Jan. 26, 2016
RespectAbility – Public Comments
Delaware’s Demand Driven Four Year Workforce Development Plan

“The reality is that your disability is not the extent of your identity. People with disabilities have many interests and skills; they are an untapped source of ingenuity and productivity. As long as we’re leaving so many people with disabilities on the sidelines, we are not only denying them opportunity; we are undermining the competitiveness of our businesses and stifling economic growth. Working together, we can successfully take up this unfinished business, ensuring that America captures the talents of all our people.” – Governor Jack Markell, op-ed in USA Today, October 27th, 2015

RespectAbility is pleased to have the opportunity to submit public comments regarding the current draft of Delaware’s Demand Driven Four Year Workforce Development Plan as required under Section 102 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

The First State’s WIOA State Plan is close to our hearts because of Governor Jack Markell of Delaware. His leadership as chair of the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Better Bottom Line Initiative set the stage for many of the innovations that WIOA is putting into place. Many of the most important models and practices that we discuss in our Disability Employment First Planning Tool originate out of his leadership. In terms of geography and population Delaware may be a small state, but in terms of leaderships the First State has had a substantial impact nationally.

As such, we are pleased to say that the Delaware WIOA draft is well done. It creates a win-win-win strategy for vital improvements for Delaware’s workforce system and its ability to serve people with barriers to work, employers and taxpayers alike. This draft plan will break down silos and build thoughtful collaborations, especially for youth transitioning from school to work. It is to be strongly commended goes a long way to build success.

Looking at the historical statistics, the last publically available data predates Governor Markell’s time as the chair of NGA, Delaware had a 36.4% labor force participation rate (LFPR) for people with disabilities (PwDs). However, other states (North and South Dakota, Wyoming and Alaska) and Montgomery County, Maryland have all achieved approximately a 50% LFPR level for people with disabilities. Likewise, we are also seeing pockets of excellence around innovative youth programs to address disability employment in Georgia, Nevada, and Kentucky. We believe that Delaware is poised to do the same as well. Under your new WIOA plan, with strong leadership and implementation, people with disabilities will be ever-increasingly contributing members of their communities in new and better ways. This will strengthen the economy for all people in Delaware.

As Baby Boomers retire and Delaware’s economy evolves, the First State is starting to experience an increasing talent shortage. There are 56,600 people with disabilities between the ages of 21 to 64 in Delaware. Many of those who are working are only working part time and/or are under-employed. A recent detailed study by the Kessler Foundation and the University of New Hampshire shows the 70% of working age people with disabilities (PwDs) are striving for work. People with disabilities can provide a wonderful solution to companies and
other employers that want to succeed. The diverse skills, higher loyalty, and retention rates of people with disabilities are already starting to meet employer talent needs in increasing numbers. However, a major growth opportunity exists for the future.

We have had the honor of meeting on multiple occasions with Governor Markell and Secretary Rita Landgraf to discuss best practices as part of our national coalition with Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Independent Living movement, NACDD, Best Buddies and NOD. We are delighted to see so many of these best practices and others integrated into your plan. We know that the team in Delaware has worked successfully to improve outcomes and opportunities, especially for young Delaware with disabilities and other barriers to work.

Because of your good work, the 3,800 youth with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 21 living in Delaware have increasing chances to successfully transition into the world of work. If this plan is further strengthened and implemented, we believe that Delaware too can join the ranks of other states that have approximately a 50% LFPR rate for their citizens with disabilities. However, no plan is perfect. Upon reviewing the current draft of the state plan there remain a few areas where improvements can be made to achieve the best results possible. These issues are:

1. **Use the best data points, including the Labor Force Participation Rates of people with disabilities v. those without disabilities, as performance metrics**

   As we expressed in our introduction, it is our view that Delaware is on the path towards achieving greater outcomes and higher employment rates for people with disabilities. Sustaining this success will very much depend on making sure Delaware’s leaders have access to the right data. **It is vital that the workforce system and the State Board include the labor force participation rates of people with disabilities on their state dashboards and performance metrics.** Looking solely at unemployment information, decision makers are missing the bigger picture of those individuals with barriers to employment who are not actively seeking work. As an example of the data that is needed, we are including a link to, and a copy of, the presentation our organization has compiled about employment for Delawareans with disabilities. This compilation contains information derived from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey that should be valuable to the WIOA work being done in Delaware.

   We do see on one of the most important data points that are needed in the assessment of the weaknesses that impact the great work being done by the Delaware Department of Labor Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Weakness Assessment. **Specifically, on page 12, the State Plan discusses “The employment gap between Delawareans with and without disabilities is 38.7%.”** The gap between people with and without disabilities is one of the most important metrics needed to ensure that barriers to employment are being overcome and positive outcomes are being achieved. This fact is recognized in the State Plan where it says that “research suggests that a best practice to close this gap is Career Pathways focused counseling strategies, which DVR will be implementing.” We agree with this completely and how that bridging this gap will be done in the most collaborative, and demand driven manner possible.

   We would add, however, that further data points on Delawareans with disabilities are needed in the text of the state plan itself, rather than being buried in an appendix. An infographic or data chart, summarizing the great information found in Appendix A Economic Analysis, could easily be added to section II.a Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis. **Below you will find several figures which reflect the types of data that should be added to enhance the current draft of Delaware’s WIOA State Plan.**
Figure 1.
Delaware Performance Metrics on Jobs for PWDs*

- 75.1% of persons without disabilities aged 18 to 64 are employed.³
- 36.4% of PwDs aged 18 to 64 are employed.¹
- There is a 38.7 point gap between the employment rates of Delawareans with and without disabilities. This is a critical metric and one being measured by Delaware’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- 3,800 persons aged 16 to 20 have a disability.²
- 114,696 civilians with a disability live in Delaware.³
- 56,600 persons aged 21 to 64 have a disability.¹
- The employment gap between PwDs and people without disabilities has decreased 1.9% between 2010 and 2011.³
- 30,631 people ages 18-64 received SSDI or SSI benefits in the year 2012.³
- In 2012, DE's total expenditure on SSDI benefits for PwDs was $423,180,000.²
- Voc. Rehab. obtained 1,065 jobs for PwDs in DE in 2012.³
- Voc. Rehab. received 3,374 general rehab applicants and 80 blind applicants in DE in 2012.³

* This data precedes Governor Markell’s time as Chair of NGA and his Better Bottom Line initiative.

1. 2012 Disability Status Report: Delaware, disabilitystatistics.org
3. Annual Disability Statistics Compendium

Figure 2.
Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 16 to 20 in Delaware in 2012

Prevalence Rates: Age 16 to 20 years (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any Disability</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulatory</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Care</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Living</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total numbers reported

Source: Cornell University
Precision is needed when using statistics to advance policy proposals. We hope that these important details will be revised as Delaware’s WIOA State Plan moves forward.
2. **Stigma Reduction and High Expectations:**

Stigma, low expectations and misconceptions are critical barriers to employment for people with disabilities. A Princeton study shows that while people with disabilities are seen as warm, they are not seen as competent. Similarly, a study published by Cornell Hospitality Quarterly found that companies share a concern that people with disabilities cannot adequately do the work required of their employees. We therefore highly recommend that the Combined State Plan be amended to include a communications/public relations/education strategy for reducing such stigmas. **Already, the attention and leadership that Governor Markell has brought to employment for people with disabilities, is a great foundation to build on.** Reducing stigma must begin by showcasing those Delaware based employer who best showcase the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and recruiting diverse talent to meet employer needs. Getting employers to understand how people with disabilities can meet their most critical talent needs is very much a communications challenge and it has bearing on the State Plan.

A great example of the business case for disability inclusion is provided by Walgreens who has demonstrated that workers with disabilities in their distribution centers are as productive, safer, and turn over less when compared to peers without disabilities. Several sections of the Plan talk about outreach to business about how the workforce system can train job seekers to meet employer need. Where is the messaging strategy and communications plan for showcasing the bottom line benefit of hiring people with disabilities? Are there any plans for highlighting those employer heroes who are capitalizing on the talents of people with disabilities? Governor Markell’s media appearances and speeches to chambers of commerce and other groups have been vital in demonstrating the business case for hiring PWDs. A systematic and ongoing communications campaign must continue if you want to maximize your success. **The best way to fight stigmas is to let employers see the facts from other employers who are already succeeding by hiring people with disabilities.**

In terms of potential employer partners, we encourage your state plan to look at the Disability Equality Index that assesses the inclusion and hiring efforts of major employers. It was put together by the United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN) which operates a network of affiliates across the country that can be an incredible resource for your work. Page 142 of the state plan mentions the Business Leadership Networks in passing. We know that Delaware has worked with the USBLN in the past, and it can help you in your serious business-to-business PR effort. The companies which scored 100% in the USBLN index can be a great resource. These are Ameren Corporation, AT&T, Booz Allen Hamilton Inc., Capital One Financial Corporation, Comcast, NBCUniversal, Ernst & Young LLP, Florida Blue, Freddie Mac, Highmark Health, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Lockheed Martin Corporation, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), Procter & Gamble, Qualcomm Incorporated, Sprint Corporation, Starbucks Coffee Company, and TD Bank N.A. The Delaware State Plan can talk about these employers and other success stories, especially those taking place in Delaware.

