

A Guide to Increasing the Successful Recruitment and Hiring of People with Disabilities:

Tools and Resources for Directors, Managers, and Staff

**February
2009**

**Virginia Board for People with
Disabilities**

**Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation Research & Training Center on
Workplace Supports and Job Retention
Richmond, Virginia**

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Resource Guide Introduction

Many people do not think of disability as a “diverse group” but disability is no stranger to any culture, to any race, to any religion and is spoken about in every language. With disability crossing all known barriers it is crucial that state government, employers, organizations, corporations, universities and small businesses begin to increase their standards of diversity to include people with disabilities.

It is our hope that this guide will help you and your organization understand the benefits of recruiting, employing, and retaining individuals with disabilities, and that it will help you find the answers to opening your doors to candidates with disabilities. It is a business decision that we know you will be pleased you made.

This guide was developed as a result of a grant funded by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. The project entitled “Promoting Partnerships and Employment for Virginians with Disabilities” was developed and implemented as an initiative promoting public - private partnerships to increase employment in state government agencies for people with disabilities. This state initiative provided training and resources to state approved staffing agencies, state hiring managers, community rehabilitation programs, and staff with the state rehabilitation agencies on the benefits of recruiting and hiring people with disabilities. The program provided training opportunities as well as a system of recruitment of jobseekers with disabilities for the state approved staffing vendors.

In order to best meet the needs of your organization we have divided this guide into various sections. The first is a call to action from our Governor Tim Kaine who was instrumental to this project by authorizing Executive Directive #8. This directive calls state agencies to examine their employment policies and procedures and remove practices that could be barriers to recruiting and hiring qualified applicants with disabilities. The next section outlines strategies that organization executives, human resource staff and front line managers can use to hire, recruit, and retain jobseekers with disabilities. Following this section, we have included a Disability Friendly Business Self Assessment Tool that your organization can use to gauge your accessibility to jobseekers and customers with disabilities. We have also included multiple case studies of employees across the Commonwealth of Virginia who have been successful in their careers as state employees. There is an entire section devoted to business fact sheets which covers a myriad of topics related to disability issues and employment. Finally, we have included Local, State, and National Resources to assist you with further education on this critical topic.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about how you can make your organization more diverse. We hope you enjoy the materials that we have put together in this guide.

A Call to Action

Tim Kaine became the 70th Governor of Virginia on January 14, 2006. During Governor Kaine's tenure, Virginia has been recognized as the most business-friendly state in America, the top-performing state government in America and the state where "a child is most likely to have a successful life".

Under Governor Kaine's leadership, Virginia boasts one of the highest median incomes and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation. Governor Kaine has been an advocate for individuals with disabilities for many years and has worked closely with Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center to support their research and training efforts. Governor Kaine is the first governor of Virginia to hire a staff member to serve as a Special Advisor on Disability Issues. VCU and the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities applaud the efforts of Governor Kaine to support Virginians with disabilities in becoming a part of the community.

A Message from Governor Kaine

The Promoting Partnerships and Employment for Virginians with Disabilities initiative is designed to assist human resource personnel better understand the unique skills and abilities that people with disabilities can bring to Virginia's work force.

In October 2007, as a part of this initiative, I signed Executive Directive 8, (see page 4) which ordered all state agencies and institutions of higher learning to examine employment policies and procedures and remove practices that could be barriers to recruiting and hiring qualified individuals with disabilities.

To reinforce the importance of the directive, my chief of staff encouraged our hiring personnel to attend trainings sponsored by DHRM and VCU-RRTC to prepare you to meet the requirements of the directive.

My directive also requires all state agencies and schools of higher learning to report to the secretary of administration annually on their implementation progress. The findings of the first report are currently being analyzed by our Department of Human Resource Management.

The findings will be used to design ongoing training, to assist our state agencies, colleges and universities to develop better practices for recruiting, hiring and accommodating qualified employees with disabilities.

I'm confident that the directive will encourage others with disabilities to apply for positions in state government. And the training programs like this will help ensure we don't overlook those talented individuals who want to serve the Commonwealth.

*Governor, Tim Kaine
Governor Commonwealth of Virginia*

Executive Directive 8 (2007)

DIRECTING ALL STATE AGENCIES TO ACTIVELY RECRUIT QUALIFIED APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Commonwealth of Virginia enjoys a statewide unemployment rate below four percent and it would be advantageous for state agencies to tap into an underused but qualified labor market to fill open positions.

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor under Article V, Section 1 of the Constitution of Virginia and Sections 2.2-103 and 2.2-104 of the Code of Virginia, I hereby direct all executive branch agencies, including institutions of higher education, boards, and commissions to expand existing efforts for recruiting, accommodating, retaining and advancing people with disabilities for positions available in state government.

Agency hiring managers are encouraged to participate in training offered by the Department of Human Resource Management. These trainings will be coordinated with Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center project, "Promoting Partnerships and Employment for Virginians with Disabilities," which is funded through the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities and the state rehabilitation agencies, Department of Rehabilitative Services and Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Trainings will cover topics including Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Code sections 51.5 – 41 and 51.5 – 42 of the Virginians with Disabilities Act, interviewing techniques, accommodations and assistive technology, and other resources available to assist in the employment of people with disabilities.

All executive branch agencies, boards, commissions, and institutions shall examine existing practices relating to employment of people with disabilities which shall include a review of their recruitment efforts, interviewing criteria, testing procedures and resources to assist in accommodating workers with disabilities.

All executive branch agencies shall report to the Secretary of Administration by July 1 of each year regarding their efforts pursuant to this executive directive, including the efforts of any boards and commissions for which the agency is responsible. The report shall be in a format to be specified by the Secretary of Administration. The Secretary of Administration shall make this format available no later than December 31, 2007. Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 23rd day of October, 2007.

Timothy M. Kaine, Governor

Hiring and Retention of America's Best: Steps for Success

Executives -- What Employers and Organizational Heads Can Do!!!

Human Resource Managers and Staff -- What Human Resource Managers and Staff Can Do!!!

First Line Supervisors -- What First Line Supervisors Can Do!!!

Executives

What Employers and Organizational Heads Can Do!!!!

- 1. Set high diversity standards that include people with disabilities for the entire organization and lead by example.**

Let all employees know that the Executives support hiring, retaining, and recruiting people with disabilities and believe they bring value to the organization.

- 2. Don't be afraid to hire qualified people with disabilities for key management positions.**

The entire organization will notice the action taken by the leaders and it will reinforce others in the organization to do the same.

- 3. Take an active role in sharing your experiences of hiring workers with disabilities with other corporate leaders and executives.**

Letting the business world know you practice what you preach is powerful and will change your visibility with individuals with disabilities making decisions regarding where to spend their resources.

- 4. Don't make it difficult for HR recruiters and managers to recruit and hire people with disabilities.**

Supporting the recruiting and hiring of these individuals will require many resources which include a budget line item. Make sure there is a specific budget targeted toward recruiting workers with disabilities.

- 5. Provide incentives for recruiters, managers, and supervisors who are actively recruiting and hiring applicants with disabilities.**

The extra rewards for going out and pursuing this organizational objective will provide additional motivation to continue this style of recruiting and hiring.

- 6. Ask for progress reports on the success of recruiting and hiring people with disabilities.**

People will know you are concerned and you will demonstrate that this is important to you as the leader of the organization.

- 7. Create a disability friendly environment to attract people with disabilities as workers and customers of your organization.**

Showcase your business and share its intent to attract all people including people with disabilities. It will generate more profit as well as a more diverse work environment.

- 8. Offer an incentive package and mentorship program for people with disabilities who come to work for your company.**

Establish yourself as an organization that would really want people with disabilities to work and frequent your business.

9. Review advertising and marketing budgets to ensure the organization is reaching out to this new market of customers.

Putting resources in this area will get more people with disabilities into your organization as well as help attract more as potential workers in this tight labor market.

10. Centralize your accommodation program and budget.

Having one central budget will encourage managers and supervisors to be more flexible in their hiring practices if accommodations are needed.

Human Resource Managers and Staff

What Employers, Human Resource Managers and Staff Can Do!!!!

1. Implement executives' commitment to recruit and hire people with disabilities.

If your organization is fortunate to have an executive who sees the benefits of recruiting and hiring people with disabilities then you (HR) will have an easier time in getting recruiters, managers, and supervisors to rally around this commitment. It is important to have the commitment in writing to share with all staff in the organization.

2. Create a recruitment and hiring plan which will reflect the values and commitment from organizational leaders regarding the hiring of people with disabilities.

If there isn't an organizational commitment, then advocate for one!! Representatives from organizations who have a commitment from Executives state it is easier to develop a plan for recruiting these individuals. The organization's value to recruit and hire people with disabilities can be disseminated to everyone. If there isn't a plan then take the responsibility to advocate for a plan and a commitment to recruit individuals from this non-traditional labor source.

3. Hire persons with disabilities within your Human Resource Department.

Hearing about the benefits of recruiting and hiring people with disabilities will be more believable if you (HR) have actually hired people with disabilities. We should always practice what we preach.

4. Recommend a budget line item specifically for recruitment of people with disabilities.

Remember how difficult it is to implement a new directive or corporate commitment if there aren't any funds to assist the staff. This will allow staff and workers to know the company is serious about this effort.

5. Ensure that the entire HR Department has the same strong values of recruiting and hiring people with disabilities.

If the goal is to become more aggressive in the recruiting and hiring of people with disabilities it is important that staff feels comfortable in this new arena. Establish a mechanism for staff to share their thoughts and discuss any bias they may feel toward this new group of potential recruits. It will help the entire HR department if staff learns to express their feelings about people with disabilities.

6. Provide ongoing staff training relating to recruiting and hiring people with disabilities.

Since this may be a new area for many recruiters, managers, and supervisors it will be important for them to receive information about disabilities and technology which may be needed to accommodate someone on the job as well as on the interview. Let the staff know how important it is to the organization that they are well versed and understand issues facing people with disabilities in the workplace. This will help staff to understand the demands placed upon them.

7. Recommend and advocate for a mentoring program that includes people with disabilities.

Many organizations offer mentoring programs and opportunities for new workers especially individuals considered to be of minority status (women, African Americans). If people with disabilities are not included in the existing programs, they should be added. If the organization doesn't have a mentoring program, it would be a real advantage to develop one – many people with disabilities have been out of the work environment for a long time or have very little work experience and the mentoring program will increase the odds of having a successful job match.

8. Establish a help desk or resource list for managers who have questions about the interviewing and hiring of people with disabilities.

Recruiters and managers may be willing to be more aggressive in recruiting and hiring people with disabilities but they are afraid and just don't know what to say or how to ask the right questions. In addition there might be concerns of productivity and willingness of the organization to accommodate. Supporting your staff, managers, and supervisors with a help desk in addition to on-going training opportunities will pay off in the long run.

9. Get involved with community organizations who represent and work with people with disabilities.

If you are going to recruit from nontraditional labor sources you need to get established with new resources and partners in the community. Serve on local boards serving people with disabilities and become involved with special education and transition programs at local schools and establish working at local schools. Develop a working relationship with your local vocational rehabilitation office, as well as conduct an open house event at your organization for people with disabilities in the community. This will assist in knowing more potential workers but also let people with disabilities know about your business and your interest in having them as customers.

10. Become more assertive and demand more of supervisors in hiring people with disabilities to the organization.

Sometimes you have to make it clear that recruiting and hiring people with disabilities is expected and it is a high priority for the organization. HR has often stressed that the hiring decision is up to the first line managers therefore excusing itself from responsibility. It might mean that HR representatives will have to take a firm approach in ensuring that people with disabilities are being aggressively recruited.

