

Disability Diversity and Inclusion

State as a Model Employer (SAME) Practices



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DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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Inclusion in the Workplace

Why is it important to individuals with disabilities?

- Income
- Identity
- Belonging
- Social Engagement
- Self-expression



Inclusion in the Workplace (Cont.)

Why is it important to employers?

- Employers need people, talent, skills
- Diversity allows for creativity, innovation
- Competitive advantage: Connection with largest minority group in the US
- Reputation and brand
- Employee engagement



The Role of the State

- Public sector is one of the largest employers
- State government employed 5 million people in 2013
- States can play a significant role in advancing the employment of individuals with disabilities
- In Wisconsin, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) intends to demonstrate model practices promoting the recruitment, hiring, training, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities in the workforce



DWD State as a Model Employer (SAME)

- DWD Secretary's Office authorized the creation of a SAME Task Force
- Current members include DWD Human Resources, Division of Employment and Training, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Overarching goal: Develop and support a framework/model that promotes diversity **and** inclusivity in the DWD workforce



SAME First Steps

- Create a Charter
- Learn from Others
- Create a Work Plan



SAME Initial Findings

DWD has many SAME best practices in place already!

- Diversity Zone on Wisc.Jobs
 - Disabled Expanded Certification (DEC)
 - DVR Limited Term Employment (LTE) Internship Program
 - Veterans Programs
- DWD Business Services
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action (AA) Committees



Leveraging Existing Opportunities

- Inform stakeholders about opportunities

Example : Upcoming SAME E-learning

- Challenge misperceptions and stereotypes

Example : Offer disability and employment education/training

- Make information accessible and user-friendly

Example : Diversity Zone

- Learn if strategies *make a difference*



How SAME Evaluates Impact

- Percentage of individuals in the DWD workforce who self-identify as having a disability -
- Number participating in and benefiting from DEC
- Number participating in the DVR LTE Internship Program
- Number of DWD employees engaged in activities designed to increase awareness about disability, employment, and available resources



Future Efforts

We can do more!

- Leadership and accountability
- Evaluate policies, practices, programs
- Education and training
- Internal support and advocacy: “Create a culture”
- Measure impact of efforts
- Learn from others



Call to Action

What can you do?

- Lead the way – set priorities and expectations
- Get involved and engaged
- Question traditional ways of doing business and propose creative alternatives
- Create opportunities for new learning
- Encourage champions and advocates
- Learn from others



Contact Us

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