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BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS:

A Guidebook for Centers for Independent Living



By Sara Watson

*A publication of the Washington Business Group on Health/
Institute for Rehabilitation and Disability Management*

Sponsored by grants from the

Dole Foundation, Washington, D.C.

and the

Steelcase Foundation, Grand Rapids, Michigan

U.S. Department of the Treasury

Internal Revenue Service

Office of Chief Counsel

Washington, D.C. 20224

202-566-4473

Information on income tax regulations relating to the deduction of up to \$35,000 per year for expenses incurred for the removal of architectural and transportation barriers to persons with disabilities and the elderly. Deduction is available to employers of persons with disabilities and to other taxpayers.

Workers' Compensation Research Institute (WCRI)

245 First Street

Cambridge, MA 02141

617-494-1240

WCRI provides non-partisan information about public policy issues involving workers' compensation systems. The Institute produces major research studies, source books, and research briefs that report on significant new research data and issues in the field of workers' compensation.

[Some information in this appendix came from the Resource Guide for Employers of Persons with Disabilities, produced by the Vermont Center for Independent Living and the Vermont Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation].

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April 1988

State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Each state has a Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, a state agency that is responsible for helping disabled people find employment and/or return to work. For more information, contact the State Department of Education in each state.

State Workers' Compensation Agencies

State Workers' Compensation Agencies are located within each State Department of Labor. Most workers' compensation agencies have rehabilitation specialists on staff.

United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc.

66 E. 34th St.

New York, NY 10016

212-481-6300

Provides advocacy and program support to assist persons with cerebral palsy to gain independence. Provides technical assistance on workplace modifications, information on appropriate adaptive equipment for employees with cerebral palsy, information on cerebral palsy.

U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB)

330 C. St., S.W., Room 1010

Washington, D.C. 20202

202-245-1591 (voice & TDD)

An independent Federal regulatory agency charged with ensuring that certain facilities designed, constructed, altered, or leased with Federal funds comply with accessibility standards issued under the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968. Provides information and technical assistance regarding removal of architectural, transportation, communication, and attitudinal barriers affecting physically disabled persons.

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)

801 18th St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20006
202-872-1300

Provides free publications on tax incentives for removing architectural barriers entitled "The Tax Advantages of Section 190" and "Design Guidelines Qualifying for the Tax Advantages of Section 190."

President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped (PCEH)

1111 20th St., N.W., Room 636
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-653-5044 202-653-5050 (TDD)

Provides information, referral, and technical assistance to employers as well as employees with disabilities and others interested in the employment of persons with disabilities, including information on tax incentives for businesses, and rights and responsibilities of employers and employees. Extensive list of free publications.

RESNA: Association for the Advancement of Rehabilitation Technology

1101 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-857-1199

A society of rehabilitation engineers which provides answers to specific questions about modifying existing equipment and designing new devices.

Social Security Administration

Baltimore, MD 21235
301-876-6450

Can provide employers with information on the Social Security Disability Insurance program as well as information on work incentives in public and private sector disability benefit programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Many thanks to Jay Rochlin, Director of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, and to Lex Frieden, Director of the National Council on the Handicapped, for reviewing this guidebook.

Information on this project was also published in Business and Health (February 1988).

National Easter Seal Society

2023 W. Ogden Ave.

Chicago, IL 60612

312-243-8400

Publishes a free brochure entitled "The Tax Reform Act of 1986: How It Will Affect Persons with Disabilities, Voluntary Organizations, and Employers".

National Information Center on Deafness

Gallaudet University

800 Florida Ave., NW

Washington, D.C. 20002

202-651-5051

Collects and disseminates information for hearing-impaired persons, including job accommodations for hearing-impaired workers.

National Organization on Disability (NOD)

2100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 234

Washington, D.C. 20037

1-800-248-ABLE 202-293-5968 (TDD)

A private non-profit organization that promotes the acceptance and full participation of disabled persons in their communities. Provides information and referral about services available through government agencies and private organizations, and information about disability.

National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC)

8455 Colesville Road

Silver Spring, MD 20910

800-34-NARIC (voice and TDD)

Database to provide information on disability/rehabilitation topics: REHABDATA contains 18,000 citations in its bibliographic database of rehabilitation research, including reports, journal articles, and reference texts. Provides information on research relating to job accommodation, attitudes, and benefits.

National Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (NARF)

P.O. Box 17675

Washington, D.C. 20041

703-556-8848

A membership organization representing the interests of private rehabilitation vendors serving the needs of disabled persons. NARF has 23 state chapters that seek solutions to local and state problems concerning rehabilitation facilities.

National Center on Employment of the Deaf

One Lomb Memorial Dr.

P.O. Box 9887

Rochester, NY 14623-0887

716-475-6219 716-475-6205 (TDD)

Serves as corporate liaison with companies interested in hiring deaf students; performs career development consultations to help employers chart career paths of deaf employees; provides information about hiring, training, and integrating deaf employees; clearinghouse of information and research relating to the employment of deaf persons; information on deafness.

National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)

815 W. Van Buren, Suite 525

Chicago, IL 60607

312-226-5900

A coalition of user directed independent living centers (ILCs), which are non-profit organizations designed to help disabled persons live as independently as possible. Many ILCs offer services useful to employers, such as job accommodation assistance and counseling on benefits. A directory of Independent Living Programs can be obtained for \$8.50 from the Independent Living Research Utilization Project, 3400 Bissonnett, Suite 101, Houston, TX 77005.

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Job Opportunities for the Blind (JOB)

1800 Johnson St.

Baltimore, MD 21230

301-659-9314

Provides employment referrals to blind persons nationwide. Provides employers with information and technical assistance on reasonable accommodation techniques and devices.

Mainstream, Inc.

1030 15th St., N.W., Suite 1010

Washington, D.C. 20005

202-898-1400 (voice & TDD)

An advocacy organization that works to increase awareness of the rights of disabled persons in employment. Seeks to create greater employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Provides information and technical assistance on making the workplace accessible, reasonable accommodation, attitudes, and legal requirements. Publications list and newsletter.

Multiple Sclerosis Society

205 E. 42nd St.

New York, NY 10017

212-986-3240

Non-profit health agency which provides services to people with multiple sclerosis. Provides information about multiple sclerosis; provides in-service training to agencies and employers.

Muscular Dystrophy Association

810 Seventh Ave.

New York, NY 10019

212-586-0808

Provides information and referral about forty diseases covered by the Association.

Institute for Rehabilitation and Disability Management (IRDM)

Washington Business Group on Health

102 Irving St., NW

Washington, D.C. 20010

202-877-1946

Helps corporations improve their retention and hiring of disabled employees through the use of progressive disability management strategies. Works with the disability community, policymakers, service providers, and employers to provide information on the cost-effectiveness of hiring persons with disabilities.

Inter-National Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation (I-NABIR)

12100 Portree Drive

Rockville, MD 20852

301-468-6142

Through Projects With Industry (PWIs) nationwide, employers and rehabilitation professionals work in partnership to secure competitive employment for people with disabilities. Nearly every metropolitan area in the country is served by PWI, and virtually every major corporation is involved. The Inter-National Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation, Inc. (I-NABIR) is an association of organizations operating and participating in PWI-like programs.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

P.O. Box 468

Morgantown, WV 26505

1-800-526-7234

An information system developed by employers for employers, to exchange ideas about practical steps they have taken to accommodate functional limitations of employees and applicants with disabilities. Sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

INTRODUCTION

The Washington Business Group on Health (WBGH) is a non-profit (501(c)3) coalition of over 200 of the nation's largest employers. WBGH educates its members on health programs and gives its members a voice in the formulation of health policy. The Institute for Rehabilitation and Disability Management (IRDM) concentrates on improving corporate disability programs by working with employers, unions, insurers, policy-makers, academicians and disability organizations.

IRDM is working with five Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to help them form partnerships with their local business communities to help promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The project was funded by the Dole Foundation and the Steelcase Foundation. The CILs involved are the Boston CIL; Houston CIL; Grand Rapids (Michigan) CIL; the North Central West Virginia CIL in Morgantown, WV; and Resource Network for the Disabled, in Valley Falls, KS.

Currently, over sixty employers are participating in this effort by establishing and maintaining Business Advisory Committees for each CIL. Businesses involved include AT&T; Sears; Digital; IBM; Tenneco; Federated Department Stores; J.C. Penney; Marriott; DuPont; General Electric; Honeywell; New England Telephone; and numerous regional and local companies. The committees meet regularly and have undertaken a variety of activities, such as internships in local companies, a computerized referral system to match job applicants and employers, employer seminars for community-wide Disability Awareness Days, and disability awareness seminars in local worksites.

