



Fast Facts On...

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Private businesses partnering with public disability agencies will achieve success in recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining qualified workers with disabilities.

"The focus on hiring qualified employees with disabilities is, in fact, good for business. The return on investment to SunTrust can be measured in several ways: One, it helps in our diversity initiatives, building a strong workforce; two, it helps us to develop products and services, expanding our customer base; and three, it enables us to reach out to our entire community. It's good for our shareholders and it's good for business."

C.T. Hill, chairman, president and chief executive officer, SunTrust Mid-Atlantic, Lead Company of the Virginia BLN

DID YOU KNOW?

- + Companies in many industries report difficulty finding enough skilled workers to fill available jobs.
- + People with disabilities are the largest source of untapped talent in today's labor force.
- + There are many tax incentives available to businesses for training and hiring people with disabilities.
- + Local vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs are a resource to help business in recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining of workers with disabilities.
- + Business Leadership Networks (BLNs) are employer-led organizations that share innovative best practices in hiring and retaining people with disabilities. BLNs help employers meet current and future labor needs.

WHY PARTNERSHIPS?

Business needs skilled, qualified workers to fill its labor demands and grow into new markets. Rehabilitation programs need employment placements for their customers – people with disabilities. A strong partnership is a win-win situation.

- + Improved knowledge of business culture and needs
- + Realistic skills training
- + Enhanced customer satisfaction

WHAT ARE THE PITFALLS TO A PARTNERSHIP?

- + Too much government jargon
- + Government programs too slow or have too much paperwork
- + Lack of understanding of the business culture
- + Prior bad experiences
- + Disability is not seen as a business issue by employers

HOW TO DEVELOP A PARTNERSHIP?

The Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce in Maryland began working with the local VR program when the chamber sponsored a BLN. The chamber and VR regularly plan for the region's workforce needs. VR develops training and support programs and the result is a steady pipeline of job-ready workers with disabilities – meeting the labor demands of the region.

Partnership Features

- + Be available to provide support
- + Earn trust by serving on committees
- + Plan events or trainings together
- + Figure out cost saving measures
- + Sponsor a Business Leadership Network (BLN)

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE PARTNERSHIP?

Business Benefits

- + Access to a wider range of qualified candidates
- + Learn how to meet workers accommodation needs
- + Reduced turnover and improved attendance of workers
- + Diverse workforce

Rehabilitation Benefits

- + Increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities

(continued)

"Chambers can promote the mission of a Business Leadership Network as a service to their membership. The chamber can provide information, encouragement and support regarding workforce diversity and marketing to the disability population. Just these two areas of service can help business members in recruitment and retention of labor and increase sales to the growing population of people who have disabilities."

Jack Smith, Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce

WORKING PARTNERSHIPS

Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), SunTrust Bank, and Manpower, Inc.

- + The DRS works closely with Manpower Inc. and SunTrust Bank by providing dedicated personnel called Business Development Managers (BDM).
- + BDMs are active in the community learning about businesses' needs and teaching business about DRS programs and services.
- + Manpower Inc., a Fortune 500 company connecting people with disabilities with employment opportunities for more than 12 years, stays on the cutting edge of supply and demand to their employer-customers.
- + SunTrust Bank has a readily available pipeline of dependable and qualified workers.

"Our success as a disability-friendly business is directly tied to our strategic long-term relationships developed with the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) and Manpower, Inc. Both these organizations share our commitment to increasing our talent pool by including individuals with disabilities."

Katherine McCary, vice president, Human Resources,
SunTrust Bank and chair of the Virginia Business
Leadership Network (BLN)

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)

- + The ADRS has developed a single point of contact for employers.
- + Employer Development Coordinators (EDC) actively share information in the business community and coordinate services across the various community rehabilitation programs.
- + A partnership between ADRS and the UAB was formed some 20 years ago.
- + UAB and ADRS now work together to provide timely and aggressive employee intervention strategies for University personnel whose jobs have been affected by illness, injury or disability.
- + The focus of the partnership is to help the university retain valued employees by tapping into the disability management resources of ADRS.

Go to www.worksupport.com/biznet/index.html and click on Public/Private partnerships under the Resource section for additional examples.

RESOURCES

Public Sector

- + Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
Contact: Peggy Anderson, 205-290-4457
panderso@rehab.state.al.us
- + Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services
Contact: Ethel Walker, 804-662-7000
walkerEF@drs.state.va.us

Private Sector

- + Center for Workforce Preparation
U.S. Chamber of Commerce,
Contact: Cathy Healy, 202-463-5970
chealy@uschamber.com
- + U.S. Business Leadership Network
Contact: Katherine McCary, 804-343-9571
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