

Innovative Employment Practices at Work:

**Celebrating the Efforts of the
Harkin Summit Community**



Forward

The Harkin International Disability Employment Summit is built on collaboration. Not only does the event itself exist to encourage collaboration between participants, but collaboration is the very thing that allowed the Summit to exist in the first place. The first Harkin Summit was held as The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement at Drake University was just getting started, before we had a full team of staff and resources to help in such an endeavor. That first summit was made possible through the passion and hard work of our partner agencies, who stepped in to help bring this vision to reality. These types of partnerships continue to be the backbone of what makes the Harkin Summit successful.

I am excited that in this report we get an opportunity to highlight the work of some of the partners we have met along the way in hosting these Harkin Summits. These pages are filled with innovative solutions to increasing employment outcomes for people with

disabilities in competitive, integrated employment. And all by members of our Harkin Summit community.

This year we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the United States. It has been a year marked with both celebration and with reflection on work yet to be done. The Harkin Summit has allowed me to meet so many passionate disability advocates from around the world. I continue to learn about your successes and celebrations in this space, as well as to problem-solve and dream with you on overcoming the continued struggles. Together I know we can continue to make a difference.

This report is a celebration of successes. I hope you all may find some inspiration in these pages to continue the fight. Thank you for being a part of the Harkin International Disability Employment Summit.



Senator Tom Harkin (retired)



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About the Harkin International Disability Employment Summit:
The Harkin International Disability Employment Summit brings together high-level representatives and grassroots implementers from around the world – all working to increase the employment of people with disabilities. Representatives from business, disability advocacy, government, education, foundations, and NGOs bring their lessons from Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe and the Americas to identify and create strategies to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

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Section 1: Introduction

Three years ago, at the Harkin International Disability Employment Summit (Harkin Summit) in Washington, D.C., Senator Tom Harkin (retired) issued a bold challenge: to double the labor force participation rate of people with disabilities in the United States and around the world within 10 years.

In his 40 years in Congress, Senator Harkin played a leadership role in enacting a legislative agenda that advanced the civil and human rights of children and adults with disabilities. In the process, he worked closely with leaders of the disability rights movement around the U.S.

Over time, he became increasingly focused on one area – helping people with all types of disabilities participate fully in their communities by working in the competitive labor market.

Despite legislation like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that require employers to provide reasonable accommodations for workers with disabilities, too many are unemployed or underemployed. In the United States, for instance, only about 29 percent of people with disabilities of working age are employed, compared to 75 percent of the general public.

Tackling this problem will require us to work together across sectors – government, business, researchers, disabled people’s organizations, educators, service providers, family leaders, philanthropy, religious institutions, media – with a common goal of generating new approaches that bring sectors together to reimagine what is possible.

The annual Harkin Summit is just one way in which Senator Harkin, The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement, and other members of the Harkin Summit planning committee are working to help individuals and organizations around the world advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Employment is the key to independence and economic sustainability. The goal of the

Harkin Summit has been to provide a venue to explore cross-sector solutions that will ensure that the world’s largest minority, people with disabilities, get a fair shot. In a survey of past Summit participants, it was noted that a primary benefit of these Summits has been the new relationships and knowledge gained, which led to sharing of resources and tools, and the implementation of new ideas and activities.

This publication highlights a few examples of innovative practices to improve disability employment outcomes from around the globe. Please join us in celebrating the incredible work of past Summit participants. We look forward to continuing to come together to share ideas, develop strategies, and make an impact as a Harkin Employment Summit community.



Section 2: Methodology



In the Spring of 2020, we solicited examples of innovative employment practices from around the globe. The call for submissions was sent to all past attendees of the Harkin International Disability Employment Summit for whom we had a valid email address. We asked that all submissions highlight how their initiative or program strategically addresses barriers to employment for people with disabilities at the local and/or regional level. A total of 24 full submissions were reviewed internally at The Harkin Institute.

Submissions were reviewed based on status of implementation, reach, cost (when possible), and connection of implementing partners to past Summits. For this report, we took special care to consider the following questions when selecting the top initiatives:

- How does the project or program advance employment for people with disabilities?
- How has the implementing organization supported the adoption and sustainability of the project/program?
- What outcomes (health, economic, environmental, and/or social) were achieved?

