



ICED NEWS

State Interagency Committee On Employees With Disabilities

Volume 8, Number 2

August 2005

ICED HOLDS FIRST LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

The first Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities Legislative Reception was successfully held May 18, 2005 in the Illinois State Library Atrium. The reception provided an opportunity for state employees with all types of disabling conditions at the event to communicate issues of importance to the invited legislators, agency directors and leaders of local organizations that represent or advocate for people with disabilities.

Some issues of note that impact employees included:

- the declining numbers of state employees with disabilities,
- how to improve use of current state programs for employees with disabilities, such as the Severely Disabled Option and the ICED Internship Program, and
- how the State's fiscal situation will effect current and future employees with disabilities

Co-Hosts of the event were: Senator Adeline Geo-Karis, Senator Carol Ronen, Representative Elizabeth Coulson, Representative Mary Flowers, Director Rocco Claps and Secretary Carol Adams, Ph.D. of the Department of Human Services. The Honorable William Davis and the Honorable Robert Pritchard were in attendance.



(L-R): Secretary Carol Adams, Ph.D., Director Rocco Claps, Senator Ronen, Audrey McCrimon (DHS), Jeff Standerfer (DHS), SCIL Exec. Dir. Pete Roberts, (front) Ann Ford, Exec. Director, INCIL, Rob Kilbury (DHS), DHHC Director John Miller.

UNDERUTILIZATION OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

The Illinois Human Rights Act requires agencies to set goals for hiring people with disabilities, when there is an "underutilization." Underutilization is determined by comparing each agency's workforce composition to the availability percentages of people with disabilities for each job group in the state at large.

Using the 2000 census data, the labor force availability figure for employees with disabilities is 10.8% for Illinois; however, only 3% of state agency workforce is made up of people with disabilities.

Large agencies tend to be more underutilized by employees with disabilities, but many small agencies have underutilizations of 1 or 2 people with disabilities each. In some cases, agencies with more than 1000 employees are underutilized by more than 100 employees with disabilities.

The purpose of the underutilization goals is to promote the shaping of an environment conducive to diversity and positive personal growth, and to oversee the coordination and implementation of efforts to reduce intolerance and harassment.

During FY05, agencies were able to reduce their underutilization for people with disabilities; however, agencies have a long way to go to meet their goals. Where underutilization exists, proactive measures such as greater outreach efforts as well as other affirmative action measures must be taken. In FY06, the Department of Human Rights will encourage agencies to meet with organizations, including the Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services and the Department of Central Management Services' Severely Disabled Option program coordinator, that can assist them in meeting their goals in

this area. Referral relationships should be developed so that agencies have a good pool of applicants with disabilities.

BE A PART OF NATIONAL DISABILITY MENTORING DAY

Wednesday, October 19, 2005 is National Disability Mentoring Day™. Disability Mentoring Day™ is a large-scale, broad-based effort designed to promote career development for students and other job seekers with disabilities (mentees) through hands-on career exploration, job shadowing, and internship or employment opportunities, and matching of mentee/mentor relationships. This program is hosted nationally in regions around the country by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), in close partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), as well as many national corporate sponsors, whose generosity and participation make this program possible.

The goals of the Disability Mentoring Day™ are:

- To enhance internship and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- To promote disability as a central component of diversity recruitment for a more inclusive workforce.
- To dispel employers' fears about hiring people with disabilities.
- To increase confidence among students and job seekers with disabilities.
- To serve as a launching point to promote a year-round, national effort to foster mentoring and career exploration opportunities.

In 2004, through a network of more than 225 volunteer local coordinators in regions around the country, Disability Mentoring Day™ witnessed participation of more than 9,000 students and job seekers with disabilities nationally and in many international locations. They were mentored by almost 1,500 private, non-profit, governmental, and educational organizations. The Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DHS/DRS), introduced fifty students to employers



A group of business leaders (mentors) and job seekers with disabilities (mentees) who participated in the 2004 Disability Mentoring Day

throughout the state as part of their contribution to the national effort. This year the Division strives to double that number.

What happens on Disability Mentoring Day™ varies to best fit the needs of all parties. Some typical events are:

ONE-ON-ONE JOB SHADOWING. Mentees with disabilities are matched with workplace mentors according to expressed career interests. This enables mentees to learn more from their assigned mentors about a typical day on the job and how to prepare for that particular career.

GROUP VISITS TO WORKSITES. Mentees with disabilities can tour a workplace, meet with its various employees, and learn firsthand about different types of jobs and related opportunities within that career field.

DIVERSE PROGRAMMATIC EVENTS. In addition, many communities also plan kick-off breakfasts, all-day informational seminars, and/or end-of-day receptions for all community participants to attend. For example, the U.S. Department of Labor hosts a breakfast kickoff for federal agency mentors and mentees, followed by one-on-one mentoring, and concluding with a reception incorporating agency exhibits.

All of these events, plus other scenarios that take place on Disability Mentoring Day™, provide an opportunity for the program participants to share their experiences and build a much broader and beneficial network of relationships.

For more information about this exciting program, or to volunteer your services as a mentor, please contact:

DHS/DRS
C/O Taqiyyah Shakur
100 South Grand Ave East
Springfield, IL 62702

Phone: (217) 558-1261
TTY: (217) 557-2507
FAX: (217) 558-4270

ICED ADDS EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES SECTION TO WEBSITE

In a continuing effort to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, the ICED has added the Employment Resources section to its website (www.state.il.us/ICED). This section provides publications, training materials and resources for employees and employers in an effort to increase awareness of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities, and to facilitate the use of effective strategies. Some available resources include;

People with disABILITIES: the untapped workforce is a terrific video available through ICED thanks to the Chicagoland Business Leadership Network. This is available at no cost for use in awareness education or training as a VHS video or as a DVD. In it, business leaders discuss the common concerns about including people with disabilities in their place of business and give their personal, positive experiences in recruiting, hiring, and managing a workplace that is inclusive of diverse workers.

