

In this Issue: [Free Course for Employers, Federal Information Exchange & More](#)

WHAT'S NEW

Inclusive Talent Acquisition Course for Employers

It's a fact that's been proven many times over: diversity in the workplace matters. But how do you foster a company culture that attracts and supports a diverse workforce, including employees with disabilities? "Introduction to Inclusive Talent Acquisition," a free online course co-developed by Perkins School for the Blind and Harvard Extension School, gives hiring managers and recruiters the tools they need to attract, interview and onboard qualified candidates with disabilities. In just three hours, participants will learn practical steps to create an inclusive workplace for all. The next iteration of the course will be available starting January 10, 2017, with enrollment starting this week. [Learn more about the course.](#)

EARN Convenes Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability

Last week, EARN, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and U.S. Office of Personnel Management, gathered thought leaders on disability employment in the federal workforce to kick-off the Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability. During the meeting, which took place at the Access Board in Washington, D.C., participants representing a wide range of agencies discussed strategies for sustaining progress made under Executive Order 13548 and ways for agencies to collaborate and learn from each other's challenges and successes going forward. [Read more about federal disability employment.](#)

Increasing Workforce Inclusion through State Policy

Last week, the Council of State Governments (CSG) and National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) jointly released the report of the National Task Force on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities, which over the past year worked to address barriers to and identify policy solutions for facilitating stronger, more inclusive state workforces. Through the lens of four topic areas, the report, titled "*Work Matters*," outlines a range of state-level disability employment policy initiatives, including States as Model Employers policies. The task force and report are a result of CSG's and NCSL's involvement in the ODEP-sponsored State Exchange on Employment and Disability. [Read the "Work Matters" report.](#)

Honoring Contributions to the Disability Community

At a ceremony in New York City late last month, the Viscardi Center recognized 10 individuals with Henry Viscardi Achievement Awards for their work to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Among the awardees were several individuals whose efforts have focused on employment, including PJ Edington, IBM Government and Regulatory Affairs Executive; Dave McGill, Occur Vice President, Reimbursement and Compliance; and Curtis Pride, former Major League Baseball player and current Ambassador for Inclusion. Bestowed

annually, the awards honor the legacy of the center's founder, Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr., himself a person with a disability committed to creating a more inclusive society. [Learn more about the recipients.](#)

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ASKEARN.ORG SPOTLIGHT



Finding Candidates with Disabilities

Last month, EARN hosted a webinar on how employers can tap the talents of veterans with disabilities. This highly attended webinar will be archived soon. In the meantime, employers and others interested in the topic can check out the “Disabled Veterans” section of AskEARN.org, which includes frequently asked questions and information about accommodations, tax incentives and related legislation, including the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, which applies to all employers, and the Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance Act, which applies to federal contractors. Some employers express concern that one of the greatest barriers they face regarding the hiring of individuals with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities, is the inability to find qualified candidates. The key is the adoption of effective outreach and recruitment strategies. This page of AskEARN.org provides guidance and resources to help companies take proactive steps to build a workforce inclusive of qualified individuals with disabilities, today and into the future.

[Read more](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

January 12, 2017, 2:00 p.m. ET

Twitter Chat: “#DisabilityMentors: Supporting the Career Success of Young People with Disabilities

In honor of National Mentoring Month, the Campaign for Disability Employment (CDE) in collaboration with one of its members, the American Association of People with Disabilities, will host a Twitter chat focused on career mentoring and its role in helping foster success for young people with disabilities as well as the employers who stand to benefit from their skills and talents. The featured guest will be Derek Shields, co-chair of the National Disability Mentoring Coalition (NDMC). To participate in the conversation, please use the hashtag #DisabilityMentors. [Follow the CDE on Twitter](#) or [learn more about the NDMC.](#)

January 13, 2017

Deadline: Disability Equality Index Registration

The deadline to register for the 2017 Disability Equality Index (DEI) is fast approaching! Sponsored by the American Association of People with Disabilities and the U.S. Business Leadership Network - an EARN partner - this benchmarking tool offers businesses the opportunity to receive an objective score, on a scale of zero to 100, on their disability inclusion policies and practices. The first DEI launched in 2014 and was open to Fortune 1000 companies only. Now, companies with 500 or more employees can also participate. [Learn more about the DEI.](#)

February 14, 2017

Event and Webcast: Annual Disability Statistics Compendium Release

The Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics and Report on Disability is a web-based tool that pools disability statistics published by various federal agencies. The most recent version will be released on February 14, on the second day of a “State-of-the-Science” conference sponsored by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research-funded Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics. For those unable to attend in person in Washington, D.C., the event can be viewed live via webcast. [Learn more about the event.](#)

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EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT



Ford

Following the success of a pilot program, one of America's largest automakers, Ford Motor Company, will be expanding an initiative to continue hiring people on the autism spectrum. The initiative launched earlier this year at the company's Dearborn, Michigan headquarters with four individuals, all of whom were subsequently hired in regular positions. Now, the company plans to expand the program, bringing 12-24 more individuals on board in the coming months. [Learn more about Ford's plans.](#)

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The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN) is a resource for employers seeking to recruit, hire, retain and advance qualified employees with disabilities. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy under a cooperative agreement with The Viscardi Center. For more information, visit AskEARN.org

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