



**JIM DOYLE**  
**GOVERNOR**  
**STATE OF WISCONSIN**

October 2003

*Dear Employer:*

*I am pleased to have this opportunity to share information regarding the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and the great potential for you as an employer to benefit by tapping into this previously untapped labor pool.*

*The Harris Poll interviewed over 900 managers, and they had this to say about people with disabilities who worked for them:*

- *19 out of 20 managers give employees with disabilities a good" or excellent" rating on their job performance. They say employees with disabilities work as hard or harder than their employees who do not have disabilities.*
- *39% of line managers rate employees with disabilities as better on attendance and punctuality than non-disabled employees, and 40% rate them about the same.*
- *The average cost of hiring people with disabilities is the same as hiring people without a disability, according to 75% of the employers surveyed.*
- *However, only 43% of Equal Employment Opportunity officers say that their companies have hired people with disabilities.*

*People with disabilities are just like other workers. They want to do a good job, they appreciate constructive supervision, and they want to get ahead. The myth that people with disabilities are grateful just to work and are happy to stay in entry-level positions is precisely that: a myth. Some people need or want a steady routine, but most enjoy new challenges, and people with disabilities are no exception.*

*For additional information, attached is the "Disability Friendly Self-Assessment Tool for Employers". This tool is designed to help provide insight for employers who want to hire and retain employees with disabilities. In addition, the tool explores myths and misconceptions about workers with disabilities and is a resource guide to assist you to utilize the labor pool to the fullest potential.*

*Despite their desire to work, people with disabilities face multiple barriers in part because of the misconceptions about their abilities and skills to do the job well. I am asking the private sector to join state government to make the commitment to dispel these myths and to explore the potential to add workers with disabilities to the workforce.*

*Sincerely*

*Jim Doyle Governor*

*“Forget those grim unemployment numbers.  
Demographic forces are about to  
put a squeeze on the labor supply  
that will make it feel like 1999  
all over again.”*

Paul Kaihia, September 2003,  
*Business 2.0.*

## HOW TO GET THERE

### **STEP 1: Complete the Workers with Disabilities Friendly Assessment**

This assessment provides employers with a mechanism to self assess their workplace and determine if it is “Friendly”. Completion of the assessment will help you identify areas where your current environment is not as attractive to workers with disabilities as it could be. You do not need to return your completed assessment.

### **STEP 2: Register as a Worker with Disabilities Friendly Employer**

Visit our website and complete the Friendly Employer registration. Your company can then be accessible to workers with disabilities seeking employment. Registration will enhance your efforts to tap into this high quality labor pool.

### **STEP 3: Review the enclosed reference materials**

This publication includes information to help dispel some of the myths about workers with disabilities and strategies to help you attract and retain workers with disabilities. Refer to the Employer Resource Guide to locate organizations geared toward workers with disabilities. These materials will also be available on our web page listed below.

### **STEP 4: Continue to check the Workers with Disabilities resource page**

Check our website for timely information that will help you utilize workers with disabilities as a resource for your business' present and future labor supply. More specific information and resources are available and will continue to be enhanced and updated. These enhanced resources are intended to help employers recruit, accommodate, and retain qualified workers with disabilities.



Visit our Website at:

[www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/programs/populations/disability](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/programs/populations/disability)

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is an equal opportunity service provider. If you need assistance to access services or materials in an alternate format, contact DWD, Division of Workforce Solutions at 608-264-8164. TTY 608-267-9019.

# Myths and Facts

## ABOUT WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

**MYTH 1:**

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 2:**

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 3:**

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.

**MYTH 4:**

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. Studies by the Office of Disability Employment Policy's Job Accommodation Network have shown that 15% of accommodations cost nothing, 51% cost between \$1 and \$500, 12% cost between \$501 and \$1,000, and 22% cost more than \$1,000.

**MYTH 5:**

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 6:**

It is impossible to determine a fair salary range for workers with disabilities.

**FACT:**

This is simple. Employees with disabilities should receive prevailing wages and benefits based on productivity and job performance.

**MYTH 7:**

There is nothing I can do if an individual with disabilities is not the right fit or doesn't work out in my organization.

