



Business Matters

Encouraging Diversity in the Workplace • Promoting a Positive Environment for Business Growth

Spring 2001

Employment Services Organizations

The Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) works in partnership with over 85 community-based programs throughout the state that not only help train and employ workers with disabilities, but also serve as valuable outsourcing vendors to area companies.

To businesses, these organizations, known as *Employment Services Organizations (ESOs)*, provide quality goods and services to public and private industry. Services offered to businesses include, but are not limited to: packaging, assembly, collating, fabricating, mailing services, prime manufacturing, printing services, screen printing, laundry services, custodial maintenance services, landscape maintenance services, data entry, and recycling. Products available include furniture, baked goods and packaged gourmet foods, woven/sewn products, containers, and more.

A complete listing of Virginia's Employment Services Organizations, their services and products, are available on the

ESO Interactive Directory

located at

www.vdrs.org

or for more information, contact

Jack Hayek, Program Manager, Employment Services and Special Programs
email: hayekje@drs.state.va.us; tel: (804) 662-7124



The Louise W. Eggleston Center, located in Norfolk, Va. is just one of many ESO's statewide that provide on-the-job training to employees with disabilities, while providing quality service to area businesses.

Through Eggleston Center's Business Services Division, companies such as Trader Publishing Company, Signature Printing and Cox Communications, have benefitted from outsource services including bulk mail processing, packaging, assembly, laser cartridge remanufacturing, lamination, order fulfillment and warehousing. The Business Services Division also offers return to work and light-duty services to various worker compensation insurance companies to keep their injured workers active and employed. Host employers like Lake Taylor Hospital and City of Norfolk's Department of Parks and Recreation have also partnered with the Eggleston Center to provide job sites for the Center's vocational training and ongoing support to individuals with disabilities who desire to enter the competitive job market. In addition, the Center has partnered with government-based organizations, such as the Portsmouth Naval Hospital, turning the hospital's downsized food service operation into a full-scaled cafeteria.

To learn more about the services of the Eggleston Center, please call 757-625-2311 or visit their website at www.lwe.org.

Looking for a Few Good Workers ?

About 1.6 million people with visual impairments live in the United States, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Of those, the National Federation of the Blind and the Braille Institute of America estimate that 70 percent are unemployed.

What jobs can blind or low vision workers do?

"Don't consider any job 'off limits' to a visually impaired person," says Sharon Spencer, vice president of sales and marketing for Freedom Scientific's blind/low vision group, a company that develops assistive technology products in St. Petersburg, Fla. Nearly one-third of the company's employees are visually impaired.

In terms of accommodations, they are "remarkably fewer than one would initially assume," says Anthony Cobb, director of job opportunities for the blind for the National Federation of the Blind in Baltimore, Md. Most deal with providing assistive technology, such as screen reading software programs. For example, Marriott Worldwide Reservations, a division of Marriott International Inc. in Omaha, Neb., offers a variety of accommodations. "For associates that have some vision but are unable to read our normal computer screen, we have provided larger monitors as well as screen magnifiers," says vice president L. Kaye Dengel, whose division employs 50 visually impaired workers. Though costs of equipment vary on what is required, possible funds to offset accommodation costs may be accessed through state rehabilitation agencies.

Other helpful accommodations such as altered schedules to meet transportation needs, Braille on vending machines or bathrooms, and more importantly, alternate ways in which the company disseminates information such as using voice mail messages instead of handwritten notes or flyers, make it easier for workers with visual impairments to do their jobs.

Lastly, provide sensitivity training to co-workers, as well as levels of management, for successful recruiting, interviewing and hiring practices.

**source: HR Magazine, December 2000, p129-134.*

Network News

For the past year, DRS has worked toward the development of a functional, growing web of Employment Networks throughout the state, providing a valuable arena for employers and workforce development professionals to post job leads, diversity and staffing needs in front of various recruitment resources.

To date, there are 16 Employment Networks throughout the state, with additional local Networks in the making. They are typically led and facilitated by one of DRS' Regional Marketing Specialists and are supported by a steering committee comprised of DRS representatives and other members from similar workforce development groups and organizations. See right side of this page to find the nearest Employment Network serving your area.

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THE FACTS ABOUT TAX.....

You may be done with this year's tax season, but why not get a jump on next year's? Did you know that the **Employers of Individuals with Disabilities Credit** provides a credit to employers who have employed a person with a disability who has completed or is completing rehabilitative services provided by the Department of Rehabilitative Services, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs? This tax credit is available for taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 1999, continuing through December 31, 2002. More information on this and other disability tax credits may be obtained at www.tax.state.va.us.

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Join the Virginia Department of Business Assistance, local and regional economic development offices, Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Development Centers, Small Business Incubators, Main Street organizations, and other

individuals in gratefully acknowledging the Virginia businesses that are **"Setting the Prosperity Standard"**.

- Current Listing of local Employment Networks:**
- Charlottesville Regional Employment Network**
Mike Somers (540) 434-5981
 - Danville Area Employment Network**
Nancy Worley-Martin (804) 791-5257
 - Greater Fredericksburg Employment Network**
Ann Mathieu (540) 899-4161
 - Hampton Roads Employment Network (Peninsula)**
Cortney Miron (757) 865-3117
 - Hampton Roads Employment Network (Southside)**
Brent Barkway (757) 396-6728
 - Luray/Page County Employers Network**
LaPearl Smith (540) 535-1808
 - Martinsville Area Disabilities Employment Network**
Marcia Cook (540) 632-7161
 - Metro Richmond Employment Network**
Ethel Walker(804) 662-7153
 - New River Valley Employment Network**
Dan Semones (540) 776-2740
 - Northern Virginia Employment Network**
Lisa Marcucci (703) 313-4409
 - Prince William County Employment Network**
Lisa Marcucci (703) 313-4409
 - Region 2000 Area Network for Employment - Lynchburg**
Renee Wilson (804) 947-6721
 - Roanoke Workforce Network**
Dan Semones (540) 776-2740
 - Rockingham/Augusta Employers Network**
Don Stonesifer (540) 434-5981
 - Shenandoah County Employment Resource Group**
Vickie Emmert (540) 459-6226
 - Winchester/Frederick/Clarke Employment Network**
Judy Alkire (540) 722-3453