Polls and focus groups show that there are three types of messages and audiences that are needed to expand employment for people with disabilities. Serious communications campaigns are needed for all three:

A. CEOs/business leaders need to understand the value proposition/business case for their specific company as to why they should focus on putting people with disabilities into their talent pipelines. This is best done through business-to-business
success stories. You know that Delaware employers have seen that people with disabilities can be extremely capable and loyal workers. While there are few Stephen Hawkings — with or without disabilities — people with disabilities can work highly successfully in hotels, healthcare, tend parks and facilities, assist aging seniors, and be super talents in developing computer software and engineering solutions. CEOs and business leaders need to know that people with disabilities can be the BEST people to get a job done. They, like anyone else, will also need message repetition on this over time.

B. Human resources professionals and on-the-ground supervisors need to understand that hiring people with disabilities is generally easy and inexpensive, and that any costs incurred are more than offset from increased loyalty. Hiring managers and supervisors are key implementers who can turn high minded policy and business goals into action at the ground level. However, studies show that many of them are afraid of what they don’t know about people with disabilities. They are afraid of potential legal action, costs, or other failures. For them, they need supports that will empower to overcome their own fears and to excel at recruiting, hiring, supervising or working with teammates with disabilities. Delaware’s Vocational Rehabilitation staff and community agencies can fully support human resources professionals and managers in dealing with their own specific fears and stigmas surrounding hiring people with disabilities. Moreover, online and in-person training is readily available to help from a variety of sources. RespectAbility has online webinars, as does ASKJAN.org, USDOL and others. Partners like the Poses Family Foundation Workplace Initiative can provide training to the workforce staff and volunteers systems-wide as well as to community agencies in supporting companies through messaging efforts around related to fear and stigma. The National Organization on Disability and the U.S. Business Leadership Network offer strong resources.

C. People with disabilities and their families need high expectations. From the time of diagnosis, education for high expectations must begin. It is vital to have an “Employment First” Policy and PR campaign that will inspire Delawareans with disabilities to reach for the stars. For example, Virgin Airways founder Sir Richard Branson and finance wizard Charles Schwab are dyslexic. Scientist Stephen Hawking and multi-billionaire businessman Sheldon Adelson, like Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas and President Franklin D. Roosevelt before them, are wheelchair/mobility device users. The CEO of Wynn Casinos, Steve Wynn, is legally blind. Arthur Young, co-founder of the giant EY (formerly Ernst & Young) was deaf. Success sells success and that is something the workforce system should seriously utilize in an intentional manner moving forward.

We have a communications campaign, #RespectTheAbility, which shows success. However, this can be done relatively inexpensively by having Governor Markell, and his successor, to showcase success stories when he speaks to Chambers of Commerce and other employer groups. He should also host a specific summit, as have the governors of many other states. We would be happy to assist on a summit of best practices that uses the business case to expand disability employment.
3. **Focus on Sector Strategies to Get More People with Disabilities Employed:**

The success of WIOA depends on being an employer driven paradigm shift. Delaware’s commitment to this success is clear from the formal title of the State Plan. Expanding opportunities for people with barriers to employment such as disability requires strong partnerships with employers in those sectors which are rapidly expanding.

As required by WIOA Sec. 102(b)(1)(A), Appendix A contains a detailed analysis of the First State’s economy. It does much to catalog the done by the Great Recession and the continuing challenge of expanding the economy in the years that followed. On page 23 of the Economic Analysis, the Appendix states that “Health Care and Social Assistance, the state’s top industry in terms of employment, is projected to add the most jobs over the next decade. The nearly 10,000 net new jobs projected are almost twice as many as the industry with the second-most projected growth, Construction.” Further, page 45 offers Occupation Projections by Career Cluster. Some of the clusters with the highest projected growth including “Hospitality & Tourism cluster is expected to generate the most job openings, with 23,500 projected.” In terms of wages, the Projections also show that the highest wages in “Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM)” fields. All of the sectors offer huge opportunities for Delawareans with disabilities. **We submit these are job sectors where people with disabilities can excel and benefit their employer’s bottom line.**

As example of how Delaware can do this, we would recommend that Delaware look at disability employment programs that have helped hotels and resorts meet their talent needs in other states. The draft of Delaware WIOA state plan shows that the “Hospitality and Tourism” cluster is a key growth sector of the First State’s growth. Employers working in this sector can greatly benefit from the loyalty, dedication, and retention rates of employees with disabilities.

An outstanding example of the type of work needed is found in Missouri. As part of the Poses Family Foundation’s Workplace Initiative, a coalition of employment service providers have launched a successful training and placement program with the hospitality sector in St. Louis. This training runs for up to 12 weeks, and takes place on site at the hotel; all participants are paid by the hotel for the duration of training. Since the summer of 2015, two cohorts of trainees have completed training at the Hyatt Regency. Trainees have gone on to permanent employment at the Hyatt and other hotel partners in a range of departments—culinary; auditing; and customer service. **This type of training and Poses’ Workplace Initiative could easily be part of the overall Sector Strategies for Delaware.**

Likewise, in other states, hotels and other hospitality employers have found Project SEARCH to be an amazing source of talent. The work done by Embassy Suites and David Scott in Omaha, Nebraska offers valuable lessons that can enable Delaware to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Moving forward, Delaware’s workforce system should connect with employers in the hospitality sector to begin figuring out how to benefit from these models.

Likewise, “The Transportation and Warehousing sector” in Delaware “continued its recent growth in Delaware, adding 1,250 jobs in 2014.” This is another sector where more Delawareans with disabilities can be employed and can benefit their employer’s bottom line. **A great example of the business case for disability inclusion is provided by Walgreens who has demonstrated that workers with disabilities in their distribution centers are as productive, safer, and turn over less when compared to peers without disabilities. These efforts have taken the logistics sector by storm with Lowe's, OfficeMax, Pepsi, as well as P&G** (just to name a
few) all launching their own successful disability hiring initiatives. For example, as reported by the National Organization on Disability, “Lowe’s hired more than 150 new workers with disabilities in the first year, and an additional 250 workers in the following 18-month period.” Another great example is Starbucks. Their “Inclusion Academy” has rapidly grown from just a pilot program in Carson Valley, NJ to a complete program at their largest roasting plant. Supply chain continues to be a sector that embraces disability inclusion, and the knowledge of the benefits to companies of inclusion are spreading to other industries.

As agriculture is also an important industry in Delaware, there is an opportunity to replicate the success of TIAA-CREF’s Fruits of Employment project that provides internships and job training to workers with disabilities to prep them for careers in competitive agriculture.

Shifting to other potential partners, we mentioned the USBLN’s Disability Equality Index that assesses the inclusion and hiring efforts of major employers above. It is put together by the United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN) which operates a network of affiliates across the country that can be an incredible resource for your work. However, there is not yet an affiliate chapter in Delaware. Moving forward, we encourage committed leaders to work hard in order to create a USBLN affiliate. Meanwhile, the companies which scored 100% in the USBLN index can be a great resource. Your State Plan should talk about these and other local employers in your sector strategies as well. Success sells success and that is something the workforce system should seriously utilize in an intentional manner moving forward.

There are several examples in the text of Delaware’s WIOA plan which show hints that such a paradigm is in motion. For example, on page 88, the Plan discusses the continuing role of DVR “to develop and enhance established partnerships with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities.” The Plan then goes on to specific that this will involve such things as engaging “employers in activities as strategic partners”, “Use employers to help identify high demand industries and occupations”, “Utilize their expertise to develop career options and credentialed programs for individuals with disabilities,” and to “Promote and encourage their expertise in activities such as apprenticeships.” We look forward to seeing how Delaware puts these commitments into action in the months and years ahead.

4. **Ensuring the young people with disabilities get STEM qualified:**

   One missing item from the current draft of Delaware’s state plan is an issue that Governor Markell has actively championed. **During his time in office, Governor Markell has championed the importance of ensuring that opportunities in STEM are fully accessible to people with disabilities.** He has led the way in partnering with companies to employ more people on the autism spectrum. For example, Microsoft, SAP, and Specialisterne have committed themselves to “provide employment opportunities for people on the autism spectrum in roles such as software testers, programmers, system administrators, and data quality assurance specialists.” This work is critical both at the state level and at the federal level. Federal contractors and other employers have huge demands for STEM qualified talents. However, many schools place their best supports for students with disabilities in schools that do not have strong STEM training. **This is a huge loss as people on the Autism Spectrum, for example, can have the very best skills in science, math and engineering.** Delaware needs to address this need and to continue highlighting successes achieve in this space.

