



**LEAD CENTER**

**LEAD On! Quarterly Newsletter - June 2020**

## Newsletter

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Issue

June 28, 2020

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### **The American with Disabilities Act Anniversary Commemorates 30 Years of Progress**

Thirty years ago, President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the comprehensive civil rights legislation affirming that people with disabilities have the right to the same opportunities as everyone else across all aspects of society. The date, July 26, 1990, marked a turning point for Americans with disabilities, protecting them against discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state, and local government services (including public transportation), public accommodations (including private transportation and places such as movie theaters, stores, and doctors' offices), and telecommunications. The ADA has five sections, called "titles," that relate to these different areas of life. Collectively, they ensure people with disabilities have equal opportunity to economic self-sufficiency and full participation in America's workplaces and communities.

Later, the [ADA Amendments Act of 2008 \(ADAAA\)](#) amended the ADA and other disability

discrimination laws in response to a number of decisions by the Supreme Court. Specifically, the ADA changed the definition of the term "disability" by clarifying and broadening it, which, in turn, increased the number of people protected under the ADA and other federal nondiscrimination laws, including protections related to employment.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) announced plans for a yearlong recognition of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) centered around the theme, "[Increasing Access and Opportunity.](#)" Commemoration activities include events, speeches, and new compliance assistance resources. The ADA anniversary will also serve as a key component of this year's National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) observance in October.

With funding from ODEP, the LEAD Center is continuing its work to promote equal opportunity within the broader workforce system for youth and adults with disabilities, advance the development of inclusive career pathways, support economic advancement and financial literacy, and provide up-to-date data to the field on employment and related results for people with disabilities.

To learn more about ODEP's ADA commemoration, visit [dol.gov/odep/topics/ADA.htm](https://dol.gov/odep/topics/ADA.htm). To learn more about its disability-related policy work, visit [dol.gov/odep](https://dol.gov/odep).

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## **Increasing Access and Inclusion Through Apprenticeship**

Apprenticeship programs are a proven solution for employers seeking to recruit and hire qualified workers. They're also a promising career pathway for individuals from many diverse backgrounds, including people with disabilities. In that spirit, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) launched the Apprenticeship Inclusion Models (AIM) initiative in the fall of 2018. Its charge? To research, develop, test, and evaluate innovative strategies to support youth and adults with disabilities in existing apprenticeship programs.

Apprenticeship is a proven "earn-while-you-learn" model for preparing workers for living-wage jobs and long-term career paths, while supplying businesses with a highly skilled workforce. Registered Apprenticeship has seen a growth of 710,000 new apprentices since 2017, and the model is expanding into growth sectors in the economy, including information technology (IT), healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and transportation and logistics.

Through AIM, ODEP selected three intermediary organizations to pilot inclusive apprenticeship programs and practices to provide access to apprenticeship opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities.

- [Apprenti](#) is partnering with Microsoft and Amazon to ensure universal accessibility of recruitment and training practices for their technology apprenticeships.
- The [Healthcare Career Advancement Program \(H-CAP\)](#) is developing formal guidance,

technical assistance resources, and demonstration training sessions with two of their partner training sites.

- Working through the [Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership \(WRTP\)](#), the [Industrial Manufacturing Technician \(IMT\)](#) apprenticeship program is piloting the use of a new [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) tool as a means to expand access for people with learning disabilities.

[Social Policy Research Associates](#), [JFF](#), and [Wheelhouse Group](#) are providing technical assistance to the intermediaries.

AIM's mission is especially poignant given this year's commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which affirms the value America places on an inclusive workforce. The AIM initiative is a natural extension of that groundbreaking law, ensuring that people with disabilities have access to lifelong careers, while giving businesses an opportunity to access the talents of the more than five million Americans with disabilities in the workforce.

Individuals interested in learning more about the AIM initiative can explore information at <https://www.spra.com/aim/> and stay up to speed on promising practices and resources through the AIM newsletter.

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## The Top 10 Reasons for Visiting the DRIVE Website

1. **WIOA Disability-Related Reporting:** DRIVE is the only website where you can retrieve [WIOA Reporting](#) data related to people with disabilities in your state, county, or Employment & Training Administration (ETA) region.
2. **National Disability & Employment Data:** There is no other single website where you can get up-to-date [national](#) disability and employment data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Social Security Administration (SSA), SSA's Ticket Tracker, State Data: National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, Department of Labor Wage and Hour, and more.
3. **State-level Disability & Employment Data:** Click on [State Profiles](#) to access your state or territory and find up-to-date state-level data in the areas of vocational rehabilitation, mental health, workforce development, and more.
4. **State-level WIOA Profiles:** Click on the [WIOA Profile](#) for your state to find key sections from your WIOA State Plan and State Plan Modification pertaining to youth and adults with disabilities.
5. **State-level Policies & Initiatives:** Click [Policies and Initiatives](#) in your State Profile to find Executive Orders, Policies, Legislation, information about Systems Change initiatives, Partnership Agreements, and more that support employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

