



Strategies for Preparing Employment First Ambassadors

The following strategies can be used to prepare Employment First Ambassadors for sharing their personal employment stories and presenting about the importance of integrated employment for people with disabilities to local groups. The tools and strategies listed should be tailored to the individual(s) you are supporting and the types of presentations they will be doing. Use only what makes sense.

Step 1 – Learn about Your Role as an Employment First Ambassador

- ☐ Review and discuss the document titled “Employment First Ambassador Role”.
- ☐ Review and discuss the PowerPoint called “Employment First Ambassadors: They Get the Job Done!”
- ☐ Review and discuss the document called “Employment First Summary”.
- ☐ Review the Wisconsin Employment First information found at <https://wi-bpdd.org/index.php/employment-first/>

Step 2 – Prepare Your Personal Employment Story

- ☐ Complete the worksheet called “Employment First Ambassador Story”.
- ☐ Discuss answers.
- ☐ Create a summary paragraph(s) using the information from the worksheet and discussion.
- ☐ Have the Ambassador practice presenting his/her summary to others for the next week or two, and make changes if needed.

Step 3 – Prepare a PowerPoint Presentation to Go with Your Story

- ☐ Look at the example “My Employment Story” PowerPoints.
- ☐ Take pictures of the Ambassador at work and in the community to put in his/her PowerPoint.
- ☐ Ask the Ambassador to have a co-worker or boss write a few sentences to include in the PowerPoint.
- ☐ Example questions to ask boss/co-worker(s):
 1. How has employing me benefitted your business?
 2. How have I contributed to the workplace?
 3. How have you supported me to be successful?

Step 4 – Practice Your Story Using Your Slides

- ☐ Over the next week or so, ask the Ambassador to practice telling his/her story to people a few times using the slides.



Step 5 – Include Employment First in Your Presentation

- ☐ Discuss the upcoming presentation. When is it, who is the audience, etc.?
- ☐ Review the appropriate PowerPoint presentation for the audience:
 - Why Hire People with Disabilities - for Businesses
 - EF For Self-Advocates and Family Members
- ☐ Discuss with the Ambassador which reasons he/she thinks Wisconsin needs Employment First policies.
- ☐ Pick out slides or bullet points for the Ambassador's part of the presentation. Modify the presentation slides to suit your needs and focus of your event.

Step 6 – Practice Together

- ☐ Before your Employment First community outreach event, assemble a small audience and practice your presentation with the Ambassador.



Employment First Ambassador Story

Name:

Age:

Disability:

Current Job:

1) When you were in school, what type of job did you think you were going to have?

2) What different kinds of jobs have you had since high school?

3) What do you do at your current job(s)?

4) What do you like about your job(s)?

5) How did you get your current job(s)?

6) How many hours a week do you work?

7) How do you get to work?

8) Who helps you at work?

9) What are your current employment goals?

10) Why is it so important for you and other people with disabilities to have jobs in the community?



Employment First Talking Points

For Businesses

- Many businesses have workforce needs that are not being met. Baby Boomers, who make up almost half the workforce, will be retiring soon. Workers will be needed to fill those jobs.
- More than 75% of people with disabilities are unemployed or underemployed when they would rather be working more.
- Hiring people with disabilities has a good return on investment. Research shows that:
 - ✓ The turnover rate for employees with disabilities is 8% compared to 45% for other workers
 - ✓ employees with disabilities have nearly identical job performance ratings as those without disabilities
 - ✓ The amount of supervision needed is similar for employees with and without identified disabilities.
 - ✓ The public likes to spend money with businesses that hire people with disabilities – 87% of customers say they prefer companies that hire people with disabilities.
- Employing people with disabilities helps the economy. Rather than being unemployed, workers with disabilities become tax payers, are less reliant on public benefits, and have money to spend in the local community.