For more information on forming partnerships with the local business community, or for additional copies of this guidebook, contact Sara Watson at IRDM, 102 Irving Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20010. Telephone (202) 877-1946.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDEBOOK

The purpose of this guidebook is to draw on the experiences of the five partnerships described above in order to give other CILs ideas on how they can form mutually beneficial partnerships with their local business communities. The partnerships would be carried out by CIL Business Advisory Committees whose members are mostly local employers, but also include representatives from disability organizations. The guidebook gives ideas on recruiting members of the committee, marketing the CIL to potential members, and ways to use the partnership to help the CIL.

Epilepsy Foundation of America

4351 Garden City Dr.
Landover, MD 20785
301-459-3700

Provides information (print material, videos, and workshops) and technical assistance to promote understanding of epilepsy among employers and others.

Executive Enterprise Publications, Inc.

33 W. 60th St.
New York, NY 10023
212-489-2670

Publishers of a book entitled Complying with Equal Employment Regulations for Handicapped Persons.

IBM National Support Center for Persons with Disabilities

P.O. Box 2150
Atlanta, GA 30055
1-800-IBM-2133 (voice & TDD)

Responds to requests for information and technical assistance from professionals and others who wish to learn how computers can enhance the work and lifestyles of people with disabilities. Executive briefings and demonstrations of adaptive equipment at national conventions. Free resource guide available.

Industry-Labor Council

National Center on the Employment of the Disabled
Human Resources Center
I.U. Willets Rd.
Albertson, NY 11507
516-747-6323

A nationwide non-profit membership organization of major corporations and labor unions committed to successfully integrating persons with disabilities into America's workforce. Assists human resources professionals in planning and implementing their affirmative action plans for people with disabilities. Provides architectural accessibility surveys.

Apple Office of Special Education Programs

Apple Computer

20525 Mariani Ave., MS23D

Cupertino, CA 95014

408-973-6484

Deals with rehabilitation and special education technologies using Apple computers to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Clearinghouse on the Handicapped

U.S. Dept. of Education

Room 3132, Switzer Bldg.

Washington, D.C. 20202

202-732-1245

Compiles and provides information on any programs and organizations serving persons with disabilities, especially in the areas of employment and education.

Closing the Gap, Inc.

P.O. Box 68

Henderson, MN 56044

612-248-3294

Provides current information on how microcomputer technology can assist disabled people in meeting their needs in employment, education, and independent living. Publishes newspaper and resource directory; provides training in the use of computers.

Compliance Assistance Service

Information Development Corporation

300 St. Alban Court

Winston-Salem, NC 27104

919-765-2321 (voice & TDD)

Architectural consulting firm specializing in barrier-free design. Technical assistance kits and self-surveys available.

WHY PARTNERSHIPS?

The business community needs familiar, reliable sources of assistance in dealing with disability issues, and CILs can become those resources, benefiting both themselves and the outside organizations. These partnerships facilitate a variety of actions that are compatible with CIL goals. Examples of benefits to CILs include:

- Job Opportunities: Forming a partnership with the local business community can help the CIL promote disability awareness activities for employers and gain access to job openings for qualified applicants with disabilities.
- Service Contracts: Many of the services performed by CILs can help employers bring employees back to work after a disability, or facilitate the hiring of a disabled person. Rehabilitation facilities can benefit from CIL expertise in planning the discharge of a disabled person. Local organizations that need to become accessible can use CIL services to plan low-cost, effective adaptations. Businesses may pay private firms to perform many of these services, when the CIL may be already providing these services to its clients at a very low cost. Developing additional customers who may be in a position to pay for the services rendered allows CILs to expand the services they can offer, undertake capital expansions, or even cover administrative expenses.
- Contacts for Other Activities: Assisting a variety of organizations to achieve some of their goals can help the CIL win friends in the community that are more likely to support the CIL in its other activities. The other organizations may also help the CIL become more visible in the community and thereby reach more persons with disabilities.

