

# The APSE Gazette

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President Obama Announces New Initiatives During National Disability Employment Awareness Month!  
Washington, D.C. – President Obama today announced that his Administration is taking several steps to ensure that there is fair and equal access to employment for all Americans, particularly the 54 million people in this country living with disabilities. The announcement comes during National Disability Employment Awareness Month. “My Administration is committed to ensuring that all Americans have the chance to fulfill their potential and contribute to our nation,” said President Obama. “Across this country, millions of people with disabilities are working or want to work, and they should have access to the support and services they need to succeed. As the nation’s largest employer, the Federal Government and its contractors can lead the way by implementing effective employment policies and practices that increase opportunities and help workers achieve their full potential. We must also rededicate ourselves to fostering an inclusive work culture that welcomes the skills and talents of all qualified employees. That’s why I’ve asked the responsible agencies to develop new plans and policies to help increase employment across America for people with disabilities.”

The following are some of the steps the Obama Administration will take: The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) will collaborate to sponsor and organize a day long Federal Government-wide job fair for people with disabilities. The Fair will take place in early spring 2010. In addition to the Job Fair, OPM, ODEP, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and

the Department of Defense’s office on Computer and Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) will provide workshops throughout the day on a variety of topics including the Schedule A hiring waiver and the right to the provision of reasonable accommodations including information on assistive and communications technology.

OPM will develop training on Schedule A for  
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Federal Human Resources specialists, hiring managers and selective placement coordinators that will be easily accessible and includes on line training.

EEOC and the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division will hold four Town Hall meetings throughout the nation to share information about the ADA Amendments Act proposed regulations and to gather comments on them. All Town Hall meetings will consist of two sessions - one for disability advocates and one for the employer community. These sessions will be completed by November 20th. The four locations are Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, and New Orleans. The Department of Justice will release a video that will identify and respond to a number of common myths held by employers about workers with disabilities.

OPM will create and lead a task force comprised of representatives from key Federal Departments and Agencies that have developed and implemented model practices for recruiting, retaining and advancing employees with disabilities. The task force will report on the innovative practices agencies use to encourage the employment of individuals with disabilities. The report will identify and promote successful practices for conducting outreach, recruiting, hiring qualified candidates, successful accommodations, and providing opportunities for career advancement at all levels.

### **National APSE Mission Statement**

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

## **Employment Success Stories**

*by Jamie Swinarski*

**Brian Sutton** is grateful for the support he receives from Ollie Webb Center, Inc. "It makes me happy," says Brian. He is a busy guy. During the summer, he volunteered at Trinity Church. "They treat me so nice over there," Brian stated. During the academic year, Brian works at St. Wenceslaus Catholic School. His job coach, Laura, helps him perform tasks such as taking out the trash and mopping the floor. His favorite part about his job at St. Wenceslaus is in the cafeteria. "I like cleaning off the tables," remarked Brian. He has been with the school for a year and intends to stay there. Brian has also worked for Godfather's Pizza for over 10 years; on Friday and Saturday nights, he works in the kitchen washing dishes and trays.

In his leisure time, Brian enjoys concerts, movies, watching sports, spending time with his friends and participating in Ollie Webb Center, Inc. activities. His favorite kind of music is country with Alan Jackson being his favorite country music singer. As for sports, he loves Husker football and watching Zac Lee play. "I bowl in the super league," says Brian, as he proudly points out his first place trophy. He also likes participating in cooking class. "They teach me how to cook. One time I made lasagna. It was so good!" As for future goals, he would like to live on his own someday in an apartment.

**John Steele** is celebrating his 10th year at Armstrong Cabinet Factory. John started out as a janitor, then was asked to work in the shipping department, and eventually was promoted to an assembly position. John now currently floats between the shipping department and assembly.

Gary Maddox, who is John's supervisor, says "John is a very good worker! He is always willing to help out where ever he is needed, he is very reliable."

# FACT SHEET

## National Disability Employment Awareness Month

### October 2009

Nationally, Congress designated each October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The goal of this month is to highlight the specific employment barriers that still need to be addressed and removed to improve the employment outcomes for people with disabilities. This effort to educate the American public about issues related to disability and employment actually began in 1945.

Several barriers continue to exist for people with disabilities gaining full access to employment:

- The US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, conducted a survey of employers perspectives in 2008. This survey showed that many business owners do not actively recruit and hire people with disabilities due to lack of knowledge about the abilities of people with disabilities in the workplace.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, August 2009, the unemployment rate of persons with a disability was 16.9%, compared with 9.3% for persons with no disability. This statistic includes ALL people with disabilities of working age. On a per capita basis the employment rate for people with disabilities is extremely high compared to persons with no disability.
- The unemployment rate for persons with developmental disabilities is much higher. According to a survey conducted by the Nebraska Association of Persons in Supported Employment (Nebraska APSE), only 24% of people supported by Nebraska developmental disability service providers were employed within a business in their community. This leaves the unemployment rate for people with developmental disabilities at OVER 75%.
- Many myths 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 people with disabilities. Some common misconceptions of the employment with disabilities are:

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 need to be protected from failing. I won't be able to discipline an employee with a disability if needed.

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: Studies show that there is no significant difference in performance standards of employees with and without disabilities. Many employers actually state that employees with disabilities outperform employees without disabilities.

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.

Myth: Considerable expense is necessary to accommodate workers with disabilities

FACT: Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe.