For Individuals and Families

- Employment for people with disabilities benefits everyone. Workers with disabilities are:
 - ✓ Healthier and happier,
 - ✓ Contributing citizens and tax payers,
 - ✓ Less reliant on public benefits, and
 - ✓ They have money to spend in the local community.
- Many people with disabilities want to work. About 75% of people with disabilities say they are under employed or would like a job.
- Employment First means that everyone can work for regular wages in the community, regardless of disability.
- Many laws and policies are changing to provide better support and more opportunities for people with disabilities to get jobs. 34 states have passed laws to support Employment First, including Wisconsin. There is still much work to do, though! You can make a difference by sharing this information with other people and sharing your employment story.



Employment First Summary

There are many people in Wisconsin making less than minimum wage and not working in the community. This is not the best thing for people with disabilities or the community. Wisconsin can do better!

- ✓ 49 out of the 50 states in the USA are working on Employment First.
- ✓ 34 states have policies that support Employment First.
- ✓ This means that 34 states are actively working toward helping all people with disabilities get jobs. Wisconsin is one of 14 with Employment First legislation!

Employment First is about:

- ✓ Believing that everyone can work in the community for regular pay – even people with significant disabilities, and
- ✓ Having support to work in the community

Wisconsin passed an Employment First bill in March 2018! This law requires...

- ✓ Work in the community for regular pay to be the priority for state agencies
- ✓ State agencies to work together to increase the number of people with disabilities working in the community for regular pay. These state agencies are the Department of Workforce Development, Department of Health Services, Department of Public Instruction

Wisconsin has passed Employment First policies, but there is still a lot to do! You can make a difference by:

- ✓ Sharing your employment story
- ✓ Letting people know about Employment First
- ✓ Telling people why integrated employment is important to people with disabilities

Common Employment First Words

Employment First – a national movement to help all people with disabilities get jobs in the community

Integrated Employment – work for minimum wage or more in the community with people who do not have disabilities

Policy/Policies – rules made by government agencies and schools about the services people receive



Employment First Ambassador: Roles and Responsibilities

Employment First (EF) Ambassadors are people with disabilities (& their family members) who have jobs in their communities & understand the importance of advocating for policies and services that will help *everyone* with disabilities get jobs in their communities.

EF Ambassadors support Employment First and believe that:

- Everyone can work in the community
- There is a job for everyone in the community no matter how significant their disability
- Schools, families, and businesses must raise their expectations about people with disabilities working
- People are healthier, safer, and happier when they work
- Integrated employment is good for the employers, individuals, and the economy

EF Ambassadors will be asked to:

- Learn about Employment First
- Meet with legislators and policymakers to tell them why it is important for them to support the Employment First
- Share their personal employment stories by presenting at conferences, meetings, schools, and community events
- Meet with employers to talk about why they work and why hiring people with disabilities is good for business
- Be part of videos and Public Service Announcements to help educate others about the importance of Employment First
- Be part of the Employment First Conference every year

**Employment First
Ambassadors:
They Get the Job Done!**



What Are Employment First Ambassadors?

People with disabilities that:

- Have **jobs in the community**
- **Want to be leaders**-have their voices heard
- Believe that all people with disabilities deserve **real jobs for real wages!**



Why did EF Ambassadors begin?

- People with disabilities need to be **leaders** in the **Employment First Movement!**
- Businesses, legislators, policy makers need to **hear directly from people with disabilities**
- People with disabilities need **opportunities to develop leadership skills**



What do EF Ambassadors do?

- **Spread the word** about the importance of **community employment** for people with disabilities!
- **Talk to:** businesses, legislators, policy makers, people with disabilities and family members
- Host/support **local EF events/Speak at Conferences**
- Provide **leadership at the EF conference**









What do EF Ambassadors do cont'd?

- **Develop materials/ information** that provide a clear message about **Employment First**, why it is **important**, and what people can do to **get involved**



This Year We Want to Recruit Many More Ambassadors!