11. Develop an incentive program for recruiters and front line supervisors to assist their efforts in recruiting and hiring of people with disabilities.

With many demands on the HR staff, as well as the fears and stereotypes of people with disabilities it may be a good idea to create an incentive system to reinforce your staff in the recruiting and hiring of people with disabilities.

12. Ensure that the organization is ready to accommodate new workers with disabilities.

It is great that there is a commitment to recruit and hire people with disabilities but if the organization isn't prepared then everyone is going to lose. Remember to examine your policies and make sure you are ready to accommodate people with disabilities.

First Line Supervisors

What First Line Supervisors Can Do!!!!

1. Learn about the business benefits people with disabilities bring to a work environment.

Often organizations hire people with disabilities and say it is the right thing to do, however more and more organizations are realizing that hiring people with disabilities is good economic sense. Lower turnover and higher office productivity are some of the benefits to supervisors.

2. Attend training and educational seminars on interviewing and hiring people with disabilities.

People with disabilities have been portrayed in many ways and everyone has been guilty of perpetuating negative images and stereotypes of people with disabilities. Many business representatives say they are uncomfortable around people with disabilities especially during an employment interview. Disability awareness training opportunities are available for managers which will discuss how and what to say in an interview. One good tip if you haven't been able to attend training is to relax and talk to the individuals just like any other potential employment candidate.

3. Visit or talk with other organizations and staff who have hired people with disabilities.

If supervisors are reluctant to interview or hire people with disabilities because they are concerned about issues such as productivity, lost time from work, co-workers concerns or cost it is a great idea to discuss those concerns with co-workers and HR that have experience in hiring and supervising people with disabilities.

4. Ask for assistance from the human resource staff regarding questions about hiring people with disabilities.

Human resource staff may be seen as the controllers or enforcers of rules, regulations and making life complicated for supervisors but they can be a real resource in helping you control your turnover, resolve absenteeism, and help with productivity. Working together HR and first line supervisors can focus on recruiting wonderful candidates with disabilities for the job opening in your unit.

5. Determine how existing workers in your unit feel about working with someone with a disability.

Anytime a new employee is hired there are always questions about who it is and will they fit in. Based on old stereotypes about people with disabilities supervisors feel that they will not fit in because they are different. However, individuals without disabilities often don't fit in because of personality or other unique characteristics. Managers shouldn't assume that just because the potential candidate has a disability he will not become a valuable part of the work unit. Many businesses report that once they hire a person with a disability their work group becomes tighter and more productive.

6. Be receptive to accommodations for people with disabilities in the workplace and how it may raise productivity for your entire unit.

Technology has opened the door for many people with disabilities to be just as productive if not more so than individuals without disabilities. Often we only look at someone and assume they can't do certain functions without asking or understanding that an accommodation makes it possible for an individual to do the job and maybe even better than someone else. Most accommodations are very reasonable and inexpensive.

7. Be willing to take a chance/risk with hiring someone with a disability.

A supervisor is responsible to get the work done and should be concerned about the bottom line. A person with a disability is qualified for the job with or without accommodations, but there are still some reservation about the hiring due to the disability there is no better way to know the value and benefits of a person with a disability working in your group than making a decision to hire.

8. Open your work unit for job shadowing opportunities for students as well as others with disabilities.

With the tight labor market and businesses need for good employees, managers should consider opening their organization to local schools and offer job shadowing opportunities. This can be for students with and without disabilities. Job shadowing will give the manager and co-workers an opportunity to experience a person with a disability at the workplace.

9. Take advantage of special incentives such as tax credits, on the job training and job coaching from organizations representing people with disabilities.

There are many tax incentives as well as on the job training funds to assist a business who is concerned about the cost to train someone. There are various community organizations that are more than willing to help answer the questions and provide technical assistance on the

programs designed to help businesses. These resources are great for supervisors who don't have any experience in working with people with disabilities in the workplace.

10. Keep an open mind, ask questions, seek assistance, attend training and look for opportunities.

The best advice for supervisors who are concerned about the labor shortage and how they will keep their operation productive should look for people with disabilities. If managers wish to explore this labor source it is important that they keep an open mind and ask lots of questions.

Disability Friendly Business Self Assessment Tool

This simple to use checklist was designed to support organizations to effectively reach out to job applicants with disabilities. Organizations can evaluate their accessibility, customer-friendliness and employment friendliness with the use of this tool.

Disability Friendly Business Checklist

Please consider the following questions when evaluating your business for Disability Friendliness*.

I. Considerations for Evaluating Accessibility

- Is the entrance to the business accessible to persons with mobility limitations? Is the entry to the building on an even hard surface and without steps?
- If the accessible entrance is not immediately apparent, are there directional signs?
- Are there handicapped parking signs/spaces with necessary access space for vans with lifts?
- Does the business provide accessible restrooms, phones, water fountains?

Depending on the business and its services to the public, other considerations could also include:

- Posting a notice on the front door that assistance will be provided for customers with disabilities
- Installing sensors or automatic door openers
- Installing a lift or elevator
- Having Braille on elevator panels and signs for public restrooms
- Having Braille or large print available on menus
- Having a TTY, volume controls on a public telephone or any other assistive technology device
- Having movable seating and/or accessible tables that accommodate wheelchairs
- Having wide aisles or appropriately spaced displays of merchandise for wheelchairs to maneuver through
- Making the company's website user-friendly to visitors with disabilities (i.e. including "text-only" versions for persons with visual impairments, or supplying text for audio clips for persons who are deaf/hard of hearing)

II. Considerations for Evaluating Customer-Friendliness

- Is staff alert and helpful to customers who have visible disabilities?
- Does someone on staff know sign language?
- Has the business offered disability awareness training to staff ?
- If removal of a barrier is not "readily achievable," are the goods, services, etc. made available through alternative methods?

III. Considerations for Evaluating Employment-Friendliness

- Are persons with disabilities included in their job applicant pool?
- When interviewing persons with disabilities, is the focus on the candidate's skills and abilities, not the disability?
- Has an effort been made to educate management or human resources personnel on ADA laws and compliance?

- Are policies, practices and procedures flexible enough that, if necessary, modifications can be made to ensure that the skills and abilities of applicants with disabilities are equally represented?

* This checklist has been reprinted with permission from the Virginia Business Leadership Network. Learn more about the VABLN at www.vabln.org.

Successful Case Studies

Sasha -- Frontier Culture Museum, Support Services Coordinator

Ed -- State of Virginia, Governor's Special Advisor for Disability Issues and Workforce

Renee -- Commonwealth of Virginia, Data Entry Operator

Jason -- VCU Health System, Patient Transporter, Department of Radiology

Sandy -- University of Virginia, Hospital Environmental Services

Eric -- Data Specialist, Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy (VOPA)

Sasha

Support Services Coordinator, Frontier Culture Museum

Sasha is a 32 year old woman with quadriplegia as a result of an accident. Because of the accident, she is mobile only with the use of a motorized wheelchair. She is the Support Service Coordinator at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, Virginia and works 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. She has been employed there for approximately four and one half years and has been promoted in employment since she first started in 2003.

Currently, Sasha's employment responsibilities include booking field trip reservations for area schools and selling the museum's educational programs. Her day to day job activities include a great deal of multi-tasking. These responsibilities consist of using the museum's computer program, Quantics, using Microsoft Access, utilizing basic office skills and answering the phone.

Sasha states that she receives a great deal of support from many avenues of assistance. Aside from support from her managers and co-workers, she derives most support from her husband. She says that her family is her top priority, especially now that she is expecting her first child in approximately six to seven weeks. She also continues to receive support from her Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) Counselor, for support with her physical and occupational concerns.

Sasha has minimal challenges or barriers with her employment. When she first started working for the museum, they installed automatic doors as well as a wheelchair ramp for access into her building. Many times, the museum has allowed her to work from home if she is unable to get to work due to problems with her wheelchair accessible vehicle.

Sasha had limited employment history prior to being injured. She had only worked part-time in retail department stores. After Sasha's accident in 1998, she went to Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia as well as Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center. Sasha came to be employed at the Frontier Culture Museum after her DRS counselor worked with the museum staff to create an internship for Sasha. The internship lasted approximately two months before she was hired as a Receptionist. She quickly was advanced to the Visitor Center Supervisor, and then was further promoted to her current status of Support Service Coordinator. She is a salaried employee with full benefits and says that she loves to work with the public and really enjoys what she is doing.

Ed

Governor's Special Advisor for Disability Issues and Workforce State of Virginia

Ed is 63 years old and has Cerebral Palsy. He currently works for the State of Virginia as the Governor's Special Advisor for Disability Issues and Workforce. He works full time in a salaried, benefited position and has been on the job for 19 months. Ed works on workforce issues and with the Secretary of Health and Human Services on all kinds of issues such as Olmstead, and Money Follows the Person Project. His charge is to make sure the state lives up to their responsibility with Olmstead and working and hiring people with disabilities.

Ed was previously employed by VCU-RRTC (Research Rehabilitation Training Center) for 14 years as a Training Associate. This was a full time position and he provided education and support for three audiences. He assisted people with disabilities in understanding their employment rights and helped individuals to navigate the DRS/ESO systems as well as the Social Security Administration system. Ed assisted the business

community in overcoming their fears of hiring individuals with disabilities and helped them with ideas of how they can accommodate individuals on the workplace. His third audience was Vocational Rehabilitation providers, helping them learn effective ways to work together as a team focused on the same goal and provide consumer directed services. Ed transitioned to his next job by working part time with RRTC and part time as the Governor's Special Advisor. He has also worked as a political activist during Governor Kaine's administration as Richmond Mayor. Ed was able to develop a good relationship with Mayor Kaine and address issues related to disability equality.

Ed ambulates with a power wheel chair and his speech is difficult to understand initially. He has limited upper extremity mobility due to the Cerebral Palsy. Ed receives supports and accommodations on his current job. He has a personal work support person at least 5 hours of the day. His assistant is paid for by the state, but Ed is her supervisor. Ed uses special software on his computer to slow the keyboard keys to "CP Speed" as he explains. He uses telephone headphones that his assistant can listen at the same time to help with communication. The office door handles in his building were changed to accommodate his needs as well.

Ed feels he does not experience many challenges in working for the state and if he does he is not bashful about letting his needs be known. He feels the state is very accommodating in providing the supports he needs to do his job. When Ed speaks with HR managers he uses the old saying "Don't judge a book by its cover." "When I speak, folks listen because you have to really listen to understand me" he explains. His job has impacted his life by allowing him the opportunity to work directly with people who make state policy. He educates and helps them see the benefits of certain policies and how it relates to people with disabilities.

Renee

Data Entry Operator Commonwealth of Virginia Data Entry

Renee, age 55, has overcome significant obstacles to achieve success in her work. She was born with a deformity in her right leg that makes it shorter than her left leg. Her palate is short which causes a speech impediment, and she was diagnosed with hearing loss in both ears at age 4. The difference in the length of her legs has affected her gait and posture, which has resulted in the onset of three different types of arthritis. Her vocational goals have centered on clerical and fiscal positions, the longest term of employment being with the Commonwealth of Virginia, which she enjoyed and would like to obtain again. Renee is happily married, a newlywed at age 53, and draws much support from her husband, her friends and her church.

The greatest challenges at work have come from inaccurate impressions associated with her limp and communication issues related to her hearing loss. She explains her limp and speech combined to give an impression of insecurity, which was exacerbated by her hearing loss. It interfered with normal, rapid conversation and resulted in misunderstandings with coworkers and supervisors. Potential employers tended to focus on her disabilities rather than her abilities. Effective workplace communication was a constant effort, people often hung up on her, and telephone messages she left for others were frequently not understood. She struggled with low self-esteem, confidence, and the need to repeat herself often. Working in a team environment was unnecessarily frustrating and counter-productive, and terminations punctuated her attempts to be financially independent. Even succeeding in academic environments was difficult when, as the instructor explained, they were not going to slow the pace of the class because of her hearing. With time, improved self-advocacy skills, experience and support, however, she learned that she needed to face the person with whom she was communicating, that oral conversations on the telephone must be kept to a minimum, and that with patience she can maintain a positive attitude and engage in productive workplace communications.

