

ODEP/USBLN® Annual Alliance Report

9/24/09

I. Alliance Background

Date Signed 9/12/2008

Overview

The U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and The US Business Leadership Network ® (USBLN) signed a formal Alliance agreement in recognition of the value of establishing a collaborative relationship to promote the employment of people with disabilities. Through this formal agreement, ODEP and the USBLN intend to provide USBLN members and others with information, guidance, and access to resources that will help them to recruit, hire, and advance workers with disabilities.

Through the Alliance, ODEP and the USBLN intend to work together to develop and achieve mutually agreed upon outreach and communication goals, training and education goals, technical assistance goals, and engage in a national dialogue. Examples of the types of activities that may be pursued under this Alliance include:

- Communicating new policies and effective disability employment practices to employers via the ODEP and the USBLN Web sites.
- Providing speaking and exhibiting opportunities at ODEP and USBLN events.
- Collaborating with other Alliance participants on employer issues that are identified through the Alliance Program.
- Disseminating ODEP training and education materials to USBLN members.
- Identifying and working with ODEP to provide expertise on key industry issues as they pertain to the employment of people with disabilities.
- Identifying activities that demonstrate, evaluate or replicate model disability employment strategies.
- Promoting ODEP-funded technical assistance services, such as the Job Accommodation Network and the new Employer Technical Assistance Center.
- Developing and disseminating case studies illustrating the business value of employing people with disabilities and publicize their results.

- Convening or participating in forums, round table discussions, or stakeholder meetings on employer leadership issues to help forge innovative solutions in the workplace on recruiting, hiring, retaining and promoting people with disabilities.

The ODEP/USBLN® Implementation Team members for Year 1 were:

USBLN®: Beth Butler, Chair; Marthalee Galeota, Board Member; John Kemp, Executive Director & General Counsel; Brandon Macsata, General Consultant; Laurie Blair, Administrator.

ODEP: Employer Policy Team Members included Beth Bienvenu, Patrick Cokley, and Team Lead Colet Mitchell; Policy Communications & Outreach Division Members included Alliance Manager Carol Dunlap, Division Head Barbara Haight, and USBLN Alliance Coordinator Maggie Roffee.

This report covers the period commencing with the date the Alliance was signed on 9/12/2008 to 9/23/2009.

II. Implementation Team Meetings

During the first year of the Alliance, two in-person meetings were held. The first implementation planning meeting convened on February 23, 2009. This was a brainstorming session generating several possible initiatives and products that could be pursued under the four Alliance areas: Outreach & Communication; Training & Education; Technical Assistance; and National Dialogue.

As a result of this meeting, the following actions were adopted:

1. The USBLN® Executive Director would present the slate of possible initiatives at their next board meeting.
2. A USBLN® implementation team would be formed.
3. ODEP would facilitate joint conference calls of all its Alliance partners.
4. The USBLN® would host a joint meeting of all ODEP Alliance partners at its September 2009 annual conference.

The second in-person meeting was held at the USBLN® Washington, DC headquarters on July 2, 2009. During this meeting, the nine initiatives that the USBLN® Board agreed to were discussed.

Under Outreach and Communication, the USBLN® launched the following actions:

- An Online Resource Library is being created, and ODEP was invited to provide web-articles & the USBLN® offered to work collaboratively on features for ODEP's Business Sense.

- ODEP was invited to have an observer at the September 15, 2009 meeting of international organizations that are similar to the USBLN®.

Under Training & Education, the USBLN ® Board was interested in possibly calling together targeted industry panels.

Under Technical Assistance & Tools, the Board was interested veterans' initiatives and the issues around employer/provider relationships.

Under National Dialogue, the Board was interested in National Service Initiatives as well as involving ODEP in its Social Networking site called "Jobs Change Lives".

As a result of the meeting, the following actions were adopted:

1. The USBLN® convened a conference call with its leadership to pare the list down to no more than 2 or 3 deliverables that can be accomplished during the year.
2. After the final initiatives were selected, subcommittees are now being formed to develop and implement a plan for the deliverables.

III. Events and Products

During the first year of the Alliance, the USBLN® highlighted many of the Administration's and ODEP' initiatives on its Website including the signing of the Alliance, President Obama's disability agenda, the ODEP funded Campaign for Disability Employment, and First Lady Michelle Obama's Call to Service. A link to ODEP's website was featured on their home page as well as a link to ODEP's Job Accommodation Network. In addition, the USBLN included ODEP news items in their periodic emails to their membership which represents 60 BLN affiliates in 36 states including the District of Columbia and more than 5,000 employers.

The final actions for this first year of the Alliance occurred during the USBLN® annual conference, held from September 15 - 18, 2009 in Washington, DC.

Actions included:

1. A Board decision to pursue a single major project under the training activity, convening an industry panel.
2. A joint meeting of all ODEP Alliance partners was held.