**FACT:**

This is the statement everyone is afraid to articulate. They are really trying to say, "I can't fire a worker with disabilities if he doesn't work out." The ADA's intent is to ensure that individuals with disabilities are given the same opportunities and treatment as everybody else. Employers are not expected or encouraged to go easy on workers with disabilities. They should meet the same performance expectations and be subject to the same disciplinary actions as any employee. If they are not doing the job or are falling short of the workplace's criteria, they should be coached, counseled, disciplined and, if necessary, terminated based upon established policies. Just as individuals with disabilities deserve equal consideration in the employment arena, they must be held accountable to the standards and expectations of their employment.

Information provided by the Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

*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 are some common myths and the facts that tell the real story.*

## DISABILITY FRIENDLY

# EMPLOYER SURVEY

Take this simple assessment to find out if you offer an environment that is attractive to workers with disabilities. Each line that you check represents a characteristic that is likely to attract qualified workers with a disability.

✓ Please check items that apply to your organization

### RECRUITMENT

- We clearly state on our job announcements that we are an Equal Employment Opportunity employer.
- Applicants are encouraged to request accommodations that provide them equal access to all phases of the recruitment process
- Our job descriptions clearly identify the essential and marginal functions of all positions we are attempting to fill.
- We are familiar with organizations and agencies that assist job seekers with disabilities

### HIRING, RETENTION, EVALUATION, AND PROMOTION

We provide all new hires and job candidates with the following information addressing issues of particular interest to workers with disabilities:

- Workplace Accommodations
- Flexible Benefits
- Alternative Work Schedules

We periodically review our organizational policies and practices as they relate to workers with disabilities:

- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Training
- Evaluation
- Promotion
- Termination

We conduct "accessibility audits" of our organization to help identify possible barriers to:

- Physical access to facilities
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Promotional opportunities
- Training for Workers With Disabilities

We educate managers, supervisors and interviewers on:

- Americans With Disabilities Act
- Wisconsin Fair Labor Standards
- Workplace Accommodations
- Disability Management/Return to Work
- Benefits of Hiring Workers With a Disability
- Disability Stereotypes

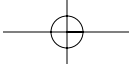
### EMPLOYEE TRAINING

We provide flexible training opportunities including:

- Mentoring
- Job Rotation
- On-the-job Coaching
- Peer Training
- Internships

We provide equal access to company sponsored training and social activities for all employees, including workers with disabilities:

- Newsletters/Notices
- Breakrooms/Lounge
- Career Advancement Training
- Specific Skill Training



## ACCOMMODATIONS

We talk about assessing and redesigning jobs for workers with disabilities with:

- Managers
- Supervisors
- Lead Workers

We provide the following accommodations to assist employees in performing their jobs:

- Ergonomic workstations/keyboards
- Flexible workstations
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

We offer alternatives to full-time employment:

- Part-time Employment
- Job Sharing
- Flex-time

The following proactive return to work policies and practices are in place:

- Early Intervention
- Case Management
- Alternate Duty Assignments
- Supervisor Training

We offer similar or pro-rated benefits for part-time employees.

## Disabled Worker Friendly Employer Gauge:

*- Add up your checkmarks -*

If your total was:

- 1 - 12** you will have trouble attracting workers with disabilities
- 13-25** you are somewhat friendly to workers with disabilities
- 26-37** you are mostly workers with disabilities friendly
- 38-47** you are workers with disabilities friendly

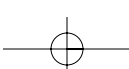
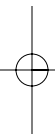
**1-12**  
Needs  
Improvement

**13-25**  
Somewhat  
Friendly

**26-37**  
Mostly  
Friendly

**38-47**  
Disabled Worker  
Friendly

*To learn more about workers with disabilities and how you can become a more Workers With Disabilities Friendly organization refer to the following answer/resource guide. You can also contact your local Job Center or Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Office.*



# How to Attract and Retain Workers with Disabilities

## Create non-traditional recruiting strategies

Motivate current employees to recruit applicants with disabilities for existing employment opportunities.



Post job announcements on your website and consider including pictures of employees with disabilities.



Remember to identify your company as an "Equal Opportunity Employer" and add "Our Company Values Diversity."