Renee's work history includes 18 years with the Commonwealth of Virginia, and 10 years as a Data Entry Operator. In an effort to enter a more lucrative field, Ms. Hawkins studied for a position as a Health Reference Coding Technician but was unable to obtain employment. She participated in a supported employment program at the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) and worked with a job coach, but found that while employers routinely wanted to hire candidates with experience none were willing to provide that experience. She eventually went back to data entry.

The experience she had with Caliper in obtaining her current long-term assignment with the Commonwealth has been "wonderful". Renee interviewed, followed up as required, and was assigned a position as a Data Entry Operator in an Auditing Department. The position initially involved telephone responsibilities, but an accommodation was made that allowed Renee to focus instead on data entry, a modification that has been successful and would now, according to her supervisor, be replicated with any other employees in that position. The initial contract lasted for 6 months and was recently renewed for another year. Renee's goal is to earn the distinction required to obtain permanent, direct employment with the Commonwealth and access to associated benefits. She knows she is in a different place in her life now, both in her work life and her private life, and she thanks God for the assistance in getting there.

Renee's supervisor confirms that Ms. Hawkins has done a great job, that she is conscientious, responsible, proactive regarding scheduling issues, and shows initiative in asking for work or volunteering to help others when she is caught up, which happens more frequently now that Renee is in the position. The obstacles in communication required a lengthier training period, but the long-term benefits of having a dedicated and productive employee more than makes up for that initial investment. Her supervisor indicated that the attitude is critical. Having a good attitude makes dealing with any other issues possible, and Renee has demonstrated that in spite of the obstacles she overcomes on a daily basis, she has a winning attitude.

Jason

VCU Health System, Patient Transporter, Department of Radiology

Jason was 23 years old and had learning disabilities. He had completed a Clerical certificate program at J. Sargeant Reynolds following training in Materials Management at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center and graduation from Manchester High School. He typed 41 wpm, knew Windows and MS Office applications, and had an excellent driving record. He was referred to The Choice Group for assistance, indicating that he felt lost and needed help to identify and obtain a career position. He expressed the desire to obtain a full-time position, but was willing to accept a part-time position that had the potential of becoming full-time. He was willing to work in the west end of Richmond or in the downtown area. His stated compensation goal was \$10 per hour and he agreed to a vocational goal of: 1) business environment, 2) mail room, or 3) Delivery. As services continued, Jason's interest in helping people in a medical environment would have an impact on his job search. Jason's supports included his mother, his grandmother, people at church and friends. His learning disabilities presented a barrier to employment.

Services started with situational assessments to determine the client's strengths in clerical responsibilities, and he performed well in these. He explored appropriate and relevant career cluster information with his Vocational Counselor to identify additional potential opportunities.

Jason's previous employment included Parts Puller/Cashier at Advance Auto Parts in Midlothian, Tax Screener at the Virginia Department of Taxation, and Office Aide at the Virginia Department of Occupation and Regulation. He had completed an unpaid work experience and seasonal position at the Virginia Department of

Taxation, but had not been successful in obtaining permanent employment. His volunteer work for two years as an Emergency Medical Technician, however, along with his communication skills, excellent customer service skills, and superb organizational and planning skills, made him an ideal candidate for a support position in a hospital setting.

A position as Patient Transporter in the Radiology Department at MCV was identified and Jason's Vocational Counselor assisted him in applying for it and preparing for the interview. He was offered the position, which was part-time with a flexible schedule and \$9.32 per hour. It was determined that many employees start in this manner and are moved up to full-time permanent if they excel. He accepted it and worked with the Vocational Counselor off-site and on-site to learn the intricate labyrinth of corridors he would need to know in order to transport patients. The employer would not allow on-site support during work hours with real patients. With assistance and support he learned the hospital environment and how to deal with difficult patients. The excellence of his work was recognized and he was offered a full-time permanent position with state benefits. He has been there for almost two years, is very happy with his career path, and continues to receive support in Long Term Follow Along.

Sandy

Environmental Services University of Virginia Hospital

Sandy is a 61 year old woman who sustained a traumatic brain injury approximately 14 years ago. She is a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) and received her Associates in Science from J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College. Sandy is very knowledgeable and skilled in working with a variety of disabilities and diagnoses. She has excellent interpersonal skills, customer service skills and very empathetic. In addition to her passion for working with individuals, Sandy has a love for art and turned a hobby into a small business with a partner producing leather art pieces.

Sandy has many natural supports in her life including family, friends, the Brain Injury support network, her manager and many co-workers. Some of the challenges she faces on a daily basis are short term memory loss, low self-esteem, fatigue, and medical conditions such as Rheumatoid Arthritis and cataracts.

Sandy was referred to Career Support Services to assist her in finding a job. Some of the jobs she held in the past included a COTA Home Health and a COTA in Rehab facilities. Career Support Services assisted Sandy in obtaining a job at the Mill House working as a Unit Coordinator. When the Mill House began down sizing due to budget cuts, Sandy lost her job and returned to Career Supports to assist her in finding another job. Her job coach at Career Supports assisted her in obtaining a position for Henrico County Parks and Recreation as an Inclusion Coach. This turned out to be a summer job and so together, Sandy and her job coach continued to look for employment opportunities. Sandy obtained a part time job at Ukrops Supermarket as a cashier. The job coach provided on the job training with Sandy and after several weeks determined it was not a good job match. The noises of the scanners and all of the people were too much for Sandy to handle. The stress and noise caused her to have headaches and dizziness on the job.

Finally, Sandy obtained a position at Virginia Commonwealth University Health Systems (VCUHS) working as a COTA in Rehab. Sandy needed some assistance from her job coach in completing the on-line application but was able to set up her interview independently. The job coach attended the interview with Sandy and explained Career Supports services to the hiring manager. The job coach also advocated for the necessary accommodations and strategies that Sandy would need to use in order for her employment to be successful. Sandy needed assistance in evaluating the expectations of the job and determining whether it was a good fit for her.

Sandy was hired in September 2001 as a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant in General Rehab at VCUHS. Her starting pay was approximately \$15.00 per hour. Currently, her wages are \$30 per hour. Her duties include: providing dressing program treatment, lead and assist with group treatment, and provide 1:1 therapy with patients. She is responsible for writing daily progress notes and completing weekly billing summary and charge reports. Sandy's accommodations include allowing a job coach on site to assist Sandy in her initial training; extra breaks if needed and a "cheat sheet" to track all information that she needs to refer to daily. The job coach developed a form to prompt her of the patients to see that day, the treatment to receive, patient precautions, patient room number, a place for notes, how much time she spent with that patient, and boxes to check off when she completes the file note and charges. She also is allowed a little extra time in the morning to complete a form that assists her in organizing her day. Since she has begun using this form, many of the other therapists have begun using the same format to help organize their work day.

Sandy loves her job and the support she receives from Career Supports. She states "My experience with Supported Employment and Job Coaches has been excellent. My current job coach developed a form, which enables me to perform my Occupational Therapy duties as well as completing the required paperwork for each patient. With both the specialized form and monthly check-ins I have been able to perform my job at VCUHS with excellent results. This October marks my six year anniversary. "

Sandy's employer has written the following comments. "I have been impressed by Sandy from the moment I met her – and impressed by the entire job coaching program from that first moment as well. Sandy approached the job interview like any other candidate. I was surprised to discover that she had a job coach but have been grateful to Stephanie for all the work she has done to make Sandy's work with us so successful. From the beginning, Stephanie has helped Sandy learn and integrate skills. She has worked with Sandy on the development of compensatory strategies, which Sandy, in turn, has employed well to help her do her job successfully. Stephanie also has provided Sandy with encouragement and support. Sandy sometimes doubts herself and can be self-deprecating. Stephanie consistently points out to Sandy what she does well and encourages her to be proud of the work she is doing. Stephanie and Sandy have a very positive and supportive relationship. Sandy is quite at ease talking through things with Stephanie. Stephanie is open and direct with Sandy. What a great relationship!! Sandy does a wonderful job with patients and is beloved by her co-workers. She is thorough, responsible, professional and studious. Things in health care work are constantly changing. Changes in routines and procedures are not a favorite of Sandy's. However, Stephanie has seen Sandy successfully through each one. The experience with Sandy and Stephanie has been wonderful for me – and for our staff and our patients – in every regard. I don't know if job coaching is always this successful, but based on my experience with Stephanie and Sandy, I am totally impressed."

Eric

Data Specialist, Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy (VOPA)

Eric is a Data Specialist at the Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy (VOPA). His employment there is the latest achievement in a life focused on overcoming obstacles. Eric is 28 years old and has cerebral palsy. He recognized early in his career that some employers make a decision based on appearances and never actually give him the opportunity to discuss, much less demonstrate, his abilities. He reports that he had no problem obtaining interviews based on his resume, training and education, but these in-person interviews rarely produced a job offer.

Three exceptions to this were his current and previous two positions, all business related, working with computers and accounting software, and providing customer service. Eric obtained his first position without assistance and completed accounts receivable, billing and receptionist back-up duties. He found, however, that he was subject to a different set of expectations than his fellow employees. Then, with the assistance of the Department of Rehabilitation, he obtained a position with an accounting firm, where his duties included receptionist activities, bookkeeping on QuickBooks to balance bank statements, data entry, correspondence to state tax offices, and various related duties.

Working again with the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Eric identified and applied for positions that would advance his career. He interviewed independently and advocated for himself regarding an Administrative Assistant position. While another candidate was chosen to fill that position, Eric was called back for a full time, temporary Data Entry position, and was chosen as the strongest candidate. The position later became a full time, permanent Data Specialist position and Eric was again chosen as the strongest candidate. His duties include entering information from intakes and screenings into the current database.

Eric cites his parents as his main support in these transitions, and identifies his appearance (use of a walker) as the single largest obstacle he needed to overcome. He now feels that he is in a place where he can stay, where his experiences can be used to help others, speak out and educate people about disability issues, and advocate for those who request assistance.

Sherry Confer, LCSW, is the Deputy Director of VOPA and is Eric's direct supervisor. She described VOPA's aggressive advocacy and the fact that they hold themselves to a higher standard. They make a vigorous effort to recruit qualified candidates with disabilities in order that VOPA may lead by example. She mentioned that Eric required no accommodations, but she has worked with the Department of Rehabilitative Services in the past to assess and provide appropriate accommodations. Ms. Confer indicates that Eric is very forthright about what he can do and where he can improve, has a good attitude, is solution focused and part of the team, and has developed a reputation for doing the task right the first time. He came to the position prepared to make a significant contribution to this unique, consumer-focused, legal environment and has proven that he requires little supervision, coming to her for direction as needed. She is pleased that Eric feels at home there and looks forward to his continued professional growth.

Hiring and Retention Business Fact Sheets

Tax Credits

Work Opportunity Tax Credit
Small Business Tax Credit
Architectural / Transportation Tax Deduction

Tips for Working with People with Disabilities

Tips for Communicating with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Workplace
Supporting Individuals with Autism in Integrated Community Jobs: Identifying Support
Needs to Facilitate Success
Competitive Employment Supports for Individuals with Severe Mental Illness
PAS Facts -- Providing Effective Workplace Personal Assistance Services
Realities of Hiring People with Disabilities⁷

Disability Related Tips and Tools

Using Disability Etiquette in Serving Customers with Unique Needs
Reasonable Accommodations and the Americans with Disabilities Act
Recruiting from Nontraditional Sources of Labor

Supports

Job Coaching Services and Benefits to Businesses and People with Disabilities
One Stop Career Centers: Information for Employers
Job Analysis Strategies for Enhancing Worker Productivity

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

Authors: Valerie Brooke, Howard Green, and Jennifer McDonough, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

CURRENT LEGISLATION

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), authorized by the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 provides employers an incentive to hire certain target group members with barriers to employment. In 2006 the WOTC was extended through December 31, 2007.

