

GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON THE  
**EMPLOYMENT OF**  
**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**Disability Awareness Day**  
**Vermont State Legislature**

**General Overview**  
**March 2016**

# General Overview Topics

- Mission & Vision
- Organization
- GCEPD Partners
- Dispelling Myths
- Spirit of ADA Award Winners 2014 & 2015
- Key Activities 2015 - 2016
- Questions?

# Mission & Vision

**Mission**: Promote equal employment for all citizens of Vermont by advising the Governor on current issues affecting employment of people with disabilities, and through partnerships among business, government and people with disabilities.



**Vision**: Barrier Free Employment for All Vermonters.

# Organization

**The GCEPD is a permanent, standing committee of the Governor, established by the State legislature in 1963.**

## Full Committee Membership (23 members)

- 17 volunteer members and 6 mandated members
- 1 part-time Executive Coordinator
- Full committee meets 6 times/year

## Executive Committee Membership (5 members)

- Chair, Vice Chair, Executive Coordinator and a minimum of 3 other GCEPD members appointed by the Chair
- Executive Committee meets 6 times/year

# GCEPD Partners

- Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VocRehab)
- Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS) – initiative through Vermont Agency of Human Services
- Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) – Workforce Development Division and Veterans State Grant
- State of Vermont Office of Veteran’s Affairs
- Vermont Association of Business Industry & Rehabilitation (VABIR)
- U.S. Veteran’s Administration
- Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, Special Olympics Vermont, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors, Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights, Vermont Center for Independent Living, and many others
- Business representatives across Vermont

# GCEPD Helps to Dispel Myths

## **Myth: “It costs too much to accommodate people with disabilities.”**

- Fact: A 2007 report from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) stated that most workers with disabilities (74%) do not require special accommodations; most accommodations are easily obtainable.
- Fact: A 2006 report from JAN reveals that 20% of employer accommodations cost nothing and 80% cost less than \$500.
- Fact: There are tax credits (e.g. Work Opportunity Tax Credit, WOTC) and other incentives to encourage employers to hire people with disabilities. *(Source: Vermont Department of Labor, 2013)*

# GCEPD Helps to Dispel Myths

## **Myth: “They can’t be expected to perform their jobs like other people.”**

- **Fact**: DuPont found that 85% of the people they employ with disabilities had an average or above average attendance rate compared to people without disabilities. *(Source: Auburn pub.com, 11/28/06)*
- **Fact**: Turnover rates for employees with disabilities are substantially lower than for the general workforce – 8% annually for people with disabilities vs. 45% overall. *(Source: Washington Mutual Insurance study, 2010)*
- **Fact**: Industry reports consistently rate workers with disabilities as average or above average in performance, attendance and safety. *(Source: U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2008)*

# GCEPD Helps to Dispel Myths

**Myth: “Once I hire a person with a disability, I’m on my own.”**

There are many organizations that offer support to employers that hire people with disabilities. Some examples include:

- Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation /CWS
- Vermont Department of Labor
- Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Job Accommodation Network
- Vermont Association of Business, Industry & Rehabilitation
- Disability & Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) – New England ADA Center
- Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council

# 2015 Spirit of ADA Award Winners

The following 12 organizations across Vermont were recognized in October 2015 for their exemplary practices in the recruiting, hiring and retaining of people with disabilities:

- **Barbara Barber, Label Shopper – Bennington**
- **Betsy Bailey, Little Dippers Doodle Children’s Ctr. – St. Johnsbury**
- **Sandra Kuc, Vermonsters Childcare and Learning Ctr. – Rutland**
- **Executive Chef Ray Wood, Capitol Food Court (The Abbey Group) - Montpelier**
- **Simon Labranche and JP Labranche, Labranche Lumber Company – Newport**
- **Neomi Lauritsen, Springfield Food Co-op – Springfield**
- **Michael Underwood, Walmart – St. Albans**

