

EARN

Employer Assistance and Resource Network

INFORMATION YOU CAN USE:

HAVE YOU VISITED THE NEW EARN WEBSITE YET?

Enhance your Business! Recruit jobseekers and veterans with disabilities!

The Employer Assistance and Resource Network Website (EARN) is your source for

- information on how to recruit job seekers and veterans with disabilities
- updates on the types of assistive technology available to enhance the productivity of your workers
- strategies for creating an inclusive and accessible workplace

Additional categories the website features include return-to-work, talent management, workplace culture, news and events, and related initiatives such as information on the Workforce Recruitment Program, which matches college students and graduates with disabilities for summer internships or employment.

Visit the new EARN website at www.askearn.org

EARN is a service of the National Employer Technical Assistance Center, which is funded by a cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) to Cornell University.

WRP HELPS EMPLOYERS FIND QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

Are you looking to diversify your workforce by hiring qualified individuals with disabilities? Have you been looking for a new resource for sourcing college students and recent graduates with Bachelors and advanced degrees?

Through the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), employers can recruit interns and full time employees from a database of over 2,200 pre-screened college students with disabilities. WRP staff will search the database to find candidates with the right skills to match available jobs. Over 245 candidates have already been hired this year.

To learn more and to take advantage of this free resource, visit <http://askearn.org/r-wrp.cfm> or contact an employment consultant at 1-855-AskEARN (275-3276).



MARTINEZ: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS MODEL EMPLOYER

Office of Disability Employment Policy Assistant Secretary Kathy Martinez testified on February 16, 2011 before the Subcommittee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs about "Improving Federal Employment of People with Disabilities."

Martinez discussed how ODEP and the federal government can be model employers for people with disabilities.

"Our goal is to make people with disabilities believe that the federal government is a place that will both welcome and nurture their talent so that they can ascend to the highest ranks of public service," stated

Martinez.

[Click here to read Ms. Martinez's testimony.](#)

[Click here to view the slideshow.](#)

NOW AVAILABLE: WEB-BASED TOOLKIT FOR FEDERAL AGENCIES TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy today posted an online toolkit comprised of resources to assist federal agencies in recruiting, employing and retaining individuals with disabilities. The kit is available at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/federal-hire/>

ODEP, in collaboration with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, designed a five-step process that agencies can readily follow to ensure an inclusive workplace for employees with disabilities. The steps are: employer training, creating a welcoming environment, recruitment, hiring and retention. Topics include "do's and don'ts" for interviewing, accessibility and accommodations, how to find technical assistance, and creating a pipeline of candidates.

"This online toolkit is designed to make it easy for federal employers to find and hire excellent workers who happen to have disabilities," said Kathy Martinez, assistant secretary of labor for the department's Office of Disability Employment Policy. "Federal agencies — and all employers — are strengthened when they include people with disabilities among their ranks."

ADA 2010 REGULATIONS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DOCUMENT NOW AVAILABLE

The Department of Justice has issued revised regulations for Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and created a new technical assistance document entitled, "ADA 2010 Revised Requirements: Effective Date, Compliance Date."

The document is available in [HTML format](#) and in [PDF format](#).

UPCOMING FREE WEBINARS FOR BUSINESSES

A four-part webinar series focusing on leading practices that advance disability inclusion within businesses is being offered through the Southeast ADA Center. Leaders in the field will share their experience, success, and practical methods for promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. The first webinar in the series took place on February 17, with the other three scheduled for April, June, and September. Webinars are free of charge. CEU and CRCC credits are pending approval.

Click on the links below to register:

Time: 1:30 - 3:00 PM EST/12:30 - 2:00 PM CST

Thursday, April 21, 2011: [Building the Corporate Business Case for Including Disability-Owned Businesses](#)

Thursday, June 16, 2011: [Creating a Model with Business: Common Sense Approaches to Access and Accommodations](#)

Thursday, September 15, 2011: [On-line Employment Applications and Website Accessibility](#)

DID YOU KNOW?...

THE TEN COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

OFCCP regulations implementing Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act require covered federal contractors and subcontractors to develop affirmative action plans to recruit, employ, and advance people with disabilities. Successful plans should include all major components, which are equally effective for employers who are voluntarily implementing affirmative action plans.