   **This issue of STEM and access for student with disabilities is a natural point of partnership between the workforce system and the educational system.** That work needs to
start young, be matched with high expectations for success, and work to ensure people with disabilities have the chance to become future scientists, engineers, and mathematicians. Partnerships should be created with federal contractors who have Section 503 requirements and talent shortages. This includes the top contractors in Delaware such as: Glaxosmithkline PLC, Husky Energy INC, Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Corporation, Vigil Contracting INC, and Masley Enterprises INC.

5. **Expand on Opportunities with Federal Contractors:**

   More emphasis is needed in Delaware’s Plan around the employment opportunities and talent challenges created by the Section 503 regulations and federal contractors. Delaware’s Plan as written contains only minimal references to the new 7% utilization goal set for companies to recruit, hire, and retain qualified individuals with disabilities in all job categories. Given the priority placed on Sector Strategies by the Unified State Plan and the vast number of employers doing business with the Federal government, this is a huge opportunity to outcomes for people with disabilities.

   Delaware needs to respond to the opportunity created by Section 503 with a strategy focused on competitive advantage, not just compliance. Section 503 is an opportunity that could potentially have a broad impact on the employer engagement work of the entire workforce system. The companies who must comply with Section 503 have an opportunity to teach companies not impacted by the regulations how to effective employ, engage, and retain workers or customers with disabilities. The full list of federal contractors in Delaware can be found at [www.Fedspending.org](http://www.Fedspending.org).

6. **Improve School to Work Transitions for Youth with Disabilities – Including an disability employment programs in Hotels, Hospitals, and Elder Care Facilities**

   There is a significant need for the State of Delaware to expand Project Search to train, prepare, and transition more young people with disabilities into the workforce. Nationally, each year approximately 2,700 such young people, spread out in 45 states, do a one-year, school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. This innovative, business-led model features total workplace immersion, which facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and worksite-based training and support. The goal for each program participant is competitive employment.

   Already, there are several successful Project Search sites that provide valuable examples of the skills and abilities young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities possess. The Christiana Care Health System has already benefitted from the pipeline of talent created by Project Search’s business model. Remarkable work of this kind depends on collaboration and partnerships, both key tenants of the paradigm shift of WIOA.

   Nationally, Project Search sites have been achieving outstanding results for people with disabilities, employers, and taxpayers alike. For example, the first longitudinal study of the program found “a 68% success rate in transitioning students from high school into competitive employment” and “Project SEARCH sites in Upstate New York that have an impressive 83% success rate overall.” These are the types of successful outcomes that Delaware should be investing in through WIOA.

   We look forward to seeing how the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will continue to develop and enhance established partnerships with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate VR services.
7. **Public Education on Free and Accessible Services and Resources:**

Delaware offers many online and in-person resources to help employers and people with disabilities come together to build success. For example, the State Plan rightly speaks with pride about Delaware JobLink. To quote page 5 of the Plan, “Our current greatest advantage is Delaware JobLink (Joblink.delaware.gov) with its retooled resume builder, career lattice project, and streamlined job order procedure.” This is an incredible resource and it is one that all stakeholders need to be educated to know that these resources exist, and that they are free and user-friendly. These resources must also all be accessible. There is also no need to re-invent the wheel in creating online resources as ASKJAN.org, the US Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy, our organization and others also offer free toolkits, webinars and training opportunities. Another resource is Understood.org. This is a comprehensive resource to help families and individuals with learning and attention issues build their educational and career plans. It will be helpful to collaborate with those groups however to ensure that the best tools are created to fit the training and information needs on these issues. At the same time, the online tools created for state hiring are very helpful for Delaware and set a model for the country.

8. **Transportation is a vital component and it must be addressed directly:**

Many people with disabilities do not drive. Others cannot afford private transportation. It is vital to work with public transportation to ensure that there are bus routes to places where there are internships, apprenticeships and other work opportunities. In a place where that is not possible, Delaware should look at partnering with UBER and other new transportation solutions. Indeed, for PwDs who do drive, such companies as UBER can also provide a way to enter into the workforce with flexible hours.

9. **One-Stop-Shops/American Job Centers Should be Mobile and Online:**

One critical challenge that we have seen in the WIOA State Plans of many other states has been an excessive focus on the expensive physical infrastructure of the One-Stop or American Job Center (AJC) system. The workforce needs of state economies are evolving rapidly thanks to technology and globalization. Investing excessive resources on physical locations at the expense of improving online delivery of workforce services and supports is an example of looking backwards, not forwards. Moreover, the District of Columbia and others have successfully moved much of their one-stop services to trained staff with laptops who go to schools, hospitals, and community organizations where they are better able to serve the public. With that in mind, we are pleased to see the extensive internet-based resources referenced in the current draft of Delaware’s WIOA plan. However, there is a critical question that needs to be asked. Are Delaware’s workforce system websites fully accessible for people with visual differences who use screen readers? Are there plain language summaries for people with intellectual or developmental differences? Do training videos or online instruction modules have closed captioning for people with hearing differences? Addressing these challenges may take time, but they will net a great deal of benefits to the workforce system.
10. Aging workers and those with recently acquired disabilities must be specifically addressed in the plan.

The plan does talk about the aging of the Baby Boomer generation and how their retirements will lead to talent shortages. However, many people who have been in the workforce for decades find that before full retirement age they cannot keep up with the physical demands from their jobs. In Iowa, IVRS works with Unity Point Hospital. They find that ER nurses, for example, come to a point where they can no longer keep up with the physical demands of the job. They have a department that works to “re-home” talented and valued employees who either age into a disability or acquire a disability through accident or illness. Empowering youth with disabilities to enter the workforce should be your highest priority, but keeping workers in the workforce is also important. This will take a specific strategy and effort so that you don’t have massive numbers of people going onto disability rolls and out of the workplace prematurely.

11. People with disabilities are can be ideal talent in serving Delaware’s aging population:

To quote a 2014 report from the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), “[people with disabilities] not only represent an untapped talent pool, but also offer significant value and insight” in the field of healthcare. There are numerous examples of young people with disabilities doing incredible work in the fields of healthcare, elderly care, and in assisted living. Project Search in Delaware is located within the Christiana Hospital in Newark. However, we suggest that there is a general opportunity for growth of such transition programs to meet the employment needs of nursing homes, senior living facilities and hotels.

12. Beware “Order of Selection” and Utilize a “Jackie Robinson Strategy”:

The workforce system only gets one chance with new employers to make a good impression. By law, policy, and custom, the system looks to serve people with the most significant disabilities first. However, if they are not the right match for the employer, it will only undermine our long term goals. Thus it is vital to also use a “Jackie Robinson Strategy” to make sure that the right talent gets into the right positions so it is win-win for the employer and worker alike. As the first African-American to play major league baseball, Robinson tore down decades of discrimination and blazed a trail for other talented and diverse athletes to follow. He was the talent that his employer needed, and contributed to the bottom line. Because, stigma and misconception remain a critical obstacle and one that Delaware’s workforce system needs to focus on, sometimes the best way to help people with more significant disabilities in the long term is to start with new employers by placing talent with fewer disabilities first. Once they understand accommodations and how to maximize the use of talent, they will be ready to more broadly open their employment “tents”.

13. Sustain Delaware’s Commitment to State Level Affirmative Action – hiring of people with disabilities for jobs in state government and state contracting obligations:

As stated above, the continuing challenge of improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities requires a full spectrum approach. One of the best practices identified first in Governor Markell’s Better Bottom Line Initiative and later in RespectAbility’s Disability Employment First Planning Toolkit concerns hiring people with disabilities at the state level. Page 93 of the State Plan mentions how “The State of Delaware has a Selective Placement Program in which agencies can interview qualified individuals with disabilities without having to
This Program reflects one of the most important first steps taken by Governor Markell. Namely, the idea that, state government hiring and contracting can also be a source of opportunity for people with disabilities. In the Governor’s own words, “One key action is to set a state goal for hiring people with disabilities through an executive order and hold agencies accountable for achieving that goal.” This is a model Program that should be sustained even after new leadership is elected this fall.

Next is the matter of contracting in state government. As with Section 503, state government can also use contracting as a means to promote the hiring, retention and promotion of people with disabilities. Contracts with state may not be as vast or lucrative as federal contracting, but this is yet another place where innovative work can be done to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities at the state level. Lastly, as shown by Delaware’s Selective Placement Program, having a fast track or selective placement hiring system for people with disabilities can create more jobs. We hope that the workforce system will consider how to sustain such efforts in the future.

14. Finding a market niche with high turnover jobs:
Millions of dollars are lost each year due to employee turnover. For all jobs earning less than $50,000 per year, the average cost of replacing one employee is between $6,000 and $20,000. Research shows that employees with disabilities are more productive and loyal than their non-disabled peers. Company records show that even when the relatively more expensive accommodations were factored in, the overall costs of accommodations were far outweighed by the low turnover rates and better tenures of the employees with disabilities. Hospitals, elder care institutions, hotels, and distribution/supply chains including UPS, Walmart, Walgreens have proven records of success. They can be outstanding partners for disability employment as these industries suffer from high turnover rates and PwDs are proven to have significantly higher retention rates. It is important to identify more specific opportunities with employers and to site them inside the plan, as well as the criteria by which to continue and to expand such partnerships in the future.

