



People with Disabilities at Work

The Newsletter about Customized
Employment
For Persons with Disabilities

Sponsored by *Whatever It Takes*
A Project Funded by the US Department of Labor
Office of Disability Employment Policy



April - June 2006

Volume 4, Number 3

Did you know that . . . The median household annual income of working age people with disabilities increased from \$34,200 in 2003 to \$34,300 in 2004 in the U.S. (Source: Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics. (2005). *2004 Disability Status Reports*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.)

What's New?

The Whatever It Takes (WIT) staff is pleased to announce the addition of 6 new customers receiving services through the WIT program. In addition to pre-employment and job development services more than half of our customers are utilizing the Individual Accounts system. Customers are able to purchase employment related items and services, such as: transportation to and from the job, interview attire, uniforms, assistive technology and interpreting services.

Check These Dates

☑ **July 14, 2006:** Listen and Learn Series: "Work Incentives for Individuals with Disabilities". Speaker: Sheelagh Roache, Senior Benefits Specialist, Work Smart Program, Abilities, Inc. 2:15 pm - 3:15 pm in the Smeal Learning Center at Abilities, Inc. in Albertson, NY.

☑ **September 8, 2006:** Listen and Learn Series: "Internal and External Customer Service". Speakers: Robin Saltzman, Director of Human Resources for



Published and distributed by Abilities, Inc.
at the National Center for Disability
Services, 201 IU Willets Road, Albertson
New York 11507; 516/465-1542, 516/485-
5000 X1139 or 800/662-1220 (TTY);
www.abilitiesinc.org

Professional Development, Winthrop Hospital. 2:15 pm - 3:15 pm in the Smeal Learning Center at Abilities, Inc. in Albertson, NY.

☑ **September 18, 2006:** Staff Training: Cerebral Palsy. Speaker: Maureen McCabe. 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm in the Smeal Learning Center at Abilities, Inc. in Albertson, NY.



If you are interested in attending a training program, please contact Jennifer Sulmonte, Case Manager at (516) 465-1402 for a complete listing of the Abilities, Inc. 2006 training schedule.

Tips About Interacting with People with Disabilities:

1. **ASK BEFORE YOU HELP.** Just because someone has a disability, don't assume he or she needs help. If the setting is accessible, people with physical disabilities can usually get around. Adults with disabilities want to be treated as independent people. Offer assistance only if the person appears to need it. And if he or she does want help, ask how before you act.

2. **BE SENSITIVE ABOUT PHYSICAL CONTACT.** Some people with physical disabilities depend on their arms for balance. Grabbing them (even if your intention is to assist) could knock them off balance. Avoid patting a person on the head or touching his or her wheelchair, scooter or cane. People with physical disabilities often consider their equipment part of their personal space.

3. **THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK.** Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his or her companion, aide or sign language interpreter. Talk to him or her as you would with anyone else. Respect his or her privacy. If you ask about his or her disability, they may feel like you only see the disability, not them as a human being.

4. **DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS.** People with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do. Don't make decisions for them about participating in any activity.

Remember that people with disabilities are individuals with families, jobs, hobbies, likes, dislikes and problems and joys. While the disability can be an integral part of who they are, it alone does not define them. Don't automatically assume that a disability makes someone into a hero or a victim. Treat them as individuals and as you would want to be treated. (Excerpts taken from: Cohen, Judy "Disability Etiquette: Interacting With People With Disabilities", United Spinal Association, 2003).

~WIT Staff

Myths and Facts About People with Disabilities

Myths are roadblocks that interfere with the ability of persons with disabilities to have equality in employment. These roadblocks usually result from a lack of experience and interaction with persons with disabilities. This lack of familiarity has nourished negative attitudes concerning employment of persons with disabilities. Listed below are some common myths and the facts that tell the real story.

MYTH: Hiring employees with disabilities increases workers compensation insurance rates.

FACT: Insurance rates are based solely on the relative hazards of the operation and the organization's accident experience, not on whether workers have disabilities.

MYTH: Employees with disabilities have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.

FACT: Studies by firms such as DuPont show that employees with disabilities are not absent any more than employees without disabilities.

MYTH: Persons with disabilities are inspirational, courageous, and brave for being able to overcome their disability.

FACT: Persons with disabilities are simply carrying on normal activities of living when

they drive to work, go grocery shopping, pay their bills, or compete in athletic events.

MYTH: Persons with disabilities need to be protected from failing.

FACT: Persons with disabilities have a right to participate in the full range of human experiences including success and failure. Employers should have the same expectations of, and work requirements for, all employees.

MYTH: Persons with disabilities are unable to meet performance standards, thus making them a bad employment risk.