List job openings in publications and on websites that target applicants with disabilities.



Attend local Job Fairs for job seekers with disabilities to gain a better understanding of the skills and abilities they bring to the workforce.



Establish a positive working relationship with local agencies/organizations, such as the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, that provide employment assistance for job seekers with disabilities. (Search the Internet for potential contacts.)

## Consider options and flexibility

Consider providing internships/work experience placements for individuals with disabilities as a means of increasing the "comfort level" of staff and the potential applicant.



Access information on reasonable accommodations and related tax incentives through local rehabilitation agencies/organizations.



Consider telecommuting, job sharing, and other alternative employment options.



Explore accommodations (i.e. interpreters, readers, large print) when interviewing and testing applicants with disabilities.

## Consider "outside the box" approaches

Explore modifications to existing work-stations/procedures to reduce injuries, enhance productivity, and accommodate workers with disabilities.



Consider mentoring partnerships as a way to make workers with disabilities feel at home.



Consider greater use of "cafeteria" style benefit packages to facilitate the hiring of persons with disabilities in flexible work arrangements.

## Promote opportunities for workers with disabilities to update their skills

Ensure that workers with disabilities receive the same access to employer-provided training as their co-workers.



Encourage workers with disabilities to stay competitive via training in the increasingly technology-based economy.



Review company programs to address multiple learning styles. Avoid one-size-fits-all approaches.

## Combat negative stereotypes

Offer management level training and employee workshops to eliminate disability related bias in the workplace.



Ensure that disability bias plays no part in hiring, training, or retention decisions.

**Finally -**

*Look at the skills  
the person brings to the job,  
not the disability...*

# ORGANIZATIONS WITH A DISABLED WORKER FOCUS

## WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

[www.dwd.state.wi.us](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us)

### WISCONSIN JOB CENTERS

**888-258-9956**

Wisconsin Job Centers offer a wealth of information and services to employers and job seekers. To find your nearest Wisconsin Job Center, call the toll free number listed above or visit our website at: [www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/directory](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/directory).

### WISCONSIN DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (DVR)

**1-800-442-3477**

DVR provides comprehensive employment, training, and placement services for individuals with disabilities. They are also an excellent source of disability related information and consultation.

### WISCONSIN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK (BLN) [www.dwd.state.wi.us/DVR/BLN](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/DVR/BLN)

BLN is a business led initiative assisting employers to identify, hire, and retain qualified workers with disabilities.

### REHABILITATION FOR WISCONSIN, INC.

RFW is a Wisconsin Association of Community Rehabilitation Programs who provide pre-vocational, employment, and community living services for individuals with disabilities. [www.RFW.org](http://www.RFW.org)

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

[www.doleta.gov](http://www.doleta.gov)

This website developed by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration identifies a variety of resources designed to help you recruit, accommodate, and retain workers with disabilities.

### ABLEDATA

[www.abledata.com](http://www.abledata.com)

Provides a guide to assistive technology to help employers identify cost effective accommodations for employees/applicants.

### JOB ACCOMMODATION NETWORK (JAN)

<http://Janweb.icdi.wvu.edu>

JAN provides links to publications and useful accommodation ideas to assist workers/applicants with disabilities.

### RESNA

[www.resna.org](http://www.resna.org)

RESNA is the professional organization of providers of assistive technology services, including job accommodations. This site contains a directory of certified professionals in the field.

### STOUT VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION INSTITUTE - UW-STOUT [www.svri.uwstout.edu](http://www.svri.uwstout.edu)

Vocational assessment, assistive technology, disability management, and job placement services are available to enhance the employment potential of individuals with disabilities.

### GREAT LAKES ADA AND IT CENTER

**800-949-4232**

The regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center operates a national information line for answering questions on the ADA.

### WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF SAFETY

[www.wischamberfoundation.org](http://www.wischamberfoundation.org)

Provides training, publications, and consultation services on safety related issues including workers compensation and return-to-work programming.

*According to the 2000 census, one in five people reported having a disability. Wisconsin's future economic health will demand that employers include this 20% of the available labor pool in tomorrow's workforce.*

*Governor Jim Doyle*

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