15. The disability issues of people involved in the corrections system must be addressed:
According to recently published data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, “An estimated 32% of prisoners and 40% of jail inmates reported having at least one disability.” This issue is a serious one and it needs to be addressed at the state level. Frequently people are involved in the criminal justice system because they have disability issues, including learning differences, ADHD, executive function, and mental health issues that went undiagnosed or unaddressed through childhood and into the school years. Given these statistics from the BJS, it is vital that Delaware identify how many of the individuals in the ex-offender pipeline have disabilities. Serving ex-offender is a critical workforce development challenge and one that can only increase when disability is a factor as well. The price paid for ignoring this issue are higher rates of recidivism and greater costs to society. Can there be screening or assessment tools for identify disability as people either enter or exit the prison system? If people who have been in the corrections system are to be well served by Delaware’s workforce system, then it is vital that disability issues be identified and addressed in a way that will help them develop their talents so they can be successful citizens and workers in the future.
Conclusion

In all of our work around WIOA, we have emphasized the fact that this new law represents the intersection of hope and history for people with disabilities. Delaware’s State Plan is a great example of that hard work, dedicated effort, and specific policies needed to realize those hopes. People with disabilities want to pursue the American Dream, just like everyone. Making sure there are pathways for their talents to meet employer talent needs is a win-win-win for people, taxpayers, and businesses alike. We are encouraged by what we have seen from Delaware and we stand ready to assist in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, President and CEO, RespectAbility
Philip Pauli, Policy and Practices Director, RespectAbility
We have included a chart below which looks at the gap in workforce participation between those with and without disabilities nationally over time. As seen in the chart, as women and minorities have been able to make significant strides in joining the workforce, people with disabilities have not. We know that by maximizing Maryland’s WIOA plan’s potential that all of this can change for the better for the people of our state.

*Chart 1 – The gap nationally in workforce participation rates between people with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.*

Source for chart is the Disabilities Compendium.
Delaware and Jobs for PwDs

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, President
www.RespectAbilityUSA.org
Delaware*

- 75.1% of persons without disabilities aged 18 to 64 are employed.\(^3\)
- 36.4% of PwDs aged 18 to 64 are employed.\(^3\)
- **There is a 38.7 point gap between the employment rates of Delawareans with and without disabilities. This is a critical metric and one being measured by Delaware’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**
- 3,800 persons aged 16 to 20 have a disability.\(^1\)
- 114,696 civilians with a disability live in Delaware.\(^3\)
- 56,600 persons aged 21 to 64 have a disability.\(^1\)
- The employment gap between PwDs and people without disabilities has decreased 1.9% between 2010 and 2011.\(^3\)
- 30,631 people ages 18-64 received SSDI or SSI benefits in the year 2012.\(^3\)
- In 2012, DE’s total expenditure on SSDI benefits for PwDs was $423,180,000.\(^3\)
- Voc. Rehab. obtained 1,065 jobs for PwDs in DE in 2012.\(^2\)
- Voc. Rehab. received 3,374 general rehab applicants and 80 blind applicants in DE in 2012.\(^3\)

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Gov. Markell with Lisa Derx (VP, Best Buddies) and Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi (President, RespectAbility)

* This data predates Governor Markell’s time as Chair of NGA and his Better Bottom Line Initiative.

1. 2012 Disability Status Report: Delaware, disabilitystatistics.org
3. Annual Disability Statistics Compendium
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>People with Disabilities (%)</th>
<th>People without Disabilities (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty¹</td>
<td>US 29.2</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE 20.4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking¹</td>
<td>US 26.0</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE 25.1</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity¹</td>
<td>US 39.1</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE 39.9</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment¹</td>
<td>US 32.7</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE 34.6</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. *Annual Disability Statistics Compendium.* Pg 53, 54, 72, 73, 29
## DE Ages 6 to 21 Served By IDEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Disabilities</td>
<td>16,936</td>
<td>16,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
<td>8,764</td>
<td>8,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech or Language Impairment</td>
<td>1,492</td>
<td>1,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>1,536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Disturbance</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Disability</td>
<td>Omitted</td>
<td>Omitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impairment</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic Impairment</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impairment</td>
<td>2,162</td>
<td>2,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Impairment</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>1,019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deaf Blindness</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injury</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Delay</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](https://www.abd.org/researchdata/dscompendium/annual残疾人统计数据综合报告)
Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 16 to 20 in Delaware in 2012

*Total numbers reported

Source: Cornell University
Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 21 to 64 in Delaware in 2012

Prevalence Rates: Age 21 to 64 years (%)

- Any Disability: 10.9%
  - Total: 56,600*
- Visual: 1.8%
  - Total: 9,200*
- Hearing: 1.8%
  - Total: 9,600*
- Ambulatory: 5.9%
  - Total: 30,700*
- Cognitive: 3.7%
  - Total: 19,300*
- Self-Care: 2.0%
  - Total: 10,500*
- Independent Living: 3.8%
  - Total: 19,600*

*Total numbers reported

Source: Cornell University
# Employment of Non-Institutionalized Working-Age People (Ages 21 to 64) by Disability Status in Delaware in 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Numbers Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any Disability</td>
<td>20,100*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>3,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>5,200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulatory</td>
<td>8,200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>4,600*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Care</td>
<td>1,900*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Living</td>
<td>3,000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total numbers reported

Source: Cornell University
Governor Jack Markell (DE, D)

“Advancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities is the right thing to do as a society, it’s the smart thing for government to do and it makes good business sense.”

Governor Jack Markell

Governor Jack Markell (DE) has dramatically strengthened state hiring/inclusion. In July 2012, Governor Markell signed the Employment First Act, requiring state agencies to consider, as their first option, competitive employment for persons with disabilities. He also made this a priority with the National Governors Association (NGA) and this initiative continues nationwide.

Gov. Markell with Doc Sweitzer (Board Member, RespectAbility) and Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi (President, RespectAbility)
Delaware’s Vision

- Much can be learned from the approach to these issues in DE, where Governor Markell and Delaware’s Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services, Rita Landgraf, have focused like laser beams on finding win-win solutions for employers and potential employees with disabilities.

- They started with a major summit, where they brought together top business leaders, advocates from the disability community, foundations, and other leaders to brainstorm and implement solutions. They understood from day one that real change will take strong public-private partnerships driven by meeting the needs of employers for successful and reliable talent.

- DE’s vision is to:
  - Promote an open atmosphere in which the employees feel comfortable in disclosing their disability.
  - Provide education and support on accommodating PwDs and the benefits of doing so.
  - Provide PwDs with the same opportunities and environment to succeed as everyone else.
PwD’s and DE’s Workforce Strategy

- PwD often do not get the same opportunities and environment to succeed as everyone else. This increases the financial security gap between people with disabilities and people without disabilities.

- DE is building innovative programs to increase the options for PwDs as a main component of the State’s overall workforce strategy. In order to achieve the State’s Employment program, DE will:
  - Serve PwDs age 14 to 25, who have a desire to work in a competitive work environment.
  - Provide individually tailored services to assist individuals to explore and plan career paths.
  - Include services to support individuals to maintain employment based on their specific needs – i.e. job supports, transportation, personal care, orientation and mobility training and assistive technology.

- A similar program, Promise, with comprehensive community based services, has also been designed to support individuals with mental health and substance abuse needs age 18 and older, providing an array of employment supports. These programs are slated to begin early in 2015.
Delaware has been working with ODEP where the state is benefiting from technical assistance and best practice expertise. The initial engagement invited the State of Delaware to participate as one of the six states in the Employment Resources Rebalancing Initiative (ERRI), and an evaluation was conducted relative to our current systems, policies, and practices in order to determine if they are in alignment with the employment first priority. The workgroup learned that much needs to be accomplished on a variety of levels to fulfill the employment first transformation.

