



## **APSE Applauds New Federal Rules to Improve Employment of People with Disabilities**

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Fifty years ago today, Martin Luther King, Jr. in his iconic speech exclaimed, “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.’ On Tuesday, the federal government took a major step forward in living out the true meaning of these words for individuals with disabilities. Vice President Joe Biden announced that the requirements for federal contractors to undertake efforts to recruit and hire workers with disabilities have been significantly strengthened. APSE would like to applaud the Obama Administration for pushing forward to ensure federal contractors and subcontractors are maximizing their efforts to employment individuals with disabilities, under the new Final Rules for Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act.

### **What These New Rules Mean for APSE Members**

With these new rules, private businesses that do business with the federal government (which is well over 20% of businesses) will be undertaking increased efforts to actively recruit and employ individuals with disabilities. As an organization exclusively focused on employment of individuals with disabilities, this means that federal contractors will be looking to APSE and its members to assist in meeting these new requirements through identification of qualified job candidates, and assistance and support to ensure these individuals succeed on the job.

### **Highlights of the New Section 503 Rules**

- **7% Employment Goal:** Federal contractors and subcontractors will now have a goal that 7% of individuals in each job group in their workforce consist of qualified individuals with disabilities.
- **Data Collection:** Contractors will be required to track data on the number of individuals with disabilities who apply for jobs and are hired.
- **Compliance Enforcement:** Contractors must allow the federal government to review documents to ensure they are complying with these new regulations.
- **Affirmative Action Requirements:** The regulations specify a series of requirements for federal contractors to ensure they are maximizing their efforts to recruit, hire, and provide career advancement to individuals with disabilities, including outreach to an array of disability organizations.
- **Invitation to Self-Identify:** In order to track recruitment efforts, under the new rules, federal contractors can now ask job applicants to voluntarily self-identify as an individual with a disability prior to receiving a job offer and after they have received a job offer. Additionally, current employees will be asked to voluntarily identify themselves as individuals with disabilities every 5 years. It will be critical to monitor the implementation of these voluntary self-disclosures requirements to ensure that the rights of individuals with disabilities to non-disclosure under the American’s with Disabilities continue to be respected.



### **When Do the New Regulations Go Into Effect?**

It is expected that the new regulations will go into effect sometime in March 2014.

### **What should I do now?**

- Learn about the requirements for federal contractors under these new rules, and consider how to take advantage of them to increase employment opportunities.
- Identify the federal contractors in your area and consider how to begin developing relationships with them. Federal contractors in your area can be identified via the [www.usaspending.gov](http://www.usaspending.gov) website.

As these new regulations are implemented, APSE will provide additional information on how APSE members can use these new requirements to expand employment opportunities.

### **Where Can I Learn More?**

- APSE Recorded Webinar with Katherine McCary: “[Becoming a Provider of Choice for Federal Contractors: How OFCCP Regulations Can Maximize Your Success.](#)” Please email Jenny Levet at [Jenny@apse.org](mailto:Jenny@apse.org) to purchase recorded webinars.
- USDOL has two webinars upcoming that will provide an overview of the new rules for Federal Contractors: [August 30<sup>th</sup> – 2:00 PM eastern](#) – [September 18<sup>th</sup> – 2:00 PM eastern](#)

### **Additional Information**

- [Summary of new rules, and links to additional information including new Section 503 rule text](#)
- [Overview of major differences between current and new Section 503 regulations](#)