

**EMPLOYMENT
FIRST
PARTNERS**

Engaging Businesses to HIRE PEOPLE with Disabilities

The Employment First Partners project provides mini-grants of \$3,000 to local groups to create big changes in their communities.



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I encourage companies to go for it, hire individuals with disabilities, it has been rewarding for me and the bakery. Isaac has never been late, always on time, and takes his work with a lot more pride than any other employee here.

Larson's Bakery - Racine, Wisconsin

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250 people with developmental disabilities got jobs and new relationships were built with over 200 businesses.

Grassroots efforts create opportunities:

- More than 30 statewide grassroots groups are working with local businesses to increase employment at competitive wages for people with the most significant disabilities.
- More than 50 people with disabilities are sharing their employment stories to raise awareness of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.
- Hundreds of other grassroots activities have taken place such as: legislative breakfasts, media campaigns, outreach to civic groups and school boards, partnerships with local businesses and chambers of commerce, and local conversations with community members.

After participating in the project, grant recipients report a significant increase in:

- The number of people working together in their communities to expand employment opportunities;
- The number of businesses that hire individuals with disabilities; and
- The number of legislators and policy makers that see the importance of community employment for individuals with disabilities.