Delaware was recently awarded another technical assistance grant from ODEP that will focus on “Capacity Building in Effective Practices” to ensure that the state’s training protocols and workforce skillsets support the Employment First Governor Markell has focused like a laser beam on finding win-win solutions for employers and potential employees with disabilities.
“Employment First” Communication Plan

- DE is currently working on a communication plan focused on the employment first transformation to be directed towards consumers and students with disabilities, parents and families of individuals with disabilities and the workforce inclusive of those who work in early intervention programs, schools and the adult service delivery system.
Gov. Jack Markell launched a partnership that illustrates the potential for putting more people with disabilities to work. The state helped bring together the IT firm CAI and an international organization Specialisterne, which is dedicated to employment of individuals with autism. CAI, a company that employs thousands of people across the country, is committed to hiring people who have autism for more than 3% of its workforce by 2015, recognizing that these individuals are especially qualified for technology roles like software testing, data quality assurance, programming, data mining and data entry. The Governor has advanced the Specialisterne model within his administration and several departments have hired or are actively recruiting through Specialisterne.
Governor Markell’s initiative created a major spark in Delaware’s Department of Labor with an increase of 8.6% of individuals with disabilities becoming actively employed from 2011 to 2013. Delaware has seen an increase in the number of employers engaged and in the number of individuals with disabilities actively seeking employment.
The Healthcare Association, made up of Delaware’s hospitals, has signed on to the Governor’s initiative and is developing internships, expanding internships and building recruitment from these efforts into employment.
The University of Delaware, in collaboration with the State of Delaware, conducted a comprehensive survey of state employees to determine the needs of the State, as an employer, with respect to evaluating the attitudes of and hiring practices toward state employees with disabilities. The two key areas that were identified as a need in response to this survey were: HR training initiatives related to disability awareness, and refinement of state hiring practices/systems for recruiting qualified applicants with disabilities.
HR Training Initiatives

The State of Delaware has created an online class available to all State employees, which is required for all hiring managers as a prerequisite for additional classroom training. The State of Delaware piloted the online training, with the classroom training beginning in October 2014.
State of Delaware Hiring Practices - Selective Placement

The State Office of Management and Budget in collaboration with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division for the Visually Impaired has worked to ensure that the Selective Placement program is one hiring option for individuals with disabilities who seek employment in state government. Governor Markell’s initiative to employ people with disabilities has brought heightened awareness to the Selective Placement program, which allows a qualified individual with a disability to apply, be screened and matched for a state job.
In addition, non-profit organizations that work closely with DVR and DVI received training on the Selective Placement Program in order to assist in qualifying eligible applicants. Resources include a publicly-available training video on the OMB website ("Untapped Talent Ready to Work") that provides information about including people with disabilities in the workforce and the accomplishments that can be gained from utilizing this resource. OMB has also developed a webpage (Selective Placement for Job Seekers), which provides information about how to become certified, meet the requirements, the application process, and contact Survey and Enhanced Training for State Employees with Disabilities.
In July, 2013 a workgroup was convened to develop and issue a survey to all State of Delaware employees to participate in a survey to assist in enhancing employment opportunities and experiences for persons with disabilities within the State of Delaware workforce. The survey asked participants with and without disabilities to share their experiences and ideas about the employment of people with disabilities by the State’s workforce.
Survey Highlights

Robust Participation Rate ~ 31% (5,196 of 16,894 eligible participants) answered the first and most critical question:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a person with a disability as an individual with a long-lasting physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; an individual who has a record of such impairment; or an individual who is regarded as having such impairment. Disabilities may be physical, cognitive, or psychological in nature, but do not include minor or temporary conditions.
Using this definition, do you believe you have a disability that affects your ability to perform your job responsibilities?

- 11.8% of state workers self-identified as being a worker with a disability, a statistic commensurate with the prevalence of disability in Delaware among the general population (12%).

- 44% (567) of respondents who self-identified as having a disability had requested at least 1 reasonable accommodation

- 1 in 3 respondents (n=605) had encountered a comment, most often made by co-workers and/or supervisors, that made them feel uncomfortable.
Survey Highlights

• 1 in 5 respondents (n=590) believed they had been physically or psychologically intimidated or threatened due to their disability, most commonly by supervisors, followed by co-workers.

• Of these employees, 1 in 3 took action to the address the matter, typically reporting the situation to a supervisor or Human Resources Department.

• Less than one-third of all respondents, despite disability status, were aware of specific resources or programs within the State employment system to support employees with disabilities.

• 25% of all supervisors of employees with disabilities stated that they faced fiscal, physical, attitudinal, or other barriers in hiring or accommodating employees with disabilities.

(Center for Community Research & Service, University of Delaware School of Public Policy and Administration 1/7/14)
Results

- As a result of the survey both an online class and training for managers and supervisors were developed. Starting in October, 2014 (National Disability Employment Awareness Month), the online class “Focus on Ability” became available to all State of Delaware employees, which can be found here - [http://delawarepersonnel.com/training/online/](http://delawarepersonnel.com/training/online/).

- Class objectives include:
  1. Explaining the benefits of hiring and retaining employees with disabilities;
  2. Providing an overview of the ADA, including how to respond to or make requests for accommodations;
  3. Describing invisible disabilities including mental illness, and dispelling myths;
  4. Interacting comfortably with employees who have disabilities (including examples of respectful behavior, and communication tips); and
  5. Identifying resources available to State employees.

- A classroom training program specifically for managers and supervisors will be offered starting winter 2014/2015.
Delaware’s New Website

In addition, the State of Delaware developed a specific online resource section within the state’s employment recruitment website to offer specific supports to workers and employers of persons with disabilities: http://delawarestatejobs.com/disability/index.shtml
In May, 2013 Computer Aid, Inc. (CAI), a global Information Technology consulting, outsourcing and systems integration company announced a National Founding Partnership with Specialisterne to train and hire people who have autism, in technology roles. With over 800 associates in the Delaware Valley, and 3,300 in the U.S., CAI plans to employ over 3% of its consultant workforce with people who have autism in technology roles in software testing, data quality assurance, programming, data mining and data entry, before the end of 2015.

CAI sees an innovative opportunity to leverage the unique talents of people with autism, while providing them a road map to develop meaningful IT careers. In the USA, it is estimated that one in every 88 people are impacted by autism. Specialisterne is a world leader in mobilizing the talents of people with autism to work in technology-focused jobs. Originally founded in Denmark, Specialisterne has operations around the world, including its new U.S. headquarters, which is based in Delaware.
Delaware’s healthcare sector is currently exploring new options that explore not only new and innovative medical practices, but holistic rehabilitation models that support individuals and their families in living independently and obtaining employment as the foundation for long term wellbeing.

The Project SEARCH Model is an international model for training young people with disabilities within various business sectors while they are completing their final years of high school. This world renowned model has been embraced locally by Christiana Care Health System in partnership with the Delaware Department of Education, Red Clay School District, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Goodwill Industries. Now in its second year, students with disabilities within Red Clay School District currently spend a substantial amount of time within multiple departments within Christiana Care Hospital. Each student has the opportunity to rotate through a minimum of three internship sites prior to graduation accumulating approximately nine months of employment related experience prior to graduation.

The Project SEARCH Model is currently seeking opportunities to be replicated in partnership with other healthcare systems in Delaware, or other large business operations, in partnerships with Delaware school districts and nonprofit organizations.
On March 26th, Governor Jack Markell signed Executive Order 44 allowing businesses owned by individuals with disabilities and certain small businesses to be included in the state’s supplier diversity efforts. Executive Order 44 expanded the scope of the Governor’s Supplier Diversity Council to include the study and consideration of how the State of Delaware does business with enterprises owned by individuals with disabilities as well as certain small businesses. For additional information on this program, please visit: http://gss.omb.delaware.gov/osd/certify.shtml
The Commission and the State of Delaware also received the opportunity to participate as one of the six states in Employment Resources Rebalancing Initiative (ERRI) and Vision Quest Initiative in 2014, whereby a consultant was available to the state’s Employment First Workgroup and a separate Vision Quest local and national consulting group in evaluating current systems, policies, and practices in Delaware to determine if they are in alignment with the employment first priority.
As a result of the ERRI and Vision Quest initiatives, the Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS) took the lead in implementing a communication plan with the following deliverables within the next federal fiscal year:

- Theme #1 Outcome/Milestone: Universal MOU and set of Policy Recommendations
- Theme #2 Outcome/Milestone: Development of Statewide Employment First Universal Training & Implementation
- Theme #3 Outcome/Milestone: Execution of Employment First Key Messaging Campaign through video and/or social media.

The plan is a work in progress and will be monitored by the Employment First Oversight Commission. As of November, 2014 the State of Delaware submitted and has been accepted into the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program under ODEP and has requested additional technical assistance and support to carry out the plans developed under Vision Quest and ERRI. A working group will meet quarterly or with the Employment First Oversight Commission to implement the plan for this new initiative.
Capitalizing on Federal Programs

- Through the State of Delaware Medicaid program there is work being done to expand community and employment related benefit options for eligible Delawareans. These new services will serve low income individuals across disability groups that have a desire to work in a competitive environment. Alignment of Medicaid programs toward options that support employment is a primary goal for the State of Delaware and an opportunity for any state that pursues expanded employment for persons with disabilities.

- The new Medicaid Pathways to Employment program will offer services such as on the job supports, transportation, personal care, orientation and mobility training, benefits counseling, and assistive technology services to assist persons in obtaining and maintaining employment in order to better meet their individual needs.

