at company functions that did not include kosher, halal or vegetarian options, compared to 16% of white evangelicals. By contrast, white evangelical Protestants (39%) are more likely to report that they or their coworkers were required to work on Sabbath observances or religious holidays, compared to approximately one-quarter (26%) of non-Christian religious workers. Roughly 1-in-5 of both non-Christian religious workers (21%) and white evangelical

Protestants (16%) report incidents in which coworkers made jokes about their religious beliefs or practices.

Workers who are a part of high social diversity (45%) and moderate social diversity (42%) workplace environments are more than twice as likely as workers in minimal social diversity workplace environments (21%) to report that they have experienced or witnessed some form of religious non-accommodation, while workers in low diversity (36%) environments fall in between.

Notably, there are no differences reported by workers across occupation categories. Workers in professional occupations (40%) are about as likely as those in service industries (35%) or skilled manual labor professions (35%) to report experiencing or witnessing religious non-accommodation in the workplace.

Workers who witness or experience incidents of non-accommodation are slightly more likely than those who have not to say they are currently looking for another job where they would be happier (31% vs. 25%). Similarly, workers who report incidents of non-accommodation are slightly less likely to say they look forward to coming to work than those who report no such incidents (75% vs. 81%).

## Reporting of Incidents of Non-Accommodation and Company Response

Among workers who have experienced or witnessed some form of workplace non-accommodation, less than 1-in-5 (14%) report that these experiences were shared with managers or with human resource professionals at their company, while more than one-quarter (26%) say these experiences were not shared with managers or human resource professionals, and 6-in-10 (60%) say they are not sure.

Workers in high social diversity workplace environments (21%) who witnessed or experienced religious non-accommodation are approximately three times as likely as workers in low (7%) or minimal (8%) social diversity environments who witnessed or experienced religious non-accommodation to say these experiences were shared with managers or human resource professionals.

Workers who said instances of non-accommodation had been reported to managers or human resource professionals also report a wide range of reactions from their company. Nearly one-third (32%) say the company did nothing, while 21% say the company issued a warning to the responsible party, and 20% say the company changed its policy or adopted a new policy. More than 1-in-5 (22%) say they are not sure how the company responded to the report of religious non-accommodation.

## Religious Discrimination in American Society

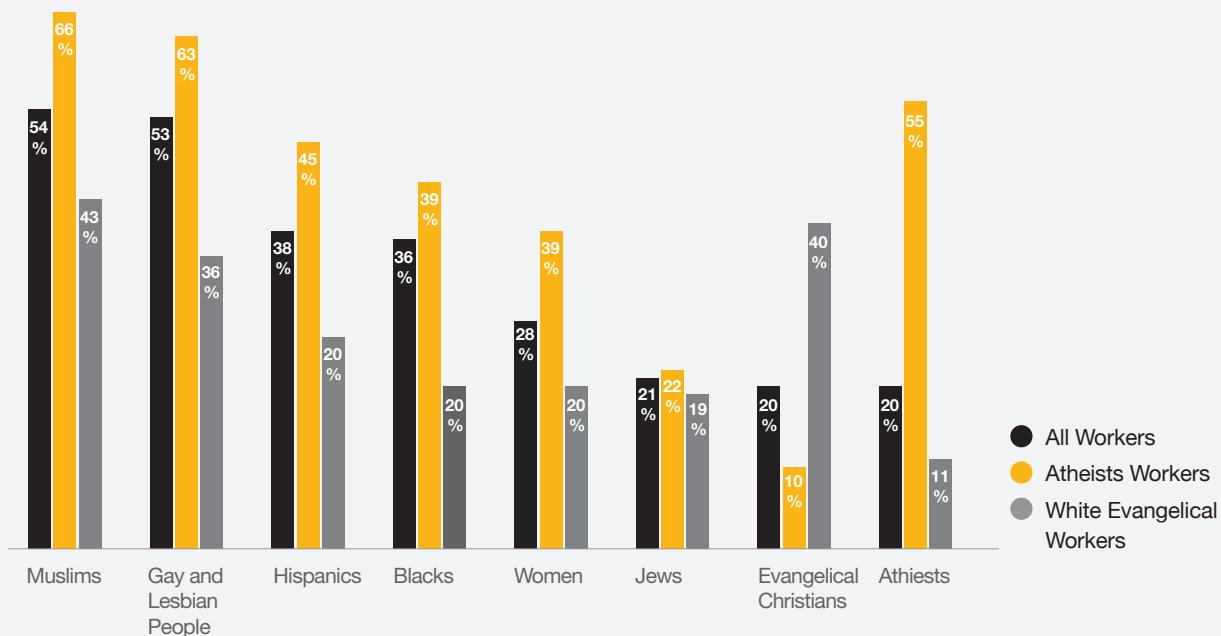
### Groups Facing Discrimination

There is agreement among most workers that there is a lot of discrimination against Muslims (54%) and gay and lesbian people (53%) in the U.S. today. By contrast, only

roughly 1-in-5 workers believe there is a lot of discrimination against Jews (21%), atheists (20%), followers of Eastern religions (26%), evangelical Christians (20%), or Mormons (20%). Nearly 4-in-10 workers say there is a lot of discrimination against Hispanics (39%) and African-Americans (38%). Approximately one-quarter (28%) of workers say there is a lot of discrimination against women.