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), replaced the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) program, provides a tax credit for employers hiring individuals from certain targeted groups including: low-income, vocational rehabilitation referrals, former AFDC recipients, veterans, ex-felons, food stamp recipients, summer youth employees, and SSI recipients. The total amount of WOTC taken by all industries in 1996 on corporate income tax returns totaled \$6,896,000 (IRS 1996 Statistics of Income Report, published, 1999).

EMPLOYEES

An employer who hires an employee receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or who is a certified vocational rehabilitation (VR) participant may claim the WOTC after certification is received from the State Employment Security Agency (SESA).

RECEIVING THE WOTC

An employer may take a tax credit of up to 40 percent of the first \$6,000 in first year wages per qualifying employee. The maximum per employee credit is \$2,400 in a given tax year. This credit applies only to employees who work at least 400 hours during the tax year. With respect to qualified summer youth employees, the maximum credit for each is \$1,200 (40 percent of the first \$3,000 of first year wages.)

MINIMUM EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS?

A partial credit of 25% for certified employees who worked at least 120 hours, but less than 400 hours, may be claimed by the employer during a one year period. No credit is available for employees who work less than 120 hours.

CLAIMING THE TAX CREDIT?

Complete and submit IRS Form 8850, Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work Credits, to your local SESA. Do not submit this form to the IRS.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The following steps should be followed.

- Step 1** The employer determines likely eligibility by including the WOTC Pre-Screening Notice as part of the application process.

- Step 2** On or before the day employment is offered, the Pre-Screening Notice must be signed by the employer and employee and mailed to the SESA within 21 days after the employee begins work.

- Step 3** The employer documents eligibility (based on information received from the employee) and submits documentation to the SESA.

- Step 4** SESA certifies which individuals are eligible for WOTC, and notifies the employer in writing for purposes of filing the tax credit.

RESOURCES

1. IRS web site for information: <http://www.irs.gov/prod/help/newmail/user.html>
2. WOTC web site address is: www.ttrc.doleta.gov/common/directories or call (202) 219-9092
3. U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Center for Workforce Preparation: www.uschamber.com/cwp
4. Form 8850 is available from the Internal Revenue Service:
http://www.uses.doleta.gov/pdf/Appendix_IV/Appendix_IV__1_a__8850_Form.pdf

Download the U.S. Department of Labor ETA 9061 form, from:
http://www.uses.doleta.gov/pdf/Appendix_II/Appendix_II__1_ETZ_9061.pdf

5. Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention: www.worksupport.com

Small Business Tax Credit

IR Code Section 44, Disabled Access Credit

Authors: Valerie Brooke, Howard Green, and Jennifer McDonough, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

WHAT IS IT?

Small businesses may take an annual tax credit for making their businesses accessible to persons with disabilities. The total disabled access tax credits taken in 1996 on corporate income tax returns by all industries totaled \$11,865,000 (IRS 1996 Statistics of Income Report, 1999).

WHO IT ELIGIBLE?

Small businesses that in the previous year earned \$1 million or less in gross receipts or had 30 or fewer full-time employees are eligible for the Small Business Tax Credit.

WHAT EXPENSES ARE COVERED?

The tax credit is available every year and can be used for a variety of costs such as:

- sign language interpreters for employees/customers who have hearing impairments;
- readers for employees/customers with visual impairments;
- the purchase of adaptive equipment or the modification of equipment;
- printed materials in alternate formats (e.g., braille, audio tape, large print);
- the removal of architectural barriers in buildings or vehicles; and
- other similar services (i.e., use of a job coach or a co-worker to provide support to an employee with a disability).

WHAT EXPENSES ARE NOT COVERED?

The tax credit does not apply to the costs of new construction, and a building being modified must have been placed in service before November 6, 1990.

WHAT IS THE AMOUNT OF THE TAX CREDIT?

The credit is 50% of expenditures over \$250, but not to exceed \$10,250, for a maximum benefit of \$5,000.

HOW CAN THIS CREDIT BE CLAIMED?

Businesses can claim the Disabled Access Credit on IRS Form 8826.

Example of a Small Business Disabled Access Tax Credit using co-worker support as a similar service cost.

Company X hired an individual with a disability; a co-worker was assigned to support the new employee as a workplace accommodation. The co-worker spent a total of one hour each day providing support. The number of co-worker hours spent with the employee totaled 200 hours during the calendar year. The co-worker's hourly wage was \$10.00 per hour. Therefore, the cost of providing the reasonable accommodation for the new employee with a disability was \$2,000. The amount by which \$2,000 exceeds \$250 is \$1,750. Fifty percent of \$1,750 is \$875. Company X may take a tax credit of \$875 on its next income tax return.

Architectural / Transportation Tax Deduction

IR Code Section 190, Barrier Removal

Authors: Valerie Brooke, Howard Green, and Jennifer McDonough, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention-

WHAT IS IT?

Businesses may take an annual deduction for expenses incurred to remove physical, structural, and transportation barriers for persons with disabilities.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

All businesses are eligible.

WHAT EXPENSES ARE COVERED?

The architectural/transportation deduction is available each year to businesses with qualified expenses. It can be used for a variety of costs to make a facility or public transportation vehicle, owned or leased for use in the business, more accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. Examples of deductions include:

- providing accessible parking spaces, ramps, and
- curb cuts;
- providing telephones, water fountains, and
- restrooms that are accessible to persons using wheelchairs;
- making walkways at least 48 inches wide; and/or
- providing accessible entrances to buildings, including stairs and floors.

WHAT EXPENSES ARE NOT COVERED?

The deduction may not be used for expenses incurred for new construction, completion of renovation being done to a facility or public transportation vehicle, or for normal replacement of depreciable property.

WHAT IS THE AMOUNT OF TAX DEDUCTION?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) allows a deduction of up to \$15,000 per year for qualified architectural and transportation barrier removal expenses.

HOW CAN THIS EXPENDITURE BE DEDUCTED?

Businesses seeking to take a deduction for expenditures made for architectural and transportation modifications should follow the instructions found in IRS Publication 907 and in IRS Publication 535, entitled: Business Expenses. It is important to note that businesses may not take a deduction and a tax credit on the same expenditure.

Supporting Individuals with Autism in Integrated Community Jobs: Identifying Support Needs to Facilitate Success

Author: Dr. Katherine Inge, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

INTRODUCTION

People with autism are significantly underserved in terms of achieving employment outcomes supported by the state/federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) program. While the data available is based on a narrow definition of autism used by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), only 0.6% of all successful VR closures in 2005 were individuals with autism. The actual number of successful closures in 2005 for individuals with autism was 1,141 (Dew & Alan, 2007). A VR closure is considered successful when:

- The VR services provided under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) substantially impacted the customer's job at the time of closure.
- The individual obtained his or her vocational goal.
- The individual maintained employment for a minimum of 90 days.

Perhaps as critical are the number of unsuccessful closures for individuals with autism and the proportion of unsuccessful closures to successful closures. In 2005, there were 1,689 unsuccessful closures with a proportion of unsuccessful to successful closures of 1.48 (1689:1141) (Dew & Alan, 2007). This data published by RSA clearly illustrates the poor employment outcomes of individuals with autism spectrum disorders in this country.

These employment outcomes are even more alarming when considering the information from a 2007 report from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The study found that 1 in 150 children in America today have an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (CDC, 2007). The Autism Society of America (ASA) estimates that 1.5 million Americans and their families are now affected, costing the U.S. at least \$35 billion annually. In light of this information, employment is critical if individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are to become participating members of society.

Integrated competitive employment should be a goal for all individuals with autism who wish to work and should be the first choice offered. The current unemployment statistic may be related more to services and supports individuals with autism do not receive. Holmes (2007) indicated that a major reason for underemployment, unemployment, and job loss of individuals with autism is a failure to determine the supports needed as well as the most effective way to design the supports. Individuals with autism can be successfully employed when the proper supports are identified, put into place, and periodically evaluated to ensure effectiveness. This fact sheet will provide strategies and supports that Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) can provide to assist individuals with autism in achieving integrated employment outcomes.

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT NEEDS AND AUTISM

Any individual has unique characteristics that will impact the type of job, which the person will need to be successfully employed. For instance, one person may do well in a job that requires a great deal of public contact while another performs best when the work setting has limited interactions with customers. This is true of individuals without disabilities as well as those who have disabilities regardless of the type or severity of the disability.

There are some unique behavioral characteristics that are associated with autism. CRPs who want to assist individuals with autism find and maintain a job in the community, may find it useful to understand some of these unique characteristics. Remember, there will be a great deal of variability across skills, interests, and behavioral characteristics of individuals with autism. This section is presented with a caution that the employment specialist should not assume that all individuals with autism have the same support needs just because the person has autism. Getting to know each individual and his or her interests and abilities will be key to a successful employment outcome.

Key Points

- There is no specific strategy that will work for all individuals with autism in all employment settings.
- The person with autism is an individual with unique skills and abilities as well as support needs. All people with autism are not alike.
- The employment specialist must analyze not only the characteristics of the employee, but also the characteristics of the work site and its employees.
- Information obtained in natural environments about the individual (e.g. home, restaurants, the mall, school, etc.) is generally more useful to the employment specialist versus information from segregated environments (e.g. sheltered workshop, special education classroom, etc.).
- Some characteristics displayed by individuals with autism may be beneficial in specific work settings rather than negative if the individual is matched to the right job.

Characteristics

- **Difficulty communicating:** Recognize that individuals with autism have a wide range of communication skills.

Some may repeat words or phrases instead of engaging in conversation. Others may be nonverbal and yet have intellectual abilities. Assume competence rather than assuming that the individual's lack of communication is associated with cognitive limitations. For support needs related to communication, determine if an accommodation may minimize the disability.

Strategy: John has difficulty communicating and sometimes is not responsive when someone speaks to him. His supervisor communicates with him about his work tasks using e-mail. John does well with this strategy and also is able to ask his supervisor's and coworkers' questions using this strategy.

- **Limited social skills:** Social interactions on the job have been identified as critical to job success and retention. Social skill requirements on the job can present difficulty for individuals with autism. An employment specialist will want to understand the social characteristics of the individual seeking employment as well as the social demands of any

potential workplace. Some of the characteristics that may be observed are the individual's preference to being alone, aloof manner (e.g., does not smile or greet coworkers, has a fixed stare in social situations), little or no eye contact, or laughing (and/or crying) for no apparent reason. Individuals with autism also may have difficulty initiating or sustaining conversation with others even though the person has speech.

Strategy: Be sure to observe the individual's social skills and consider how matching the person to a work environment can accommodate limitations. As an example, Mary appears to be unaware of the importance of using "social graces" in communicating with others. She can appear to be blunt or unfriendly such as not smiling or greeting coworkers when arriving at work. Matching Mary to a job where social skills are not needed, or one where the coworkers are supportive of one another would be important. With Mary's permission, the employment specialist could discuss with her coworkers that while she may seem aloof and unfriendly, this is a characteristic of her disability. A supportive work environment over time also may help Mary improve her social skills.