The Chicagoland Business Leadership Network Educational Toolkit. The kit provides a wealth of information for human resource personnel and managers about The Americans With Disabilities Act requirements, recruiting, interviewing, hiring, job accommodations, communication tips, resources, and more. There is also a section on marketing and reaching out to customers with disabilities which gives concrete ideas that could be used in planning and staff training.

A link to the Central Illinois Business Leadership Network's resource page takes you to an array of information, statistics, and tools to use in making a workplace inclusive of people with disabilities. This is a good place to start a search for questions or issues related to employment of workers with both visible and invisible disabilities.

A new link to a site of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services provides a variety of materials and information on making a workplace mental health-friendly. The *Toolkit* helps employers assess their workplace, gives recommended policies and practices, resources for communicating with employees about mental health in the workplace, and supervisory training materials for managers of employees experiencing mental illnesses. The toolkit recognizes that businesses implementing these practices function better and are perceived as great employers because all employees are supported in life crises that arise and are happier, more content employees.

TechConnect LOW INTEREST LOANS

To better serve Illinoisans with disabilities, the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services, together with the Illinois Assistive Technology Program, Centers for Independent Living, the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois, the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, and the Statewide Independent Living Council, have joined forces to offer the TechConnect Low Interest Loan Program.

The TechConnect Low Interest Loan Program has two parts:

1. The Assistive Technology Loan Program provides loans to Illinois residents with disabilities and/or their families on behalf of the person with a disability to purchase assistive technology devices, services, and home modifications.
2. The Telework Loan Program is restricted to Illinois residents with disabilities, 18 years and older. The loan can be used to purchase equipment, services, and home modifications to work in a "telework" situation. The equipment is not restricted to assistive technology devices.

Telework is paid employment; including full-time and part-time self employment at home or at other telework sites other than the employer's customary office or place of business.

TechConnect Low Interest Loans can range from \$500 to \$40,000 with a 3.5 percent interest rate.

You may be eligible for a TechConnect Low Interest Loan even if you are not eligible for a traditional bank loan due to no credit or a bad credit history related to your disability.

For more information contact:
TechConnect Loan Program
Illinois Assistive Technology Program
1 West Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 100
Springfield, Illinois 62701

(217) 522-7985 Voice
(217) 522-9966 TTY
1-800-852-5110 Voice/TTY (Illinois only)

<https://www.techconnect.iltech.org/>

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING AIR TRAVEL

The U.S. Department of Transportation has recently published document 14 CFR Part 382, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability; Technical Assistance Manual; Final Rule.

The document is in response to a Congressional mandate for the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide a technical assistance manual to air carriers and individuals with disabilities concerning their rights and responsibilities under the Air Carrier Access Act and DOT regulations.

Topics covered include such items as;

- Learning the Basics About The Law Protecting Air Travelers With Disabilities
- Assisting With Trip Planning, Travelers Tips
- Assisting Air Travelers With Disabilities at the Airport
- Assisting With Boarding the flight, During the Flight and Deplaning
- Frequently Asked Questions

The document can be found on the web at <http://www.state.il.us/ICED/news/airtravel.pdf>

ICED SEEKS NOMINATIONS

The ICED is seeking nominations for the 2005 Awards Ceremony. Awards will be presented in the following areas:

State Employee of the Year:

This award recognizes a state employee with a disability who, despite everyday challenges, exemplifies the model of an outstanding public servant through their work ethics, collegiality with co-workers and continuing effort to deliver quality work.

Service Partnership Award:

Presented to an organization that works in cooperation with a State agency to help reduce the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities in Illinois.

Candlelight Award:

Presented to the organization or individual that has raised visibility and awareness regarding the barriers or issues that impact persons with disabilities locally, regionally or nationally.

Nomination forms can be obtained at the ICED website (www.state.il.us/ICED). Completed forms and supporting information must be mailed to Jodi Schrage, 130 W. Mason, Springfield, IL 62702 and postmarked by September 7, 2005.

Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities

Rocco J. Claps, Co-Chairman, Director, Department of Human Rights
Carol L. Adams, Ph.D., Co-Chairman, Secretary, Department of Human Services
Paul J. Campbell, Acting Director, Department Central Management Services
Roy Dolgos, Director, Department of Veterans Affairs
Chris Kolker, Chairman, Civil Service Commission
Deborah Johnson-Small, Employee Member, Department of Human Services
Michael Knepler, Employee Member, Department of Agriculture
Elaine Lazell, Employee Member, Department of Healthcare and Family Services
Debbie Primm, Employee Member
Susan Allen, Department of Human Rights
Andrew Barris, Civil Service Commission
Wendy Butler, Department of Central Management Services
Marva Campbell-Pruitt, Department of Human Services
Kathy Day, Department of Agriculture
Gwen Diehl, Department of Veterans Affairs
Katherine Gardner, Department of Human Services
Patty Greene, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission
Tammy Hall, Department of Financial and Professional Regulation
Margaret Harkness, Council on Developmental Disabilities
Jack Kanady, Division Of Specialized Care for Children
John Riech, Department of Human Services
Jodi Schrage, Department of Central Management Services
Karen Wordelmann, Illinois Employment and Training Council

Mark Your Calendar

October
ICED Annual
Conference

Note: This newsletter is available in alternative formats upon request.