A total of 12 programs were selected to best represent the diversity of innovative employment programs and initiatives across the globe.



Section 3: Innovative Practices

Projet d'Autonomisation des Jeunes handicapées Benin

Projet d'Autonomisation des Jeunes handicapées du Benin (The Federation of Associations of People with Disabilities of Benin) is an organization dedicated to providing young people with disabilities multiple job training opportunities, primarily focused on preparing them for the pastry making and screen-printing professions. The training is multi-leveled and also aims to train employers on effective methods of inclusion in the workforce.

The National Employment Agency operates fully accessible centers where young people with disabilities can receive training and proper accommodations to support their success. Participants of the program are provided housing, accessible tools and equipment to complete their training. With the added participation of future employers, the training centers promote a smooth progression into the work force.

The program has grown to serve over 350 individuals with disabilities. Funding assistance for the program was provided by the French Embassy, and Handicap International and Sisters for Human Promotion provide services to assist the program participants in finding employment and requesting necessary accommodations.

The program has led to the financial autonomy of young people with disabilities in Benin. Additionally, the program has had a positive impact on the culture of business, which has historically been hostile towards people with disabilities. The program continues to work to normalize the integration of individuals into the workforce in Benin.



A pilot with 24 young people, who were trained in pastry and screen printing professions, made it possible to see that people with disabilities can be trained in an open environment with other young people without disabilities. This made it possible to train 350 young people with disabilities.

Capacity Building of Persons with Disability in Poultry Farming for Business

Kenya

Capacity Building of Persons with Disability In Poultry Farming For Business, is a project implemented in Bunyala Sub-County, Western Kenya by Agri & Aquatic Livelihood Support Organization (AALSO) whose mandate includes promoting income and food security among women and persons with disabilities. In Kenya, women and persons with disability constitute population segments that are worst hit by poverty. Societal and attitudinal barriers continue to prevent women and persons with disabilities from achieving basic human rights. However, enormous economic opportunities exist in agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors that remain un-tapped to reverse the poverty situation among these key populations in Kenya.

The Poultry Farming for Business project was developed to equip persons with disabilities with knowledge and skills on agricultural production, value-addition processes and entrepreneurship; to link persons with disabilities to partner organizations providing credit facility to enable them access to high-yielding seeds, livestock and fish for their business projects; and to link agri-business projects of persons with disabilities to market outlets by partner private players.

This project was conceived following the advice of Peter Musakhi, currently Deputy Director in the Ministry for Devolution, who attended the inaugural Harkin International Disability Employment Summit in 2016. Applying strategies identified at the Summit, AALSO carefully carried out analysis of the priority economic empowerment programmes prepared by the National Ministry of Devolution. AALSO organized a community meeting in Bunyala to identify and discuss viable economic projects for the community. The community members prioritized poultry farming, and suggested that because of their precarious economic situation, women and persons with disability should be the primary beneficiaries of the project.

Over 100 persons with disabilities have been helped through this project. The economic opportunity provided has made it possible to afford basic human necessities such as food, healthcare, clothing and shelter.



With a vision of seeing Persons with Disability who are self-sufficient and contributing to the society, our Mission is to build capacity of women and persons with disability to undertake farming for income and food for their well-being, the project concentrated in Agriculture/Crops, Livestock and Fisheries.

Keystone Employment Initiative

Moldova

Keystone Moldova was founded in 2003. Keystone's Employment Initiative is a more recent part of the work Keystone is doing and has a primary mission of cultivating a workforce where people with disabilities are seen as valuable and contributing members of their community. Moldova has a history of placing people with disabilities in institutions, isolating them from society. The Keystone Employment Initiative has assisted in breaking down social barriers and stigma by providing accessible and inclusive employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the communities where they live.

An important step of Keystone's Employment Initiative has been to confront the injustice people with disabilities face. Many positive changes have been made since the Republic of Moldova ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Keystone Employment Initiative has helped raise awareness of continued discrimination of people with disabilities. Keystone is advancing inclusion by making it possible for people with disabilities to move from institutions into the community and to find work. The initiative incorporates strategies to achieve progress in areas of employment, social protection, and financial security.

