

GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON THE
EMPLOYMENT OF
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

General Overview

March 2015

General Overview Topics

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- Challenges – National & Vermont Statistics
- Dispelling Myths
- Promoting Hiring & Retention Strategies
- Key Activities 2014 - 2015
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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

- 17 volunteer members and 4 mandated members
- 1 part-time Executive Coordinator
- 4 ad-hoc members
- Full committee meets 6 times/year

Executive Committee Membership

- Chair, Vice Chair, Executive Coordinator and 2 other members
- Executive Committee meets 6 times/year

GCEPD Partners

- Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Agency of Human Services (VocRehab)
- Vermont Association of Business Industry & Rehabilitation (VABIR)
- Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS)
- Vermont Department of Labor (mandated member)
- Veteran's Administration (mandated member)
- 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

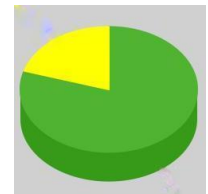
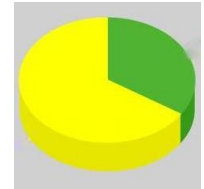
Challenges – National Statistics

- Payments to Americans with disabilities cost taxpayers approximately \$450 billion/year. Yet as of March 2012, the poverty rate of working-age people with disabilities was 29% compared to 13% for their counterparts without disabilities.
- The percentage of Americans with disabilities who are outside the workforce is exactly the same as it was before passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 – approximately 70%.
- 67% of working-age people with disabilities would rather have a job than be unemployed.
- One in three adults with disabilities, ages 18 – 64, was employed in 2011, compared with three out of four adults without a disability.

(Source: RespectAbilityUSA statistics obtained from various sources, 2013)

Challenges – Vermont Statistics

- 46,401 Vermonters of working age (ages 18-64) have a disability representing 11.6% of the State's working age population.
- Of those 46,401, only 15,905 are employed, for an employment rate of 34.27%.
- The employment rate of working age Vermonters without a disability is 79.79%.



(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012)

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: “A person with a disability will be out from work more than my other employees.”

- **Fact**: Industry reports consistently rate workers with disabilities as average or above average in performance, attendance, and safety. *(Source: Darlene Unger, “Employers’ Attitudes Towards People with Disabilities in the Workforce: Myths or Realities,” 9/02, pg. 6)*
- **Fact**: DuPont found that 85% of employees with disabilities had an average/above average attendance rate compared to people without disabilities. *(Source: Auburn pub.com, 11/28/06)*

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
- Creative Workforce Solutions
- VT 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

GCEPD Promotes Hiring & Retention Strategies

Examples of strategies communicated to organizations include...

- Treat employees with a disability like any other employee.
- Provide mentoring and training as with any new hire.
- Explore menu of progressive employment options offered by the CWS group in an employer's area.
- Learn about best practices from employers that have a diverse workforce (e.g., GCEPD "Spirit of the ADA" Award winners).
- Consider targeted recruiting; reach out to high schools and colleges for referrals.

GCEPD Promotes Hiring & Retention Strategies (Cont'd)

- Partner with Vocational Rehabilitation / CWS for placements.
- Explore reasonable accommodations as needed (e.g., assistive technologies, etc.).
- Host a GCEPD-led panel of experts discussing workplace accommodations.
- Develop a pipeline through internships, mentoring, and job shadowing days.
- Include disability awareness and etiquette in employee orientation and supervisory training.

GCEPD Key Activities – 2014 & 2015

- Met with Governor Shumlin to present accomplishments – May 2014
- Promoted National Disability Employment Awareness Month (5 radio stations/5 newspapers) – October 2014
- Spoke to Bennington Rotary Club – October 2014
- Initiated the “Spirit of ADA” Awards with five Vermont employers – October 2014 thru Summer 2015
- Published an article in Business People Magazine on Benefits of Employing People with Disabilities – December 2014
- Scheduling National Groundhog Job Shadow Day for April 2015 (working with CWS)
- Presenting at Springfield Rotary Club – March 2015

GCEPD Key Activities – 2014 & 2015 (Cont'd)

- Selected for Communications/Outreach Study conducted by Leadership Champlain student group (Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce) – Being submitted April 2015
- Participating in Vermont Job Expo (booth) – May 2015
- Meeting with Governor Shumlin to present accomplishments – Fall 2015 (held annually – to be scheduled)
- Maintaining updates to Abilities eNewsletter (quarterly), Website: Hireus.org, Facebook and LinkedIn pages – Ongoing

Questions?

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

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You can also check out our website at www.hireus.org.