



Opening Doors: Creating an Accessible Welcoming Environment for Job Seekers with Disabilities

NAWDP Conference: May, 2015

The LEAD Center is led by National Disability Institute and is funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor, Grant No. #OD-23863-12-75-4-11

TODAY'S SPEAKER

Elizabeth Jennings

LEAD Center, Assistant Project Director
National Disability Institute

The **National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities (LEAD)** is a collaborative of disability, workforce and economic empowerment organizations led by **National Disability Institute** with funding from the **U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy**, Grant No. #OD-23863-12-75-4-11.



3



LEAD CENTER MISSION

- ▶ To advance sustainable individual and systems level change that results in improved, competitive integrated employment and economic self-sufficiency outcomes for individuals across the spectrum of disability.

4 |



OBJECTIVES

Participants in this session will learn about:

- ▶ The disability community as a whole
- ▶ Disability etiquette basics
- ▶ Universal Design strategies
- ▶ Practical things you can do to create a welcoming environment for job seekers with disabilities
- ▶ Disability partners to support your efforts
- ▶ Resources to assist you

5 |



LEAD CENTER

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ An estimated 20% of the U.S. population are people with disabilities.
- ▶ Less than one-third of working age adults with disabilities are employed.
- ▶ People with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed and to live in poverty than any other single demographic group in the United States today.

|



LEAD CENTER



THE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

An individual with a disability is a person who

- ▶ Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- ▶ Has a record of such an impairment or
- ▶ Is regarded as having such an impairment



SECTION 188 OF WIOA – NON-DISCRIMINATION

- ▶ Section 188 regulations require that recipients of WIOA funds provide equal opportunities and do not discriminate on the basis of disability.
- ▶ Discrimination is prohibited in registration, provision of assistance, benefits, services, and training including core, intensive, training and support services.

9 |



LEAD CENTER

Disability is a natural part of the human experience.

Any one of us could become a member of this demographic at any given moment.



|



LEAD CENTER

DISABILITY ETIQUETTE BASICS

11 |



LEAD CENTER

USE PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

- ▶ When speaking about people with disabilities the rule of thumb is to always think about putting the **person** first.
- ▶ “People-first” language helps us remember that people are unique individuals and that their abilities or disabilities are only part of who they are.

12 |



LEAD CENTER

EXAMPLES OF PERSON FIRST LANGUAGE

Positive	Negative
Accessible or Barrier Free (such as parking or entrances, seating, restrooms, etc.)	Handicapped
Person who is hard of hearing	Partially Deaf, Hearing Impaired
Person who has low vision	Partially Blind, Vision Impaired
Wheelchair User	Wheelchair Bound
People or Person with Disability	Handicapped, the disabled, physically challenged, crippled etc
Person with a developmental/ intellectual disability	Retarded, mentally defective, mongoloid
Born with a disability.	Birth defect



BRING PARITY TO THE PARTY

- ▶ First and foremost – treat the individual as you would anyone else.
- ▶ Offer to shake hands when introduced. People with limited hand use or an artificial limb can usually shake hands and offering the left hand is an acceptable greeting
- ▶ Treat adults as adults. Look at the individual not their companion, address questions/requests/directions to the individual – even if they have an interpreter or support.
- ▶ ASK FIRST - If you offer assistance, (always ask before assisting someone), then wait until the offer is accepted. Then ask the individual with a disability for instructions on how you may assist them.
- ▶ RELAX. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as "see you later" or "Did you hear about this?" that seem to relate to a person's disability.



PLAN TO BE ACCESSIBLE

- ▶ Complete an accessibility review of your Center/facility, programs, and services.
- ▶ Have policies and procedures in place for meeting accommodation requests.
 - ▶ Remember to ask the person how to best meet their needs – the customer with a disability knows their own needs best.
- ▶ Review your technology tools and utilize assistive technology to ensure access to all.
- ▶ Consider Universal Design.