- **Unusual behaviors:** Individuals with autism may have unusual behaviors that have presented a barrier to integrated employment. For instance, an individual may insist on "sameness" in his or her work environment such as wanting all work supplies or personal belongings to be placed in a specific arrangement and becoming upset if there is a change. Another example of wanting "sameness" in the workplace might be resistance to change in routines. A person with autism might not respond or become visibly upset if a coworker or supervisor asks him or her to stop work on a regularly scheduled task to complete something new. Another unusual behavior that has typically been associated with autism is the individual engaging in repetitive movements. The person spinning objects or waving a hand in front of his or her face might characterize this behavior. Remember that each person is unique, and an individual may or may not display unusual behaviors just because he or she has autism.

Strategy: CRPs are advised not to limit a person's access to employment opportunities because of unusual behaviors. A good job match can minimize atypical behaviors or perhaps may even be considered strength in some work environments. For instance, the individual who requires consistency in his or her daily tasks can make an excellent employee! However, if this same person is placed in a job where there is no consistency in daily routines, it is unlikely that individual will be successful. Also consider, that as the person becomes comfortable with the workplace, behaviors may not be an issue or may decrease. For instance, the individual who makes loud noises when feeling insecure or uncertain of what is expected may over time only occasionally make loud noises. Again, a match between the person and the environment is important where simple accommodations can be made to support the individual. Example: John has a behavior in which he will clap his hands over his ears every few minutes and hum loudly. If he is able to wear headphones while working, this behavior does not interfere with his work performance.

KEY POINTS

- Be sure to consider features of a work place, which either meet the needs of the individual's characteristics or can be adapted to support the person.
- Identify worksites that will offer minimal exposure to issues or things that have been known to contribute to behavior challenges.
- Negotiate accommodations that will address specific individual characteristics that cause barriers to employment.

- A job analysis of potential jobs should look at all issues related to environmental factors (e.g., noise, light, temperature); coworker supports (e.g., amount of available supervision, social demands of the workplace); and types of job tasks (e.g., down time, production requirements, number of job duties, routine, and job complexity.)
- Always involve the supervisor, coworkers, and the individual in the identification and the design of any workplace accommodations.

Competitive Employment Supports for Individuals with Severe Mental Illness

Author: Grant Revell, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

One Stop Career Centers are a valuable potential resource for people with a severe mental illness seeking competitive employment. This Fact Sheet reviews the key practices that have demonstrated effectiveness in supporting people with severe mental illness in achieving a successful employment outcome.

Employment is a key component of recovery. Research findings indicate that consumers with a severe mental illness who hold competitive jobs for an extended period of time frequently demonstrate improved self esteem and improved symptom control. One Stop staff need to work collaboratively within an integrated community team with this population. Supported employment that incorporates a number of key practices is a proven method for supporting people with a severe mental illness in achieving and sustaining employment. There are seven research-based practices for supporting these consumers in competitive employment. One Stop staff should work to help build a team effort involving, for example, vocational rehabilitation, community Mental Health Services, and employment services in working with individuals with a severe mental illness.

1. Participation in the employment program is based on consumer choice.

Consumer choice to seek employment should be the main criteria for entering an employment program. Consumer characteristics do not predict success in competitive employment. Gender, ethnicity, diagnosis, hospitalization history, cognitive functioning, education or substance abuse are not predictors of employment success. Practices that encourage consumer choice include:

- Creating an atmosphere where anyone can choose work, and
- Focusing on an individual's strengths and motivation.

2. Supported employment is integrated with mental health treatment.

Employment supports for a consumer with severe mental illness should be integrated with the person's mental health treatment. Employment efforts will not be effective if the person is not receiving adequate clinical case management. Practices that encourage employment program integration with mental health treatment include:

- Employment support team members working closely with the mental health case managers, and
- Program plans for treatment and employment are coordinated and mutually supportive. For example, medication or housing changes are coordinated with employment activities.

3. Services are focused on competitive employment as the goal.

Services should focus on competitive employment outcomes. Individuals with severe mental illness have historically received services in day treatment or sheltered programs that focused on an array of rehabilitation activities, protected job options, or short-term work experiences. These experiences do not promote competitive employment outcomes. Practices that focus on competitive employment as a goal include:

- Targeting attention and resources on work as a goal from the moment the individual enters the employment program,
- Stating the benefits of work and encouraging success consistently with the consumer, and
- Avoiding spending time and resources on work readiness experiences or extended periods of assessment. Focus instead on employment goals and interests.

4. A rapid job search approach is used.

A rapid job search approach means that the job search will begin with contact with an employer within the first month after the consumer enters the supported employment program. Consumers prefer to work towards competitive employment instead of preparatory activities. In fact, work readiness type preparatory activities that delay attention to competitive work can reduce prospects for community employment. Practices focusing attention on a rapid job search include:

- Providing direct assistance in job finding through job leads and active job development, and
- A place-train approach using on-the-job training emphasizing supports at the job site.

5. Job finding is individualized with attention to consumer preferences.

Job finding is a collaborative process between the consumer and the employment support team. This process emphasizes use of a consumer's preferences, abilities, and prior work experiences. Job selection takes into account job duties, location, hours of employment, work environment, and other individual factors related to success and satisfaction. Practices that focus on consumer preferences include:

- Working closely with a person's personal interests, and
- Seeking jobs and workplace environments that match individual preferences.

6. Ongoing supports are continuous.

Programs need to find ways to work together to provide ongoing supports after an individual enters employment. Placing arbitrary time limits on supports after a person is employed is very detrimental to success in employment. The availability of continuous supports, including replacement assistance, is frequently tied closely to funding policies and performance standards of the various employment support programs. Practices that focus on continuous supports include:

- Assisting the individual to discover his/her true job interests by working in competitive employment, and
- Assisting people to move into new jobs as long-term job interests are clarified.

7. Benefits counseling is used to educate consumers on impact of earnings on benefits.

A well-designed program of benefits planning is an important employment support. Many individuals with a severe mental illness receive disability benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Benefits (SSDI). They might also receive benefits related to housing and/or food assistance. Practices that focus on benefits planning include:

- Assuring that consumer has access to a professional benefits counselor and understands the interaction between earnings from employment and disability benefits.

RESOURCES

The following websites are provided as a resource for additional information and support.

- VCU Benefits Assistance Resource Center -- <http://www.vcu-barc.org/>
- Supported Employment Information for Consumers -- <http://www.mentalhealthpractices.org/se.html>
- Supported Employment Information for Practitioners -- http://www.mentalhealthpractices.org/se_pcs.html
- Implementing Supported Employment as an Evidenced Based Practice -- http://www.mentalhealthpractices.org/pdf_files/bond.pdf
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) — <http://www.nami.org>
- National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse <http://www.nostigma.org/>
- Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services -- <http://www.dmhmrzas.state.va.us/>

Information for this fact sheet was drawn from the following resources: Bond, G. (2004). Supported Employment: Evidence for an Evidence-Based Practice. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*. 27(4), 345-359; Ridgway, P., & Rapp, C. (1998). The active ingredients in achieving competitive employment for people with psychiatric disabilities: A research synthesis. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas School of Social Work.

PAS FACTS: Providing Effective Workplace Personal Assistance Services

Authors: Ed Turner, Special Counsel on Disability to the Governor of Virginia

Using Workplace PAS to Explore New Career Options

Workplace Personal Assistance Services (WPAS) is a valuable tool that assists employees with significant disabilities to find and maintain employment. It is fast becoming the most effective method for employees with disabilities to achieve the needed level of production to become effective and efficient in the workplace. WPAS offers the opportunity for the workplace personal assistant to be exposed to different disabilities and all types of work environments. This really makes WPAS a win-win situation for both the employee and the Workplace Personal Assistant (WPA). It also enables the employer to add diversity to their workforce since the employee with the disability and their WPA may come from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Attributes of an Effective Workplace Personal Assistant

Many employees with disabilities place a higher value on the attributes of a WPA than on the skills they have. Like any employer, employees with disabilities still struggle to find WPA's who are reliable, punctual, and have a high degree of loyalty. A WPA who has these important attributes is a valuable asset to the employee who needs their support. The employee with the disability understands their WPA can gain the necessary job skills through training programs, but it is hard to instill the importance of reliability, punctuality, and loyalty.

Advantages of Becoming a Workplace Personal Assistant

In addition to having the satisfaction of contributing to the success of the employee with a significant disability, there are many advantages and opportunities available to a WPA. For example: most businesses and employers will provide training opportunities for the WPA to gain or improve the necessary skills to better support the employee. Also, working on the job a WPA has the opportunity to gain an understanding of a business, which could eventually lead to a rewarding career. Because most employees with a significant disability are highly motivated they are usually very active in their communities. This gives the WPA a chance to be involved in many exciting and interesting events that will increase their business contacts. This is why a successful Workplace Personal Assistant can use this role as a springboard to gain opportunities for growth, opportunities to learn new skills, possible advancement and becoming more valuable to the company or business.

Administration Aspects of Providing Workplace Personal Assistance

Many employees who have found a reliable and loyal WPA will hire them as a private contractor to provide services away from the jobsite. As a private contractor, the WPA will need to for fill many administrative tasks to be able to meet certain Federal and State legal requirements. For example, as a private contractor, a WPA must learn how to negotiate a fair and equitable contract with the employee for duties away from the jobsite.

They must also file certain Federal and State Income Tax forms to support the extra income above \$500. Most employees are knowledgeable about these requirements and can give their WPA resources they can use to fulfill these legal obligations. There are also some resources listed in the table below that can help a WPA find out information on these legal matters.

Effective and Ineffective Workplace PAS Scenarios

Workplace PAS is important for employees with significant disabilities to be successful on the job, unfortunately not all WPAS work. Below we will give scenarios of WPAS who are both ineffective and effective in the workplace.

- The employee with the disability has a WPA who is scheduled to work a 6 hour shift from 9-3 p.m. The employee has a meeting that has been called this morning by his manager for 10 a.m. There are papers that need to be collated by the WPA for the meeting. The WPA does not arrive at work until 9:45 a.m., and he did not even have the courtesy to call his employee with the disability to inform him of his late arrival. The employee is able to go to the meeting, but is not properly prepared because the handouts are not ready therefore making him seem inadequate and unprepared.
- The employee with the disability has speech impairment. He has been granted the opportunity from his company to address a grant committee to assist in procuring huge financial assistance, which would provide funding for a pilot WPA Agency. The employee with the disability knows that his message is powerful and wants to make sure all involved in the meeting fully understand his message, so he asks his WPA to be his voice. The WPA is not comfortable with public speaking or addressing groups, but he does understand that his job is to assist his employee with the disability in the mechanical aspects of his job and repeating his employee's words is a part of that. He quickly agrees, and with this support the employee's message is effectively delivered.

Workplace PAS Accommodation

Topic	Agency	Website
Reporting your income to the State	State Department of Taxation	www.StateDepartment.Gov
Reporting your income to IRS	IRS	www.irs.gov
How to pay your own FICA	Social Security Administration	www.ssa.gov
WPAS as a career	Job Accommodation Network	www.JAN.org
Discrimination and workplace PAS as a reasonable accommodation	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	www.eeoc.gov

Realities of Hiring People with Disabilities: Learn the Truth!!

Authors: Valerie Brooke, Howard Green, and Jennifer McDonough, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

Many businesses ask, and are concerned about the cost of hiring someone with a disability to work in their company. There are many misconceptions on this issue and this fact sheet will allow you to have information about the realities of hiring someone with a disability.

Myths & Facts

Myth: Considerable expense is necessary to accommodate workers with disabilities.

Fact: Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe. Studies by the Office of Disability Employment Policy's Job Accommodation Network have shown that 15% of accommodations cost nothing, 51% cost between \$1 and \$500, 12% cost between \$501 and \$1,000, and 22% cost more than \$1,000.