CREATING THE PARTNERSHIP

Laying the Foundation

In order to create the partnership, CIL staff need to undertake two main tasks: develop an exciting agenda for the partnership, and then use that agenda and the services the CIL can offer to attract other people to the partnership. Regarding the first task, CILs need to develop goals and missions that are interesting to both the CIL and the partnership members. CILs need to be ready to provide leadership to the partnership, as well as the organizational and logistical support necessary to implement the ideas and keep the momentum going.

Developing the Membership

To attract employer members to the partnership, CILs can emphasize the services they can offer to help disabled employees on the job. Employers who have not had employees with disabilities in the workplace may be concerned first with returning their current employees to the job after they become disabled. Otherwise, the employer may be paying benefits to that employee indefinitely. Therefore, the employers may be eager for assistance — and willing to pay for necessary accommodations. Once employers become familiar with the CIL, they may be more willing to use the CIL for other services — and to hire persons who already have a disability.

CILs can also enlist the support of local businesses that need to become accessible. Perhaps a local law requires that a business become accessible when undertaking new construction or a major renovation. Or a local organization receiving federal funds needs to comply with regulations from Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Or the owner decides that s/he wants to attract customers who use wheelchairs. These organizations may go to expensive architectural firms to give them advice on accessibility — or they can start with CILs. A local hospital contracted with the Grand Rapids CIL to make a complete accessibility review of its facility. The CIL in Kansas City, Missouri, The Whole Person, has completed accessibility reviews for 1,100 facilities — bus stops, voting locations, a

APPENDIX THREE AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO DISABLED EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS OF DISABLED PERSONS

AT&T National Special Needs Center

2001 Route 46

Parsippany, NJ 07054

1-800-233-1222

Advice on communications technology and devices for people with disabilities.

American Foundation for the Blind

15 West 16th St.

New York, NY 10011

212-620-2037

Provides consultation to employers of blind persons in the areas of affirmative action, career development, employee counseling, employer education, job modification, placement, and training in job analysis. Maintains AFB Job Index, a listing of jobs performed by blind persons and linkages to those persons.

American Heart Association

7320 Greenville Ave.

Dallas, TX 75231

214-750-5300

Public health education and information regarding cardiovascular disease and rehabilitation after heart attack or bypass surgery.

chemical plant, churches, theatres, schools, shopping malls, apartment buildings, community centers, a restaurant, stores, a health spa and baseball stadiums.

To find members, CIL staff may need to approach people who have never heard of the CIL, do not know anything about independent living, or aren't convinced that they can benefit from accommodation assistance. Most employers and organizations would not know how to approach the CIL and might even be uncomfortable at the prospect of asking for assistance. In fact, of 133 large companies responding to a survey on long-term care conducted by the Washington Business Group on Health, only 8% had worked with a CIL. Therefore, the CIL needs to find a way to become familiar to these organizations and to establish its reputation as a reliable organization that can help the partnership achieve its goals.

To recruit members for the partnership, CIL staff can either telephone or (if staff time permits) visit prospective members. It is crucial during these first contacts that the CIL staff have concrete plans and goals for the partnership, that the CIL staff impress potential members with the capabilities of the CIL, and that the staff show that they can work with members of the business community. During conversations with prospective members, CIL staff need to listen carefully for all possible concerns and address them appropriately to show the business person that the CIL staff do recognize his/her concerns and can help resolve them.

Other ways in which a CIL can publicize the partnership and seek out members are to visit local rehabilitation units, give luncheon or meeting presentations at any of the numerous local civic groups populated by businesspersons (Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary, political groups, Chamber of Commerce), write articles or columns for local papers (small ones are often happy to receive "news" articles), or make services for employers and businesses part of community Disability Awareness activities.

Running the Partnership

Once CIL staff have assembled the members of the partnership, the staff will need to call the members together for a meeting to discuss the structure and goals of the partnership. The meeting should explain the concept of independent living and the CIL to the

members, and engage them in a discussion of specific goals of the partnership and activities designed to reach those goals. The meeting must be tightly run and well-organized as it represents the CIL's most visible early opportunity to demonstrate the abilities of the CIL and the potential of the partnership. After the meeting, CIL staff need to follow-up with members by investigating ideas expressed and performing the groundwork necessary to further those ideas for the next meeting. Subsequent meetings should build on the first meeting, with the members selecting priority activities, assigning responsibility for the necessary tasks and then reporting on progress made. It is crucial that the partnership initiate specific, tangible activities as soon as possible in order to motivate members to stay involved.