UNIVERSAL DESIGN



DOL DEFINITION OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

- ▶ The use of common strategies that reinforce the concept of an inclusive setting that welcomes diversity, including products and environments that are accessible to and useable by all.
 - ▶ The use of universal design strategies enables workforce staff to provide easier access, a welcoming atmosphere, and better customer service.
 - ▶ Universal design strengthens practices to serve better persons with disabilities and other challenges to employment (e.g., people with a wide range of learning styles, languages, educational levels, intelligences, experiences, and abilities).
 - ▶ Universal Design provides multiple and flexible methods to ensure that the learners acquire the information and knowledge they need.

17 |



LEAD CENTER

WHAT IS UNIVERSAL DESIGN (UD)?

- ▶ UD is a proactive approach that anticipates barriers people might face regardless of the cause and creates approaches to overcome or accommodate them.
- ▶ Developing services that are accessible to the largest number of people reduces the need for:
 - ▶ specialized assistance,
 - ▶ individualized accommodation requests, and
 - ▶ delays while accommodations are put into place.

|



LEAD CENTER

WHAT IS UNIVERSAL DESIGN?

- ▶ Universal Design is a strategy for making products, environments, operational systems and services welcoming and usable to the most diverse range of people possible.
- ▶ Its key principles are simplicity, flexibility, ease of access and efficiency.
- ▶ It is a lens through which all aspects of interaction can be viewed, and can be applied to products, services, physical environments, communications, technology, policies and practices.

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/media/newsroom/universal.htm>



EXAMPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

- ▶ Open/closed captioning
- ▶ Availability of screen readers
- ▶ Increasing font size on documents
- ▶ Curb cuts
- ▶ Voice activated applications
- ▶ Door handles that don't require grasping, use push-bars, and/or have automatic or electronic door openers



WHY IS UNIVERSAL DESIGN IMPORTANT TO THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM?

- ▶ Universal design makes access to services, jobs and learning accessible to all people, thereby serving the largest number of youth and adults, even without expertise in disability or knowledge of someone's specific disability.
- ▶ Job seekers are encouraged to use alternate methods to represent themselves and their skills, abilities and talents.

21 |



LEAD CENTER

UNIVERSAL ACCESS INCLUDES:

- ▶ Reasonable efforts and appropriate steps to ensure that recruitment, outreach and targeting efforts are accessible and promote the inclusion of people with disabilities (and others) in programs and activities.
- ▶ All activities being offered in the most integrated setting appropriate.
- ▶ Workforce professionals providing reasonable accommodations in the registration for and provision of aid, benefits, services and/or training.

22 |



LEAD CENTER

UNIVERSAL ACCESS ALSO INCLUDES:

- ▶ An obligation to communicate effectively, with generalized actions for anyone and the availability of specific support to meet an individual's needs.
- ▶ Architectural accessibility.
- ▶ Programmatic accessibility (e.g., the provision or redesign of equipment, design of classes, provision of assistive technology, use of alternative career assessments, provision of someone to assist, etc.)



PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT



ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Site accessibility is paramount-- and it's the law.
- ▶ Consider literacy and language needs of diverse audiences (e.g., include graphics, color-coding, larger print, etc.) of materials/posters/etc.
- ▶ Include people with disabilities in visuals, as part of the language regarding people served, and on staff.



LEAD CENTER

INTAKE/ORIENTATION

- ▶ Offer assistance and accommodations to all customers rather than just to a particular population.
- ▶ Make information on all services available to all customers, avoiding assumptions that certain people may not be interested in some services.
- ▶ Create on-line or video-taped versions of forms and materials, including orientation information.
- ▶ During intake/orientation for all customers, review their rights to equal opportunity and their right to file a complaint.



LEAD CENTER

PROGRAMS

- ▶ Eliminate unnecessary complexity and/or contacts to access/participate in programs.
- ▶ Provide choices (e.g., technology; physical settings; assessment approaches and tools; on-line, face-to-face and self-directed approaches; accommodations for learning styles; etc.)
- ▶ Require that partners use UD practices in formal partnership agreements (MOUs, contracts, etc.).