- We added **9 new EF Partners** around the state!
- Each recruiting **at least two Ambassadors!**
- Meeting with **businesses, legislators, chambers**
- Hold **employer appreciation events/** give awards

Hudson High School
Barron City County on Transition
Southwest Milwaukee Consortium
SPARK – Middleton
Lodi Agricultural Fair
Madison Metropolitan School District
Mukwonago High School
WorkPlus – Madison
Franklin Public Schools

How Can you Get Involved?!

- Find out if there is an **EF Partner near you**
- **Get involved**-talk to businesses, legislators and teachers about how important it is that **all** people with disabilities work in the community.
- Share your **employment story**
- Get involved in **Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign**





WISCONSIN EMPLOYMENT FIRST: *CREATING CHANGE ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME*



SO, WHAT IS EMPLOYMENT FIRST?

It is.....

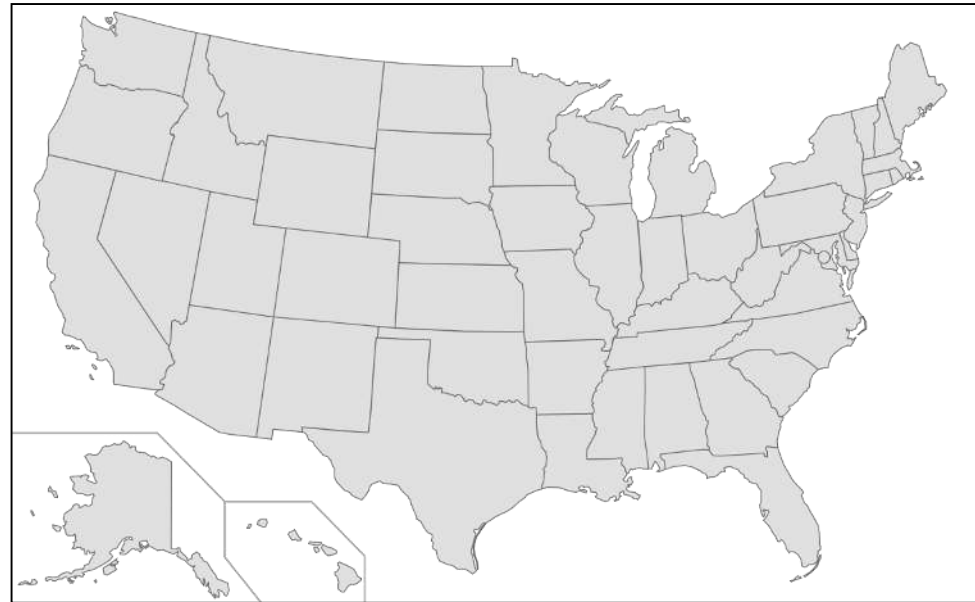
- The understanding that **everyone** can work, regardless of disability.
- Many people working together to support this idea that everyone can work.
- That makes it a **MOVEMENT**.



IS EMPLOYMENT FIRST HAPPENING ONLY IN WISCONSIN?

No!

- Employment First is happening **across** the US
- In fact, people in **49** states are working on Employment First
- There is **POWER** in numbers!



WHAT CHANGES CAN HAPPEN WITH EMPLOYMENT FIRST?

ALL people with disabilities can have the opportunity to:

- Work in the community at a job they choose.
- Be successful with a good job match and the right kind of help.
- Earn the current minimum wage of **\$7.25** per hour – or more.



DOES THIS LOOK RIGHT TO YOU?

- Some people with disabilities get paid just **pennies** an hour like the ones in the top pile.



