

Department of Labor Disability Employment Initiatives

Changing Systems/Changing Lives
National Grantee Meeting 2011

Federal Disability Programs & Resources Panel

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Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

- Provides national leadership on disability employment policy by:
 - developing and influencing the use of evidence-based disability employment policies and practices
 - building collaborative partnerships
 - delivering authoritative and credible data on employment of people with disabilities

“ A world in which people with disabilities have unlimited employment opportunities.”



ODEP Background

- Authorized by Congress in the Department of Labor's FY 2001 appropriation
- To recognize the need for a national policy that ensured that people with disabilities are fully integrated into the 21st Century workforce
- A sub-cabinet level policy agency in the Department of Labor

Status on Federal Employment Initiatives for Hiring & Retaining Individuals with Disabilities

- **President's Executive Order - July 26, 2010**
 - To hire more people with disabilities into the federal government
 - Every agency must be accountable to create goals and action plans for increasing the number of employees with disabilities and retained in federal jobs

Status Level (continued)

- **Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP/DOL)**
- Invited responses on how OFCCP can strengthen the affirmative action requirements of the regulations implementing Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Proposes for the first time that federal contractors, who create 25% of the available jobs in America, would be held to benchmarks for hiring qualified workers with disabilities

America's Heroes at Work



ks11491 www.fotosearch.com

- Supporting the Employment Success of Veterans with TBI & PTSD
- Nearly **one in five** Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars has depression and/or stress disorders
- **19%** of troops say they might have experienced a TBI, usually as the result of a powerful roadside bomb

Joint Leadership by ODEP & VETS America's Heroes at Work

- Collaboration with other DOL agencies
- DOD's Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program
- Veterans Affairs
- Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury Health Services Administration
- Defense & Veterans' Brain Injury Center
- Employer Support for the Guard & Reserve
- Uniformed Services Branches
- ED
- DOD
- DOT
- NIH
- Social Security Adm.
- Small Business Adm.
- Others

America's Heroes at Work Goals



- To help returning Service Members and Veterans with TBI/PTSD succeed in the workplace
- To increase awareness of TBI/PTSD employment issues among employers, the workforce development system, service branches, key military support systems, VSOs, and One-Stop Career Centers
- To create and raise awareness of resources that assist employers with accommodations for transitioning Service Members and Veterans with TBI/PTSD

America's Heroes at Work Website Features

- **Common employer questions** about returning Service Members with TBI and/or PTSD
- **Fact sheets** and **reference guides** on TBI/PTSD as they relate to employment
- **Web-based training tools** on making workplace accommodations for employees with TBI/PTSD
- **Promising practices** for helping those with TBI/PTSD succeed at work
- Veterans' employment **success stories**
- **Links** to additional TBI, PTSD, and Veterans' employment resources

PTSD & TBI Impact on Employment

- TBI/PTSD symptoms can sometimes cause difficulties as service men and women transition back into civilian life – especially in the workplace
- Simple workplace supports can help wounded and injured Veterans succeed on the job
- **Employment** can play a major role in recovery



Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)

- Meeting the needs of trauma survivors requires that organizations become “trauma-informed”
- A trauma-informed service system is one “whose primary mission is altered by virtue of knowledge about trauma and the impact it has on the lives of consumers receiving services” (Harris, 2004)



What Is Trauma-Informed Care?

- A strength-based service whose overall framework is based on:
 - an understanding of a responsiveness to the impact of trauma
 - emphasis on physical and emotional safety
 - opportunities to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment

Trauma-Informed Care

- Looks at all aspects of programming through a trauma lens, constantly keeping in mind how traumatic experiences impact consumers
- Organizations that are informed by an understanding of trauma respond best to consumer needs and avoid engaging practices that may cause additional harm

Women & Trauma Federal Partners' Committee

- Co-chaired by ODEP & HHS/SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services
- Initiated in April 2009
- To build awareness regarding women & trauma issues within the health and human services, justice, education, and workforce policy systems to coordinate all appropriate Federal agencies' services and supports for women in trauma issues, and
- To build capacity for identification and services for women & trauma within employer and workforce systems.



Women & Trauma Comm. (cont.)

- Membership from more than 20 Federal agencies (HHS, DOL, DOJ, DOD, ED, VA, State & ONDCP)
- Roundtable on Women & Trauma – 4/2010
- Monograph—2011
- Several trauma-informed actions or initiatives have resulted directly from the Women & Trauma Committee and Roundtable efforts

Women & Trauma Comm. (cont.)

- A national behavioral health organization launched a training program on trauma and trauma-informed care for more than 200,000 clinical service providers
- One state had plans to replicate the roundtable
- Several federal agencies were working to add requirements for trauma-informed practice into all RFPs

Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)

- Initiated in October 2010; \$22M (ETA/ODEP)
- To improve coordination and collaboration among employment and training and asset development programs implemented at state and local levels, including the Ticket to Work Program
- To build effective community partnerships that leverage public and private resources to better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes
- National T.A. & Evaluation component

DEI (cont.)