Myth: 40% of employers maintain that it is difficult or costly to provide accommodations to workers with disabilities.

Fact: The majority of employers who had made accommodations found that the cost of the accommodation was only \$500 or less. The vast majority (73%) of employers report that their employees with disabilities did not require accommodations.

Myth: Employees with disabilities will use more sick leave and won't be as productive as other employees.

Fact: Employees with disabilities have the same absentee and sick rates as non-disabled employees. Industry reports consistently rate workers with disabilities as average or above average in performance, quality and quantity of work, flexibility to demands, attendance and safety.

Myth: Persons with disabilities are unable to meet performance standards, thus making them a bad employment risk.

Fact: In 1990, DuPont conducted a survey of 811 employees with disabilities and found 90% rated average or better in job performance compared to 95% for employees without disabilities. A May, 2002 VCU-RRTC National Research Study of Employer's Experiences found that employees with disabilities are as capable and productive (timeliness, punctuality, task consistency & work speed).

Problems & Solutions

Problem: An assembler for a furniture manufacturer has spinal degeneration, uncoordinated gait, and balance difficulties. The limitations involve walking, carrying materials, and balancing.

Solution: Installing a plywood platform to raise part of the work station, suspending tools from the ceiling to balance their weight and using a cart to move assembly parts.

Cost: \$200

Problem: A greenhouse worker with mental retardation has difficulty staying on task and knowing when to take breaks.

Solution: At no cost to the employer, a job coach provided initial training. The worker then carried a tape recorder that provided periodic reminders to stay on task and indicated break time and also carried a set of laminated cards which showed the basic list of tasks to be completed.

Cost: \$50

Problem: A worker with traumatic brain injury (TBI) is employed at a bank, processing checks and other transactions. Items must be numbered and placed into a sorting matching tray in a special manner. The problem is periodic confusion due to memory loss and weakness in one side of his body.

Solution: A job coach supplied by the rehabilitation agency assists in special training in task sequencing, and equipment is adjusted to accommodate weakness. Cost: \$0

Problem: A computer service technician with cerebral palsy loses function of the lower extremities. The job related problems include bending, stooping, balancing, and getting underneath the mainframe equipment to perform needed repairs.

Solution: An automotive repair creeper is purchased and modified with back support to enable the employee to slide easily under the mainframes. Cost: \$30

Problem: A radio broadcaster/announcer who is blind needs to read the AP wire news desk material.

Solution: The employer connected a Braille printer to the incoming news service, and installed a switch to move from regular printed material to Braille. Cost: \$1,700

HELPFUL HINTS

- **Get executive commitment** -- Having commitment sends a clear message to senior management about the seriousness and business relevance of this issue. Also, top-down commitment will reinforce the desired outcomes and assist in conveying the expectation of cooperation, involvement and commitment on the part of senior management and their staff.
- **Incorporate disability into existing diversity committees** -- This group is usually composed of a cross-section of the organization and can help analyze assessment data and make recommendations to top management.
- **Design relevant, interactive applicable training** -- The purpose of good training is to not just increase awareness and understanding about disability, but develop concrete skills employees can use. Starting with awareness training and advancing training that builds specific skills is common.
- **Ensure integration** -- Integrate the concepts, skills and results of your disability efforts into the fabric of the organization.
- **Partnerships** -- There are a number of organizations that can assist your company in the successful integration of people with disabilities into your workforce.

Using Disability Etiquette in Serving Customers with Unique Needs

Authors: Valerie Brooke, Howard Green, and Jennifer McDonough, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

One-Stop Career Center staff should not be overly concerned or nervous about saying or doing the wrong thing when serving customers with disabilities. When staff stay focused on the customer's skills and abilities, barriers to providing quality services disappear. Setting up a positive and accessible interviewing environment is essential in creating an atmosphere where all can work together to meet vocational goals. This fact sheet gives some guidelines on "do's" and "don'ts" to follow when serving people with disabilities.

Tips on Serving People with Mobility Issues

When working with customers using wheelchairs or other types of mobility aids (walkers, scooters, or canes), focus on the customer, not the mobility aid. Here are some tips to help improve services:

- Wheelchairs are a part of the person and should be respected.
- Leaning on the wheelchair shows disrespect for the individual's personal space.
- Do not attempt to push a motorized chair. This could cause damage to the motor.
- Talk to the person, not the chair.
- Stand or sit in front of the person to establish good eye contact.

Example: When a case manager first greets a customer in a wheelchair, he/she should lean over or sit down to be at eye level with the individual. This action shows respect and gets the relationship started on a positive note with communication being on a level field.

Tips on Serving People with Visual Disabilities

Using expressive language is key to successfully serving customers with visual disabilities. Being sensitive to the individual's needs is important and can be done by using common sense rules.

- Offer your arm or shoulder when guiding a person to a new location.
- Do not pull or push the individual; this can be perceived as disrespectful or controlling.
- Verbally announce yourself when approaching someone who is not expecting you.
- To facilitate visualization for the customer, offer detailed verbal descriptions when talking.

Example: The receptionist may offer their elbow or shoulder to an individual with a visual impairment when he/she enters the office or is being lead to a case manager. The receptionist should describe the arrangement of the offices, noting location of restrooms.

Tips on Serving People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Although it is advisable to have sign-language interpreters available when providing employment services and/or counseling, there may be times when a customer with a hearing disability could walk in seeking information about One-Stop services. In these instances, staff should stand directly in front of the person and speak very

clearly, but not loudly. This will be helpful if the individual is able to read lips. If a male staff person is assigned this task, it is important that they have a clean shaven face so his lips are visible. If not, offer to write notes. Using such communication strategies lets the customer know that the One-Stop Career Center really wants to serve him/her. If an interpreter is needed but not available, another appointment can be scheduled when an interpreter can be present.

Example: Any One-Stop Career Center staff person who greets an unexpected customer with a hearing disability should do so calmly and with a willingness to find a way to communicate. Speak softly but clearly, and have a notepad available.

Tips on Serving People with Hidden Disabilities

There are many types of disabilities that fall into this category. As One-Stop Career Centers serve people with different types of disabilities, staff will become accustomed to spotting different indicators that may signal a hidden disability. Knowing that a disability is present will improve the customer service offered. Here are some indicators to look for and some techniques that a good provider can use in serving people with hidden disabilities.

Indicators	Possible Disability	Customer Service Techniques
Has difficulty following written Instructions. Has trouble writing.	Mental Retardation	Read instructions to the customer. Use age-appropriate language. Make explanations clean and simple. Verify understanding of directions. Cite examples of how to use information. Offer writing assistance.
Exhibits odd/unusual behavior	Mental Illness	Avoid terms like: “crazy” or “insane” in staff conversation. Understand odd behaviors can be caused by medications. Redirect gently to topical activity.
Is slow to follow directions. Has difficulty with reading or writing tasks	Learning Disability	Reduce pace of the activity. Offer materials in different formats.
Appears to “black out” a few seconds	Seizure Disability	Increase the number of breaks. Understand “black outs” can be caused by medications or by the disability
Unexpected allergic reaction	Chemical Sensitivity	Refrain from wearing strong perfume, cologne, or lotion
Unexplained body lesions	Aids/HIV	Ignore lesions and focus on the customer’s job goals.
Erratic behavior	Autism/Brain Injury	Give time to calm down; stay focused on goals.

Examples: One-Stop staff persons who becomes adept at spotting signs pointing to hidden disabilities are valuable assets. These staff members will be able to handle situations by responding to cues and using the appropriate interventions without alarming other customers or staff.

Some customers are unaware that they have a disability. One-Stop staff can use the indicators listed above as a sign for the potential presence of a disability. Follow-up with the customer, including use of screening tools with the knowledge of the customer, could help identify the need for services.

Reasonable Accommodations & the Americans with Disabilities Act

Authors: Valerie Brooke, Howard Green, and Jennifer McDonough, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires most public and private employers to provide reasonable accommodations that enable qualified people with disabilities to perform the essential functions of their jobs. As the term “reasonable” implies, the accommodation must not constitute an undue hardship to the employer. This fact sheet provides definitions of key terms and procedures related to job accommodations under the employment provisions (Title I) of the ADA.

Who is Covered?

Employers: Public and private employers with 15 or more employees are required to comply with the provisions of Title I of the ADA . The executive agencies of the federal government, Native American Tribes, and tax-exempt private membership clubs that are to labor organizations are not covered, but other federal, State or local disability-related non-discrimination laws may apply.

Applicants: Individuals with a physical or mental impairments that substantially limits one or more major life activities are covered by Title I of the ADA when applying for employment. Major life activities may include walking, learning, seeing, working, hearing, speaking and caring for oneself.

Who is a Qualified Applicant?

Under Title I of the ADA, a qualified person with a disability is one who satisfies the skill, experience, education, and other job-related requirements of the position and can perform essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations. To be eligible for reasonable accommodations, the person must have a disability and be qualified for the position that he or she seeks or holds.

What are Essential Functions?

Essential job functions are fundamental job duties that the person must be capable of performing, with reasonable accommodations if needed. The following are some of the reasons a function may be considered essential:

- The position exists to perform the function.
- There are a limited number of other employees available to perform the function, or among whom the function can be distributed.
- The function is highly specialized, and the person in the position is hired for their special expertise or ability to perform it.

What are Reasonable Accommodations?

Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to the job, work environment, or to the way things are usually done that enables qualified people with disabilities enjoy an equal employment opportunity. Broad categories of accommodations include changes to the job application process to ensure an equal opportunity to apply for employment, changes that enable an employee with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job, and changes that enables an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment (e.g., access to training).

Reasonable accommodations may include:

- Making existing facilities accessible to and usable by an individual with a disability.
- Restructuring of the job.
- Modifying the work schedule.
- Modifying the equipment or devices.
- Installing new equipment or devices.
- Providing qualified readers and interpreters.
- Appropriate modification of application and examination procedures and training materials.

Reasonable accommodations DO NOT include:

- Eliminating a primary job responsibility.
- Lowering production standards that are applied to all employees;
- Providing personal use items, such as prosthetic limbs, wheelchairs, eyeglasses, hearing aids, etc.;
- Allowing anything that would be considered to be an undue hardship to the employer.
- Excusing a violation of a uniformly applied conduct rule that is job-related and consistent with business necessity (e.g., an employer never has to tolerate or excuse violence, threats of violence, stealing, or destruction of property).

What Constitutes an Undue Hardship?

An accommodation may be considered an undue hardship if it creates significant difficulty or expense to the employer. That is, an employer would not be required to provide an accommodation if it costs more than alternatives that are equally effective, requires extensive and disruptive renovations, or negatively affects other employees or customers. Undue hardships are determined on a case-by-case basis. Factors to take into consideration when determining whether an accommodation constitutes an undue hardship are:

- The cost and nature of the accommodation.
- The overall financial resources of the facility.
- The overall financial resources of the employer.
- The type of operation of the covered employer.
- The impact of the accommodation upon the operation of the facility.

What Should an Employee do to Request an Accommodation?

The employee must let the employer know that he or she needs adjustment or change at work because of a disability. Requests for accommodations can be made orally or in writing.

What Should an Employer do Following a Request for an Accommodation?

The following are the steps an employer should take in response to an accommodation request:

- Verify employee's disability.
- Identify essential job functions that requires accommodations.
- Consult with the individual to identify a variety of accommodations to reduce and/or remove barriers and increase productivity.
- Implement the most appropriate accommodations, taking into account the preferences of the individual with disabilities.