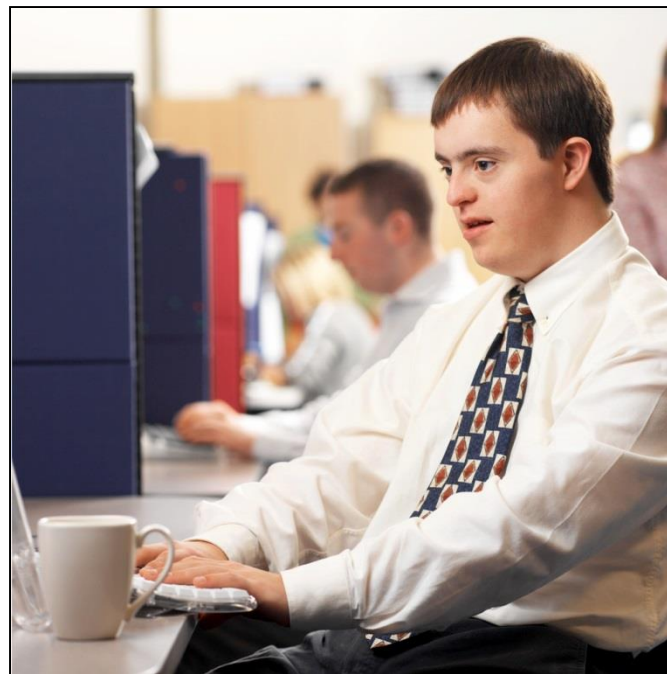
- People who don't have disabilities must be paid at least **\$7.25 per hour.**



WHAT CAN EMPLOYMENT FIRST MEAN FOR PEOPLE?

DID YOU KNOW?

- RESEARCH SHOWS THAT WHEN PEOPLE WORK IN THE COMMUNITY, THEY NOT ONLY HAVE MORE **MONEY**, BUT THEY ARE ALSO **HAPPIER** AND **HEALTHIER**.



WHY IS EMPLOYMENT FIRST SO IMPORTANT?

- There are many people with disabilities in Wisconsin earning **less** than minimum wage and **not** working side by side with others who do not have disabilities in their communities.
- This is not the best thing for people with disabilities or communities.
- We can do **better**!



People with disabilities need **real** jobs for **real** pay!

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF EMPLOYMENT FIRST WI?

The goal is:

- To have **twice** as many people with disabilities working at jobs in the community.



WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE EMPLOYMENT FIRST HAPPEN IN WISCONSIN?

- **SPEAK UP!** Tell family members, teachers, law-makers, support agencies, and case managers, that everyone deserves a job in the community earning minimum wage or more
- Tell them all why community employment is so important to you
- * **Tell your stories!**



SPEAKING UP FOR EMPLOYMENT FIRST?

SHOW PEOPLE WHAT IS POSSIBLE BY:

- Creating videos of people with disabilities working in their communities (maybe you or someone you know)
- Having Employers talk to other Employers
- Telling Policy Makers and Law Makers that everyone deserves a **real** job for **real** pay – regardless of disability



BE AN EMPLOYMENT FIRST AMBASSADOR

Do you...

- Have a job in the community?
- Believe that there is a job in the community for everyone, regardless of disability?
- Want to share your employment story?
- Want to talk to elected officials about why Employment First is needed in WI?



If so....we need YOU to be an EF Ambassador!

WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT EMPLOYMENT FIRST?

- Go to the Wisconsin Employment First Website at :
www.wiemploymentfirst.com
- Molly Cooney:
608-266-0266
molly.cooney@wisconsin.gov





Fast Facts for Employers

Adapted from APSE's Resources for Employers by Nancy Molfenter

Why Hire People with Disabilities?

Untapped Labor Force

- People with disabilities experience the highest rates of unemployment and underemployment of any other single group in this country.
- More than 75% of people with disabilities report being unemployed or not working as much as they want to work – and that's a lot of people!

Businesses Have Needs

- There is always a fluctuating rate of unemployment, but there is also a constant need to fill employment positions.
- And, many businesses just like yours have needs that are not being fully met. Maybe you do too.

What Are Your Needs?

- Perhaps it is the filing, the data entry, keeping up with shipping and receiving, sorting mail and invoices each week, managing the waste and recycling, or keeping up with production and maintaining quality assurance records.
- Whatever your need(s), there are qualified and willing workers out there – and some of them have disabilities.

Qualified Job Applicants

- In 2012, approximately 31% of persons with a disability aged 21-64 had some college or an associates' degree compared to 33% of the same population without identified disabilities.