Keystone's Employment Initiative includes programs called Employment for All and Ecovox. These programs are tailored to address individual needs and interests of participants. The primary purpose of Keystone's Employment for All program is to

afford people with disabilities the opportunity to enter everyday jobs which are compatible with their individual skills. The Ecovox program assists people with disabilities to become entrepreneurs.

Partnerships are very important to the work of Keystone's Employment Initiative to advocate for disability rights throughout Moldova. Keystone works with district governments in Moldova to draft policy initiatives that promote inclusion in local communities. In addition, Keystone partners with Moldova's Nation Employment Agency to provide services to prepare participants for employment.

The Keystone Employment Initiative is having an impact on the culture of the labor market, by promoting employment practices that include people with disabilities. So far, 14 individuals have successfully obtained competitive wage jobs and 10 individuals are operating their own businesses. In country where only 39.1% of the working age population is gainfully employed, this is significant. These individuals are now ambassadors in the effort to break down barriers to employment for people with disabilities, as their success raises awareness of the worth of people with disabilities being included in the workplace.



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Hand'Inclusion Sitel Africa Morocco

Hand'Inclusion SITES Africa promotes employment for people with disabilities by providing vital job skills training, facilitating connections with employers, and implementing policies to make workplaces more accessible. Based in Morocco, Hand'Inclusion SITES Africa engages in a robust set of initiatives that aim to tackle challenges for people with disabilities from a variety of angles.

The SITES group works to connect people with disabilities with employers who are looking to fill a variety of roles in health care, customer relations, human resources, facilities, and information technology (IT). The most recent development is the continued expansion of a work-at-home program.

Emphasis is placed on increasing workplace accessibility and retention of people with disabilities at SITES sites. Employers receive assistance with recruitment and training, and the development and implementation of workplace policies that ensure an inclusive work environment. Employers benefit from a broadened talent pool of potential employees with diverse backgrounds.

The SITES group has recently begun directly supporting a cooperative approach aimed to assist people with disabilities to increase the sales of their own products and services. These cooperatives produce and provide a wide variety of products and services and facilitate a stronger community of people with disabilities. Additionally, Hand'Inclusion SITES Africa provides financial support for cooperatives through advertising their products.

Hand'Inclusion SITES Africa has achieved success in improving social integration and accessibility of workplaces. The ultimate goal is to increase the employability of and decrease the total unemployment rate for people with disabilities.



The integration of people with disability is part of the global strategies fixed by the General Direction of Africa SITES Group. 90 people with disabilities visited our sites to spend a half day with our associates and trainers to introduce them to our profession.



Centro Cerrito Azul

Peru

Cerrito Azul was founded in 1992 to provide people with autism an alternative to traditional educational and career routes. Since then, the organization has broadened its efforts to help people with Down Syndrome and other cognitive disabilities. The aim is to help the community better understand what people with disabilities are capable of. The organization provides people with disabilities direct financial support, education and job training, and connections to prospective employers. Cerrito Azul also advocates for legislative changes at the local level that support the rights of people with disabilities.

The primary goal is to help empower people with disabilities to become more productive in their communities. Cerrito Azul works to increase awareness of companies regarding the untapped employment market of people with disabilities. Companies are encouraged to change their personnel selection systems and adapt them to support the hiring of people with disabilities.

Cerrito Azul is supporting over 200 families by

providing education and job training opportunities and is expanding opportunities for them to enter the work force. Additionally, Cerrito Azul supports self-employment ventures, including the production of goods and services by people with disabilities.

Cerrito Azul seeks to create positive change for people with disabilities through local advocacy and outreach efforts. Cerrito Azul helped found the Council for the Defense of People with Disabilities. The goal of the Council is to advocate for laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities. Additionally, Cerrito Azul has helped to register 90% of people with disabilities in the region into the national register, which allows them to benefit from government health programs.

We work with people with autism, down syndrome and mental delay. Our goal is they will be productive in our society. In Peru this is a challenge, because the rights of persons with disabilities are not respected. Our Association works to improve the conditions so that people with disabilities can be included in our society. And we directly benefit 200 families with education and preparation for work, at this time.