- Delaware is currently on track to implement this new Medicaid waiver program for the aforementioned services with the federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services in winter 2015.
Delaware Project SEARCH Sites

- Christiana Hospital, Newark

Project SEARCH: [www.projectsearch.us](http://www.projectsearch.us)
Contact Erin Riehle at Erin.Riehle@cchmc.org
Top contractors:

- Glaxosmithkline PLC
- Husky Energy INC
- Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Corporation
- Vigil Contracting INC
- Masley Enterprises INC

For complete list see fedspending.org


How to get started: Job Accommodation Network ➔ https://askjan.org/
Jobs in Delaware

- Delaware’s expected fastest growing occupations:
  - Insulation Workers, Mechanical
  - Helpers-Brickmasons, Blockmasons, Stonemasons, and Tile and Marble Setters
  - Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic
  - Personal Care Aids
  - Brickmasons and blockmasons

[Link to Career Information](http://www.careerinfonet.org/oview1.asp?next=oview1&Level=Overall&optstatus=&jobfam=&id=1&nodeid=3&soccode=&ShowAll=&stfips=10)

- Click for your Workforce Development Plan
  [Link to Workforce Development Plan](http://workforceinvestmentworks.com/workforce_board_info.asp?st=DE)

- Click for your Workforce Development Board
  [Link to Workforce Development Board](http://wib.delawareworks.com/2012-state-plan.php)
Resources

- Fedspending: [www.fedspending.org](http://www.fedspending.org)
- Project SEARCH: [www.projectsearch.us](http://www.projectsearch.us)
- Job Accommodation Network: [https://askjan.org/](https://askjan.org/)
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency: [http://wdcrobcollp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_cd=SVR](http://wdcrobcollp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_cd=SVR)
- RespectAbilityUSA: [www.respectabilityusa.org](http://www.respectabilityusa.org)
Let Us Know If We Can Help!

We have many resources for policy makers and employers on our website and are ready to help!

RespectAbilityUSA
11333 Woodglen Drive, Suite 102
Rockville, MD 20852

www.RespectAbilityUSA.org
Cell: (202) 365 – 0787
Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi
President
JenniferM@RespectAbilityUSA.org
Disability Employment First Planning Tool

Created by RespectAbility, Best Buddies, The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and National Organization on Disability (NOD).

Questions? Contact Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi at 202 365 0787 or JenniferM@RespectAbilityUSA.org
Dear Governors, Workforce Development Board and Agencies, Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies and others devoted to enabling people with disabilities to get jobs,

Our nation was founded on the principle that anyone who works hard should be able to get ahead in life. People with disabilities deserve to be able to work to achieve the American dream, just like anyone else. Companies like Walgreens, E.Y., AMC Theaters, Lowe's and others have shown that employees with disabilities are loyal, successful and help them make more money. If we find the right jobs for the right people it can and does increase the bottom line of companies, while enabling people with disabilities to achieve dignity and independence.

We stand ready to help governors, states, workforce development boards and agencies, vocational rehabilitation and others in their efforts to enable people with disabilities to get competitive integrated employment. Thus, we have created this “Disability Employment First Planning Tool” as a resource for your state, workforce development boards and agencies. It is organized around the key recommendations from the National Governors Association’s report, A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities. The pages that follow are taken from best practices and can really help you in your work to create win-win-win solutions for people with disabilities, employers and taxpayers alike. The key areas are:

- Making the best of limited resources
- Finding and supporting businesses in their efforts to employ people with disabilities
- Making disability employment a part of the state workforce strategy
- Preparing youth with disabilities for careers that use their full potential, and providing employers with a pipeline of skilled workers
- Being a model employer by increasing the number of people with disabilities working in state government

There is full bipartisan support in Washington and around the nation for employment for people with disabilities. The National Governors Association initiative A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities was a significant milestone. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and ABLE Act recently became law.

According to section 102 of WIOA, each state will now have to create a “Unified Plan” before March 2016. We recognize that this is not an easy task, and that there is not a lot of time. Until now, tens of billions of dollars of tax money has been wasted on failed programs, while evidence shows that there are better programs and practices that work. Our goal is to ensure that each state puts forward an excellent plan based on best practices — one that will create the most integrated job opportunities that pay competitive wages for people with disabilities possible, while meeting the talent needs of employers. Thus, the pages following will give you a list of best practices that you can replicate in your own work.

1. bit.ly/1v1b4h9
2. bit.ly/1wYGg7c
3. bit.ly/1v1b4h9
5. bit.ly/1w39l9
6. bit.ly/1xV99Wv9
This month Section 5037 came online to ask federal contractors to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain individuals with disabilities. For the first time, they also have a 7% utilization goal for qualified individuals with disabilities in each of their job groups (including management). Moreover, all of their staff, including those with disabilities, must be paid at least $10.10 an hour. Another regulation, VEVRAA8, requires similar obligations on contractors to hire veterans, including veterans with disabilities. Policies are changing fast and we stand ready to help.

We have already met with 33 governors on employment for people with disabilities and real progress is being made. The initial efforts of Governors Jack Markell (DE), Terry Branstand (IA), Scott Walker (WI), Dennis Daugaard (SD), Phil Bryant (MS), Jay Inslee (WA) and others have been stellar.

Please go through all the policies outlined in the following pages. We also have created separate documents for each state as resources. They include statistics, planning data, and a wealth of information. It even has links to lists of all the federal contractors in your state that, due to Section 503, must now become inclusive employers.

Please contact JenniferM@RespectAbilityUSA.org or at 202-365-0787 if you have any questions. We are here to help you succeed in opening the doors to success for the twenty million working age Americans with disabilities, most of whom want to work.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi
President, RespectAbilityUSA.org

Lisa Derx, Vice President
Best Buddies

Donna Meltzer,
President, The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)

Kelly Buckland
President, National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)

Susan Prokop
Advocacy Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)

Carol Glazer
President, National Organization on Disability (NOD)

7.usa.gov/1BLnZ72
Welcome to the **Disability Employment First Planning Tool**, organized around the five areas from the NGA report *A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities*. This tool is meant to be a guide and internal document for you and your state, workforce development boards and agencies, vocational rehabilitation and others. It will help you better understand what a holistic plan for integrated competitive employment for people with disabilities would entail, as well as to see where there are current gaps. Throughout this planning tool, all “jobs” and “employment” refer to jobs that are either competitive integrated employment as defined by WIOA or self-employment. (Please see full WIOA definition of competitive integrated employment in Appendix A.)

This tool is written to provide specific and measurable steps that can be taken to achieve the overall goal of integrated employment of people with disabilities. As you consider these steps and goals we ask that you consider where your state is on the path to achieving each of these. We have provided space to note the state’s progress based on the following:

- **N** Not Yet Started or Considered
- **B** Beginning to Progress Towards Goal
- **D** Developing Steadily Toward Goal (i.e. you have a model program in part of the state but it is only available to a small number of the people with disabilities and employers who need it)
- **M** Met Goal
- **E** Exceeds Goal and is Exemplar for Other States
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I. MAKING THE BEST OF LIMITED RESOURCES

One of the most cost effective things that you can do to successfully integrate disability employment into the state workforce strategy is to reduce the barriers caused by negative stigmas surrounding employment for people with disabilities (PwDs). Indeed, efforts that do not cost any taxpayer dollars but rather demonstrate leadership can make a significant difference in lowering barriers to entry into the workforce and to changing the landscape for people with disabilities, employers and taxpayers alike.

A Princeton study shows that while people with disabilities (PwDs) are seen as warm, they are not seen as competent. Similarly, a study published by Cornell Hospitality Quarterly found that companies share a concern that people with disabilities cannot adequately do the work required of their employees. Thus, leadership by the Governor and state to reduce this stigma is vital before broad progress can be made.

Ensuring that there is an expectation by employers that employees with disabilities can succeed, and by PwDs that they can work successfully is critical to better outcomes for people with disabilities, businesses, and the state. This is especially true for young people with disabilities and for those with newly acquired disabilities who were previously in the workforce. This section gathers data regarding your leadership and efforts to address and reduce stigmas and other barriers to employment in your state and make disability employment a part of the state workforce strategy.

Additionally, in making the best use of limited resources to advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities, the NGA A Better Bottom Line (bit.ly/1vb4Ib9) report highlights that “Governors can act to secure resources by directing agency heads to continuously review opportunities for federal support and the possibility of partnerships with federal agencies and the private and nonprofit sectors. Areas for governors to consider include: (1) capitalizing on the numerous federal programs, particularly in the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education (OSERS), which oversees the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA); the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP); and the U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration on Community Living; (2) connecting with private-sector and philanthropic resources to complement public-sector funding with short-term pilots, innovative ideas, or evaluations and studies; and (3) maximizing the efforts of disability experts in their state, including advocacy organizations, research institutions, and universities that are engaged in similar activities as state agencies to advance opportunities for people with disabilities, such as recruitment, assessment, services, outreach, and awareness campaigns.”
A. Internal Issue Awareness and Commitment

1. The Governor has taken the time to personally understand the issues surrounding the expansion of competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities (PwDs) in this state.

2. The executive director of the state workforce board and agency, and other key state leaders such as the vocational rehabilitation director, special education director and others have taken the time to personally understand the issues surrounding the expansion of competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities (PwDs) in this state.

