



Disability and Employment Boot Camp Strategies and Resources to Support Engagement

The Disability and Employment Boot Camp's objectives include supporting state and local areas to share, test, and implement new innovative ideas in an evolving workforce landscape. It is also to address the emerging needs of American Job Centers dual customer approach of serving people with disabilities and businesses during a period of economic recovery with emerging and innovative practices.

This document provides resources and strategies to support the six teams as they are working together to strengthen the American Job Center network's capacity to support individuals with disabilities to enter, stay in, or return to the labor force.

The resources are first broken down by general disability employment resources and then state/region.

- ◆ [Disability Employment Online Resources](#)
- ◆ [Resources by State/Region](#)

Disability Employment Online Resources

This is a good place to start. Scroll through the subcategories and then the resources within each category to find tools and strategies to support your partnership, support disability, and access and to conduct outreach to the workforce system and business community to help connect the disability employment dots.

The disability employment subcategories include:

- ◆ [General Disability Awareness for Serving Individuals with Disabilities](#)
- ◆ [Resources for Service Providers and Workforce Development](#)
- ◆ [Resources to Share with Employers](#)
- ◆ [Effective Partnerships: State Example](#)

General Disability Awareness for Serving Individuals with Disabilities

- ◆ Disability Sensitivity Training [Video](#): (4 min) - Learn strategies to become more disability aware through featuring examples of awkward communication intermixed with tips on more effective communication strategies.
- ◆ [Effective Interaction: Communicating With and About People with Disabilities in the Workplace](#) - Includes a list of suggestions on how to relate to and communicate with and about people with disabilities.
- ◆ [Effective Communication: Disability Awareness & Etiquette Guide for CILs and AJCs](#) - This guide has been developed to address effective communication directed to both customers and AJC colleagues who have disabilities. The guide utilizes a commonsense approach to providing

information about disability and communication in a format that is easy to read and understand and includes checklists, guides, and fact sheets.

Resources for Service Providers and Workforce Development

- ◆ [The Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center \(WINTAC\): Business Engagement & Employer Supports](#)
 - ◇ Business engagement is the interaction between employers, vocational rehabilitation (VR), and other workforce development and education organizations that results in measurable improvement in both parties' desired outcomes. Engaging businesses is a key component in improving and increasing employment outcomes for people with disabilities.
 - ◇ This online toolkit from [WINTAC](#) was designed with Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals in mind. However, much of the guidance provided can be applied universally.
 - ◇ Topics include:
 - ◆ [Models & Functions](#)
 - ◆ [Competencies & Skills](#)
 - ◆ [Information Management & Data Collection](#)
 - ◆ [Developing Useful Business Partnerships](#)
- ◆ [Explore VR's Employer Supports Toolkit](#)
 - ◇ This was designed for VR professionals but includes excellent guidance that can be applied universally. This toolkit provides ideas on how organizations can best support businesses that employ persons with disabilities.
- ◆ [EARN's Engaging Employers: A Guide for Disability & Workforce Development Professionals](#)
[The Employer Assistance & Resource Network for Disability Inclusion \(EARN\)](#) has put together a comprehensive guide to help disability and workforce development service providers understand how to build effective relationships with employers based on this "dual customer approach." It draws upon employer feedback about their experiences working with service providers and lessons learned on effective business engagement.
- ◆ WorkforceGPS: [Employer Engagement Cohort Resources](#)
 - ◇ In 2019, ETA brought together a group of workforce professionals across seven states to form the Workforce Innovation Cohort on Employer Engagement. This cohort developed resources that assist in answering the question: "*How might we more effectively engage employers with recruiting, hiring, and training job seekers with disabilities as an integrated strategy of the American Job Center service delivery?*"
 - ◇ Tools & Resources Include:
 - ◆ [Building Business Relationships Guide](#): This guide advises workforce professionals interested in building and improving relationships with businesses and employers.
 - ◆ [Interacting with Businesses: Guiding Questions Protocol](#): Developed for front-line staff, this tool provides sample responses and resources workforce professionals can refer to when answering commonly asked questions by employers.

- ◆ [Measuring the Success of Communications with Businesses](#): This resource shares guidance on how to measure success when working with businesses using meaningful and data-driven metrics.

Resources to Share with Employers

- ◆ [NOD's Disability Employment Best Practices](#)
 - ◇ The National Organization on Disability (NOD) has compiled a list of proven strategies and real-world examples highlighting successful disability inclusion in the workplace.
- ◆ [Disability: IN](#)
 - ◇ A business-led nonprofit dedicated to promoting the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace across the globe. While their main office is in Northern VA, 27 local chapters of Disability: IN are in operation across the US.
 - ◇ Disability: IN Led Initiatives and Resources:
 - ◆ [Disability Equality Index](#): The DEI Index is "...a comprehensive benchmarking tool helping companies build a roadmap of measurable, tangible actions towards disability inclusion and equality."
 - ◆ [Inclusion Works](#): Customized disability inclusion consulting for businesses.
 - ◆ [Disability Inclusion/Employment Best Practices Report](#): An annual report of best practices compiled from the DEI Index's top scoring companies.
 - ◆ [COVID-19 Response Series](#): A compilation of resources designed to support workplace disability inclusion efforts during the current pandemic.
 - ◆ [Business Case for Disability Inclusion](#): This research was a collaborative effort between Disability: IN, Accenture, and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD). Findings from this report highlight the many financial benefits.
- ◆ Work Without Limits (WWL) Resources for Employers: [Basics For Business: Finding A Comfort Level With Disability](#): This is a supportive tool for businesses seeking greater disability awareness.
- ◆ [Recruiting, Hiring, Retaining, & Promoting People with Disabilities: A Guide for Employers](#): Courtesy of the federal cross-agency initiative, [Curb Cuts to the Middle Class](#), this toolkit was developed to increase equal employment opportunities and financial independence for individuals with disabilities.

Effective Partnerships: State Examples

- ◆ **New York:** [The NY Alliance for Inclusion & Innovation](#)'s mission statement shares that this group exists "...to serve as a catalyst for positive change and leading resource for individuals with disabilities, their families, and the organizations supporting them."
 - ◇ [Transformation Project](#): This project gave organizations across NY that provide employment support services with access to effective tools and resources on changing employment narratives for people with disabilities into stories of career success.
 - ◇ [Employment Council](#): This council consists of disability employment support providers across NY who meet quarterly, focusing on building an "...advanced, cross-systems level approach to supported employment."



- ◇ [NYS Inclusive Workforce Alliance](#): Members of this alliance represent 22 different organizations dedicated to bringing full inclusion of persons with disabilities into the workplace. This cross-systems team works collaboratively to address state policies, regulations, and workforce initiatives.
- ◆ **Massachusetts**: MA's [Regional Employment Collaboratives](#) are partnerships between state agencies and disability support providers, businesses, the workforce development system, and other employment service organizations. Divided into four separate regions across the state, these local groups come together regularly to share job leads, troubleshoot barriers/challenges, hear presentations from local business leaders, and put together employment-related events (mock interviews, recruitments, etc.), and to learn from one another.
- ◆ **Missouri**: A collaboration between WIOA partners, Community Rehabilitation Programs, community-based organizations, and businesses/employers, [Nexus Groups](#) meet regularly to improve employment opportunities for Missouri residents with disabilities. By leveraging one another's resources, providers are able to strengthen their networks and better serve their community. For businesses, The Nexus Group operates as a "single point of contact" one can turn to when hiring needs arise. Members of the Nexus Group also collaborate to host special inclusivity events for local businesses, job fairs/recruitments, mock interview sessions, etc.