Project Inclusion Network and South Star Drug Inc. Philippines

South Star Drug Inc. (SSDI), in partnership with the Project Inclusion Network (PIN), supports and promotes artists with disabilities through the #DropThePrefix Campaign. This campaign directly supports artists and creators with disabilities while simultaneously raising both money and awareness, as artists are a group typically left out of the discussion of increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities

The #DropThePrefix campaign was launched in 2019 to support exceptional artists who have disabilities. The message behind the campaign is to drop the “dis” in disability and focus on what people with disabilities are able to accomplish. Ten artists were initially selected from PIN’s exceptional artists stream, and their work was featured on 2020 desk and wall calendars and limited-edition eco-bags. The bags were hand sewn by people with disabilities as well. The theme for this collection of work was “We Care A Little More”.

The most direct impact of the #DropThePrefix campaign has been the visibility each artist received. The artists were supported financially, as were people with disabilities who were involved in the production chain. The campaign continues to raise money, which is being reinvested into the #DropThePrefix campaign as well as other SSDI initiatives.

South Star Drug Inc. has a strong commitment to hiring people with neurodevelopmental disabilities in their head office and branches. SSDI and PIN previously have partnered to provide disability sensitivity trainings to facilitate a more positive and productive environment in which people with disabilities can participate and achieve success.

The #DropThePrefix campaign is planned to last indefinitely with the goal of continuing to remove social and economic barriers that restrict people with disabilities from fully participating in society. The current focus is to create a social enterprise that will sustain the efforts, will provide alternative income streams for the artists with disabilities.



#DropThePrefix is a campaign by SSDI in partnership with PIN, showcasing the talent and skills of artists with Disability. #DropThePrefix provides opportunities for Persons with Disability who may not be able to hold regular office jobs. Apart from using art as therapy, the artists with disability are also able to earn from this since each artist was paid a fee for the artwork that they created. Apart from the direct beneficiaries of the campaign, the communications and publicity materials from the campaign led to increased awareness about the artistic talents of Persons with Disability.



Autism Transitional Employment Program

SE Asia (Bangladesh, Nepal, and India)

Avalon Employment Inc., based in Newfoundland, Canada, was created three decades ago to facilitate knowledge transfer and to find and match prospective employers with employees. In the last decade, Avalon has shifted focus to helping adults on the autism spectrum find employment. The organization has grown in scope and breadth, and currently provides supports in many countries across the globe including throughout southeast Asia.

Avalon's success comes from their two-step matching process which identifies both traditional and nontraditional skills of participants. The process begins with Avalon staff getting to better understand the particular strengths of the individual before identifying which companies would be the best mutual fit. Avalon assesses both traditional skills identified as relevant to employers as well as focusing on what Avalon calls "hidden skills". These skills are often overlooked by traditional employment screening practices. By expanding the scope of relevant skills for employment, Avalon is able to find fulfilling employment for those on the autism spectrum as well

as deliver quality workers to business partners. The program was initially funded by the Canadian government as a component of a larger strategy which aimed to boost employment for those on the autism spectrum, and has since expanded to Bangladesh, India, and Nepal as part of an international development program called Disability Rights Promotion International. In each of location, the administration of the program's assessment and employer matching is entirely community based. Partners vary greatly based on location but are administered primarily through the local partner agency or nonprofit organization. These organizations, while largely autonomous within Avalon's framework, receive intermittent support directly from Avalon staff.

Avalon's success comes from assisting companies and individuals in meeting in the "middle" by matching the needs of the employer with unique skill sets of the individual. To date, the program has placed more than 700 individuals into jobs.



By working and supporting an under represented group in the labour force, we assist companies and individuals in meeting in the "middle" matching the needs of the employer with the identified and hidden skill sets of the individual. Over a period of four years the program intake and implementation was able to support over 700 people getting employment, this was part of a international Development Program Called DRPI Disability Right Promotion International

National Center for Disability Entrepreneurship at the Viscardi Center United States