3. The Governor has openly pledged his/her support and commitment to the National Governor’s Association (NGA) Disability Employment Initiative “A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities.”

4. The State and Governor celebrate and recognize National Disability Employment Awareness Month each October.

5. The State is reaching out to make the most of opportunities coming from the Federal government and other partners, and is blending and braiding those opportunities for maximum results. This practice entails a legitimate process of fiscally mixing funds to create one source, and combining separate accountable sources to provide services.

B. Raising Public Awareness and Decreasing Stigma

1. The Governor uses his or her own time, name and office to reduce stigmas and prejudice against hiring people with disabilities by demonstrating the positive business case aspects of employing PwDs at least once a month, through media opportunities such as personal statements, appearances, op-eds, conferences, and media events.

2. During speeches to business leaders, the Chamber of Commerce and other employer groups, the Governor regularly speaks about the positive business cases of being an inclusive employer.

3. The Governor uses his or her own time, name and office to reduce stigmas and prejudice against hiring PwDs by demonstrating the positive business case aspects of employing PwDs at least once a month, through media opportunities such as personal statements, appearances, op-eds, conferences, and media events.

4. The Governor visits a successful job site in their state at least quarterly that employs PwDs and where it is win-win for employers and employees alike. Media is invited to report about the experience to highlight the business case for employing people with diverse abilities.

5. The Governor is working with public figures/celebrities (i.e. from Hollywood, sports or local news stations) to do public service announcements or events throughout the year to encourage companies to see the advantage of hiring PwDs.
6. During speeches to business leaders, the Chamber of Commerce and other employer groups, the Governor regularly speaks about the positive business cases of being an inclusive employer.

7. The state promotes awareness and inclusive hiring by identifying and publicly praising businesses within the state that are leaders in inclusion through awards, visibility, or other incentives.

8. The Governor hosts disability employment summits, which include businesses that are successful inclusive employers making the business-to-business case for inclusive employment to other employers.

II. FIND AND SUPPORT BUSINESSES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO EMPLOY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

From the NGA A Better Bottom Line report: “Businesses are telling policymakers that they are willing to hire people with disabilities, but they need a long-term partner. Government must reorient its strategy from looking to businesses to solve a social service problem to instead understand and solve the challenges businesses face in identifying and recruiting skilled workers. Governors can encourage state agencies to find more such businesses by dedicating staffers who have business expertise to work with employers, working with multiple businesses in a sector, and including small businesses. Governors can provide leadership in building long-term partnerships that support business with actions such as assigning one point of contact from the state to work with employers over the long term, providing skills assessment and training, and navigating the complexities of benefits related to workers with disabilities.”

A. Communication, Staffing, and Support

1. There is a state-supported centralized agency that distributes information, resources, integrated employment support and training for businesses that hire PwDs, and this agency makes itself known to employers.

2. The state has enables mechanisms and services which enable businesses to effectively include people with disabilities in their workforce.

3. The state is working to build and sustain the capacity of front-line staff across systems to successfully implement evidence-based effective practices in supporting and serving employers who hire individuals with disabilities as well as their employees with disabilities.

4. There are expectations on provider organizations to assure that they are transitioning from predominantly facility-based, segregated service models to market-driven service models focused on the provision of integrated employment supports and other home and community based services.

5. The state has created mechanisms to enable people with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities, to navigate multiple service programs.
6. The state has a special focus on supporting Federal contractors under new mandates from Section 503, including working closely with the United States Business Leadership Council, an organization devoted to supporting inclusive employers, as well as with the National Industry Liaison Group which represents Federal contractors.

III. MAKE DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT PART OF THE STATE WORKFORCE STRATEGY

From the NGA A Better Bottom Line Report: “Make disability employment part of the state workforce development strategy. For many states, the first step has been to prioritize “employment as the first option” when designing policies, programs, and investments to support the employment of people with disabilities. To date, more than 30 states have adopted Employment First strategies, which direct state policies and investments to prioritize employment for people with disabilities. Governors can make Employment First a priority by issuing an executive order or working with the state legislature to enact legislation to support it. Governors can also direct state agencies to align disability programs with workforce and economic development programs, track disability employment outcomes and make sure they are included with current workforce data collection, and focus on the business case when meeting with employers.”

A. Policy and Legislation

1. The Governor/state has signed Employment First legislation and/or issued an Executive Order on Employment First.

2. The Governor has made specific and measurable commitments to improve competitive integrated employment for PwDs in this state, and has made it a high priority for his/her Administration.

3. The state is actively working to align policy, practice, and funding across systems to promote integrated employment as the preferred outcome of publicly financed supports and services to individuals with disabilities.
B. Communication and Representation

1. There is a statewide workforce development board that reports directly to the Governor.

2. At least one representative of the disability advocacy community is specifically included in that workforce development taskforce which reports to the Governor.

3. There are online ads, which are 508 compliant; to help PwDs find services to get jobs (i.e. for American Job Centers or Vocational Rehabilitation) before people start receiving benefits.

4. There are online ads, which are 508 compliant; to help employers source talented PwDs (i.e. www.tabABILITY.org).

5. The local, regional, and statewide workforce development boards fully support integrated employment as a winning strategy for workforce development.

6. The state has taken steps to market options like vocational rehab to persons who are contemplating or who have applied for SSI/DI in an effort to assist these individuals to return to work.

IV. PREPARING YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES FOR CAREERS THAT USE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, AND PROVIDING EMPLOYERS WITH A PIPELINE OF SKILLED WORK

Ensuring that employment of people with disabilities (PwDs) is win-win-win for individuals, businesses, and the state takes persistence, talent, training, preparing and devoted resources. There must be an expectation of work first rather than an outdated system of benefit reliance. Today, many youth with disabilities receive accessible education and degrees, yet they never enter the workforce. Is your state systematically and proactively using best practices to change that outcome and help youth with disabilities transition into work and meaningful careers?

From the NGA A Better Bottom Line Report: “Prepare youth with disabilities for careers that use their full potential, providing employers with a pipeline of skilled workers. Governors can send a strong message to state agencies, educators, business, and parents on the importance of starting early to create the expectation that employment and a career is a goal for everyone, including youth with disabilities, and ensure that career readiness begins in kindergarten through 12th grade education and is supported at colleges and universities and as students transition to work. Research shows that early career awareness and work experience for youth are indicators of positive employment.”

A. PARENTS AND EARLY EDUCATION

1. The state provides accurate and useful tools and resources for expectant mothers where there is a pre-natal diagnosis of disability so they know that resources will be available for their children to prepare for school and future employment. Those materials are given to health-care providers and are available on the web for free. For example see: http://www.legis.delaware.gov/LIS/LIS147.NSF/2bede841c6272c888025698400433a04/
2. The state provides an early infant and toddler program to all who need it within a reasonable time with an educational component promoting school readiness through pre-language-pre-literacy and numerical skills. The program promotes “Employment First” messages that every person can work and make a difference.

3. The state offers readily available free wrap around services and tools to help parents prepare their children with disabilities for work.

B. SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITIONS

1. Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) have an expectation of integrated competitive work as a first-choice option for students with disabilities.

2. The state provides high school degree bound, college, and university students with disabilities with transition services and access to internships, mentorships and work opportunities.

3. The state facilitates and supports performance-based transition apprenticeships for non-degree bound students and young adults (such as Project SEARCH or PROMISE) that offer hands-on career exploration, worksite-based training and support and placement for people with disabilities coming from school to work.

4. High quality (with integrated competitive employment as a goal) resources are readily available to transition-age students and individuals waiting for services and their families to encourage them to choose employment over benefits alone options.

5. If schools have a graduation requirement of community service hours for students, supports are offered and provided to students with disabilities so that they have equal access to integrated community service opportunities.

6. Young people with disabilities (PwDs) are made aware that employment is the first option and made aware of possibilities that would allow them to avoid long-term dependence on Social Security programs (SSI/SSDI), while also having access to the necessary publicly funded systems and supports that enable them to have full and rich adult lives characterized by successful employment.

7. State agencies such as Department of Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation blend and braid funding with formal agreements for performance based programs such as Project SEARCH, or PROMISE as a method of achieving Employment First objectives.

8. The state is confident that it has partnerships and relationships in place to meet the employment needs of all young PwDs transitioning from school to work in any given

a86e1f5446f4b2ed85257b82006ea24b?OpenDocument&Highlight=0,Syndrome and through KY ACEDD see www.downsyndromediagnosis.org
year. (For assistance in determining the number of students with PwDs in your state who are transitioning from school to work, go to http://www.respectabilityusa.org)

C. STATE COMMITMENT TO ACCOMMODATIONS, ACCESSIBILITY, AND TRAINING

Successful employees may have been born with a disability or have acquired disabilities through age, accident, or disease. With reasonable accommodations many can enter and/or remain highly productive in the workforce. Is your state doing what is needed to keep workers with newly acquired or increasing disabilities in the workforce?