# 2015 Spirit of ADA Award Winners (Cont'd)

- **Mike Rainville, Maple Landmark Woodcraft – Middlebury**
- **Matt Farnham, Hannaford Food & Drug – Morrisville**
- **Carolyn Stoughton, The Gathering Place – Brattleboro**
- **FedEx Ground – White River Junction, VT/West Lebanon, NH**
- **Holly Laber, Green Mountain Electric Supply – Colchester**

The five 2014 Spirit of ADA Award winners include the following:

- **Mark Hastings, Bond Auto Supply – South Burlington**
- **Lonnie Lisai, Lisai's Chester Market – Chester**
- **Brian Walbridge, VT Dept of Buildings & General Services – Springfield**
- **Scott Found, The Home Depot – Bennington**
- **Bill Matteson, A.W. Perkins – Rutland**

# 2015-2016 GCEPD Accomplishments

## GCEPD Activities

Conducted outreach at State Capitol (House/Senate leadership, 6 legislative committees, etc.) on Disability Awareness Day (March 2015)

Presented at Springfield Rotary Club (March 2015)

Commissioned study by Leadership Champlain student team (via Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce) to draft recommendations for updated GCEPD communications/outreach plan (Jan 2015; presented to GCEPD April 2015)

Met with Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to review Include! online educational materials focused on inclusion of people with disabilities for use in schools (June 2015)

Participated in Vermont Job Expo, providing information at our booth and participating in 17 business-to-business networking sessions (May 2015)

Presented at Bennington Rotary Club (Oct 2015)

Expanded 2015 National Disability Employment Awareness Month outreach - TV, radio, print – 3 TV interviews, 6 radio spots, 7 newspaper articles (Oct 2015)

# 2015-2016 GCEPD Accomplishments

## GCEPD Activities

Expanded Spirit of ADA Award recipients from 5 to 12 organizations; gave special recognition award to State Rep. William Botzow (Oct 2015)

Participated in 2016 NEK Veteran's Summit at Lyndon State College (March 2016)

Conducted outreach at State Capitol (House/Senate leadership, 9 legislative committees, etc.) on Disability Awareness Day (March 2016)

Participated in press conference with Governor Shumlin to announce Executive Order to make VT State government a model employer for hiring people with disabilities (March 2016)

Held first advisory meeting at Capitol with Spirit of ADA Award winners from 2014 & 2015 as part of Disability Awareness Day (March 2016)

Developed articles and brochures for print publication; update marketing materials and presentations for "road shows" and events

Increased social media presence (Facebook, website) ; updated GCEPD website ([www.hireusvt.org](http://www.hireusvt.org))

# Upcoming 2016 GCEPD Activities

## Upcoming GCEPD Activities

Participating in Vermont Job Expo, providing information at our booth and participating in the business-to-business networking day (May 2016)

Continue to expand 2016 National Disability Employment Awareness Month outreach - TV, radio, print, etc. (Oct 2016)

Recognize 12 Spirit of ADA Award winners for 2016 (Oct 2016)

Further increase outreach efforts on benefits of hiring persons with disabilities (chambers of commerce, business groups, govt entities, legislature, networking events, etc.) – scheduling 6-8 “road show” presentations (Summer/Fall 2016)

Increase social media presence (Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) and update website

Explore outreach efforts to address employment challenges for military veterans

Explore outreach efforts to address employment challenges for mature workers

Conduct advisory meeting with past / present Spirit of ADA award winners; gain insights and best practices

# Questions?

If you have questions or need information pertaining to the GCEPD or how we can assist you, please contact us.

**Christopher Loso**

**Chair, GCEPD**

**802-734-0063**

**[closo97@yahoo.com](mailto:closo97@yahoo.com)**

**Neal Meier**

**Executive Coordinator, GCEPD**

**802-279-1373**

**[neal.meier@myunion.edu](mailto:neal.meier@myunion.edu)**

You can also check out our website at **[www.hireusvt.org](http://www.hireusvt.org)** or on our Facebook page – **Governor’s Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities.**