Among the ten major components that an employer should implement:

- Assign a company official to be responsible for the implementation of affirmative action activities.
- Prepare and post an equal opportunity policy statement.
- Review personnel processes to ensure job applicants and employees with disabilities are considered for all job vacancies and training opportunities, and are not stereotyped in a manner which limits their access to all jobs for which they are qualified.
- Review all job qualification standards to ensure that they are job-related for the position in question and consistent with business necessity.
- Make reasonable accommodations to the known functional limitations of otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities.

[To read all ten components and for further information, click here.](#)

PROFESSIONALS WITH ASPERGER'S BRING TALENT, CHALLENGES

What might be viewed as poor communication skills or a lack of teamwork could be a sign of Asperger's Syndrome (AS). HR professionals who understand the condition will have a greater ability to minimize workplace conflict and find ways to maximize the unique talents of those with AS.

According to the [Job Accommodation Network](#) (JAN), many people with AS object to being classified as "disabled" under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) even though the ADA and state laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of a disability. Thus, many might choose not to disclose their condition. However, there are steps that HR professionals can take to ensure that employees are comfortable disclosing their condition and to ensure a productive and focused workplace. For example, HR can educate managers about AS and their obligations under the ADA using resources on the JAN site and [elsewhere online](#). When discussing the condition, HR practitioners should emphasize that AS-related behaviors are a result of the different way that those with AS perceive themselves, others, and the work environment.

[To read more, click here.](#)

THE DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SITUATION:

FEBRUARY 2011*

[Employment rate of persons ages 16-64 with disabilities:](#) 26.3%
[Employment rate of persons ages 16-64 without disabilities:](#) 69.1%
Employment Gap: 42.8%
[Commonly Used Terms](#)

*In February 2011, the employment rate of people 16-64 years of age was 26.3% for persons with disabilities compared with 69.1% for persons without a disability. The gap between the employment rate of persons of 16-64 years of age with and without disabilities was 42.8%, not seasonally adjusted.

Are employers screening out the unemployed when they post new jobs by using a criterion to exclude them? 

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) addressed this issue in a public hearing held on February 16. This hearing is another example of the EEOC's interest in exploring how the difficult job market and economic climate might be affecting employment practices.

The practice of excluding the unemployed, and in particular the long-term unemployed, has become a growing trend in many fields. Currently, there is no law specifically protecting the unemployed and many studies are finding that minorities, individuals with disabilities and older workers are significantly represented in the long-term unemployed population.

Christine Owens, Executive Director of the National Employment Law Project testified that “at a moment when we all should be doing whatever we can to open up job opportunities to the unemployed, it is profoundly disturbing that the trend of deliberately excluding the jobless from work opportunities is on the rise.”

The EEOC also heard testimony from experts on the employers’ side including James Urban, a partner at the Jones Day law firm. Urban, who counsels employers, expressed doubt as to the extent of the problem. Fernan Cepero, representing the Society of Human Resource Professionals, told the Commission that his organization is not aware of this practice being in regular use.

[To read this article in full, click here.](#)

FEDERAL JOBS STILL AVAILABLE, DIVERSITY SOUGHT

With all the talk of hiring and pay freezes at federal agencies and consolidation of various functions of multiple agencies, it seems there won't be many federal jobs left. But future job seekers should not worry. As long as there is a federal government, there will be federal opportunities. While staffing and hiring may be affected at some agencies, the commitment to a diverse workforce will remain.

Several programs have been established to assist in developing a workforce that looks like the country's population, including Special Emphasis Programs, Selective Placement Programs, Employment Programs and Employment Initiatives. These are designed to assist in the recruitment and career advancement of veterans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, African Americans, Hispanics, disabled veterans, people with disabilities, women and, in some cases, military spouses.

[To read more, click here.](#)

SENATE ADDRESSES ‘SHOCKINGLY LOW’ EMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Members of the U.S. Senate’s Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee heard testimony from employers, government officials, disability advocates and those with special needs who discussed the barriers people with intellectual disabilities face in the workplace.

Congress is not actively pursuing legislation on the issue, but the hearing on March 2nd signals that legislative efforts may be forthcoming to enhance employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.

Currently, employment participation for people with intellectual disabilities is estimated to be as low as 23.9 percent. Senator Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, who chairs the committee, described this figure as “shockingly low.”

[To read this article in its entirety, click here.](#)

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