

Integrated Employment: Webinar and Focus Group for Employers

Jonathan Martinis, JD

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**SHOULD PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
WORK IF THEY CAN?**

YES!!

WORK IS GOOD FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities who work don't just earn money, they are more likely to have:

- Higher self-esteem
- More friends
- A more active social life
- Greater integration and involvement in their communities

(- Boardman, et al, 2003)

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WORKING IS GOOD FOR EMPLOYERS

- Employees with disabilities have lower turnover rates, fewer absences, and contribute to a more diverse corporate culture (– Houtenville and Kalargyrou, 2014)
- Supports and Financial Incentives are available for hiring and retaining employees with disabilities!

THE PAST

- Hiring people with disabilities was seen as charity – “help the handicapped”
- While employers had a positive attitude about people with disabilities, they had lower expectations about what they could do
- This led to stereotypes and people with disabilities being offered menial, if any, jobs

(- Luecking, 2008)

Now

- Companies that hire people with disabilities have increased profitability, competitive advantage, and corporate image (– Lindsay, et al, 2018)
 - In the hospitality industry, workers with disabilities stay on the job 4.3 months longer than those without and fewer unscheduled absent days
- Diverse workforces, including people with disabilities, have better decision making processes, increased productivity, and better management - disabilities – (Houtenville and Kalargyrou, 2014)
 - In the hospitality industry, studies found that there were fewer accidents, injuries, and turnover when companies started hiring people with

BUT THERE ARE STILL BARRIERS

- There are still concerns about:
 - Being able to successfully complete the essential functions of the job
 - Being productive
 - The cost of accommodating people with disabilities

That cause employment of people with disabilities to lag far behind those of people without disabilities

(- Houtenville and Kalargyrou, 2014)

THE BASICS: EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- As of 2021, 19.1% of people with disabilities were employed – US Bureau of Labor Statistics
- People with disabilities make up 9.1% of the total workforce and 9.2% of the hospitality industry (– Houtenville and Kalargyrou, 2014)
- **Given their enhanced attendance and job loyalty, people with disabilities are a huge, untapped workforce**

THE BASICS: WHAT IS A “DISABILITY”

A person has “a disability” if they have:

- (1) A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life functions like sitting, standing, lifting, thinking, concentrating, communicating, or interacting with others
 - (2) A record of such an impairment or
 - (3) Are regarded as having such an impairment
- The Americans with Disabilities Act

GETTING TO WORK: WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO?

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, employers may not refuse to hire, retain, promote or otherwise treat people with disabilities differently if they are able to perform “the essential functions” of the job with or without a reasonable accommodation

- Americans with Disabilities Act

“REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS”

Changes to job responsibilities or functions that do not change the essential nature of the job.

- 56% of accommodations cost nothing, such as flexible hours
- Accommodations that do cost money typically are one time expenses costing \$500 or less such as assistive technology

(- Meinert, 2012)

OPPORTUNITY: THE JOB ACCOMMODATIONS NETWORK

- www.AskJan.Org
- Federally funded
- Provides free information, training, and resources to employees and employers on how to accommodate employees with disabilities as successfully and cost-effectively as possible

OPPORTUNITY: ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY LOAN LIBRARY

A repository of AT equipment open to Nevada residents with disabilities, professionals, and Nevada System of Higher Education students so they can borrow and use Assistive Technology that may be able to help them on the job and to live independently

<https://natrc15.wordpress.com/assistive-technology-loan-library/>

GETTING TO WORK: WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Purpose of the IDEA:

“to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and **prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.**”

20 U.S.C. § 1400(d)(1)(A) (emphasis added).

IN OTHER WORDS

- EVERY Special Education goal, objective, and service should help the student build skills and access supports that will help them work!

Opportunity: Special Education Transition Planning

In Nevada, transition services begin the year student turns 14:

- “[F]acilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, **vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment)**, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;”
- Be “based on the individual child’s needs, taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences, and interests; and
- Include “instruction, related services, community experiences, **the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives**, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.”

