

January 14, 2015

Dear Committee,

**Thank you for your devoted public service in your role as leaders on the implementation of WIOA.** We are so grateful for your work. We are also highly supportive of WIOA as well as the National Governors Association initiative *A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities* and other efforts to expand opportunities for people with disabilities to have access to competitive integrated employment.

**Our goal is to ensure that each state puts forward an excellent unified plan based on best practices – one that will create the most integrated job opportunities that pay competitive wages for people with disabilities possible, while meeting the talent needs of employers.**

We stand ready to help and thus have created and included here a “Disability First Planning Tool” that includes statistics, planning data, and a wealth of information. It even has a link to a list of all the federal contractors in each state that, as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, due to Rule 503, must become inclusive employers. The tool is meant to be a resource for you and for states, workforce development boards and agencies. It is organized around the key recommendations from the [NGA's report](#) *A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities*’ organizing principles. Indeed, we believe these can really help your state. The key areas are:

- Making the best of limited resources
- Finding and supporting businesses in their efforts to employ people with disabilities
- Making disability employment a part of the state workforce strategy
- Preparing youth with disabilities for careers that use their full potential, and providing employers with a pipeline of skilled workers
- Being a model employer by increasing the number of people with disabilities working in state government

We have been honored to meet with 33 governors on this topic (some many times over) and to see the real progress being made. The efforts of Governors Jack Markell (DE), Terry Branstand (IA), Scott Walker (WI) and many others have been stellar. Thank you again for your leadership and your efforts for people with disabilities. If you have any questions, please contact [JenniferM@RespectAbilityUSA.org](mailto:JenniferM@RespectAbilityUSA.org) or at 202 365 0787.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi  
President, RespectAbilityUSA.org

Lisa Derx, Vice President  
Best Buddies

Donna Meltzer,  
President, The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)

Kelly Buckland  
President, National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)

Susan Prokop  
Advocacy Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)

Carol Glazer  
President, National Organization on Disability (NOD)

**Disability Employment First Planning Tool:** Download the [PDF](#). Download the [Word document](#).

## **Disability and Job Data By State**

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