The keys to approaching these organizations and obtaining their support are to demonstrate to them that:

- (1) the partnership is not a one-sided relationship — the CIL and the business community can work together for their mutual benefit;
- (2) the CIL has the institutional capacity — including personnel, clientele, and support systems — to deliver on its promises; and
- (3) the partnership will do more than simply discuss ideas and problems — it will achieve specific goals that will make members feel as though they are achieving results through their efforts.

more assistance than other employees. Most disabled employees want to be as independent on the job as possible. Many disabled employees also may need somewhat more orientation to the job in the beginning but then can become much more independent as they learn the job.

QUESTION: Will disabled workers cause company workers' compensation rates to rise?

ANSWER: Workers' compensation rates are based primarily on industry type and company size and only secondarily on a company's individual accident rate. Since disabled people have been shown to have better safety records than average, they should help lower, not raise, the workers' compensation rates.

Furthermore, employers do not have to worry about paying extra costs for an accident that contributes to a pre-existing disability. All states provide second injury funds that cover the difference between an employer's liability for a new injury and the total benefits paid to an injured worker. Therefore the employer is not financially liable for any increase in the severity of injury due to a pre-existing disability.

QUESTION: Will disabled workers cause company health insurance rates to rise?

ANSWER: It is true that, on average, disabled persons are hospitalized more than are non-disabled persons. However, this situation is mitigated by the fact that, depending on the disability, disabled persons may tend not to engage in the more dangerous physical activities that cause non-disabled persons to need medical attention. For example, blind people do not drive cars or motorcycles and mobility-impaired persons do not play much football, thereby avoiding some of the major causes of traumatic injury. Furthermore, health insurance rates may not be higher for a disabled person if the disability is not due to a progressive disease, or if the disability is not one which tends to cause secondary health problems. For instance, a person who becomes deaf due to a one-time childhood illness that has no other health repercussions may very well not use any additional health benefits than would a non-hearing-impaired person.

QUESTION: Will disabled workers be absent more than non-disabled workers?

ANSWER: Disabled workers may be even more motivated to come to work than are non-disabled workers. In a study of its employees, E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Co. found that 85% of its disabled workers rated average and above on attendance, only slightly less than the 91% rating achieved by non-disabled employees. However, a study by International Telephone and Telegraph of a 2,000 member plant with 125 disabled workers found that the disabled workers had fewer absences than their co-workers.

QUESTION: What salary range would be fair to the employer and the employee?

ANSWER: The salary offered depends on the same factors as with a non-disabled employee. The employer should consider the productivity of the employee, the nature of the work, the skills required, additional benefits offered, the difficulty s/he has had in filling the position, etc. The employer should not feel compelled to offer the employee more money to "compensate" for the disability, nor should s/he offer the disabled employee less than what s/he would offer a comparable non-disabled applicant. The salary expense can also be partially offset by tax credits during the early stages of employment. Employers can contact their state department of vocational rehabilitation or the IRS for more information. The National Easter Seal Society also publishes a free pamphlet on the disability issues in the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

QUESTION: Can a disabled employee do the same work without supervision or assistance that a non-disabled person could do?

ANSWER: Most disabled employees would not necessarily need any more supervision than other employees, and the level of assistance would depend on the nature of the disability. The employer can hire someone whose disability does not substantially affect their performance on the job and who would require no

WHAT CAN CILS OFFER TO BUSINESSES?

One of the best ways to attract members to the partnership is to show them how they can benefit from a close association with the CIL. CILs can provide a large range of services to outside customers, but these services need to be marketed so that it is clear to members of the partnership how the services will help them. Below are a variety of services that many CILs can and do provide and a discussion of how each one can be presented to employers.

Accommodation/Accessibility Assistance

This expertise can help disabled employees perform more of their responsibilities in the workplace; help businesses who need to become accessible to customers and clients; and help prevent retirees from using expensive, institutional care. This service can help employers not only in hiring employees with disabilities, but also in retaining newly disabled employees and in advancing their careers. CILs can offer to visit worksites to give advice, bring managers into the CIL to see staff members with disabilities carry out their responsibilities, or refer employers to local and national resources (see Appendix Three). As retirees grow older, many daily living tasks become more difficult. CILs can show elderly persons how to accomplish many of the tasks which are necessary for them to stay in their home. This not only helps elderly persons but also helps employers save on the enormous costs of institutional care for their retiree population.