- AK, AR, DE, IL, KS, ME, NJ, NY & VA
(potential expansion to more states)
- Three-year cooperative agreements
- To build upon the One-Stop Career Centers' Disability Program Navigator initiative by hiring staff with expertise in disability and workforce development to serve as Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs)
- To support extensive partnerships, collaboration & service coordination across multiple workforce, generic & disability systems in each state—VR, MH, DD agencies, MIG-supported activities, ILCs, business leadership networks, community-based & non-profit organizations



Aging Workforce Initiative

- Priority area of ODEP Assistant Secretary
- Roundtable Held (12/13/10) *Disability Implications of an Aging Workforce: Developing an Action Strategy*
- Develop an action plan to identify and advance the implementation of policies and practices that support the employment of mature workers & their continued employment, especially those at risk of prematurely leaving the labor market due to health & wellness barriers
- Potential DOL Employment & Training Administration collaboration with SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program)



Workplace Flexibility Initiative

- Collaboration between ODEP & DOL's Women's Bureau (WB)
- To expand and promote the use of flexible workplace strategies for people with complex situations
- Workplace Flexibility Forum (Held 1/24/11)
- Roadmap of Recommendations
- Electronic Toolkit

*Corporate
Voices*



Integrated Employment

- Requires that policies or directives are in place that *expect, encourage, provide, create, and reward employment or enrollment in higher education* as the *first or preferred service option*
 - considered for youth and working-age adults with significant disabilities & for those with high-support needs
- Such policies are targeted to those individuals for whom job placement in the past has been limited or has not traditionally occurred. Self-employment can also be included as an integrated employment outcome

Integrated Employment (cont.)

- **Toolkit:** To provide individuals, families, caregivers, community rehabilitation providers & state policymakers contemporary strategies to improve integrated employment outcomes for those individuals with the most significant disabilities
- To facilitate implementation of an integrated service-delivery model at the State & organizational level, improving the employment outcomes, wages & benefits for individuals with the most significant disabilities



Integrated Employment (cont.)

- **Quality Work Environment (QWE) Initiative:**
ODEP partnering with the Committee for Purchase from People Who are Blind or Severely Disabled
- Utilizes aggregated best practices from AbilityOne nonprofit agencies to improve the employment experience & outcomes for workers employed by the AbilityOne program to improve integrated employment & promotional opportunities, wages, benefits & other critical elements to enable employees achieve their maximum employment potential

Add Us In Initiative

- Four cooperative agreements (\$2.4M)—Consortia led by:
 - Univ. of MO-Kansas City, MO
 - Community Partners-Integrated Recovery Network, L.A., CA
 - The Workplace Inc., Bridgeport, CT
 - Univ. of OK, Norman, OK
- More than 10M ethnic & racial minority Americans have long-lasting disabling conditions or impairments
- Individuals with disabilities from these groups are often at increased risk for unemployment

Add Us In (cont.)

- Create replicable models and strategies that can be used nationwide by businesses & employers
- Reach out to people with disabilities in their communities
- Build a national & local network of experts skilled in serving a diversity of individuals with disabilities
- Improve employment opportunities & outcomes for diverse people with disabilities



Job Accommodation Network

- Provides assistance in accommodating people in the workplace
- Accommodations assistance & resources
- Information on disabilities for HR professionals
- Legal resources & information
- Valuable links and resources



Workforce Recruitment Program

- Co-sponsored by ODEP & DOD
- Other agencies participate by providing recruiters & hiring students
- Database is a free resource of qualified candidates with disabilities for summer & permanent jobs nationwide

www.wrp.gov



Disability.gov

- Employment Education
- Housing
- Technology
- Health
- Civil Rights
- Transportation
- Benefits
- Community Life



One-Stop Career Centers' Veterans' Assistance

- **Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP)** representatives (1,127 reps nationwide)
 - Sponsored by DOL's Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS), the DVOP provides intensive services to individual veterans with barriers to employment
- **Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs)** (963 reps nationwide)
 - Facilitates the delivery of employment and training opportunities and services for veterans and conducts employers outreach on behalf of all veterans

Located in more than 3,000 One-Stop Career Centers

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

- A community service- and work-based training program for older workers
- Provides subsidized, service-based training for low-income persons 55+ who are unemployed & have poor employment prospects
- Resources for SCSEP Grantees Working with Persons with Disabilities—Disability 101 Etiquette/Definitions, Mental Health, Working w/ Employers & more
- Directed to front-line staff
- Administered by DOL's Employment & Training Administration (ETA)

ODEP Resources

- **America's Heroes at Work**

www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov

- **National Resource Directory**

www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov

Online tool for wounded warriors, transitioning Service Members, Veterans, their families and all who support them. Provides access to thousands of services and resources at the national, state, and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation, and community reintegration

- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**

<http://askjan.org/>

Helps people with disabilities enhance their employability and shows employers how to capitalize on the value and talent that people with disabilities add to the workplace

ODEP Resources (cont.)

- **National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth** www.ncwd-youth.info/

Assists state & local workforce development systems to better serve all youth, including youth with disabilities & other disconnected youth

- **Workforce Recruitment Program**
www.wrp.gov

ODEP Resources (cont.)

- **National Employer Technical Assistance Center**
www.askEARN.org
Provides employers with confidential, no-cost consultation, technical assistance & resources to support their diversity & inclusion efforts by integrating employees with disabilities into the workplace
- **Women & Trauma Federal Partners' Committee**
ODEP and Center for Mental Health Services (HHS/SAMHSA) Co-chairs
- **Campaign for Disability Employment**
www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/
PSA, Outreach Toolkit, Drop-in Articles, and much more

Questions?