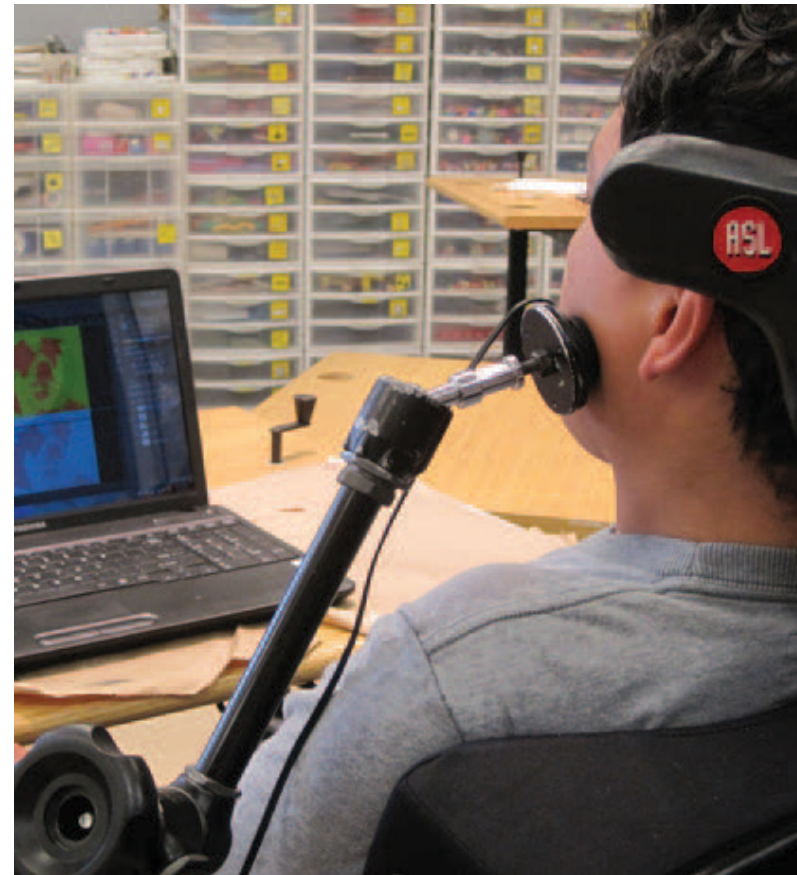
Throughout its 68-year history, The Viscardi Center has found that people with disabilities naturally have qualities that lend themselves to successful entrepreneurship – qualities like perseverance and adaptability. Unfortunately, self-employment is rarely an option without sufficient access to quality training, mentors, and resources. The National Center for Disability Entrepreneurship (NCDE) at The Viscardi Center was launched in November of 2019 to connect aspiring and beginning entrepreneurs with disabilities to expert training, one-to-one support and mentoring, resources and benefits advice, and access to startup funding. Is the only fully accessible entrepreneurship training provided at no cost participants.

NCDE empowers people with disabilities to discover the benefits of self-employment and entrepreneurship. The yearlong program utilizes a wide range of modalities, including weekly group and one-on-one mentorship, consultation from experts in their fields (nearly half of whom are also people with disabilities), and a customized curriculum of online and in-person training covering the core tenets of entrepreneurship, ethics, and business development. NCDE's content, training sessions,

and ongoing support are available in perpetuity to all NCDE participants.

Participants in NCDE begin with self-assessments and interest inventories which are used to set personal goals. Participants learn to conduct market research, analyze market trends, conduct a feasibility study, and create a business and financial plan with a focus on long-term sustainability. A key component of the program is helping participants access grants, micro loans, and potential investors that can provide financial support needed to make self-employment and/or their small business pursuits a reality.

The NCDE is funded by a private donors and entrepreneurs. In its pilot year, the program received 44 local, regional and national applicants. To date, 13 participants have been vetted and selected from across eight states. The program has the capacity to reach 40 participants from across the country as additional funding is secured. NCDE actively seeks out additional funding sources from foundation and government grants and through its E-Advisory Council members in order to continue providing the program at no cost.



The National Center for Disability Entrepreneurship (NCDE) at The Viscardi Center empowers innovative self-starters with disabilities to self-employment success. It is the only no-cost program that provides virtual, nationwide access to fully accessible entrepreneurship training that addresses the specific needs people with a wide range of disabilities face when starting or building a business. Throughout its 68-year history, The Viscardi Center has found that people with disabilities are natural problem solvers and creative thinkers, characteristics that successful entrepreneurs tend to possess. However, without access to training, mentors and resources, self-employment is rarely a viable option.