Peer Counseling/Self-Help Groups

Many CILs offer peer counseling or self-help groups conducted by a person with a particular disability. Peer counselors can help a disabled employee or a newly disabled person at a rehabilitation facility realize that he or she can accomplish a great deal more than he or she may think possible — including at the worksite. Staff at The Whole Person helped one newly-disabled employee realize that his accommodation needs on the job were not as great as he thought, with the end result that both employee and employer were satisfied with the accommodations made. A situation such as this one allows the CIL to both help a disabled employee and earn the respect of an employer.

If an employee has a family member who becomes disabled, the strains on the relative can disrupt the employee's attention to his or her job. The peer counselor can be another source of support for the family member and the employee, as well as a source of information on resources to help relieve the caregiver.

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs)

Many CILs have classes to teach persons with disabilities how to manage PCAs, which would be helpful to employers or rehabilitation facilities. PCAs are valuable to employers in that they can assist disabled employees in getting to work or performing tasks at work. PCA management is important to rehabilitation facilities because the absence of a PCA can prevent a newly disabled person from going home from the hospital, even if the person is ready to be discharged. The Center for Independent Living in Berkeley has helped employees at Bank of America, Clorox, and a local bank find and use attendants.

If an employee is caring for an elderly parent or a disabled child, the time commitment alone can interfere with an employee's workday. PCAs can relieve some of this burden, either on a permanent basis, or for respite care, allowing the employee to recuperate from the strains of family responsibility. According to a study by the Travelers' Insurance Company of its own employees, between 14 and 20% of those employees were caring for an elderly relative or friend. These employees provide services that could be obtained through a PCA, such as transportation, moving about within the home, household chores, and personal care. It is very likely that the average caregiver, with little experience with disability, has no idea that the local CIL could assist him/her with this work.

Government Benefits Counseling

It may be especially difficult for small firms or worksites with limited personnel staff to determine all the benefits due an employee with a disability. CILs can often help them determine what the relevant benefits are and how to apply for those benefits. If the CIL is already providing this service for an employee, the CIL should ensure that the employer recognizes this service.

and meetings. Again, as for other employees, employers are not expected to simply accept, uncritically, whatever work the employee is doing, without correcting him/her.

QUESTION: Will fellow employees constantly need to stop what they are doing to help the disabled employee?

ANSWER: Many disabled persons perform their jobs with no assistance whatsoever from co-workers. The key is to match the employee's abilities with the requirements of the job. Most disabled employees expect and want to do their job as independently as possible. Even if a disabled employee does require occasional assistance, this can be offset by having the disabled employee help the non-disabled employee with some aspect of his/her job.

QUESTION: Do disabled employees perform as well as non-disabled employees?

ANSWER: In the same survey by the Harris Poll mentioned above, 88% of top managers and line managers rated job performance of disabled persons as excellent or good. On several specific criteria — leadership ability, willingness to work hard, reliability, productivity, and desire for promotion — the vast majority of managers said disabled employees performed as well as or better than non-disabled employees.

QUESTION: Wouldn't most disabled people rather collect benefits than work?

ANSWER: For many disabled people, staying at home is lonely, boring and poverty-inducing. They want a chance to contribute to society, to take pride in their work and to earn a living wage. In an earlier survey by the Harris Poll and ICD (1986), two-thirds of unemployed disabled persons — over 8 million people — said they would like to give up their benefits and go to work. (Furthermore, recent changes in the Social Security laws mean that disabled persons do not need to give up all their health and income benefits immediately upon entering the workforce.) These benefits provide only a subsistence living — not enough to buy the necessities and a few of the luxuries that everyone needs.

QUESTION: Isn't accommodating disabled employees in the workplace expensive and complicated?

ANSWER: Accommodations are usually much cheaper and easier than employers anticipate. In a study by Berkeley Planning Associates of job accommodations in 915 firms, over half the accommodations cost nothing, and another 18% cost less than \$100. Furthermore, tax credits are available to help offset the cost of worksite accommodations up to \$35,000. The Paralyzed Veterans of America publishes a practical guide to accommodations, entitled Design Guidelines Qualifying for the Tax Advantages of Section 190. The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped also sponsors the Job Accommodation Network, a free national referral service for employers that can give them specific advice on accommodating disabled workers. Telephone is 1-800-JAN-PCEH.