20 USC 1401(34)

OPPORTUNITY: WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

- Make contact with Special Education Director
- Provide information on jobs and careers
- Offer to provide employment and career services, such as unpaid internships or summer employment

GETTING TO WORK: VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program provides services and supports to help people with disabilities “prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment” - Rehabilitation Act, 2006, § 722 (a)(1)
- Nevada VR is: The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation:
https://detr.nv.gov/Page/Rehabilitation_Division_Bureau_of_Vocational_Rehabilitation

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND TRANSITION PLANNING: PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

- *Pre-ETS are available for ALL students with IEPs or 504 Plans*
- *Pre-ETS include:*
 - Job exploration counseling;
 - Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible;

- 34 CFR 361.48

OPPORTUNITY: PRE-ETS

- Contact local VR office
- Offer to be a part of PRE-ETS services to provide employment experiences such as mentorship, internships, or summer employment

OPPORTUNITY: SUPPORTS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES/APPLICANTS THROUGH VR

- If your applicants/employees have disabilities, they can receive supports and services from VR to help them perform their jobs or advance in their jobs

VR SUPPORTS FOR ADULTS

People with disabilities are eligible for VR if they

- Have a disability
- The disability makes it hard for them to work
- Want to Work

AND

- VR services will help them work.

People who receive SSI/SSDI are **presumed eligible!**

ONCE THEY'RE ELIGIBLE: PLAN TO SUCCEED

The Individualized Plan for Employment
(IPE)

Lays out the employment goal – the job the person wants to get and the supports and services they need to achieve the goal.

34 CFR 361.46

OPPORTUNITY: VR SUPPORTS FOR APPLICANTS/ EMPLOYEES

Some services that are available:

- Assessments
- Counseling
- Job search and retention services
- Assistive technology
- Medical and mental health care
- Tuition and supplies for education and training
- Supported Employment
- On the job training
- Job coaches
- Transportation
- “Maintenance” payments
- Services to family members (like Day Care!)

34 CFR 361.48

OPPORTUNITY: EXTENT OF VR SERVICES

- VR can provide supports until the person has reached his or her job goal, is successfully employed in the job goal for 90 days, and agrees that they are performing well in the job and that the job goal is appropriate.
- 34 CFR 361.56

OPPORTUNITY: VR BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

A free and full service program to help business owners and employers attract, hire, and retain qualified employees with disabilities.

The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation can provide consultation and supports regarding:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Accessibility
- Education/Training
- Financial Incentives

Contact: Bureau Business Development Manager

Southern Nevada: 702.486.0372

Northern Nevada: 775.823.8110

GETTING TO WORK: CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) provide services and supports that help people live independently in the community, avoid institutionalization, and “promote equal opportunities, self-determination, and respect

Find your local CIL at
<https://www.incil.org/locate>

OPPORTUNITY: CIL SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

- Independent Living skills training,
- Peer counseling,
- Psychological counseling,
- Housing services,
- Personal assistance services, and
- “Other services necessary to improve the ability of individuals with significant disabilities to function independently in the family or community and/or to continue in employment.

CILS AND EMPLOYMENT

- A majority of CIL employees must be people with disabilities
- So, they can provide peer support to help others learn from their life experiences.
- As a result, people can learn skills and access supports to be employed from people who have had to learn similar skills and access similar supports.

GETTING TO WORK: BENEFITS MANAGEMENT

- Many people with disabilities are afraid to work because they think they'll lose the medical and other supports they need to stay healthy and live independently. - Morris, Rodriguez, & Blanck, 2016.
- “[P]eople with disabilities cannot have a decent quality of life with limited financial resources and modest government support.”
 - Forbes Magazine, “Are Tax-Free ABLE Accounts The Right Financial Solution for People with Disabilities,” 12/4/14

THE “FISCAL CLIFF”

- To live independently, many people rely on public benefits like Medicaid, SSI, and SSDI
- To qualify for Medicaid/SSI, you generally may not have more than \$2,000 of countable assets. Earnings of more than the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level can also affect eligibility for these programs.