Bridges Academy

U.S. & Global

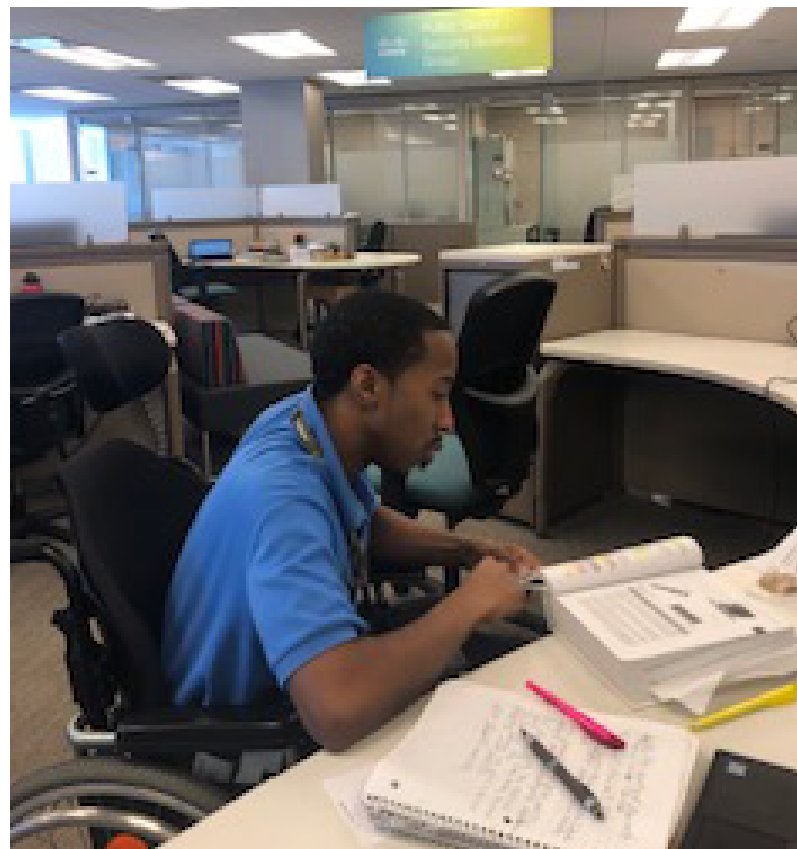
The Bridges Academy was developed out of a concern for the millions of people with disabilities who are unemployed but offer great potential as employees if provided the opportunity. Developed by Three Talents LLC, the Academy was created to provide people with disabilities the training needed to secure high paying information technology (IT) careers in network security / cybersecurity analyst jobs. To accomplish this, Bridges Academy uses the same validated curriculum and accreditation offered by Cisco worldwide to train their future IT professionals.

For each Academy, Three Talents partners with local education institutions and nongovernmental organizations to host the program. The Academy partners with area employers interested in hiring

IT professionals. Three Talents consults with these businesses to tailor their organizations to integrate people with disabilities into their workforce.

The Bridges Academy benefits businesses around the world by creating access to a previously untapped talent pool. Academies have been launched in the United States in Boston, Detroit, New York City, Orlando, Raleigh, and San Francisco. Locations outside of the United States include Lisbon, Portugal; Nairobi, Kenya; Vienna, Austria; and Dhaka, Bangladesh. Additional site locations are currently being developed in Africa and Asia.

To date, the Bridges Academy has graduated 133 students with a 95% placement rate.



Our primary objective is to create skills and experiences that lead to meaningful employment in high paying IT jobs. So far 133 students have completed this program with a 95% employment rate. We have training academies for people with disabilities to help the secure high paying jobs as network security / cybersecurity analyst roles, with programs in Vienna Austria, New York City, Detroit, and Springfield Massachusetts. Additional programs are in development in Boston, Orlando, San Francisco, Lisbon Portugal, Nairobi Kenya, Bangladesh and other locations.

JP Morgan Chase Office of Disability Inclusion - Recruiting People with Disabilities Global Initiative

JP Morgan Chase has long been a leader in the financial services sector, known for a strong focus on providing a positive customer experience. Inherent within the culture of the firm is a commitment to be an employer of choice for people with disabilities and to support the advancement of all of its over 250,000 employees. In 2017, Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon penned a firmwide policy letter that reinforced disability inclusion practices across all global platforms; emphasizing the importance of providing opportunities for people with disabilities to not only fully participate in the workforce, but also to aspire to become leaders within the firm. Since then, the Global Recruiting team and Office of Disability Inclusion have implemented a variety of programs focused on recruiting and retaining a diverse group of employees with disabilities.