FACT: In 1990, DuPont conducted a survey of 811 employees with disabilities and found 90% rated average or better in job performance compared to 95% for employees without disabilities. A similar 1981 DuPont study which involved 2,745 employees with disabilities found that 92% of employees with disabilities rated average or better in job performance compared to 90% of employees without disabilities. The 1981 study results were comparable to DuPont's 1973 job performance study.

MYTH: Persons with disabilities have problems getting to work.

FACT: Persons with disabilities are capable of supplying their own transportation by choosing to walk, use a car pool, drive, take public transportation, or a cab. Their modes of transportation to

work are as varied as those of other employees.

MYTH: Persons who are deaf make ideal employees in noisy work environments.

FACT: Loud noises of a certain vibratory nature can cause further harm to the auditory system. Persons who are deaf should be hired for all jobs that they have the skills and talents to perform. No person with a disability should be prejudged regarding employment opportunities.

**~Social Security Administration
Office of Employment Support
Programs (www.ssa.gov/work/)**

Discussing Disability with the Potential Employer

A potential employer is prohibited by law from asking questions that are likely to reveal the existence of a disability before making a job offer. This prohibition covers written questionnaires and inquiries made during interviews, as well as medical examinations. However, such questions and medical examinations are permitted after extending a job offer but before the individual begins work.

Following are some examples of questions an employer cannot ask on an application or during an interview:

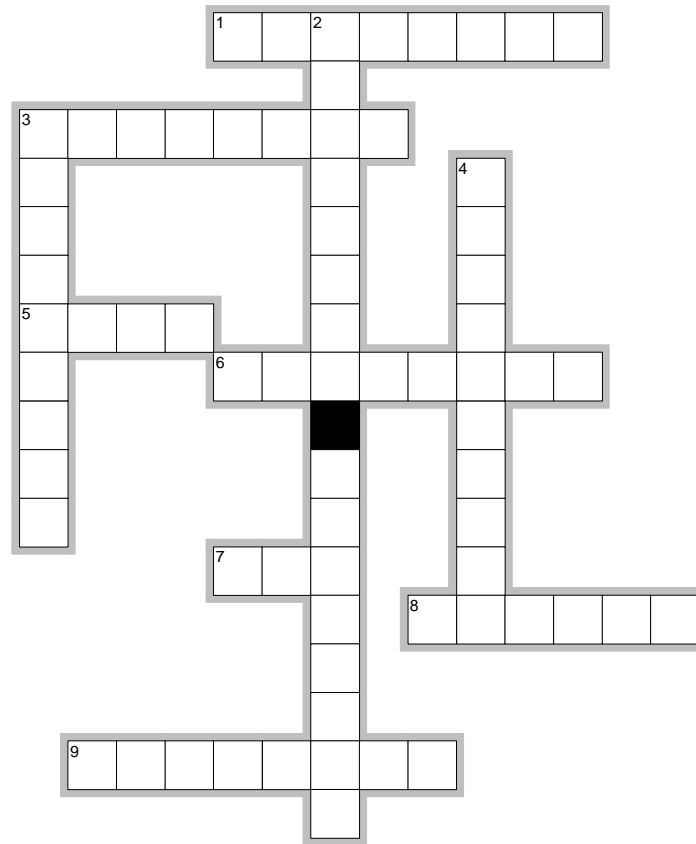
- Do you have a heart condition?
- Do you have a disability which would interfere with your ability to perform the job?
- How many days were you sick last year?
- Have you ever filed for Workers' Compensation?
- Have you ever been injured on the job?
- Have you ever been treated for mental health problems?
- What prescription drugs are you taking?

Can the employer ask these questions after making a job offer? Yes. An employer can ask all of the questions above, and others that are likely to reveal the existence of a disability, after they extend you a job offer as long as they ask the same questions of other applicants offered the same type of job.

~WIT Staff

A FEW WORDS ABOUT EMPLOYMENT

By Pamela Sullivan



Created with EclipseCrossword — www.eclipsecrossword.com

Across

1. Federal holiday for workers
3. You may need this to learn new skills to make you more employable
5. Provides rehabilitation services to individuals who are legally blind
6. What you need to be during an interview
7. Federal law protecting disabled individuals from discrimination
8. Document summarizing your work history
9. Transportation provider for disabled individuals

Down

2. What you need to have before you start your job search
3. Some employees punch this
4. Having this quality will help in your job search

Word Bank

ABLERIDE	LABORDAY
ADA	POSITIVE
BENEFITS ANALYSIS	RESUME
CBVH	TIMECLOCK
INITIATIVE	TRAINING