6. **Provider Transformation:** DRIVE has up-to-date [Provider Transformation Resources](#), sorted into categories like Leadership, Strategic Planning, Making it Happen, Funding, Data, and more.
7. **State Comparison Tool:** Use the [State Comparison Tool](#) to compare your state to another state in areas like State Data, information in your WIOA State Plan Profile, and state vocational rehabilitation rates and services (to be updated Summer 2020).
8. **Veteran Resources:** Explore resources on the [homepage](#) that promote employment for Veterans with disabilities.
9. **Most Integrated Employment Setting Self-Assessment and HCBS Employment Services Analysis:** The [Most Integrated Employment Setting State Self-Assessment](#) assists states in meeting their obligations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the HCBS Settings Rule to ensure people with disabilities in publicly funded employment services are served in the most integrated setting possible.
10. **Subscription Tool:** You can [Subscribe to Updates](#) to be notified when there are new and updated DRIVE resources and data to match your interests and preferences.

Visit the [DRIVE website](#) for **D**ata and **R**esources to **I**nspire a **V**ision of **E**mployment.

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## **Webcast: Get Empowered - Make the Most of Your Job and Improve Your Financial Security: Building Financial Solutions for People with Disabilities**

In recognition of America Saves Week, as well as the upcoming 30th anniversary of the ADA, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA), America Saves, and the LEAD Center hosted a webcast on Thursday, February 27, 2020 for people with disabilities who are getting ready to enter, or recently joined, the workforce to learn about ways to improve their financial security and achieve their financial goals. Experts from National Disability Institute (NDI) discussed ABLE accounts, which can help people save without threatening disability benefits, while an ODEP staff member gave a personal account about moving from disability benefits to employment and financial independence. EBSA provided information and resources on financial planning, addressing budgeting, managing debt, and determining a target retirement savings rate to make the most of workplace-provided retirement plans. Finally, America Saves shared how direct deposit can help with saving for financial goals.

[View the archived webcast; registration is required.](#)

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## **Webinar Series: Financial Literacy and Resilience in the Midst of a Global Pandemic**

The COVID-19 public health crisis presents a time of significant health and economic uncertainty

for many individuals with disabilities, as well as their families and communities. In response, and in recognition of Financial Literacy Month in April, the LEAD Center hosted a two-part webinar series that provided information, financial tools, and strategies that individuals and workforce professionals can use to navigate the urgent challenges ahead.

- **Part I: Financial Strategies for Workers with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Pandemic** On Wednesday, April 22, the LEAD Center team was joined by experts from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the New York Legal Assistance Group, and National Disability Institute (NDI) to share financial strategies that workers with disabilities can implement immediately.

[Presentation Slides](#)

[Webinar Transcript](#)

[Webinar](#)

- **Part II: How WIOA Can Support Workers Facing Economic Challenges** On Wednesday, April 29, the LEAD Center team welcomed representatives from workforce agencies, New York State's Chenango-Delaware-Otsego (CDO) Workforce organization and Michigan's Works! Southwest's Youth Opportunities Unlimited, to highlight a few key ways the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and workforce professionals can support workers facing economic challenges today and in the future.

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## **Webinar: Statewide Cross-System Training on WIOA Section 188: Broadening Access for People with Disabilities and Other Barriers to Employment**

A number of strategies help workforce professionals better serve people who experience barriers to employment, including disability. On Thursday, May 21, the LEAD Center was joined by representatives from Virginia's Equal Opportunity Office, WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker Programs and Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, to discuss such strategies in the context of WIOA's Section 188, which promotes equal opportunity and non-discrimination for people receiving services through the workforce system and its partners. Panelists shared approaches for effectively engaging workforce staff and partners across all four WIOA titles (workforce, adult education, vocational rehabilitation, social services [TANF/SNAP]) to implement equal opportunity practices. For example, all Virginia partners attend and participate in equal opportunity training and use it to strengthen cross-agency partnerships to collaboratively serve diverse job seekers, including job seekers with disabilities (e.g., co-enrollments and shared

employment outcomes).

[Presentation Slides](#)

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## **Webinar: Equal Opportunity and Accessibility for WIOA Partners during COVID-19 and Beyond**

During COVID-19, many American Job Centers and core workforce system partners have shifted to virtual services. COVID-19 has highlighted new accommodation needs for people with disabilities and the workforce staff who support them. State responses to these needs have varied. In order to offer support and provide examples of promising practices for workforce professionals in WIOA systems, the LEAD Center hosted a webinar that provided information, strategies, and resources around Section 188's equal opportunity and non-discrimination practices. On Thursday, June 18, the LEAD Center was joined by the Missouri State Equal Opportunity Officer and Senior Manager of Policy and Partnerships, who used current COVID-19-related and general frontline scenarios, to share effective accommodation practices and examples of equal opportunity policy implementation.

Please visit the Job Accommodation Network's COVID-19 site for additional accommodation and compliance resources: <https://askjan.org/topics/COVID-19.cfm>.

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## **On The Horizon**

### **Upcoming webinars:**

[Medicaid Buy-In Webinar - July](#)

[WIOA Reporting Webinar I - September](#)

[WIOA Reporting Webinar II - September](#)

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