**FACT SHEET**

**Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities - Final Report**

**Chapter Four: Capacity Building in the Marketplace**

Contemporary messaging to employers needs to be stronger, showcasing specific outreach and recruitment strategies used by companies that have worked to change corporate policies directed at building an inclusive workforce that is more representative of their customer base.

**What Do We Need To Know?**

* Hiring persons with disabilities is a cost-effective way to build an inclusive workforce representative of the business’s customer base.
* Individuals with significant disabilities must be perceived and portrayed as an asset to the company – not a risk.
* The approach to business should be changed from “the right thing to do” to improving the bottom line by identifying opportunities and benefits associated with developing an inclusive workforce.
* Although presumptive employability is regarded as a desirable philosophical underpinning to disability employment policy, the concept does not necessarily correspond to employer perspectives nor is it expressed in employer-centric terms.

Businesses need support from competent and well-educated employment services personnel, who work with independent service provider organizations to provide a “pipeline” of candidates to businesses.

* Employment services personnel must be educated to understand how businesses work and be able to identify and address employment needs.
* Personnel must be educated on how to appropriately assess the job seeker’s career interests, skill sets, and abilities, resulting in appropriate job matches.

Disability employment organizations and employment services personnel, including those in the workforce system and the American Job Centers (AJCs) should receive preparation and training on how to effectively engage businesses, with emphasis on using better messaging and translating effective methodology, such as supported and customized employment, into benefits for prospective employers.

* Individuals with I/DD and significant disabilities need education on how employment may impact their Social Security or other benefits. Benefits counseling is an asset to business.
* Individuals with I/DD and significant disabilities also need more opportunities to enter training programs so they may be better qualified to meet the needs of businesses. There is opportunity in the health care fields.

Access across the U.S. to public and para-transit transportation systems are needed by individuals with significant disabilities. Accessibility impacts businesses’ ability to recruit talent and impacts the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment (CIE).

Federal contractors have been working to meet the seven percent goal of including people with disabilities in their workforce by developing and submitting their outreach and recruitment plans to the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and encouraging current and newly-hired employees with disabilities to self-disclose.

* People with disabilities are hesitant to self-disclose. The benefits of self-disclosure for employees with disabilities have not been effectively articulated.
* Tax credits and their benefits to federal contractors are underutilized. Those credits include the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, the Disabled Access Credit and the Architectural and Transportation Barrier Removal Deduction.

**Resources for Assisting with Building Employer Engagement**

The U.S. Business Leadership Network® (USBLN) helps businesses drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace - <http://www.usbln.org/>

The National Organization on Disability’s (NOD), Bridges to Business program works with employers to increase the employment of people with disabilities - <http://www.nod.org/>