1. The state provides assistive and accessible technology training and support to those who need it to get and maintain competitive integrated employment. This program has strong customer service so that PwDs can be employed quickly and appropriately.

2. The state supports the efficient purchase or rental of assistive technologies, services and/or training to ensure competitive integrated employment for PwDs.

3. The state participates in an assistive technology recycling program. (i.e. http://www2.ed.gov/programs/atsg/at-reuse.html)

4. The state creates a favorable business environment for the development of innovative assistive technologies to help PwDs succeed in competitive integrated employment.

5. All of the state’s American Job Centers are universally accessible: they do not present any physical or virtual barriers for PwDs.


7. Each of these Centers has staff that has been fully trained to work with clients with disabilities so that they can be served in these centers, and not sent to a separate office or operation.

8. The state Vocational Rehabilitation program is fully matched so that wait lists are reduced or the order of selection does not exist.

9. State vocational rehabilitation quickly and appropriately matches the consumer with a rehabilitation counselor working on their job needs and placement.

10. State vocational rehabilitation offers technical assistance to employers so that they may retain workers with disabilities and for workers acquiring new disabilities to enable them to remain in the workforce.
11. The State provides information for medical and healthcare providers to become knowledgeable about the importance of encouraging patients with the onset of disability to stay or return to the workforce as a priority when appropriate.

12. Statewide hiring freezes do not include vocational rehabilitation counselors due to the federal grant that funds a portion of their salary. They are hired if they are needed.

13. In partnership with the Social Security Administration, the state created a Ticket to Work Employment Network model to connect its service systems, improve return-to-work and transition programs, and receives payments from SSA for successful employment outcomes.

14. All Individuals who are eligible for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers are automatically eligible for employment support under Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

D. SELF-EMPLOYMENT, SMALL BUSINESS OWNERSHIP, AND ENTREPRENUERSHIP

1. The state ensures that Small Business Centers are accessible and staff are trained to include and service small business owners and self-employed PwDs.

2. The state encourages micro-lending and other lending to PwD owned small businesses and start-ups.

3. The state offers readily available and free services and tools for PwDs who are entrepreneurs or self-employed.

V. BEING A MODEL EMPLOYER BY INCREASING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WORKING IN STATE GOVERNMENT

In many states the public sector is the largest employer. However, no matter its size, state government has an important role to play as a successful leader as an inclusive employer and through the state’s contracted employers. This serves to address both the practical concern of employing more PwDs and the perception problem, by demonstrating best practices and value added to the employer by fostering an inclusive work environment.

According to the NGA Better Bottom Line report, being a model employer by increasing the number of people with disabilities working in state government is vital. “Governors have a wide range of options for increasing the number of people with disabilities they employ, such as creating a fast-track hiring process for people with disabilities, focusing on retention of these employees, and setting hiring goals. A key action governors can take is to set a state goal for hiring people with disabilities through an executive order and hold agencies accountable for achieving that goal.”

A. STATE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
1. There is a Governor’s initiative and identified statewide hiring goal in place for PwDs. (i.e. [http://www.governor.wa.gov/office/execorders/documents/13-02.pdf](http://www.governor.wa.gov/office/execorders/documents/13-02.pdf) and [http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm](http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm))

2. There are people who self-identify as PwDs, or who have visible disabilities, in senior leadership roles in the Administration.

3. Inclusion of employees with disabilities is a part of the human resources evaluation of managers in state government.

4. The Administration/state uses the contracting system to promote the hiring, retention and promotion of PwDs by state contractors. This includes having a state version of the Federal Section 503 (see [http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm](http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm)) which requires eligible Federal government contractors to have at least 7% of their employees in all job categories be PwDs.

5. The State encourages entrepreneurism by revising the state’s disadvantaged business certification program to include businesses owned by PwDs as certified businesses eligible for a state contracting preference.

6. There is a fast track or selective placement hiring system for PwDs within state government so there is a preference hiring system for PwDs.

B. PERFORMANCE GOALS AND METRICS

1. The state has specific measurable annual performance goals for inclusive employment, similar to Executive Order 13548, which requires federal agencies to have performance targets and numerical goals for employment of individuals with disabilities and sub-goals for employment of individuals with targeted disabilities including veterans with disabilities. (Learn more: [www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/executive-order-increasing-federal-employment-individuals-with-disabilities](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/executive-order-increasing-federal-employment-individuals-with-disabilities)) There are also requirements under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act that require eligible Federal contractors to have at least 7% of their workforces in all job categories be PwDs. (Learn more: [www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm](http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm))

2. An official team is responsible for measuring performance metrics against annual benchmarks, has the budget to do so, and reports their results directly to the Governor, key stakeholders, and the public.

3. The state uses an anonymous employee engagement survey to determine if employees with disabilities feel discriminated against, are self-identifying, and are getting the accommodations that they need to succeed in their jobs.

C. ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION
1. The state provides early tailored supports for Administration/State employees experiencing the onset of worsening or challenging conditions (diseases, impairments, disabilities) to enable them to continue in the workforce.

2. The state’s internal website (Intranet) is fully accessible (complies with at least Section 508 Standards).

3. The state’s external website is fully accessible, including plain language (complies with at least Section 508 Standards) and the state has adopted similar accessibility standards.

4. The state has an accessible document explaining accommodation procedures for applicants, employees and supervisors.

5. The state utilizes accessible electronic record keeping software, databases, communication, and professional development tools.

6. The state has a centralized fund or other resources for accommodations and assistive technology for its employees with disabilities.

7. The state has a process for employees to confidentially self-identify as having a disability.

8. The state has an accessible emergency policy or procedure in place, inclusive of persons with disabilities along with the necessary tools to implement said policy.

9. The state has and disseminates Self-Identification of Disability Forms.

10. The State reviews proposed terminations to ensure reasonable accommodations were properly considered.

D. MARKETING OF EMPLOYMENT, EFFORTS, AND SERVICES

1. There is a statewide written statement of diversity and inclusion, which directly refers to disability that is not an anti-discrimination policy.

2. The state’s disability policy, including reasonable accommodation policy, is posted on the state website and is easy for employees and the public to find.

3. The state has an officially recognized disability employee resource group (ERG) or affinity group.

4. The state distributes diversity awareness information, which includes disability, as part of new hire training.
5. The state annually distributes a memorandum to human resource directors providing guidance on effective use of the Self-Identification of Disability Forms during the on-boarding process.

6. The State has developed and implemented an external communication and marketing plans, including social media, career fairs, and job announcements that the state is encouraging qualified applicants with disabilities to apply.

Additional Feedback
We are interested in your comments to better understand your state and the obstacles and barriers to advancing towards a more inclusive workforce.

Appendix A
WIOA Definition of “Competitive Integrated Employment”: (pages 571-573 of Statute)

“(5) COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT.—The term ‘competitive integrated employment’ means work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment)—

(A) for which an individual—

(i) is compensated at a rate that—

(I)(aa) shall be not less than the higher of the rate specified in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) or the rate specified in the applicable State or local minimum wage law; and

(bb) is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities, and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills; or

(II) in the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities, and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills; or

(ii) is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees;

(B) that is at a location where the employee interacts with other persons who are not
individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with other persons; and
``(C) that, as appropriate, presents opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.''

WIOA - “training and services for employers” section(https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/803/text)

SEC. 418. TRAINING AND SERVICES FOR EMPLOYERS.
Section 109 (29 U.S.C. 728a) is amended to read as follows:
``SEC. 109. TRAINING AND SERVICES FOR EMPLOYERS.
``A State may expend payments received under section 111 to educate and provide services to employers who have hired or are interested in hiring individuals with disabilities under programs carried out under this title, including--
``(1) providing training and technical assistance to employers regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities, including disability awareness, and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and other employment-related laws;
``(2) working with employers to--
``(A) provide opportunities for work-based learning experiences (including internships, short-term employment, apprenticeships, and fellowships), and opportunities for pre-employment transition services;
``(B) recruit qualified applicants who are individuals with disabilities;
``(C) train employees who are individuals with disabilities; and
``(D) promote awareness of disability-related obstacles to continued employment;
``(3) providing consultation, technical assistance, and support to employers on workplace accommodations, assistive technology, and facilities and workplace access through collaboration with community partners and employers, across States and nationally, to enable the employers to recruit, job match, hire, and retain qualified individuals with disabilities who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services under this title, or who are applicants for such services; and
``(4) assisting employers with utilizing available financial support for hiring or accommodating individuals with disabilities.'"
Appendix B

While the ADA and IDEA are necessary and vital laws, they are not sufficient to provide the opportunity outcomes needed by Americans with disabilities. As women and minorities have been able to make significant strides in joining the workforce, the gap in workforce participation between those with and without disabilities, as seen in the adjoining chart, has increased dramatically, as shown below. The increase in workforce participation in 1981 was 45.2%. In 2013 it had only risen to 57.1% -- only a roughly 12% increase in 32 years. Source for chart is the Disabilities Compendium.