Myth: Employees with disabilities are more likely to have accidents on the job than employees without disabilities.

FACT: In the 1990 DuPont study, the safety records of both groups were identical

Myth: People with disabilities can't work because they receive federal benefits that they will lose if they work

FACT: People with disabilities CAN and DO work even though they receive federal benefits. Working helps people with disabilities to reduce the amount of federal assistance they receive, thereby reducing the cost to taxpayers. Earning wages also contributes to the benefits they receive by paying taxes.

Businesses can also benefit by hiring people with disabilities through the use of Work Opportunity Tax Credits. Hiring an individual that receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) can earn a business \$2,400 in tax credits.

This information has been provided to you by Nebraska APSE.

Resources for additional information:

Department of Labor- [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

Office of Disability Employment Policy- [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep)

Internal Revenue Service- [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

Region V Services- [www.regionvservices.com](http://www.regionvservices.com)

The Nebraska Association of Persons in Supported Employment- [www.nebraskaapse.org](http://www.nebraskaapse.org)

Bureau of Labor Statistics- [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

US Census Bureau- [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

College of Direct Supports Information can be found at [www.nedsp.com](http://www.nedsp.com) and [mary@nedsp.com](mailto:mary@nedsp.com)

### **National APSE Goals**

Provides advocacy and education  
to customers of supported employment (SE),  
i.e. supported employment professionals,  
consumers and their family members,  
and supported employers.

Addresses issues and barriers  
which impede the growth and implementation  
of integrated employment services.

Improves supported employment (SE) practice  
so that individuals and communities experience SE  
as a quality service with meaningful outcomes.

Promotes national, state, and local policy development  
which enhances the social and economic inclusion and empowerment  
of all persons experiencing severe disabilities.

Educates the public and the business community  
on the value of including persons experiencing severe disabilities  
as fully participating community members.

## Proclamation

Whereas, our state can grow closer through education and understanding from recognizing not only each other's abilities but our commonalities and differences; and

Whereas, we are increasingly becoming a global economy which needs to embrace the talents, skills and abilities of every one of our citizens, including people with disabilities; and

Whereas, we cannot afford, either morally or financially, to lose the contributions that people with disabilities bring to the workplace and to community life; and

Whereas, we recognize the tremendous value and potential people with disabilities provide to our workplace;

Now therefore, I, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby proclaim October 2009 as National Disability Employment Month. I call on all citizens to observe this month by increasing their personal awareness and understanding of the employment potential of people with disabilities in their communities.

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Signed

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Date

# APSE has many benefits. Here are a few!

## **The Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation**

APSE members now have electronic access to the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation (JVR) as part of membership! The JVR offers cutting edge information on supporting people in the workplace. Free to APSE members, JVR has a regular subscription rate of \$453, making this a significant deal for APSE members. You can go on-line now and download issues. Or if you prefer a print copy, you can sign up to receive one at the substantially discounted rate of \$48.

## **InfoLines Partnership**

APSE members get discounts on InfoLines, an electronic newsletter published 10 times per year, that provides practical, easy-to-read information on supporting people with disabilities in the workplace. InfoLines is published by Training Resource Network and their team of Dale DiLeo, publisher, and Dawn Langton, Editor.

## **APSE WebSite and On-Line Membership System**

APSE's website carries updated information on a myriad of issues relative to SE; provides electronic communication with our members for rapid distribution of e-news and information updates; includes a new membership system that allows members to renew or join on-line, register for the conference and training sessions on-line; and has a members only section which allows access to JVR, updating your member record, and more.

## **theAdvance**

APSE members receive four copies of theAdvance, the APSE newsletter, each year. Topics discussed in theAdvance include: Public Policy affecting People with Disabilities; Empowerment of SE Workers; Management of SE Programs; Personnel Competencies and Training; Alternative Funding Sources; Ethical Standards for Service Providers; The Americans with Disabilities Act; Best Practices in SE; SE in The Rehabilitation Act; SE Worker and Employer Satisfaction; Transition From School to Work; Natural Supports; SSA Work Incentives, PASS, IRWE, etc.; and a myriad of other issues.

## **Annual Conference**

APSE sponsors an annual national conference to provide a forum for sharing and collectively improving SE practice and opportunities for persons experiencing severe disabilities. APSE members have access to conference activities at reduced rates.

## **State Chapters**

APSE members involved in the development and implementation of supported employment are tied into a national network of others involved in supported employment. State and local Chapters are forming to facilitate the continued expansion of quality SE in their states and localities. APSE currently has fully-chartered 36 State Chapters and State Chapters in Development. Many other groups are working to develop chapters in their states.

## **Legislative Action and Policy Change Activity**

APSE monitors issues including funding support for SE and community integration, rights for people experiencing disabilities, technical assistance, eligibility and entitlement, special education, rehabilitation, social security, and so on. In addition, APSE staff provide a voice for SE as policies are established and funding decisions are made that may have an impact on the services you are able to provide. We will bring SE issues to the table in this year's Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act. In Washington, D.C., APSE works with the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) to make recommendations on the legislative language and regulations on all issues which impact the national implementation of supported employment services. APSE members are updated on national policy relevant to the continued growth and development of SE through theAdvance and periodic member service documents and policy updates.

## **Voting Privileges**

Members have voting privileges in board elections and other questions brought before the members. Each Individual Member has one vote. Each Organizational member (as a group) has one vote.

**For more information on APSE membership please visit [www.apse.org](http://www.apse.org)**