In early 2017, JP Morgan Chase created a group of diversity champions to review and enhance the firm's recruiting and hiring practices. Several enhancements were put into place as a result, including coaching and training for recruiters, standardizing language standards for job interviews, and making reasonable accommodations available during the interview process. In 2018, the firm introduced the

MyAccessibility Hub, a team dedicated to creating a formal and streamlined process for handling reasonable accommodation requests of both newly hired and existing employees.

JP Morgan Chase has expanded its efforts by working with other organizations on recruiting efforts focused on people with disabilities. JP Morgan Chase is a founding member of the Veteran Jobs Mission, which focuses on best practices for hiring veterans with disabilities. The BeST initiative was launched in 2019 with a primary goal of accommodating the needs of job seekers with developmental disabilities. Additionally, the Autism at Work initiative was developed to recruit people on the autism spectrum. Most recently, in 2020, the firm opened a Washington D.C. office that accommodates the needs of employees who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Through these and other initiatives, JP Morgan Chase has been recognized globally as an inclusive and accommodating workplace. In 2019, JP Morgan Chase was named as one of the "Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion" for the fifth time by the Disability Equality Index.



Our ongoing goal is to make JPMorgan Chase the employer of choice for people with disabilities. Global total of new hires with disabilities since 2017 is over 4,000. In 2018, we introduced MyAccessibility Hub, a team created to create a formal, streamlined process for handling reasonable accommodation requests or both newly hired and existing employees.



Merck Global Disability & Inclusion Strategy Council

Global Initiative

Merck is a biopharmaceutical company that aims to tackle global health threats through the production of lifesaving medications and vaccines. A central mission of Merck is to save and improve lives, including those of their over 70,000 employees. In 2015, Merck launched the Global Disability & Inclusion Strategy Council, which was tasked with developing a “roadmap” consisting of leading edge and innovative programs to achieve its vision of full disability inclusion throughout their workforce.

The Council, a cross-functional group of leaders with expertise in inclusive best practices, developed a five-year plan encompassing such areas as Information Technology, Facilities, Health & Benefits, Population Health, Talent Acquisition, Labor Relations, Supplier Diversity and Diversity & Inclusion capability building. The work of the Council has accelerated progress for Merck in developing a comprehensive ecosystem of workplace accommodations, support and inclusion to ensure every employee can contribute to their full potential. Merck’s recruitment and retention programs developed for people with disabilities makes the company a unique commodity in the biopharmaceutical industry.

Much of Merck’s success comes from a recruiting strategy concentrated on cultivating early career

talent. Merck has adjusted recruiting processes to encourage people with disabilities to enter the field to gain experience. Viewing college students as the future visionaries and game-changers the world needs, Merck’s Global Talent Acquisition Team launched a Leadership Development Day with NextGen Leaders from Disability:IN. Participants had the opportunity to tour the labs where vaccines are created, meet one-on-one with global leaders, and learn about emerging innovations such as how artificial intelligence is used to mitigate drug fraud. Several students were subsequently offered the opportunity to intern with the company during the summer.

Merck has incorporated inclusive design practices, including the availability of assistive technology, to accommodate employees with disabilities. The company is gradually working towards universal design in all company buildings so that they are fully accessible and has made it a protocol in their new construction sites to implement a list of accommodating features in their buildings. Additionally, the company has also been a champion to reduce the stigma of mental health issues in the workplace. The Mind Well Champions initiative works to advance awareness of mental health by promoting services to improve the overall wellbeing of employees.

Merck uses a strategic “roadmap” developed by the Global Disability & Inclusion Strategy Council, consisting of leading edge and innovative programs to achieve its vision of full disability inclusion. We have experienced consistent year-over-year “wins” in advancing goals related to recruitment, retention, environmental, and technology through the focus, dedication and leadership of this Council. We believe that Merck is one of the few biopharma companies with this business model and global focus on people with disabilities.



Microsoft Supported Employment Program

Global Initiative

Microsoft Corporation is a global technology company that prides itself on its role to empower people, businesses, and organizations through the interfaces and innovations which they develop. Microsoft has an enduring commitment to fulfilling public responsibilities and serving the needs of people in communities worldwide, including those with disabilities. This commitment extends beyond products and services. To enable employment diversity and inclusion, Microsoft's Supported Employment Program creates job opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) at Microsoft facilities across the globe.