Reasonable Accommodations Resources

Technical Assistance and Guidance

- Job Accommodation Network (JAN): 800-526-7234 (voice/TTY) -- www.jan.wvu.edu
- Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation Research & Training Center on Workplace Supports: 804-828-1851 (Voice), 804-828-2494 (TTY), <http://www.worksupport.com>
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): 800-669-4000 (TTY); 800-669-6820 (TTY)<http://www.eeoc.gov>
- U.S. Department of Labor (written materials): written materials 800-959-3652 (Voice), 800-326-2577 (TTY); to ask questions: 202-219-8412 (Voice)
- ADA Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs): 800-949-4232 (Voice/TTY) <http://www.adata.org>
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID): 301-608-0050 (Voice/TTY) -- <http://rid.org>
- Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America Technical Assistance Project: 703-524-6686 (Voice), 703-524-6639 (TTY) -- www.resna.org
- University of Michigan, Industrial and Engineering Department: 734-763-3742 -- www.personal.umich.edu

Financial Assistance and Cost Sharing

- Internal Revenue Service: 202-622-606 (Voice) www.irs.ustreas.gov
- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)www.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html

Recruiting from Nontraditional Sources of Labor

Authors: Valerie Brooke, Howard Green, and Jennifer McDonough, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

There are many nontraditional sources of workers that business can recruit to meet their on-going labor needs. People with disabilities represent the single largest minority of workers seeking employment in today's market. Other nontraditional groups such as welfare recipients and older individuals are also rich sources of potential workers. Businesses can find it difficult to develop relationships in this unfamiliar recruitment area. Resources and guidance will prove helpful for businesses to reach these potential workers.

Why is this an important business issue?

Tom Donohue, President & CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce said,

“Finding and keeping good workers is one of the greatest challenges facing businesses today.”

In order for your business to fill its labor needs, nontraditional workers must be recruited. It will be impossible for business to grow into new markets without qualified personnel. With a strong economy, businesses wishing to stay competitive and increase their bottom line need dependable workers, such as people with disabilities and other overlooked sources of labor.

How do I find non-traditional workers?

Many agencies and community organizations specialize in assisting nontraditional workers obtain employment. Contacting the state rehabilitation agency which usually has local offices can help. Many strategic contacts exist in state and local communities. A list of resources are provided.

Will these workers be different from other individuals seeking employment?

All new employees bring different and diverse situations to the workplace. Therefore, managers and supervisors must develop work plans that will allow all employees to be productive and work to their potential. In some cases, individuals with disabilities may require an accommodation or a workplace support in order to achieve success. Accommodations or workplace supports include modifications to the job or the way a job is performed that enable a qualified applicant to perform the essential functions of their position.

Do many other businesses recruit nontraditional workers?

Several companies, both large and small, have recruited from this labor source for years. However, many businesses have avoided recruiting from these labor sources because they were unsure of the work potential of workers with disabilities or they did not know where to find them. New economic growth has increased an

awareness that there are many people in America seeking employment who traditionally have not been considered as a potential source of labor. Companies such as the ones listed here, as well as others, have long been involved in recruiting a diverse labor force.

Microsoft IBM Bank of America DuPont Philip Morris MANPOWER	SunTrust Bank Ethyl Corporation The Supply Room Co. Trigon Capital One Cendant Member Services	Bon Secours Marriott International Bass Resort & Hotels JC Penney Borders Books & Music Southern States
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These companies are now taking a proactive approach by informing other businesses about the benefits of recruiting and hiring from nontraditional sources and contacting the HR director can help your company with leads for nontraditional workers. Today, thousands of businesses across the country are aggressively seeking information on how to secure new sources of labor.

Will nontraditional workers require a lot of training?

As with other new employees, the company usually provides new workers with an initial orientation, as well as on-going training specific to the industry. Workers with limited employment history may require additional training for support but at the same time stay employed for a longer period of time than nondisabled workers. In cases where the employer does require on-going training or job coaches, the state rehabilitative agency and/or the state employment security agency can provide financial and other supports and services to a business.

What are the benefits or incentives to business?

Having dependable, dedicated, hard working and productive employees is a major business benefit gained from hiring from nontraditional sources. Numerous businesses report that once they have hired from this overlooked labor source, nontraditional workers are some of the best employees in the company. Many employers report that the work ethic of these employees has a direct bearing on the production and work of other employees.

Do I need to change my recruitment strategy?

Yes, businesses seeking workers with limited work histories will need to identify different recruitment resources. Recruiters and interviewers need to get up to speed on the incredible potential of workers with disabilities. Many staffing companies find that they no longer need to market their services to businesses in their traditional markets. Supplemental staffing organizations are looking into the community and making contacts with rehabilitation agencies, welfare offices, and other social programs designed to assist community members with an array of supports, including work.

Is training available for my managers and HR staff?

Managers and human resource staff will need assistance in developing new recruiting strategies. There are many community organizations that can provide information to your personnel and management staff, many are listed below. The Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) offers personnel trainings in this area. Their web site address is: www.shrm.org. Another excellent site run by Va. Commonwealth University is www.worksupport.com.

Resource Groups to Contact

A major concern raised by businesses is knowing where to find workers who have not been traditionally recruited. Below are some contacts with their special target population listed to assist businesses in reaching the different groups.

Public Resources (government):

- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA): serving individuals with all types of disabilities -- tom_finch@ed.gov
- U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation: serving veterans with disabilities -- <http://www.va.gov>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment Training Services: serving veterans with disabilities <http://www.dol.gov/dol/vets/>
- Centers for Independent Living (CIL): serving individuals with all types of disabilities -- <http://www.ilru.org> -- once on this site, scroll down to ILRU Jump Site. Click on this link for a listing of all the CIL's.
- One Stops -- State Employment & Training Programs: serving all individuals with disabilities and employment needs -- <http://www.doleta.gov>
- State Employment Security Agencies: serving all individuals with disabilities and employment needs. Look in your telephone book under State Government for individual listings of State Employment Security Agency.

Private Resources:

- American Staffing Association (ASA): serving all segments of the population -- <http://www.natss.org>
- Hire Potential, Inc.: serving people with disabilities and older workers -- <http://www.hirepotential.com>

On-line recruiting sources:

- We Media: serves individuals with all types of disabilities <http://www.wemedia.com>
- Able To Work (Microsoft & NBDC): serving individuals with all types of disabilities -- <http://www.abletowork.org>
- Lift Inc.: serving individuals with all types of disabilities <http://www.lift-inc.org>
- America's Job Bank: serving anyone seeking employment including people with disabilities plus other targeted groups, i.e., retirees and welfare recipients <http://www.AJB.dni.us/>
- Job Access: serving individuals with all types of disabilities <http://www.jobaccess.org>

Other Resources:

- International Telecommuting Association & Council: serving anyone wishing to work off site including people with disabilities -- <http://www.telecommute.org>
- President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities - Workforce Recruitment Program: serving individuals with all types of disabilities <http://www.pcepd.gov>
- Goodwill Industries International: serving individuals with all types of disabilities and other disadvantage groups -- <http://www.goodwill.org>
- ARC: serving individuals with cognitive disabilities <http://www.thearc.org>
- UCP: serving individuals with all types of disabilities <http://www.ucp.org>

Job Coaching Services and Benefits to Business People with Disabilities

Authors: Howard Green and Jennifer McDonough, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

Introduction

Many individuals with significant disabilities who have been unable to secure employment or to maintain employment have achieved employment success by securing services from a Job Coach. Job Coaching services have been so successful in working with people with significant disabilities many community programs such as welfare to work, Veterans, older workers, transition, and others have begun to utilize the talents and skills of job coaches.

One unique arena for job coaching services has been the Americans with Disabilities Act. Employers are asked to examine possible accommodations to assist their efforts to recruit and hire people with disabilities and a potential accommodation available to them often is job coaching services. Some businesses have started offering co-worker job coaching as well as reaching out to community programs in an effort to advance the employment of people with disabilities people on the worksite.

Key Points

What is a Job Coach?

A Job Coach is known by several professional titles such as employment specialist, job trainer, job consultant, and staffing specialist. He or she may come from a variety of backgrounds to include teaching, rehabilitation, or business and be responsible for assisting an individual with a disability in obtaining a job by creating a positive job match; maintaining a job through on-site assistance and other workplace supports; and advancing careers with career development. In many cases the job coach will spend time at the workplace to learn the job duties and industry standard and then assist the new employee to build proficiency over time. In addition the job coach will provide many valuable services off of the job site such as counseling and review of job duties. If the consumer is uncomfortable with the job coach at the job site the supports will be provided off-site.

What are Job Coach Services?

Job coaches do a variety of duties in the course of assisting someone both on and off the job site. Below is a list of duties for a typical job coach.

- Gathers assessment data and assisting the person with a disability to develop a list of interests and potential skills.
- Gathers employment information by doing job analyses at business sites in order to match a person with a position.
- Provides one to one training on a job site.
- Provides job retention services to the employer and person with disability.

- Maintains evaluation data for performance reporting.
- Provide services off-site.

Who do Job Coaches Support?

Job Coaches supports both the individual with a disability as well as the employer. These are the primary customers for a job coach. However, they will interact and provide consultation services to parents, community funding agencies, other community support programs.

What supports do Job Coaches provide?

Supports will vary from person to person and it is the role of a job coach to provide some or all of the following supports for an individual.

- advocacy
- identification of interests and skills,
- identification of possible accommodations
- job development and marketing services to businesses
- one to one on site job coach to model behaviors and provide actual job training
- provide on-going job follow-up and retention services
- off-site supports

Who pays for Job Coach Services?

Funding sources of supported employment services are varied. Many programs who employ job coaches have been approved to be a vendor of services for the state Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. In addition, Mental Health & Mental Retardation state and local programs will provide funding for Supported Employment services to community rehabilitation providers. Programs such as Medicaid Waivers, Social Security Work Incentives and foundation funds are also available for use in funding job coaches.

What questions do Businesses have regarding Job Coaches?

Businesses have many questions for job coaches. Some of the typical questions a job coach can expect to be asked by a representative from a business are:

- Who pays for the time and services of a job coach?
- Who is liable if a job coach gets hurt at the work site?
- How long will the job coach be on-site?
- Can the agency provide a background check on the job coach?
- What is the person's disability?
- How will I train a person with a disability?
- How can I accommodate a person with a disability and is it expensive?
- Who can help me with the cost of an accommodation?
- What happens if the person is not successful here at the job?

Job Coaches can expect to hear these as well as other questions from employers and should be prepared with answers.

What are the benefits to Businesses who utilize Job Coaches?

Businesses want to know if they invest in a program which offers training from a job coach will help to increase their bottom line and productivity. Hiring people with disabilities is an investment for an employer as it is with their recruitment and hiring of all personnel. Therefore it is important to share the benefits with the employer. Here are some!

- Job Coaches reduce the time it takes businesses to locate workers by giving the business access to a pool of pre-screened candidates.
- The up-front work of a Job Coach will complement the screening and hiring process of the business.
- Training and staff support from the Job Coach will dovetail with the style of the company. The job coach will ensure this continues until the new employee is completely up to speed.
- Job Coaches can assist with the identification of other accommodations for the company and be a resource for their diversity efforts.
- Job Coaches can assist the employer with possible tax credits such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the Disabled Access Tax Credit for small businesses.
- Job Coaches will be at the business to provide on-going supports and job retention services.

References and Resources

- http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh/vocrehab_manual/08-38_Job%20Coaching.htm
- <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/careertransition/crtnjobc.htm#job>
- <http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/fsds/ada/jobcoach.html>
- <http://www.worksupport.com>
- <http://www.worksupport.com/training/archivedWebcasts.cfm>
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- Wehman, P., Inge, K.J., Revell, Jr., W.G., Brooke, V.A. (2007). Real Work for Real Play -- Inclusive Employment for People with Disabilities. Brookes Publishing Company.