OPPORTUNITY: VR AND BENEFITS PLANNING

- VR agencies can provide *benefits counseling* to help people understand the impact working may have on their SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, and other public benefits.
- This can include budgeting, keeping track of assets, and reporting income to SSA
- VR can also refer people to and pay for Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICs) who can help employees manage their benefits

OPPORTUNITY: ABLE ACCOUNTS

- Like 529 Accounts for Education
- People are eligible if they receive public benefits (SSI/SSDI/Medicaid, etc) or WOULD BE if they applied
- People with disabilities can contribute up to \$15,000 per year into an ABLE account
- ABLE account money can be withdrawn, tax free, to pay for housing, transportation, healthcare and other expenses
- Money in an ABLE account **does not** affect eligibility for Social Security or Medicaid/Medicare (if there is more than \$101,999 in account, SSI benefits will be suspended, but still receive Medicaid).
- Nevada's ABLE Account:
<https://savewithable.com/nv/home.html>

GETTING TO WORK

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES: DISABLED ACCESS CREDIT

- A tax credit covering 50% of the eligible access expenditures in a year up to \$10,250 (maximum credit of \$5000).
- The tax credit can be used to offset the cost of undertaking barrier removal and alterations to improve accessibility
- Credit is available EVERY year the business spends money to remove barriers or be more accessible
- Eligibility: Small businesses that earn \$1 million or less or had no more than 30 full time employees in the previous year;

<https://adata.org/factsheet/quicktips-tax>

GETTING TO WORK

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES: ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS

REMOVAL TAX DEDUCTION

- Provides a deduction of up to \$15,000 a year for qualified expenses incurred to make their businesses more accessible to people with disabilities
- Eligibility: Any business of any size may claim the deduction
- Business may claim both the Disability Access Credit and the Architectural Barriers Removal Tax Deduction in the same year if they meet the requirements for each. To use both, the deduction is equal to the difference between the total expenditures and the amount of the credit claimed.

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/tax-benefits-for-businesses-who-have-employees-with-disabilities#:~:text=The%20Architectural%20Barrier%20Removal%20Tax,that%20normally%20must%20be%20capitalized.>

GETTING TO WORK

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES: WORK OPPORTUNITY CREDIT

- Provides eligible employers with a tax credit up to 40 percent of the first \$6,000 of first-year wages of a new employee if the employee is part of a “targeted group.”
- People with disabilities are a “targeted group”
- The credit is available to the employer once the employee has worked for at least 120 hours or 90 days
- Eligibility: All employers of all sizes

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/work-opportunity-tax-credit>

GETTING TO WORK

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES: SILVER STATE WORKS

Incentive Based Employment

- Provides up to \$2,000 in wage subsidies to employers who hire eligible individuals for full time employment (30 hours or more per week)
- People with disabilities are eligible
- Employer enters into agreement with Silver State Works outlining the responsibilities of the employer
- Upon satisfaction of requirements, the employer may receive a wage retention supplement – on average up to \$2,000 – payable in four equal increments of \$500 after each 30 days of successful employment, up to 120 days.

<http://www.silverstateworks.com/contact.php>

GETTING TO WORK

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES: SILVER STATE WORKS

On the Job Training

- Employers enter into a contract with Silver State Works that sets out the agreed upon wage, number of hours to master the tasks, and the maximum amount of reimbursement based on the wage paid.
- Employers will be reimbursed up to a maximum of 50 percent of the participant's initial agreed upon gross wage for the contract period and a maximum of 40 hours a week.
- Contract length will be based on the time estimated to complete the needed training.

<http://www.silverstateworks.com/contact.php>

REACH THE GOAL!

- People with disabilities having the “same opportunities for success and security as their nondisabled peers” – Gustin & Martinis, 2016
- Work is a critical part of the life experience and central to equal rights and opportunities.
- People with disabilities working is good for business!

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

The Guinn Center:

<https://guinncenter.org/>

Jonathan Martinis:

JGMartinisLLC@gmail.com

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**Thank you for joining
us!**