Workforce Developments that Impact People with Disabilities and Service Professionals

National APSE Conference
Arlington, VA
June 28, 2012

LaWanda H. Cook, Ph.D., Northeast ADA Center, Cornell University
Judy Young, M.A., National Employer TA Center, Cornell University
Agenda

• The Impact of the Recession
• Federal Employment Initiatives
• Baby Boomers and the Aging Workforce
• Workforce Needs of Veterans with Disabilities
• Working with Employers
• Q & A
First, what are your thoughts?

The most important workforce/employment trend I see impacting people with disabilities is...
The Impact of the Recession

The recession has been hard for the employment of everyone, but even harder for the employment of people with disabilities.
National Employment Rates

• In 2009, an estimated 36.0 % of non-institutionalized, working-age people with disabilities were employed.

• In 2009, an estimated 76.8 % of non-institutionalized, working-age people without disabilities were employed.

Specific Impacts

- Employment rate for people with disabilities declined at three times the rate of those without disabilities since the start of the recession.

- This decline was even more pronounced for people with daily living limitations and lower education.

- People with disabilities impacted before racial/ethnic minority groups during all waves of layoffs.

Why are people with disabilities more vulnerable to recession?

• Last hired, first fired phenomenon

• More likely to work in the contingent workforce

• Less likely to work in high-growth, recession-proof sectors

• Pure and simple discrimination?

Why are people with disabilities more vulnerable to recession?

Patterns suggest:

Employers shed any group of workers perceived to be more expensive or considered less productive than their ideal workforce. Including:

• People with disabilities
• People new to the workforce
• Recent veterans who may require training
• Older workers

Federal Initiatives:

- Executive Order 13548
- ADA Amendments Act
- OFCCP Enforcement

- The Federal Government as a Model Employer
- Schedule A Hiring for targeted disabilities
- Expanded definition of disability – focus on R/A
- Enhanced Affirmative Action Plan reviews to verify employment
The Aging Workforce
The Aging Workforce

• Older workers account for more than 25% of the U.S. population, Baby Boomers are the single-largest population cohort*

• By 2016, one-third of the total U.S. workforce will be age 50 or older, up from 28 percent in 2007**

** Source: AARP Best Employers for Workers Over 50, About the Best Employers Program: Great opportunities await today's aging workforce (February, 2012)
Graying of the Workforce

Projected percentage change in labor force by age, 2006-2016

- 75 and older: 84.3%
- 65 to 74: 83.4%
- 55 to 64: 36.5%
- 25 to 54: 2.4%
- 16 to 24: -6.9%

Why is the workforce aging?

• Financial need
  • Insufficient retirement
  • Health care costs
  • Assist family members
• Increased longevity and function

• Enjoy working, being productive, and the social engagement offered through work

• Declining pool of younger workers and fear of “brain drain” - employers ask older workers to stay
MYTHS: Older Workers

- Long-standing myths:
  - Afraid of change, less flexible and adaptable
  - Technologically inept
  - Slow to learn
  - Lack creativity
  - Perform at lower level
  - Less motivated
FACTS: Older Workers

- Low turnover rate
- Commitment to quality
- Good attendance and punctuality
- Few on-the-job accidents
- High motivation and engagement
- Strong work ethic and experience
- Loyalty and reliability
- Availability for various schedules
- Diversity of thought and experiences
Prevalence of Disability Increases with Age

- 9.5% for workers age 18 - 24
- 20% for workers age 45 - 54
- 42% for workers in the 65+ age range

Source: Bruyere 2006; Kampfe, Wadsworth, Mambeolo & Schonbrun, 2008
April, 2012 Study by MetLife:

Boomers are retiring - Almost one-half (45%) of 65-year-old are now fully retired (up from 19% in 2008).