One Stop Career Centers: Employer Information

Authors: Valerie Brooke, Howard Green, and Jennifer McDonough, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

Successful businesses continually strive to improve their customer service and productivity. One-Stop Career Centers can support the business community in achieving these goals. One-Stop Career Centers provide workforce training and recruitment services aimed at building a strong and diverse community workforce.

What is a One-Stop Career Center?

One Stop Career Centers are the focal point of the workforce investment system. These Centers support the employment interest of job seekers and the human resource needs of business.

One-Stop Center Services:

- Recruits, screens, and refers a variety of job seekers, ranging from entry-level workers to highly skilled professionals
- Recruits full-time, part-time, and seasonal workers
- Posts job openings
- Hosts job fairs
- Partners with businesses to clarify job descriptions and eligibility criteria
- Screens applicants to ensure that the right workers with the right skills are selected for interviews
- Provides training that supports the human resource needs of business
- Provides training services (pre-employment, re-employment, apprenticeship, on-the-job, and customized training)

Benefits for Businesses Working with One-Stop Career Centers?

Benefits to Business:

- Access to an increased labor pool
- Access to labor market information
- Assists customers in applying for Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work Tax Credits
- Provides information about wages and employment trends, as well as national comparisons
- Assistance with job retention and maintaining workers
- Assistance with tax incentives such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit
- Available office space for on site recruitment, interviewing and training for potential workers
- Assistance with workforce dislocation as well as possible retraining efforts
- Potential assistance with transportation services, childcare needs and mentoring programs
- Access to information regarding economic information and wage and employment trends

Locating a Local One-Stop

You can find the location of your local One-Stop by contacting America's Service Locator from the U.S. Department of Labor, on the Web at: www.servicelocator.org, or call toll free by phone at (877) US2-JOBS [877-872-5627]. You can also contact your state, county, or local department of labor or employment listed in the government section of the phone book.

Demonstrating Success

National Hiring Partnership:

In 2003 Home Depot announced a National Hiring Partnership (NHP) with the Department of Labor (DOL). The program links the Home Depot, the DOL and the public workforce system together in an effort to place qualified applicants throughout the United States with Home Depot stores that have open positions. On a local level, the Home Depot human resource managers (HRMs) work with One Stop Career Centers to source qualified applicants for specific hiring needs. Candidates then participate in the hiring process just like every other applicants. Home Depot's HRMs meet with local One-Stop Career Centers to discuss their hiring needs. Meetings occur at either the local Home Depot stores or at the One Stop Career Centers. This program enables Home Depot to find candidates to fill entry-level and skilled positions such as garden, lot attendants, cashier and receiving associates. As a result of the NHP, local stores are finding it easier to work with the One Stops and Vocational Rehabilitation in partnership to recruit and hire qualified individuals with disabilities. Some of these partnerships include agencies such as: the North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Group, Abilities, Inc. (Florida), Workforce Services (Logan, Washington), Hired hands (Virginia Beach), Chesterfield Virginia Employment Services, Virginia Employment Commission, the Utah Department of Workforce Services, the National Ability Center (Utah), and many more. These partnerships have proven to be an effective way for local Home Depot stores to find qualified individuals with disabilities to fill vital positions in the stores.

Resources

- Career One-Stop - www.careeronestop.org
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce/Center for Workforce Preparation www.uschamber.com/cwp
- Virginia Business Leadership Network -- <http://www.vabln.org>
- U.S. Department of Labor Service Locator – www.servicelocator.org
- Richmond Career Advancement Center — 804-780-4146 .
- Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services – www.vadrs.org
- Virginia Department of the Blind and Visually Impaired – www.vdbvi.org
- Virginia Employment Commission – www.vec.va.us

Job Analysis Strategies for Enhancing Worker Productivity

Authors: Valerie Brooke, Howard Green, and Jennifer McDonough, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

In an era of unprecedented economic prosperity, the supply of available and qualified workers is at an all-time low. Not only do employers have to work harder to recruit and retain productive employees, they must strive to maximize the productivity of current workers to every extent possible.

Identification of Essential Job Functions

Identifying essential job functions is critical when managers develop high quality job descriptions. The first step in this process is developing a comprehensive job analysis. This analysis involves clearly identifying the purpose of the job, the number of persons performing it, and the skills critical for success. Facts about the importance of clearly identifying essential job functions are presented here:

There are many benefits that can be gained by establishing clear description of the primary essential job functions. These benefits include:

- The presence of objective standards determining the qualifications of job applicants.
- Increased understanding of the job.
- Consistent structure for job interviews.
- Clear and understandable job descriptions.
- Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and states' fair labor laws.

Evidence to be considered in determining essential job functions includes:

- The employer's judgement.
- Input and advice from a trained job analyst.
- A job description written in functional, outcome-oriented terms.
- The amount of time spent performing the job function.
- The consequences if the person in the job does not perform the function.
- The terms of a collective bargaining agreement.
- Importance of employee currently performing job duties.
- Observations of how the job and its functions are performed.

According to the ADA, reasons that a job function could be considered essential include:

- The position exists to perform the function.
- A limited number of employees can perform the function or among whom the function can be distributed.
- The function is specialized, and workers are hired for their expertise/ability to perform the job.

Screening the applicants for the Demands of the Job

Once the essential functions of the job have been identified and included in the job description, the second step is to establish standardized procedures for evaluating the job applicants' abilities to perform the job. Within the context of essential functions, it is important to consider the physical, intellectual, social, and environmental demands of the job in evaluating prospective workers. The Employment Expectations Questionnaire is an example of one comprehensive applicant assessment instrument. It is a rating scale that enables the employer to predict the applicant's job performance.

The five areas for predicting applicants' performance are:

- Reliability (e.g., attendance, punctuality, adherence to instructions)
- Production (e.g., quality and quantity of work, initiative, ability to complete tasks)
- Social Coping (e.g., ability to get along with others, working as part of a team)
- Organizational Coping (e.g., understanding of corporate culture, conformity with employer policies); &
- Safety (e.g., ability to assess risks, appropriate use of equipment)

(A copy of this tool can be found at www.worksupport.com)

Assessment of Workers' Needs for Reasonable Accommodations

The American workforce continues to age and strategies for including people with disabilities in all aspects of society continue to evolve. Therefore, understanding the importance of reasonable accommodations is increasingly critical for employers. The third step of a comprehensive job/person analysis is to establish a mechanism for helping workers with disabilities identify their needs for on-the-job accommodations. The Work Experience Survey is a structured interview that enables workers with disabilities to consider their needs for workplace accommodation in four areas:

1. Worksite Accessibility (e.g., getting to, from or around on the job; able to operate work station)
2. Performance of Essential Functions (e.g., getting the job done, quality and quantity considerations)
3. Job Mastery (e.g., deriving a sense of accomplishment, being in control of one's career)
4. Job Satisfaction (e.g., social relationships at work, compensation, working conditions)

(A copy of this tool can be found at www.worksupport.com)

Key Questions on Assessing Needs for Reasonable Accommodations

- **What is a Job Analysis?** The process of breaking down a particular job into its essential parts or functions.
- **How is a job analysis performed?** A job analysis is completed by observation, interviews, questionnaires, and then doing a structured analysis of the results.
- **Can a job analysis help improve productivity?** YES!! A job analysis can help to determine what new skills may be needed to expand the business and also identify skills for the staff already with the company. This information can assist with determining hiring and replacement needs, as well as creating a training plan.

- **Will a job analysis assist with employees' performance problem?** YES!! The job analysis identifies workers activities and functions and how the work is completed. Also, it examines the results of the work.
- **Is a job analysis beneficial to human resource managers?** YES!! The job analysis impacts all aspects of HR, such as recruitment and selection, compensation for specific jobs, training and staff development, performance evaluations, corrective action plans, health and safety issues, ergonomic assessments, and union relations.

In a 30-45 minute interview, the Work Experience Survey helps the employer and employee to compare the worker's disability-related needs with the essential functions and environmental demands of the job. Where the effects of a disability interfere with the worker's ability to do the job, a reasonable accommodation should be considered. Resources to assist in identifying and implementing on-the-job accommodations are listed below.

- Virginia Commonwealth University RRTC on Workplace Supports, 804-828-1851, www.worksupport.com
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 800-669-4000, <http://www.eeoc.gov>
- Millington, M. (1997). The Employment Expectations Questionnaire. New Orleans, LA: Louisiana State University Medical Center.
- Roessler, R. (1995). The Work Experience Survey. Fayetteville, AR: Arkansas Research and Training Center in Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Szymanski, E., & Parker, R. (1996). Work and Disability. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, 202-376-6200 <http://www.pcedp.gov/pcedp>
- Job Accommodation Network, 1-800-526-7234, <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu>
- United States Department of Labor (1998). The
- Occupational Information Network, 202-219-7161, <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet>
- Shrey, D., & LaCerte, M. (1997). Principles and Practices of Disability Management in Industry. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

State, Local, and National Resources

State and Local Resources

National Resources

State and Local Resources

Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services

8004 Franklin Farms Drive
Richmond, VA 23229
Phone: (804) 662-7000 Type: Office Voice
www.vadrs.org

Virginia Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired

397 Azalea Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23227-3623
Call DBVI Toll Free (Within Virginia) - 1-800-622-2155 (Voice/TTY) or (804) 371-3140 (Voice/TTY)
www.vdbvi.org

Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Suite 203
Richmond, Virginia 23229-5012
(804)662-9502 V/TTY | Toll Free (800) 552-7917 V/TTY
www.vddhh.org

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

202 N 9th Street # 9
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 786-0016
www.vaboard.org

Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

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P.O.Box 842011
Richmond, VA 23284-2011
804-828-1851
www.worksupport.com

Virginia Business Leadership Network

Virginia Business Leadership Network C/O SunTrust Bank
919 E. Main Street HDQ 2705
Richmond, VA 23219
866-624-3502
www.vabltn.org

Virginia Department of Human Resource Management

101 N 14th Street
12th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
804-225-2131
www.dhrm.virginia.gov

Virginia Workforce Network

Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
3rd Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
www.vwc.virginia.gov

Caliper Staffing

Main Office
512 Central Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23454
1-800-476-1306
www.caliper.net

4907 Fitzhugh Avenue
Suite 201
Richmond Virginia
804-762-9815
www.caliper.net

Abacus Staffing

3114 West Marshall Street
Suite A
Richmond, VA 23230
804-353-7271
www.abacusservice.com

DBTAC: Mid-Atlantic ADA Center

6300 East Virginia Beach Blvd.
Norfolk, VA 23502
TEL: 757-461-8007 Voice
www.adata.org

National Resources

Job Accommodation Network

JAN Program Co-Director
PO Box 6080,
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
Telephone: 304.293.7186 x135 (Voice)
www.jan.wvu.edu

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)

1629 K Street NW, Suite 503
Washington, DC 20006
202-457-0046 (V/TTY)
www.aapd.com

National Organization on Disability (NOD)

910 Sixteenth Street NW
Suite 600
Washington DC 20006
202-293-5900
www.nod.org

US Business Leadership Network (USBLN)

1501 M Street, NW – 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
www.usbln.com

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

1800 Duke Street • Alexandria, Virginia 22314 USA
(800) 283-SHRM | (800) 283-7476
www.shrm.org

DOL - Office of Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP)

Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue
Washington, DC 20210
866-693-7365
www.odep.gov

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)

Suite 330
4733 Bethesda Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
Telephone: 301- 654-8414
Fax: 301-654-5542
www.csavr.org

**U.S Chamber of Commerce
Institute for a Competitive Workforce**
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1615 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20062
Phone: 202-463-5525
www.uschamber.com/icw

Disability Information (Government)
www.disabilityinfo.gov

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**1314 West Main Street
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