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CALL TO ACTION: STATEMENT TO POLICY MAKERS

- IN-APSE believes that a strong economy is fueled by all Hoosiers working and contributing to the bottom line.
- Indiana must look at creative ways to decrease the unemployment rate for person with disabilities (currently estimated at over 60%) through policies and legislative decisions.
- Hoosiers with disabilities must be enlisted as part of the economic development strategy to move the Indiana workforce forward.
- Close consideration should be given for every opportunity to change systems and remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities.

IN-APSE

IN-APSE: The Network on Employment is a membership organization formed in 1988 as the Indiana Association for Persons in Supported Employment to improve and expand integrated employment opportunities, services, and outcomes for persons experiencing disabilities.



HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES BENEFITS EMPLOYERS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Both large and small companies have benefited by recruiting individuals with disabilities for years, with many leading companies attributing their success to employing a diverse work force that includes people with disabilities. [USDOE and USDOC 2006]

IN-APSE believes that a strong economy is fueled by all Hoosiers working and contributing to the bottom line. Hoosiers with disabilities are an invaluable asset for the economic development strategy to move Indiana forward.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) supports businesses and employees.

- VR is a program funded by 79% federal and 21% state tax dollars. 91% of VR service dollars are spent in Indiana via purchases from Indiana businesses. [VR FFY 04]
- During FFY 2007 VR assisted 5,046 individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. [VR State Plan 2009, Attachment 4.11(e)(2)]
- VR statewide Employment Services Provider Summary reports 59% of persons provided employment services were successful in employment. [IRIS 2008]

Promoting employment for people with disabilities is an important policy objective for the nation.

MED Works is a Medicaid program that has substantially removed the main barrier people experience when going to work, loss of medical coverage. This program allows people to “buy-in” to medical coverage based on their earnings.

- 40% of those participating in the program had a median increase in earnings of \$2,583 per year.

The largest increase in earnings was for those under 21 years of age. This is encouraging considering these employees can build on that improved wage. [Press Release D.C. 2007]

People who earn more money, contribute more to Indiana's economy.

- For every Indiana tax dollar spent, \$5.59 is returned to Indiana's economy in the first year in the form of Hoosier earnings (a \$1.19 return for every combined Federal/Indiana tax dollar).
- The return on investment increases exponentially each year as prior years' employees retain employment and new workers enter the workforce each year. [Figures taken from: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/service/disabl/vr/infosheet.html>]
- People in supported employment in Indiana experience a 4.2% greater earnings comparing community employment to sheltered employment. [Day and Employment Services Outcome Systems Report, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community 2007]

Costs for long-term services are less when people are working.

- An 11 year study completed in Indiana indicates that Medicaid costs for individuals with a mental illness are reduced when the individual returns to competitive employment.





HIRING WORKERS WITH A DISABILITY IS A WIN-WIN

For World Arts Printing in Spencer, it's the rule rather than the exception. Workers with disabilities are an integral part of the operation, handling a final stage in the printing process for some 250,000 pieces each month.

"Workers with disabilities should be viewed as viable employees when the skills and abilities are sufficient to satisfy the job requirements," states Philip Gillaspay, World Arts production manager. "From an employer's perspective, it is about having a productive employee — regardless of a disability. A worker with a disability may have the ability and skills to fulfill a job task requirement within a business operation."

"Additionally, taxpayers ultimately experience reductions in the costs of government entitlement programs as an outcome of individuals with disabilities becoming gainfully employed," Gillaspay explains. "And, perhaps most importantly, the worker with a disability has an improved quality of life from gainful employment -- which offers financial compensation, the chance to increase job skill competencies, plus the opportunity for socialization within the personal community of co-workers."

THE FACTS ABOUT HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Many misconceptions exist regarding hiring persons with disabilities. However, through personal experience and interaction with persons with disabilities new attitudes can be formed. Listed below are the facts that tell the real story.

- 90% of businesses surveyed by The Chamber of Commerce and The National Association of Manufacturers reported no effect on insurance costs as a result of hiring workers with disabilities. [Gannett Newspaper 2006]
- Companies do not experience increased insurance premiums when they hire employees with disabilities. Because of Medicare changes and Medicaid Buy-In programs, many people with disabilities carry their own insurance, thereby reducing the employer's cost. [SSA 2006]
- Employers report that the vast majority of individuals with disabilities don't require any accommodations. Those that did reported the expenses were \$600 or less. [J.A.N. 2006]
- At 8%, the turnover for employees with disabilities is much lower than for other workers who have a 45% overall turnover rate. This exceptional retention rate aids in reducing the cost of turnover. [Gannett Newspaper 2006]
- 91% of employees with disabilities scored average or better in job performance when compared with the general work force, and their attendance also was found to be better. [Gannett Newspaper 2006]
- 92% of consumers surveyed felt more favorable toward companies that hire employees with disabilities. [Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation 1/2006]
- Stakeholders agree that people with disabilities are an important employment resource and work is an outcome for all Hoosiers with disabilities to attain. [Employment Summit, 2005]

ADDING DIVERSITY TO THE WORKFORCE



Robert currently works at Burger King. The restaurant where Robert works maintains a supportive

environment conducive to his success. Robert's dedication to his job is evident in his positive attitude.



Winnie is a nurse at a large specialty hospital in a large city. She says: "I never thought I could work as a nurse again

but because of the support and help I got through employment services I gained the confidence I needed to return to the field I love."



Caroline has worked at Textillery Weavers for almost 10 years. Caroline works 30 hours each week as a finisher for high-end textiles.



Tom has worked successfully for over three years as a switchboard operator at a large hospital. "Helping to organize my job search was key in securing the position."



In 1996 Sam started working at Elliott Stone as a Stone Laborer. Sam has forged close friendships with many of his co-workers. Sam is proud to be part of the stone industry and its long respected history in the community.