Health – the #1 specific reason for retiring earlier than expected.
Attracting & Retaining Older Workers

- Ergonomic equipment, proper lighting
- Provisions for vision and hearing impairments
- Implementing mentoring programs
- Lowering work stress
- Helping workers manage their time and prioritize
- Supplying clear and up-to-date job descriptions
- Providing honest, rapid, and frequent feedback, followed by appropriate training when necessary
- Maintaining good communication practices

Source: McIntosh, B. (2001). An employer’s guide to older workers: how to win them back and convince them to stay, Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Washington, DC.
Attracting and Retaining Older Workers

- Workplace flexibility: work from home, work from more than a single location, snowbird programs
- Work hour flexibility: part-time, job sharing
- Flexible work schedule
- Career flexibility: on/off ramps, leaves, reduced responsibilities, job changes
- Benefit flexibility: phased retirement, cafeteria plans
- Flexibility in employment relationships: project work, consultation, independent contracts
- Training to upgrade skills for current or new job
Attracting and Retaining Older Workers

- Targeted training opportunities
- Equal access to advancement
- Inclusion in all informal networks and gatherings
- Provision of reasonable accommodations
- Phased in retirement
- Bridge jobs to other careers
- Wellness and other health-related programs
Veterans with Disabilities
Veterans’ Workplace Issues are Disability Workplace Issues

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey 2009):

- 21.9 million veterans in 2009
- 9.8 million of these veterans were in the workforce
- 5.5 million veterans had a diagnosed disability
The real rate of disability among veterans is likely substantially higher

“Signature” Disabilities: PTSD, TBI and depression

PTSD:

- About 20% of recently returned veterans screened positive for depression or PTSD (RAND, 2008)
- Rate of PTSD among returning service members was 6% diagnosed, with an additional 27% estimated to be undiagnosed (Erbes, Westermeyer, Engdahl & Johnson, 2007)

TBI

- 19% of soldiers received a probable TBI, with more subtle (and more difficult to diagnose) blast-related injuries being the most common (RAND, 2008)

Many veterans have more than one disability - 30% of returning veterans screened positive for PTSD, TBI and/or major depression (RAND, 2008)
Main laws that apply to veterans with disabilities in the workplace

USERRA
FMLA
ADA
USERRA
(Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act)

- Enforced by US DOL
- Protects civilian jobs of service members called to military duty
- Retains employment rights for five years
- Has some disability protections for service-acquired disabilities--right to reasonable accommodation
- Must be re-employed in the job they would have attained had they not been in service
- Guaranteed same seniority, rights and benefits
- Employer must train/re-train service member to attain the “escalated job”

Source: [http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra/userra_fs.htm](http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra/userra_fs.htm)
FMLA

• New military family leave entitlements—2009

• Family members of service members can take up to 26 workweeks leave to care for service member with a disability

• Family members of National Guard may use 12 weeks FMLA leave to arrange family affairs of active duty service member

ADA

• VWDs protected in same way anyone else with a disability is.
  • Not automatically protected
  • Independent of military benefits disability rating
• Hiring—Right to an accommodation during hiring process itself
• Hiring—Right to disclosure is a choice
• Accommodation—Right to an accommodation
• Other work processes—Right to have equal access to training, development, coaching, equal compensation, promotion, etc.
• Right to an accessible workplace

The Employer Study

In collaboration with:

• SHRM
• National ADA Network
• Northeast ADA Center (formerly DBTAC—NE)
What does all of this mean for people with disabilities and service professionals?

Working with Employers
Be Aware of Employment Trends in Your Community


State Department of Labor
Be Able to Spot Disability-friendly Employers

• Include of disability in the company’s diversity plan
• Require subcontractors to comply with nondiscrimination requirements
• Train HR and supervisors on how to effectively interview people with disabilities
• Develop relationships with community organizations that promote employment of people with disabilities

➢ Larger organizations and publicly owned for-profits are more likely to have some of the best practices in place than privately owned for-profits and nonprofit organizations

Get to Know Employers in Your Community

• Research companies
• Follow industry trends
• Learn HR Metrics
• Utilize business-related social media
• If no job openings, ask for other involvement

Focus on employers’ unsolved problems not agency services!
Remember, there’s no such thing as no jobs…

- Look at opportunities not “want ads.”

- Think in terms of relationship building (with employers, jobseekers and each other) rather than placements.

- Don’t rule out self-employment/sub-contracted work.

- If it will make money, save time, and/or save money, someone will pay you (or your jobseeker) to do it!
Northeast ADA Center
New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands 1.800.949.4232
www.northeastada.org

Free, confidential technical assistance
In-person training
Webinars
Informational briefs and other resources for people with disabilities, employers, and service providers

The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the Department of Education, NIDRR grant number H133 A110020. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.
National Employer Technical Assistance Center
1.855.Ask.EARN
http://www.askEARN.org

We focus on Title I of the ADA and offer customized technical assistance and training for government agencies, federal contractors, and private employers in support of their efforts to recruit, hire, and advance persons with disabilities.