



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

**CCD Employment & Training Task Force
Recommendations for the Incoming Administration
December 2020**

People with disabilities face critical barriers to entering the general workforce. Before the COVID 19 pandemic, [the national employment rate](#) for working-age people with disabilities in the United States was 37.6 percent compared to 77.8 percent of people without disabilities. There are significant racial disparities in disability employment outcomes. Before the COVID 19 pandemic, 38.9 percent of working-age white people with disabilities had jobs compared to [only 29.7 percent](#) of working-age Black people with disabilities, 39.4 percent of working-age Hispanics with disabilities and 43.2 percent of working-age Asian-Americans with disabilities. The pandemic has ravaged the disability community and [more than 1 million](#) workers with disabilities have lost their jobs.

As such, the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities calls on the Administration to consider the following priorities:

- **Create New Leadership Opportunities Throughout the Administration for People with Disability Experiences.** – Leaders with disability experiences deserve opportunities to serve their country in a variety of administrative roles. Decisions made at the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, State, and Justice, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau impact people with disabilities in critical ways and those decisions need to be shaped by leaders with disabilities appointed to serve at the highest levels.
- **Appoint a Disability Policy Coordinator to the Domestic Policy Council.** – Since 1993, the Domestic Policy Council (DPC) has been responsible for coordinating the processes involved with domestic policy development and implementation. Given that 61 million Americans live with some form of disability, domestic policy priorities have wide ranging impacts on citizens with disabilities. As such, consideration for appointing a leader with disabilities should be a presidential priority to ensure the policy processes reflect an understanding of disability issues.
- **Challenge Business Leaders to Prioritize Recruiting, Hiring and Promoting Individuals with Disabilities to combat disability stigmas.** – It is essential for the President to use the public visibility of his or her office to fight stigmas that impact citizens with disabilities and their access to participate in the general labor market. Suggested ways the President may do this include, conducting site visits to model employers who employ people with disabilities, visiting federal contractors who exceed their goals under [Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) and [The Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act \(VEVRAA\)](#), implement strategic communications

to educate the general public about disability as a normal part of the human condition, hosting meetings with people with lived experience and with disability organizations, and host a recurring White House Conference on Disability Employment.

- **Review and Improve Federal Hiring of Employees with Disabilities** – Early in 2020, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released [GAO-20-384](#). This report reviewed efforts by the Federal government to recruit, hire and retain workers with disabilities. While the report showed the federal government had exceeded its hiring goals, the government record on retention of workers with disabilities is far from satisfactory. The Federal government must significantly improve its efforts at retention and promotion of workers with disabilities by tracking data for employees with disabilities and fully implement [Section 501 regulations](#) to ensure that each Federal agency successfully meets its hiring goal of people with disabilities.
- **Support the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and enforcement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).** – The ADA remains the civil right foundation for people with disabilities to earn a living, live in the community and be free from discrimination. As such, the President needs to ensure that the Department of Justice (DOJ) protect the rights of citizens with disabilities and opposes legislation that would weaken rights such as any reintroduction of [ADA Education and Reform Act](#). It is critical that the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#), in particular its provisions for the [Rehabilitation Services Administration \(RSA\)](#) governing integrated employment, [Section 511](#) and [Section 188](#), is fairly and fully enforced. Lastly assure the Department of Labor holds federal contractors accountable in meeting their disability hiring goals under Section 503 and VEVRAA.
- **Support and Encourage Entrepreneurship for Individuals with Disabilities.** –Prior to 2020, 10 percent of all Americans with disabilities that had jobs were self-employed. This creates a foundation for the Small Business Administration (SBA) to enhance their efforts in empowering and supporting more entrepreneurs with disabilities to become business owners. At SBA, the Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Civil Rights Resources offers a [range of resources](#) around equal opportunity to entrepreneurship and should be a key asset to help more people with disabilities to become business owners. SBA must develop new resources to assist Small Business Development Centers understand opportunities such as [Disability Owned Business Enterprise \(DOBE\)](#) certification and access to capital for people with disabilities under the [Community Reinvestment Act](#).
- **Foster a Cross Agency Data Management System to Improve Available Data to Drive Decision Making.** – Policy and legislative decisions require clear and accurate data to analyze impacts or outcomes. Tracking the labor force participations rates between people with and without disabilities is a key metric needed for future policy decisions to decrease the labor gap for people with disabilities. Likewise, there are serious gaps in tracking data around justice involved youth. There is no national database on justice involvement and inconsistent state level data on disabilities in the justice system. As such, the Administration should seek ways to improve disability data collection and ensure that data-driven decision making reflects disability issues.
- **Making the Future of Work Equitable for Workers with Disabilities.** – The opportunity agenda has gone digital thanks to the telework revolution, the disruption of COVID-19 and the rapid advancement of the gig economy. Ensure that the Department of Labor continues to reinforce universal design in innovative technologies to alleviate biases against people of color /people with disabilities and that people with disabilities have ready access to information about needed skills to succeed in emerging job markets.

- **Ensure Access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Vaccinations for Essential Workers with Disabilities and Direct Support Professionals.** – Essential workers with disabilities and the direct support professionals that support them have risked their lives for months during this pandemic. Yet, they continue to face shortages of necessary PPE and such workers need to have prioritized access once a safe COVID-19 vaccination is distributed.

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