Stable Workforce

- Research has demonstrated that the turnover rate for employees with disabilities is 8% compared to 45% for other workers – so hiring people with disabilities can help you **Reduce Employee Turnover.**

Benefits to Your Business

- Not only will your unmet needs be resolved, but polls show that the public likes to patronize businesses that hire people with disabilities, In fact, 87% of customers say they would prefer to patronize businesses that hire employees with disabilities – and that means more business for you.
- Research has also demonstrated a return on investment of \$28.69 average return for every dollar invested in accommodations.

Both mean more money in your company's pocket!

Adding to the Tax Base – and Consumer Buying Power

- You can help create more tax payers and increase the buying power of people with disabilities at the same time.
- **Marketing Opportunities:** Customers with disabilities and their families, friends and associates represent a **\$3 TRILLION** market segment.

Tax Credits

- There are great tax benefits available for employers who hire employees with disabilities, including:
- **Small Business Tax Credit** – 50% credit for expenditures between \$250 and \$10,250.
- **Architectural/Transportation Tax Deduction** – up to \$15,000 per year.
- **Work Opportunity Tax Credit** – federal tax credit reducing employers' federal income tax liability by as much as \$2,400 per qualified new worker.

Increased Diversity and Compliance with section 503 of the Rehab Act

- **Highlights of the New Section 503 Rules:**
 - **7% Employment Goal:** Federal contractors and subcontractors will now have a goal that 7% of individuals in each job group in their workforce consist of qualified individuals with disabilities.
 - **Data Collection:** Contractors will be required to track data on the number of individuals with disabilities who apply for jobs and are hired.
 - **Compliance Enforcement:** Contractors must allow the federal government to review documents to ensure they are complying with these new regulations.
 - **Affirmative Action Requirements:** The regulations specify a series of requirements for federal contractors to ensure they are maximizing their efforts to recruit, hire, and provide career advancement to individuals with disabilities, including outreach to an array of disability organizations.

More on Section 503

- **Additional Information:**
- **Invitation to Self-Identify:** In order to track recruitment efforts, under the new rules, federal contractors can now ask job applicants to voluntarily self-identify as an individual with a disability prior to receiving a job offer and after they have received a job offer.
- [Summary of new rules, and links to additional information including new Section 503 rule text](#)
- [Overview of major differences between current and new Section 503 regulations](#)

Resources for Employers

- **Additional resources to help:**
- [Employers and the ADA: Myths & Facts](#)
- [Employer Tips on Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities](#)
- [Myths and Facts about People with Disabilities](#)
- [Employing People with Disabilities, What Small Companies Need to Know](#)
- [Building a Competitive Edge: Recruiting and Hiring People with Disabilities](#)
- [Employer Assistance and Resource Network \(**EARN**\)](#):
EARN supports employers in recruiting, hiring, retaining, and advancing qualified individuals with disabilities.

Services Available to Employers through EARN

- Consultation and technical assistance,
- Customized training,
- Comprehensive online resources, and
- Links to state and local community-based organizations serving job seekers with disabilities.
- EARN is part of the National Employer Technical Assistance, Policy, and Research Center at Cornell University funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor.

Why Does all this Matter?

- **It's About a Better Bottom Line:** Not only are there people in your community who want to work and can help meet the unmet needs of your business and many others, but when people with disabilities work, individuals, businesses like yours, and communities and the economy see overall benefits.

Sources

- National Council on Disability
- Siperstein, Romano, Mohler, Parker; “*A national survey of consumer attitudes towards companies that hire people with disabilities*”; University of Massachusetts, Boston, MA; Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation; 2005.
- 2003 Crain’s Chicago Business Survey; Washington Mutual, Inc. Study.
- Erickson, W., Lee, C., and von Schrader, S. (2014). *Disability Statistics from the 2012 American Community Survey (ACS)*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI). Retrieved October 15, 2014 from <http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/>
- *U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability and Employment Policy*