



## **New Opportunity: Disability and Employment Boot Camp**

The U. S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration Disability and Employment Initiative is pleased to announce a [new innovative technical assistance opportunity for states and local workforce programs within American Job Centers \(AJCs\)](#). The Disability and Employment Boot Camp is a team-based approach with intensive coaching support to address a specific need to help Americans with Disabilities get back to work in a “new normal.”

### **What is a Disability and Employment Boot Camp?**

An opportunity for a small team to address the emerging needs of AJCs' dual-customer approach of serving people with disabilities and businesses during a period of economic recovery. Team members will identify a disability and employment challenge area and participate in an intensive, accelerated learning process focused on current, real-time issues. Participating teams will tackle challenges with experienced coaches' support to develop and test ideas leading to a workable solution. The goal is to strengthen the capacity of the AJC network to support individuals with disabilities to enter, stay in, or return to the labor force as the country manages a national transformation in the way we work and the availability of work.

### **Who Can Apply?**

The Disability and Employment Boot Camp is recruiting 6-8 teams comprised of 5-7 WIOA partners, state or local board staff, AJC operators, other relevant partners in the community, and/or business representatives who have direct responsibility and capacity to influence, develop, and test workable solutions. Members should be those who are responsible for or have oversight on improving service delivery to the disability population and/or bridging those connections with businesses. Teams may consist of state or local staff, or a combination of both. Teams comprised of state and/or local representatives need the capacity to work within and across a network of colleagues and partners who can inform, support, and enhance their project work. Teams will be actively implementing solutions and should have the capacity to influence work processes within their organization(s).

Please reference the “Boot Camp Focus Areas” section below for more details for applicable Disability and Employment Boot Camp challenge areas.

### **Time and Commitment:**

Team members can anticipate Boot Camp activities will require time to actively engage with their coach, individually as a team, and with key informants to complete assignments leading to a viable product, strategy, or desired change. It is anticipated this will require up to 10 hours a month from October 2020 through March 2021. This might entail monthly coaching calls, researching, and working with your team and network to employ workable solutions.

### **Boot Camp Focus Areas:**

The world as we once knew it has changed dramatically with much still unknown. The Disability and Employment Boot Camp is designed to provide opportunities for your team to research, explore, inquire, and create a workable solution for a challenge that is impacting how AJCs provide safe, accessible services to adults and youth with disabilities. Renewing and establishing new partnerships with employers and the business community will be necessary as they re-open or re-invent job

opportunities. The Boot Camp will address the emerging needs of American Job Centers dual customer approach of serving people with disabilities and businesses.

Teams applying will select one of two disability and employment focus areas, emphasizing effective strategies to support American Job Centers:

- Providing services to individuals with disabilities; or
- Engaging business to promote employment of individuals with disabilities.

The application process will ask teams to clearly define the challenge they are addressing.

Topical Considerations: You have first-hand knowledge of the issues your state, AJCs and Businesses are facing as they manage recovery, a changing virtual work environment, and frayed social support systems. A few examples to jump-start your challenge identification might include:

- Low-skilled adults are: Two times more likely to be unemployed; three times more likely to be in poverty; four times more likely to be in poor health. What real-time LMI data is available to inform us about the new realities our customers face and aid in a strategic plan development?
- It is understandable that some customers may fear for their safety due to the pandemic and may not want to continue in job search or enrollment into training programs. What new protocols and communication can be put into place to support at-risk individuals with disabilities and employers/partners to encourage and assure re-engagement in employment support opportunities?
- Employment has changed as new jobs were created, demand increased in some sectors, but a significant number of job opportunities were lost or put on hold indefinitely. What options are available to employ virtual learning/training, gain work experience or build new partnerships with required partners to meet customer identified needs in new ways?

**Timeline:**

- Applications Due: September 11, 2020
- Selection Notifications Sent: October 5, 2020
- Kick-off Webinar: October 21, 2020 (tentative)
- Coaching Calls: November 2020 – March 2021
- Final Initiative Wrap-up: April 2021 (TBD)

**Application:**

- To review the application questions, visit the [Disability and Employment Boot Camp](#) page on WorkforceGPS. The application questions are included as a PDF under “Related Content” on the left of the page.
- When ready to complete and submit your application, click this [link](#). All applications are due by **September 11, 2020**.