LEAD CENTER

STAFF

- ▶ Make disability etiquette mandatory training for all staff.
- ▶ Ensure all staff are aware of the culture of welcoming all people and have the tools they need to do so.
- ▶ Provide training for staff on use of assistive technology, materials in accessible formats, materials that address different learning styles and reading levels, captioning and interpretation services, etc.
- ▶ Identify internal “experts” who can provide assistance and creative problem-solving support as challenges arise.



LEAD CENTER

DISCLOSURE - THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

- ▶ Workforce Centers and other employment programs serve a high number of people with disabilities who do not disclose.
- ▶ ADA states that people with disabilities are not required to disclose their disabilities - but can do so at any time to request reasonable accommodations.

29 |



OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation and other disability service systems allow both systems to get credit for the customer's success.
- ▶ Advising customers that there are resources for individuals in receipt of SSDI/SSI.
- ▶ Offering Ticket to Work services.
- ▶ Partnering with Centers for Independent Living for training and other supports.

30 |



DISABILITY PARTNERS

- ▶ Vocational Rehabilitation Services - <http://askjan.org/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902>
- ▶ Mental Health Services - <http://www.nasmhpd.org/GeneralInfo/MHL.aspx>
- ▶ Developmental Disability Services - <http://www.nasddd.org/state-agencies/>
- ▶ Centers for Independent Living - <http://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory>
- ▶ Employment Networks - <http://www.chooseworkttw.net/findhelp/>
- ▶ Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Projects - <http://www.chooseworkttw.net/findhelp/>



The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) is a collaborative effort between the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

This project has been funded, either wholly or in part, with Federal funds from the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration under Contract Number DOLJ131A22067.

DEI Goals

The goal of the Disability Employment Initiative is to:

- improve coordination and collaboration among employment and training and asset development programs implemented at state and local levels, including the Ticket to Work Program, and
- build effective community partnerships that leverage public and private resources to better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes.



33

DEI Outcomes:

Data from SSA Ticket to Work and WIASRD

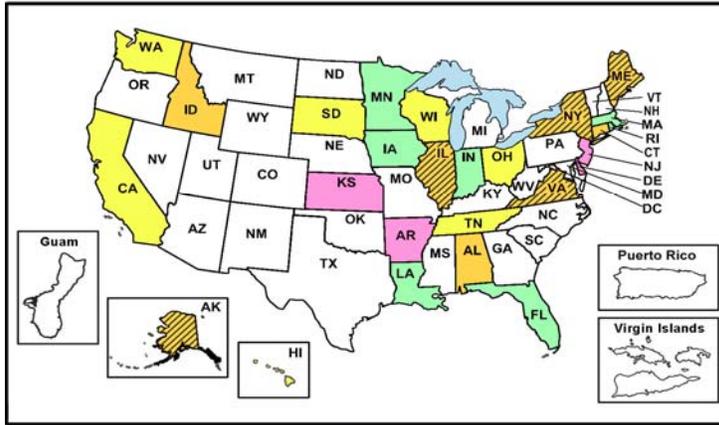
- Through the DEI, DOL is creating systemic change within the public workforce system by providing tools and strategies to promote the economic self-sufficiency of job seekers with disabilities.
- Under the DEI, the numbers come in two formats through:
 1. Ticket to Work Program, and
 2. The workforce system's performance outcomes



34

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

This map represents the twenty-six states that have entered into cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of Labor to implement strategic approaches to support exemplary employment services for Individuals with disabilities in the workforce development system. The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) is jointly funded and administered by the Department's Employment and Training Administration and the Office of Disability Employment Policy.