There are some variations in perceptions of discrimination according to religious affiliation. In general, white evangelical Protestants are more likely than others to say there is no discrimination against various groups. White evangelical Protestants are less likely than other groups to say that Muslims (43%), gay and lesbian people (36%), Hispanics (26%), African Americans (20%), or atheists (11%) experience significant discrimination. However, white evangelical Protestants are more likely than other groups to believe that their own religious community experiences significant discrimination. In fact, white evangelical Protestants are at least as likely to believe that they themselves experience a lot of discrimination (40%) as to believe any other group experiences a lot of discrimination. Remarkably, white evangelical Protestant

**GROUPS FACING “A LOT” OF DISCRIMINATION**  
Perceptions Among Atheist, Evangelical and All Workers



workers are twice as likely to say that they themselves experience a lot of discrimination as they are to say African-Americans experience a lot of discrimination.

Atheists (55%) are substantially more likely than workers in any other religious groups to report that atheists face a lot of discrimination today. However, unlike white evangelical workers, atheist workers are also more likely than workers overall to believe that Muslims (66%), gay and lesbian people (63%), Hispanics (50%), and women (39%) experience a lot of discrimination.

Interestingly, non-Christian religious workers (60%)—including Muslim workers and workers belonging to Eastern religions—are only slightly more likely than workers overall (54%) to believe that Muslims face a lot of discrimination. They are as likely as workers overall to say that followers of Eastern religions experience a lot of discrimination (23% vs. 26%).

## Discrimination Against Christians in Society

Most workers (69%) do not believe that discrimination against Christians has become as big a problem as discrimination against Muslims and other religious minorities. However, a significant minority (28%) believe that discrimination against Christians has now become as serious an issue as discrimination against other religious minorities.

There are significant differences in views about discrimination against Christians, even among self-identified Christian workers. White evangelical Protestants stand out from other religious workers, including other Christians, on this question. Nearly 6-in-10 (59%) white evangelical Protestant workers agree that discrimination against Christians has become as big a problem as discrimination against other religious minorities, compared to 35% of black Protestants, 25% of white mainline Protestants, and 22% of Catholics. Only about 1-in-10 (12%) non-Christian religious workers and 5% of atheists believe that Christians in America are facing comparable levels of discrimination as other religious minorities.

## Societal Acceptance of Personal Religious Beliefs

Most workers believe that society is generally accepting of their religious beliefs. Only 1-in-5 (20%) workers agree that people with their religious beliefs are looked down upon by most Americans, while more than three-quarters (77%) of workers disagree. However, there are notable exceptions. Nearly 6-in-10 (59%) atheists believe that people look down on their religious beliefs, as do nearly one-third of non-Christian religious workers (31%) and white evangelical Protestants (32%).

Three-in-ten (30%) workers agree that the mass media is hostile toward their moral and spiritual values, while two-thirds (67%) disagree. Again, while there is agreement among most workers, there are a few communities that stand out.

Six-in-ten (60%) white evangelical Protestants agree that the mass media is hostile toward their moral and spiritual values, compared to 40% of atheists, 27% of non-Christian religious workers, 26% of black Protestants, 25% of Catholics, and 17% of white mainline Protestants.

Two-thirds (67%) of workers agree that people with their religious beliefs are part of mainstream American society, while 3-in-10 (30%) workers disagree. However, there is significant variation among religious groups.

Although white evangelical Protestants believe they are experiencing significant discrimination and that the media is generally hostile to their moral and spiritual values, three-quarters (75%) of white evangelical Protestants nonetheless also believe that their religious beliefs are part of mainstream society. Roughly 8-in-10 (79%) white mainline Protestants and 7-in-10 (72%) Catholics also believe that their religious beliefs are part of the mainstream. By contrast, a slim majority of atheists (52%) and less than half of all non-Christian religious workers (47%) believe that their religious beliefs are part of mainstream American society.

# Survey Methodology

Tanenbaum's 2013 *Survey of American Workers and Religion* was conducted by Public Religion Research LLC among a random sample of 2,024 American adults (age 18 and up) who are currently employed in a part-time or full-time position and who are part of GfK's Knowledge Panel. Interviews were conducted online in both English and Spanish between March 19 and April 1, 2013. The margin of sampling error is +/- 2.8 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.

The Knowledge Panel is a nationally representative probability sample of the U.S. adult population. Panelists are recruited by randomly selecting residential addresses using a process called address-based sampling (ABS). Since nearly 3-in-10 U.S. households do not have home Internet access, respondent households who do not have Internet access or own a computer are provided Internet service and a netbook computer to ensure that panel respondents are representative of the U.S. adult population. Unlike opt-in panels, households are not permitted to "self-select" into Knowledge Panel; nor are they allowed to participate in many surveys per week. Additional details about the Knowledge Panel can be found on the Knowledge Networks website: [www.knowledgenetworks.com/knpanel](http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/knpanel).

To reduce the effects of any non-response and non-coverage bias, a post-stratification adjustment was applied based on demographic distributions from the March 2012 Current Population Survey (CPS).<sup>10</sup> The sample was weighted to ten different parameters—sex, age, race and ethnicity, education level, geographic region, household income, metropolitan area, Internet access, home ownership status, and employment status—to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the population.

<sup>10</sup>The parameter for Internet access was obtained from the most recent special CPS supplemental survey (October 2010).