QUESTION: Do disabled workers have poorer safety records than non-disabled workers?

ANSWER: Disabled employees work safely and may be even more careful than their non-disabled colleagues. In a 1981 study of its employees, Equal to the Task, E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Co. showed that 96% of its disabled employees rated average or above average in safety, compared to 92% of its non-disabled employees.

QUESTION: Are disabled employees difficult to supervise?

ANSWER: Supervision issues are much the same for disabled employees as for any other employees. In 1987 the International Center for the Disabled (ICD), President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, and the National Council on the Handicapped together commissioned the Harris Poll to survey 921 managers on employing persons with disabilities. In the survey, 82% of managers said disabled employees are not harder to supervise than non-disabled employees. As for other employees, employers should give disabled employees regular job reviews, inform them when they are or are not performing up to the employer's standard, and invite them to participate in all company functions

Job Training and Placement

Many CILs, especially the larger ones, conduct their own job training and placement programs. If an employee becomes disabled and cannot resume his or her former duties, the CIL could help the employer place the employee in a new job with the same or a different employer. The CIL could also help the employer hire new employees who are disabled, either by referring to the employer persons who are looking for work and have the relevant skills, or by helping to train people in the skills that the employer needs. The New England Telephone Company has used the Boston CIL to help find persons with disabilities who have the skills necessary for employment positions.

Information on Tax Credits

Most CILs can give employers and businesses specific information on the types of tax benefits that can be used to offset any increased cost associated with hiring a disabled employee or making a facility accessible. These benefits include the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit, and tax credits for barrier removal and employment expenses. Many businesses might go to their tax accountant for information on these credits, when the CIL might be equally knowledgeable. The Memphis CIL has conducted a seminar for local employers on tax credits.

Technical Assistance

CIL staff are experienced in solving crises — a trait valued by every business. If an employee is having difficulty finding housing, using the local transportation system, or any other area that may affect his or her job performance, the CIL staff could help the employee solve that problem. Here are some examples:

- The Rochester (Minnesota) CIL runs a barrier-free apartment building and has also compiled a guide, complete with photographs and detailed architectural descriptions, of all accessible apartment buildings in the city. This would be a great resource for a newly-disabled person leaving a rehabilitation facility, or for an employer with a new, disabled employee.

- The Houston CIL finds interpreters for deaf persons who need this service for a job interview, employment training, or any other situation. Many businesses might need an interpreter when carrying out complex transactions with a deaf customer.
- Steelcase Inc., in Grand Rapids, Michigan, used the Grand Rapids CIL to conduct a survey of disabled employees' perceptions of the company and their opportunities for advancement.
- AT&T used the Berkeley CIL to test and demonstrate its adaptive telephone devices.

Forming partnerships with the local business community can help CILs expand their client base and their network of contacts. This can help the CIL and the community by gaining supporters for the CIL, and by making the CIL services more visible and more widely-used.

APPENDIX TWO QUESTIONS CONCERNING HIRING WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

Many employers who have never employed a worker with a disability have questions on how to manage employees with disabilities, what problems might arise, and how to resolve such problems. It is important for CILs to help employers bear in mind that every employee, disabled or not, is different, with different needs, abilities, desires, limitations, work habits, tastes, and personalities. Therefore, the best way to handle questions relating to the job is not to assume what the answers are, but rather to discuss the questions with the employee directly. It is quite probable that the employee has devised means of handling any tasks that are required by the job, and if not, s/he is the best source of information on how to develop new methods of accommodation. CILs can emphasize that many accommodations are much simpler and cheaper than employers expect. The following questions and answers deal with some concerns frequently expressed by employers and are meant to allay some common fears and misunderstandings concerning the hiring of persons with physical disabilities. CILs may want to use this information in their discussions with employers.

QUESTION: Will a disabled worker make co-workers uncomfortable?

ANSWER: Many people are at first uncomfortable around disabled persons, yet this feeling usually wears off over time. There are also many things that an employer and the disabled employee can do to ease the transition. Before the employee starts work, the employer (or someone from a disability organization) can explain to the other workers the nature of the person's disability and any special considerations, such as how to communicate with a hearing-impaired worker. The employee also is probably quite used to answering questions about his/her disability, and, if given a chance, can help the co-workers understand and be comfortable with him/her.

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