

HOT TOPICS

Employment for People with Disabilities

Did You Know ?

For any of us, meaningful employment and career opportunities are a source of self-esteem, socialization, and an important part of a person's identity, not to mention income and independence. Working people with disabilities are among the most unemployed and underemployed members of society and thus are a key untapped workforce.

- When we match the interests and skills of people with disabilities with the needs of businesses it's a win-win. In an economy where companies are facing extreme workforce shortages people with disabilities offer a great value proposition and employing them just makes good business sense.
- Offering opportunities for innovation in job training, internships, simple no-cost/low-cost accommodations, supports, and mentoring lead to competitive employment and increased financial self-sufficiency.
- Hiring people with disabilities makes financial sense. Businesses financially benefit through reduced workforce turnover as well as increased positive work environment and work ethic.
- Work incentive programs like Medicaid for Employed Adults (MEAD) allow people with disabilities in NH to be more self-sufficient and earn more money to support themselves as well as decrease unnecessary and costly bureaucracy which may be required to keep track of "In & Out" and "Spend Down" for Medicaid recipients who work.

<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/ombp/medicaid/mead.htm>

- Most people with disabilities can and want to work, but still have a hard time getting jobs. The employment rate for working age people with disabilities is 34.9%, about half the rate as those without disabilities 79%. NH has one of the largest employment rate gaps in the U.S. A big reason for this disparity is employer misconceptions and society's often low expectations for people with disabilities.

https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2016_AnnualReport.pdf

<http://fortune.com/2017/02/28/disability-employment-rank/>

- Paid employment/ community work experiences for students with disabilities during high school years are key factors in predicting the likelihood of paid employment during the adult years.

http://www.daddcec.org/Portals/o/CEC/Autism_Disabilities/Research/Publications/Education_Training_Development_Disabilities/etadd_2016/Southward.pdf

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Keith - “Associate of the Month”

For more than six years Keith has been working at Walmart. He was recently recognized as the “Associate of the Month” which is no surprise given Keith likes what he does, works hard, takes pride in his job, and enjoys helping customers.

Working is an important part of Keith’s identity and gives him a purpose. It also allows him to be more financially independent to the point where he no longer needs SSI benefits.

“They know I can do my job when they need me to do it. Walmart values my skills and hard work.”

~ Keith



Keith, proud member of the workforce

Keith says “When I get paid, I like having money in my pocket.” And he has career aspirations with the eventual goal of working in a retail management position. He knows additional training is required and he is prepared to work hard to achieve this milestone.

How Can You Help Increase Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities ?

- Make disability employment part of our state workforce development strategy.
- Find and support businesses hiring workers with disabilities.
- Be a model employer by increasing the number of people with disabilities working in the public and private sectors, and providing youth with disabilities increased career training.
- Support equitable educational and vocational policies where transition planning includes the development of work experiences and internships in natural business and community settings.

Enjoy more success stories; Watch these short videos

“An Untapped Resource: Employing Individuals with Disabilities in New Hampshire”
at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-I8v1forihg>

“Walgreens Welcomes Disabled Workers”
at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZPcKmf7lo>

“Business Owner Makes Money by Hiring Disabled Workers”
at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRHnlyJIodg>