



ILLINOIS EMPLOYMENT FIRST UPDATE 11/7/2017

Hello Employment First Community of Practice,

I have great news to share!

Illinois has been selected to receive Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) as a Vision Quest (VQ) State for the 2018 fiscal year under the United States Department of Labor's, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP). Vision Quest States will be eligible to receive up to 100 hours of technical assistance to support the state in achieving its goals as an EFSLMP state. Illinois will participate in the following VQ Working Group: Mental Health and Employment. ODEP indicates that they are very pleased with Illinois' success as a former Core State and has recognized Illinois as a leader in achieving results that have positively impacted the lives of the individuals served through its service delivery systems. The 2018 ODEP Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program VQ award marks Illinois' 4th year as a grantee in this prestigious program. Thank you for all of your dedication-this success is not possible without the work all of us accomplish daily around Illinois.

Let us continue to challenge ourselves!

I put this in the Employer Corner but I wanted to pull it out for a wider audience to highlight the fact that we all need to challenge our unconscious biases-this is something we should to revisit because it helps us grow and adapt to new circumstances. Challenging our beliefs about systems, people and possibilities makes us more hopeful and solutions-focused.

Video Highlights Unconscious Bias

Employers may be missing out on the skills and talents of people with disabilities because of assumptions and stereotypes that they aren't even aware of that can impact their hiring decisions. Now, a new video from the U.S. Business Leadership Network, an EARN partner, helps employers understand how such "unconscious bias" may affect the way they select employees. The video highlights the efforts of companies such as EY and Kaiser Permanente to identify, and challenge, their own assumptions in order to discover the positive impact hiring people with disabilities can have.

[Watch the video.](#)

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1. WEBINARS

EFSLMP Webinar-Theme: Strategies for Securing Competitive Integrated Employment for Veterans

Topic: Honor, Pride and Military Culture in the Context of Providing Employment Supports to Veterans

November 8, 2017, 3:00-4:00 ET

<http://www.econsys.com/efslmp/copwebinar/>

The Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) Community of Practice (CoP) Webinar Series is structured to augment the technical assistance areas of primary focus in Employment First systems change (Capacity Building, Provider Transformation, School-to-Work Transition, Employer Engagement, and Policy/Funding Alignment). CoP participants will benefit from national subject matter experts (SMEs) presenting information and resources to support Employment First efforts.

During this month's CoP webinar, participants will learn about increasing employer outcomes for veterans. Richard Toscano and Maj. Kenneth Phillips will explain how to transition veterans to civilian employment. Webinar participants will learn about concrete steps your state can take to increase employer engagement and the labor force participation rate of veterans.

Webinar Objectives

- Military training promotes clarity, commitment, strength and mission above all else; asking for and receiving help is perceived as weakness. How do we effectively work with veterans who have been taught to "tough it out" when met with challenges?
- Transitioning from HELPER to HELPEE as former military can be quite an adjustment. Veterans eventually may recognize that they might need assistance through reasonable accommodations, customized employment and other vocational supports to be invited and accepted into the workplace. How can vocational programs and employment support resources most effectively interface with veterans who are resistant or mistrusting of clinical and vocational supports to attain civilian employment?
- Veteran to veteran supports and partnerships are critical to successfully transitioning veterans into civilian employment. How can vocational providers, state and federal workforce organizations, including the VA, better collaborate to support veterans to be successful in their career pathways?

Special Guests: Richard Toscano M.Ed. Rehabilitation and Major Kenneth Phillips



Rich is nationally recognized on issues related to employment, rehabilitation and recovery for persons labeled with significant disabilities. He has over 40 years experience promoting meaningful employment outcomes as Community Development Director for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health in the late 1970s; founder and executive director of a private, non-profit organization focusing on career development through the 1980s and early 1990s; public service faculty at University of Georgia University Center for Excellence on system's development and employment during the early 2000s; national consultant on research and system's change initiatives to the Northeast Program Evaluation Center at Yale/New Haven VA Central Office for veterans with mental illness, post traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injuries, while also serving as a consultant on customized employment initiatives to the U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Disability Employment Policy through 2010. Most recently, Rich has worked with Central Office of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center – Research & Development Office as a Mentor Trainer & National Program Evaluation Specialist for integrating evidence-based and customized employment practices into the VA's vocational programs.



Major Kenneth Phillips, is a native of Tuskegee, Alabama. He is a University of Alabama graduate, Commissioned Officer in the United States Army Reserves, CEO of the non-profit Priority Soldier Inc., owner of Phillips Communications LLC, and a gifted athlete and a devoted family man.

Major Phillips currently serves in the US Army Reserves as the G-6 Deputy Director for the Deployment Support Command in Birmingham Alabama. The G-6 provides IT services and support for over 4000 users in 68 organizations. Major Phillips has over 20 years of military service and is an Iraq War Veteran, where he served from 2008 to 2010.

Upon his return to the United States, he began to see the reality and difficulties of adjusting back to a normal working day and to a civilian lifestyle. His experiences inspired him to start Priority Soldier Inc., a nonprofit organization that assists struggling veterans. Priority Soldier provides support services and training to help Veterans overcome homelessness, unemployment and other obstacles.

Action Required: Seeking Input in Advance

We want to ensure that our speakers address your concerns so here's your opportunity to submit input in advance. Submit your questions or comments [here](#) no later than October 31, 2017.

Webinar Procedures

1. In advance of the webinar, we strongly recommend you test your connection and review the [Adobe Connect Instructions and Troubleshooting Tips](#)
2. On the day of the webinar, enter room here: <http://www.econsys.com/eflsmp/copwebinar/>
3. In the GUEST field, enter your **first and last name followed by state abbreviation (i.e., Jeff, Smith, DC)**.
4. To connect your audio, follow the prompts to enter your phone number (direct line), and the system will immediately call you back (see [step-by-step instructions](#))

If you are unfamiliar with Adobe Connect, please review these [tips](#) before participating.

- **Free Webinar: “Disability Inclusion Planning Toolkit Workshop”**

Join us for a free webinar to learn about The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington’s Disability Inclusion Planning Toolkit, an interactive online tool that provides a roadmap to help all organizations advance inclusion of people with disabilities.

This webinar is for everyone, not just those who work at faith-based organizations.

November 8th, 1:30pm Eastern Time / 12:30pm Central Time / 11:30am Mountain Time / 10:30am Pacific Time

Live Captioning Provided. Free of Charge. [RSVP Required*](#)

Speaker: Lisa Handelman

Recognizing that we must be a welcoming and inclusive community for all by expanding the ways in which individuals are invited and encouraged to participate in Jewish life, Federation developed an Inclusion Planning Toolkit to help all organizations on their journey to full inclusion. The toolkit is designed to be used as a fluid, developmental guide to assist secular and non-secular organizations through every stage and area of the inclusion journey, ranging from attitudinal changes to physical accommodations. Made up of two components—the Discussion Guides to spark conversation, and the Self-Assessment Activities to generate a Customized Resource Package—the toolkit is intended to build a collaborative environment around the topic of inclusion. We recognize that while each organization may be at a different stage of this journey, progressing towards full inclusion strengthens our entire community.



Speaker: Lisa Handelman is the Community Disabilities Inclusion Specialist at The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, Department of Jewish Life and Learning. She has worked in Jewish education and inclusion for over 20 years, including leadership roles at the Yeshiva of Greater Washington, SULAM, CESJDS and at Capital Camps where she designed and led the nationally recognized inclusion-based program for the past 13 summers. Lisa’s commitment to inclusion in is based on the proposition that inclusion benefits and strengthens the Jewish community.

Tuesday, November 14, 2:00 p.m. ET

Lisa Handelman

- **Webcast: Give Us Your Challenging, Your Bewildering, Your Unusual ADA Issues**

This Job Accommodation Network (JAN) webcast will be an open forum to discuss a variety of issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and employment. Participants will have the opportunity to submit their questions in advance and have them addressed during the session. The discussion will also include trending ADA topics and answers to the most challenging questions that JAN receives. [Learn more about JAN webcasts.](#)

- **Webinar: Accommodations, Work and Disability**

[Register for the webinar on November 15 at 1 pm ET.](#)

Please join [Matthew McCord](#) from the [Job Accommodation Network](#) (JAN) to explore the types of services JAN provides, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) interactive process, and a review of some of the types of accommodations that can be requested under the ADA. The webinar is being provided by the Amputee Coalition.

Highlights include:

1. What services does JAN provide that could help you?
2. What is involved in the ADA interactive process?
3. What are some common workplace accommodations?

About the speaker:

Matthew McCord joined the JAN staff in April 2015, where he fields questions from employees and employers regarding their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He also helps identify solutions for people with mobility impairments.

Join the webinar on **November 15 at 1 pm Eastern** to learn about their newest programs, services, materials, and resources.

[Register for the webinar.](#)

- **Webinar: Working with Parents with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Families - Strategies and Solutions for Social Workers**

The NIDILRR-funded [Parents Empowering Parents: National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities and Their Families](#) will host a webinar, [Working with Parents with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Families: Strategies and Solutions for Social Workers](#), November 14th, 3-4pm ET. This webinar will provide information about how to best work with parents with intellectual disabilities and their families, including the definition of intellectual disabilities, background information on parents with disabilities, the application of disability law in the child welfare system, strategies for supporting families, and how to conduct accessible and appropriate parenting assessments. Registration is free and required.

- **For Tuesday, November 14th – Social Capital and Customized Employment – What is Social Capital and Why is it Important for Customized Employment?**

Employment First and Customized Employment are the first and preferred options for going to work! Discovering the Personal Genius™ of an individual is the first step towards Customized Employment. Through this process, we learn about the skills, interests, and abilities of the individual, as well as, learning who are their connections to the community and social capital.

This presentation features Marsie Frawley from Griffin-Hammis Associates and Cindi Swanson, LSSW. Marsie Frawley has been a Senior Consultant at Griffin-Hammis Associates since 2011. Marsie has vast experience in Employment First policy and implementation in Illinois, with expertise in the Social Security Administration work incentives. She is the author of the "Ready for Business Guide: Self Employment for People with Disabilities." In 2011, she

was named the recipient of the Social Security Administration's Region V Skip Kruse Memorial Return to Work Award.

Cindi Swanson lives with her family in Naperville and has been an advocate for people with disabilities since the birth of her middle son, Adam. Adam, who has Down syndrome, is now a young adult. Adam completed transition with Naperville District 203 and works in the community. The transition planning that was done for Adam has resulted in a busy and fulfilling work and social life. Cindi has her MSW in Social Work and worked for many years as a Resource Specialist for the Illinois Life Span Program. Cindi is co-founder of Naperville Works, an organization created to increase capacity for the employment of people with developmental and other disabilities in Naperville. Her husband, Art, is a founder of We Grow Dreams, a greenhouse opened by a group of parents to provide opportunities for job training and employment for their children and others with disabilities. Cindi also happens to have a visual impairment so can speak to many important transition and other disability issues from a personal perspective.

Invitation :

Please register for The Arc of Illinois Lunch Webinar - Social Capital and Customized Employment - What is Social Capital and Why Is It Important? on Nov 14, 2017 12:00 PM CST at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8509922416366778115>

- **Employers as Partners & Mental Health Wellness at Work**
Wed., Nov.15, 2017 from 3:00 to 4:15 PM ET

Beth Butler, JD, Executive Director of the North Carolina Business Leadership Network, is a Human Resource professional with over 20 years of experience providing expertise to Fortune 500 companies on Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations and disability inclusion strategies. She has specialized skills in promoting full accessibility to support the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workforce, the marketplace, and supply of workers. She is an individual with a disability and will address making the workplace a successful environment for employees with mental health conditions.

- **PEAT Talks: Creative Recruiting Strategies for the Digital Age**

Thursday, November 16, 2pm ET

Digital recruitment is key to an effective overall recruiting strategy, but for many, the question is where to begin. In this webinar, **Jessica Miller-Merrell** of Xceptional HR Consulting will discuss how recruiters and HR leaders can prioritize their digital recruiting options and move these efforts forward by developing smaller initiatives designed to drive change and establish buy-in. Participants will learn the top five creative recruitment strategies for the digital age, from programmatic ad buying to video recruitment efforts—and how to ensure that these strategies reach all job candidates, including those with disabilities.

[Register Now](#)

K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan
Institute on Employment and Disability



- **#BeyondInclusion Twitter Chat Exploring Wage Inequalities Among Individuals with Disabilities**

Thursday, November 17, 2017
2-3 pm (ET)/11 am-12 pm (PT)

Partners:

American Psychological Association - Public Interest Directorate (@APAPublicInt)
Dr. Susanne Bruyere of the Yang-Tan Institute, ILR School (@Smb23M)
Mathematica (@MathPolResearch)

Did you know that workers with disabilities earn 63 cents on the dollar compared to their non-disabled colleagues? Wage inequalities for individuals with disabilities emerge early and persist through the span of one's career regardless of their educational achievements and/or training.

Join us for a 60 minute Twitter chat on **November 17, 2017 at 2:00 PM (ET)** as we discuss the root causes of these inequalities, their impact on individuals with disabilities, and what each of us can do to support those affected and reduce the wage gap.

Dr. Susanne Bruyère, Director of the Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at the Cornell University ILR School, will join the American Psychological Association and Mathematica Policy Research for this critical discussion.

Use **#BeyondInclusion** to join the conversation.

- **Families as Partners - A Rich Resource**
Tues., Nov. 21, 2017 from 3:00 to 4:15 PM ET.

Kathleen Considine, MSW, is Vice President of National Alliance on Mental Illness of Massachusetts, Facilitator of Plymouth NAMI group, Advocate, and statewide Trainer for NAMI MA. She also has worked with NAMI NJ. Ms. Considine will share her perspectives on the value of employment for individuals and their families, her experiences as an advocate and guidance for families on how to best support family members, with mental health conditions for successful employment.

- **Employment Collaboratives - Providers & Employers Join Forces**
Wed., Nov. 29 from 3:00 to 4:15 PM ET

Hugh Bradshaw, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Creative Workforce Solutions, Coordinator for the Employment Collaboratives for the state of Vermont; Stephanie Marks, Riverside Community Care, Employment Collaborative Coordinator for the state of MA; and

David Smith, Director of Employment for the Seacoast Mental Health Center, Portsmouth, NH, will introduce us to this effort in New England.

They will share the history of Employment Collaborative development and the profound impact it has had on matching job seekers with disabilities to meaningful employment. It is a three-way win: the job seeker becomes employed; the employer has access to qualified employees; and the providers help their job seekers to be successful – all occurring in an efficient exchange. Presenters will describe how the Collaboratives function, challenges that occurred, elements of success, and how trust is developed and maintained. They will address what it has meant to persons with mental health conditions in particular.

- **Free Webinar: “Diverse Consumers with Disabilities - Nielsen Research on the Economics of Households with Disabilities”**

Join us for a free webinar to learn about Nielsen’s innovative research into the economics of prevalent, diverse consumers with disabilities.

November 29th, 1:30pm Eastern Time / 12:30pm Central Time / 11:30am Mountain Time / 10:30am Pacific Time

Live Captioning Provided. Free of Charge. [RSVP Required*](#)

Speaker: Kim Jackson Senior Program Manager ADEPT SE Co-Lead Nielsen

The fact that 1 in 5 Americans live with some form of disability has a significant economic impact on our country. However, that impact isn’t always easy to quantify, qualify or study. Nielsen’s Omnibus Panel Survey is studying that impact and quantifying those connections.

Did you know that that more than one in three households have a member that identifies with a disability? Did you know that over 4 million households have a family member living with an intellectual disability or that over 20 million households with a loved one with a mobility impairment? These are just some of the fascinating data points revealed Nielsen’s recent research. Please join us for an informative and unique look at the economic choices made by diverse people with disabilities.



Kim Jackson

Speaker: Kim Jackson is the Senior Program Manager and ADEPT SE Co-Lead for Nielsen. Nielsen is a global information, data, and measurement company focused on studying what people watch, listen to and what they buy. At Nielsen, Jackson has filled multiple roles from Program Manager to Technology Manager to Senior Program Manger in Engineering. She has worked to develop & evangelize vision, strategy, execution & simplification of internal metrics, reporting, analytics, and services.

She has also participated in the Data & Analytics Community of Practice Council and is the current co-lead for Nielsen’s Southeast region ERG (employee resource group)

RECAPS

Watch the entire CEEWB 2017 Hot Topics Webinar Series online!

Did you miss one of CEEWB's 2017 Hot Topics webinar? That's ok; we've posted the recordings!

[CLICK HERE to view CEEWB's webinar recordings.](#)

[Shaping the Future: What States and Counties are Doing to Align WIOA, TANF, and SNAP Employment & Training](#) (June 15, 2017)

Advancing the integration of our human services and workforce development systems can at times feel like a daunting task. This webinar highlights concrete steps taken by two states and one county to better align their WIOA, TANF, and SNAP Employment & Training programs.

[Tying Infrastructure Projects to Training and Employment for Marginalized Populations: The Port Covington Example](#) (July 20, 2017)

This webinar will highlight an innovative public-private partnership underway in Baltimore, Maryland. Sagamore Development Company, LLC, ICF Strategic Consulting and Communications, the Maryland Department of Human Resources, and local non-profits are partnering on a 266-acre redeveloping project called Port Covington. It is an unprecedented economic opportunity and brings with it an obligation and commitment to ensure that the economic and employment benefits of Port Covington are shared with Baltimore City residents. The webinar will focus on the project's workforce strategy to meet the demands of employers and increase employment of Baltimore City residents, including hard-to-serve individuals; specific examples of innovative employment, training, and entrepreneurial models being developed, tested and applied; and how Port Covington's approach might be replicated across the nation.

[Evidence-Based Strategies for Serving Jobseekers and Workers with Disabilities and Chronic Health Conditions](#) (August 24, 2017)

Human services and workforce development programs have a critical role to play in supporting work for people with disabilities and chronic health conditions. Fortunately, there are many evidence-based strategies for helping these clients prepare for, attain, and retain employment. This webinar will highlight three such strategies being implemented in Washington and North Carolina.

[Employer Perspectives on Workforce: Skilling Up Workers for Available Employment](#) (September 21, 2017)

Employment is always the best path out of poverty and starting a career will not happen without acquiring skills necessary in a new technical economy. Employment with a career

pathway in mind not only has significant economic benefits but also helps build a peer network, avoid social isolation and loneliness, and in families with children sets a positive example for kids. In this webinar, representatives from three of America's largest employers will discuss necessary middle skills, career and technical education curriculum appropriate to actual job availability, and public private partnerships.

2. LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES/MOCK INTERVIEWS



**FREE
TRAINING**

**For Human Services
Professionals & Family Advocates!**

**SPACE
IS LIMITED.
CEUs AVAILABLE!**

The Arc of Illinois and The Arc of the United States are offering a free training to help you build skills in future planning.

Learn how to support aging caregivers in planning for the future of their son or daughter with an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD).

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2017

TO REGISTER VISIT: <http://bit.ly/2y7sg94> or scan the QR code

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: Monday, December 4, 2017

Registration and a light breakfast will start at 8:45 am.
The training is from 9:15 am–5:00 pm.



LOCATION:

University of Illinois at Chicago's
Disability, Health and Social
Policy Building
1640 W. Roosevelt Road
(First Floor Auditorium)
Chicago, IL 60068
* Parking garage at
915 S Paulina St, Chicago, IL

- ▶ A stipend will be provided to the first 30 participants.
Contact Meg Cooch at meg@thearcofil.org with
questions or to inquire about registration.

AUTISM WORKFORCE

Three Open Spots on Thursday Nov 30th

Legendary suit manufacturer [Hart Schaffner Marx](#) (HSM) has now hired 6 individuals with autism in four different departments under the [Autism Workforce](#) model and continues to provide opportunities in the HR department.

Three mock interview spots are available on Thursday November 30th.

9:00am

10:00am

10:30am

Please contact Amy Willer, amy@autismworkforce.com if you, your school, or organization are interested or want to learn more.

Mock Interviews allows participants the opportunity to gain necessary and practical interview experience with an HR professional. All interviews are conducted by the HSM HR Manager and the Autism Workforce staff are part of the process.

The Mock Interview Process:

- *Send Resume Prior to Interview*
- *Fill out HSM Job Application Prior to Interview*
- *Can Interview for Shipping Department, Customer Service or IT Department*
- *Interviews are 30-minutes in Length*
- *Interview Schedule and Story are Provided Prior to the Interview*
- *Written Feedback Will be Provided*

We look forward to helping your children and students succeed.

David, Ashley, Amy and Quinna
Autism Workforce Team

- **Apprenticeship Open House With Painters District Council**

The Painters District Council No. 30 will be holding an open house on November 15th from 10 am - 1 pm for a guided tour of their state of the art training center. This event is an opportunity to learn more about apprenticeship opportunities through the North Central Illinois Finishing Trades Institute. For more information on registration, you can access the event's flyer [here](#).

- **Town Hall on Transition**



Town Hall

ON TRANSITION

from adolescence into adulthood.

November 18, 2017

2:00 PM - 4:30 PM

4:00 PM RESOURCE FAIR

2:00 PM PANEL DISCUSSION

FOLLOWED BY Q & A

Northbrook Public Library

Auditorium

1201 Cedar Ln.

Northbrook, Illinois 60062



Our panelists will provide you with options to think about and explore as you or your family begin to plan for adulthood.

Our guiding principle is simple: we believe that all individuals with autism, regardless of the level of support needed, should be able to live fulfilling lives with purpose, dignity, choices, and happiness.

Who Should Come? Transition-aged students with autism ages 12 through 21, family members, school staff, adult service system professionals, and policy makers.

**Every transitioning student/family who attends will receive a printed copy of the Autism Speaks Transition Tool Kit*

RSVP now at <http://act.autismspeaks.org/transitiontownhallnorthbrook>

For questions email colleen.shinn@autismspeaks.org

3. MANAGED CARE INFORMATION FOR PROVIDERS

Dear Providers,

As you are probably aware, the Managed Care Program for Illinois residents enrolled in Medicaid is being revamped. The upgraded Managed Care Program is scheduled to begin launching on January 1, 2018. The Department of Healthcare and Family Services is issuing a series of Provider Notices to help you understand the coming changes.

Please review the first four Provider Notices [here](#) (all four are dated 10/30/2017).

We encourage you to sign up to receive relevant provider notices from HFS, including additional notices about managed care. You can subscribe to HFS Provider Notices by entering your email address at <https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalProviders/notices/Pages/ProviderEmailSubscribe.aspx> and selecting your provider type from the list. You will receive an email asking you to confirm your subscription, which you must do in order to complete the process.

4. EMPLOYER CORNER

- **Apprenticeship Works for Inclusion**

The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy recently published a new guide on disability-inclusive apprenticeship, titled "Apprenticeship Works for Business: A Guide to Building Inclusive Workplaces." The guide is part of a series that introduces employers, young people, educators and service providers to the benefits and opportunities of apprenticeship programs for underrepresented groups, including people with disabilities. Combining classroom instruction with on-the-job training, apprenticeship programs help bridge skills gaps and bring new and more diverse talent into the workplace. [Read the guide.](#)

- **Disability Equality Index**

Registration for the 2018 Disability Equality Index® (DEI) is now underway. Sponsored by the American Association of People with Disabilities and the U.S. Business Leadership Network, an EARN partner, this confidential benchmarking tool offers employers an opportunity to receive an objective rating on their disability inclusion policies and practices. Companies that score 80 percent or higher are named "DEI Best Places to Work." The deadline to register is January 12, 2018; registered companies will then receive access to the survey the week of January 22, 2018 to begin submission of responses. [Learn more about the DEI.](#)

- **Disability Employment Tracker**

The 2018 Disability Employment Tracker is now open! Sponsored by the National Organization on Disability (NOD), this tool provides companies a confidential assessment of their disability inclusion policies and practices, providing tailored reports in four areas. Completion is required

to be considered for DiversityInc’s annual list of *Top 10 Companies for People with Disabilities*, and top scorers have the opportunity to earn an “NOD Leading Disability Employer Seal.” The deadline to submit is March 1, 2018. [Learn more about the Tracker.](#)

- **Video Highlights Unconscious Bias**

Employers may be missing out on the skills and talents of people with disabilities because of assumptions and stereotypes that they aren’t even aware of that can impact their hiring decisions. Now, a new video from the U.S. Business Leadership Network, an EARN partner, helps employers understand how such “unconscious bias” may affect the way they select employees. The video highlights the efforts of companies such as EY and Kaiser Permanente to identify, and challenge, their own assumptions in order to discover the positive impact hiring people with disabilities can have. [Watch the video.](#)

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ASKEARN.ORG SPOTLIGHT

Inclusion@Work

*EARN’s new website feature, **Inclusion@Work: A Framework for Building a Disability-Inclusive Organization**, outlines seven core components of a disability-inclusive workplace, along with strategies for achieving each of them. **Inclusion@Work** was developed with input from a range of employers with exemplary track records in disability employment, and in collaboration with EARN’s funding entity, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy.*

[READ MORE](#)



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT



TIAA Fruits of Employment Initiative

EARN recently published a new Employer Success Story about TIAA’s Fruits of Employment (FoE) initiative. To meet the staffing needs of its farmland investments, TIAA forged a partnership to encourage

and facilitate the recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities to work on custom-farmed properties. Since its inception, the FoE initiative has grown to include six locations and more than 30 full-time workers.

[READ MORE](#)

- [Accessible Technology and the Employment Lifecycle](#)

From recruitment to retirement, technology plays a key role in each phase of an employee's time with your company. This **new short video** explores the connection between the six phases of employment and where accessible IT comes into play.



[Read more](#)

- [How and Why to Make VPATs a Priority](#)



When it comes to accessibility, the most common form of information exchange between vendors and their customers is the **Voluntary Product Accessibility Template ([/glossary#VPAT]VPAT)**. And at Elsevier, they've found that making these reports an organizational priority simply makes good business sense.

[Read more](#)

- [Making Tech Fields Accessible](#)

While jobs in the technology industry have grown exponentially, they're not always accessible to applicants with disabilities—and **Ather Sharif** is on a mission to change that.



[Read more](#)

- [7 Principles of Inclusive Design That Put People First](#)



The Paciello Group's **Henny Swan** argues that it's time to shift our thinking away from compliance by recognizing how accessible technology can enable people by design.

[Read more](#)

5. RESOURCES

- ***Mental Health and Wellness Through Civic Participation*** outlines the steps to getting involved in government as one aspect of participation in community life that fosters community inclusion. This guide describes what civic and political engagement is all about, and provides a list of reasons on why involvement in civics is important. It goes through steps outlining how to identify your own personal views, choose a political party, find reputable news sources, adopt a level of engagement, and connect with your government directly. Also inside this document is a detailed section on voting that includes information on voter eligibility requirements along with steps to registering, including where to vote, how to choose a candidate, and what to do when you get to the polls. Through this guide, providers and consumers alike will be reminded that their thoughts and opinions have value, and there are many different way to express them and be heard!

[Click here](#) to access the document

- **NCD Publishes 2017 Disability Policy Progress Report**
The [National Council on Disability \(NCD\)](#) has published [National Disability Policy: A Progress Report](#) (PDF), the 2017 edition of NCD's report of the state of disability policy in the US. The central topic of the 2017 report is poverty, a common thread that continues to compound many of the core concerns of people with disabilities. The report focuses on seven factors that are crucial for enhancing the economic independence of people with disabilities in society: education, employment, financial assistance and incentives, healthcare, long-term services and supports, transportation, and housing.
- **Accessibility, Usability, and Design of Wearables and Wirelessly Connected Devices**
The NIDILRR-funded [Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Inclusive Technologies \(Wireless RERC\)](#) has published a brief, [Accessibility, Usability, and Design of Wearables and Wirelessly Connected Devices](#) (PDF). The brief draws on findings from a review of representative applications and examples of currently available wearable and connected technologies. The brief explores the potential impact of inclusive design principles on future device development which can enhance accessibility, increase independence and community participation of people with disabilities, and support a more inclusive society.
- **Capacity Building Research Featured in Special Issue of Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education**
Research from the NIDILRR-funded [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Entities](#) is featured in a [special issue of the journal Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education](#). The open access issue features nine articles examining the capacity building perspectives and strategies of minority-serving institutions conducting research in disability, rehabilitation, independent living, and health. The articles also discuss findings on rehabilitation outcomes among individuals from traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic groups that warrant such capacity-building efforts.

- The University of Illinois at Chicago's Center on Integrated Health Care & Self-Directed Recovery announces its [interactive map of U.S. mental health peer certification programs](#). Use the map to learn the status of each state's certification program, whether its peer services are Medicaid-reimbursable, and the number of specialists trained thus far. Visit the map here: <http://www.center4healthandsdc.org/map-of-national-peer-training-programs.html>. The Center is funded by NIDILRR and CMHS.

- **Kessler Survey on Supervisor Perspectives**

At an event in Washington, D.C. last week, the Kessler Foundation released the results of a new national survey that explored the workplace experiences and perspectives of supervisors related to disability inclusion policies and practices. Conducted in collaboration with the University of New Hampshire's Institute on Disability, the study is the first to look at disability inclusion from this perspective, offering new information to assist employers, policymakers and others in designing policies and programs that foster more inclusive workplaces. [Learn more about the Kessler survey](#).

- **Taking Count of Disabilities and Inclusion**

A first-of-its-kind study published by the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI) in partnership with U.S. Business Leadership Network (USBLN) – an EARN partner – reveals that more workers in the U.S. than previously thought have a disability, specifically 30 percent of college-educated employees working full-time in white-collar professions. The report, titled *Disabilities and Inclusion*, also highlights how the workplace experiences of employees with disabilities in Brazil, Germany, India, Japan and the U.K. differ from those in the U.S. [Learn more about the CTI report](#).

6. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

1. **International Paper Foundation** – (*Deadlines & Eligibility vary by IP Location*) The IP Foundation provides grants to nonprofit charitable organizations classified under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Service Code. The Foundation's grants will support projects or programs focused on the IP Foundation's Signature Causes – children's education, hunger and health & wellness, and disaster relief.
2. **Brady Education Foundation Grant** – Grants to USA Nonprofits to Improve Educational Outcomes for Underserved or Minority Children (*Stage 1 Proposal Due Date 12/01/2017*). The Brady Education Foundation Grant is offering funding for up to one year to USA nonprofit organizations for the development of new programs or the assessment of existing programs that promote educational success for disadvantaged children.
3. **Follow this link to find available State Grant opportunities**

<https://www.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Grants/SitePages/CSFA.aspx>