- Round 1 DEI Projects (Funded in 2010)
- Round 2 DEI Projects (Funded in 2011)
- Round 3 DEI Projects (Funded in 2012)
- Round 4 DEI Projects (Funded in 2013)
- Round 4 (Funded in 2010-Round 1 and 2013-Round 4)



Disability and Employment Community of Practice

provides disability and employment resources for the public workforce system, including promising practices to promote the positive employment outcomes of persons with disabilities. <http://disability.workforce3one.org>



American Job Center Access Guide:

<https://disability.workforce3one.org/command/view.aspx?look=2001405840432475887&mode=info&pparams=>

Workforce3One Communities - Login | Sign Up

Disability and Employment
Connecting the Pieces of the Employment Puzzle

HOME ABOUT RESOURCES DISCUSSIONS

Promising Practices - Access & Accommodations - Employer Resources - Front Line Staff Training - DEI Project - DPN Archive

American Job Center Access Resource Guide
Posted by Laura Gleneck - On February 27, 2014 (EST)

This guide was developed to provide American Job Centers and their partner agencies with relevant federal, state and local level information around their legal obligations and resources that can assist them in identifying and implementing effective accommodation strategies in serving and training job seekers who experience a disability.

Feedback
Was this resource useful to you?
Yes No
Download Now

Information
Modified On : February 27, 2014

DEI 37

American Job Center Access 30-Second Training Series:

<https://disability.workforce3one.org/view/1001403833465878171/info>

Workforce3One Communities - Login | Sign Up

Disability and Employment
Connecting the Pieces of the Employment Puzzle

HOME ABOUT RESOURCES DISCUSSIONS

Promising Practices - Access & Accommodations - Employer Resources - Front Line Staff Training - DEI Project - DPN Archive

American Job Center Access 30-Second Training Series
Posted by Laura Gleneck - On February 07, 2014 (EST)

As part of ongoing technical assistance, the Employment and Training Administration's DEI Technical Assistance Team, NDI, created a series of 30-Second Trainings that address Job Center Access. These trainings were developed for Disability Resource Coordinators and other workforce professionals to share with their Job Center staff and partners.

In addition to creating the American Job Center Access 30-Second Training Series, the NDI Team also created an American Job Center Access Resource Guide that will serve as a "take-away" or desk-top resource for Job Center staff and partners. This guide contains useful information and resources found in the correct answers of the American Job Center Access 30-Second Trainings and other national, regional, state, and local resources that can support Job Center staff and partners in serving job seekers with disabilities.

Feedback
Was this resource useful to you?
Yes No

Related Resources
1. "Disability" - What does it mean in the context of the American Job Centers?
Posted On : 02/07/14 09:21 AM
10. Where can you find a self-paced web-course for Job Center staff interested in discovering best practices for working

DEI 38

Resources

- ▶ **DEI Technical Assistance Project** <http://www.dei-ideas.org/>
- ▶ **Disability and Employment Community of Practice** provides disability and employment resources for the public workforce system, including promising practices to promote the positive employment outcomes of persons with disabilities. <http://disability.workforce3one.org>
 - ▶ For the American Job Center Access Guide: <https://disability.workforce3one.org/view/2001405840432475887/info>
 - ▶ For the American Job Center Access 30-Second Training Series: <https://disability.workforce3one.org/view/1001403833465878171/info>
- ▶ **ODEP** <http://www.dol.gov/odep/>
- ▶ **ADA Center Disability Etiquette Course -** <http://www.wiawebcourse.org/>



39

Resources

- ▶ **Job Accommodation Network (JAN) -** <http://askjan.org>
 - Provides technical assistance on providing accommodation, including a Searchable Online Accommodation tool, Effective Accommodation Practices Series and free trainings.
- ▶ **ADA National Network 10 regional ADA Centers -** <http://adata.org/Static/ContactUs.html>
 - Leader in providing information, guidance, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), tailored to meet the needs of business, government and individuals at local & regional levels.
- ▶ **State Assistive Technology Projects -** <http://www.resnaprojects.org/allcontacts/statewidecontacts.html>
 - Provide technical assistance on assistive technology, consultation, product demonstrations, equipment borrowing, and low-interest loans for individuals with disabilities.



**STORY FROM THE FIELD:
“NEVER SAY NO”**

41 |



LEAD CENTER

QUESTIONS?

42 |



LEAD CENTER

CONTACT INFORMATION

Elizabeth Jennings
Assistant Project Director

LEAD Center
National Disability Institute
1667 K Street, NW - Suite 640
Washington, DC 20006

ejennings@ndi-inc.org
www.leadcenter.org