The mission of the Supported Employment Program is simple: partner with vendors and local employment agencies to make a substantial difference in the lives of people with I/DD. People with I/DD face particular challenges in entering the job market. However, Microsoft believes that when people are hired into jobs that match their interests and abilities, and have support, they can become successful, productive

workers. Having fulfilling employment promotes independence and helps people with disabilities become fully integrated members of the community.

Microsoft Real Estate and Facilities works with employment consultants to identify candidates with disabilities who hold the skills and talent necessary to fill available positions in corporate offices, campus groundskeeping and cafés, and distribution warehouses. Since the Supportive Employment Program began in 2013, it has resulted in over 270 people with I/DD employed in Microsoft facilities across the globe.

In 2019, Microsoft hosted an Ability Summit to discuss best practices to further inclusion of people with disabilities in the global workforce. Other corporations in attendance included Starbucks and AT&T. Senator Tom Harkin (Retired) provided remarks emphasizing Microsoft's leadership in breaking down barriers and setting an example for other companies to follow.



The mission of Microsoft's Supported Employment program is simple: partner with vendors and local employment agencies to make a substantial difference in the lives of people with I/DD. People with I/DD face particular challenges in entering the job market. However, we believe that when people are hired into jobs that match their interests and abilities, and have support, they can become successful, productive workers. We have taken all our learnings to help other companies start their own supported employment program.

Section 4: Meeting the Challenge

“We need to be open to bold new ideas that no one has tried before. We need to be willing to take risks and fail, because that is how we will learn. And we need to listen to each other across sectors, with disabled people and their organizations always helping to center the strategies on the goals and dreams of disabled people...who seek to have jobs, careers, and lives filled with meaning and purpose, with the dignity and self-esteem that come from earning a decent living and being a valued member of your community.”

– Senator Tom Harkin (retired), 2017 Harkin International Disability Employment Summit

When Senator Harkin issued a challenge to attendees at the 2017 Harkin Summit to double the labor force participation rate globally for persons with disabilities in the next decade, I will admit we at The Harkin Institute were hearing that challenge for the first time along with those attending the Summit. I count this as one of the many blessings of working for Senator Harkin – his immense passion and belief that collectively we can change the world shapes our work each day. Since this challenge was issued The Harkin Institute has worked hard alongside the Senator in efforts to meet it.

We know we are not alone in this work, and in fact know that alone we will never be successful. The Harkin International Disability Summit and the ecosystem of Summit planning partners, speakers, and attendees are the backbone of efforts to meet this challenge. We thank all of you who have been with us over the years, and all of you who will be joining these efforts today and in the future.

It is in this spirit of partnership and collaboration towards a common goal that we brought on The Valuable 500 as our event partner for the 2020 Harkin Summit, where this report is being released. This global movement seeks to put disability on the business leadership agenda, and we are proud to be a part of these efforts. We look forward to the new partnerships to be shaped in the years to come.

The theme of the 2020 Harkin Summit is “Realizing the Value of Inclusion.” This year perhaps more than any other, we must mobilize to both immediately build jobs for individuals with disabilities and to permanently fix the system so that disability inclusion moves from an aspirational goal to one that is an accepted and valued component of the business strategy.

This is the moment to seize in meeting the Harkin Challenge, and we thank you for joining us in the effort. Please reach out to us at The Harkin Institute. All of you will help to show us the way.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Bentley". The script is fluid and cursive.

Amy Bentley, *Policy Director*

The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement serves as a venue and catalyst for dynamic non-partisan research, learning, and outreach to promote understanding of the policy issues to which Senator Harkin devoted his career. The Harkin Institute is located at Drake University, one of the finest institutions of higher learning in the Midwest. A midsized, private university in Des Moines, Iowa, Drake offers the benefits and resources of a larger institution along with the advantages of intimate class sizes and close personal relationships. Drake University's mission is to provide an exceptional learning environment that prepares students for meaningful personal lives, professional accomplishments, and responsible global citizenship. The Drake experience is distinguished by collaborative learning among students, faculty, and staff and by the integration of the liberal arts and sciences with professional preparation