

EMPLOYMENT FIRST

investing in success

Hoosiers with disabilities have the highest unemployment rate of any minority. They want to work and reduce their reliance on state and federal subsidies. Some are able to secure employment on their own but many need assistance to overcome stereotypes, develop work experience, and become independent. The Indiana Employment First Coalition believes that a strong economy is fueled by all Hoosiers working and contributing to the bottom line. Hoosiers with disabilities must be enlisted as part of the economic development strategy to move Indiana forward.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT — FUELING THE ECONOMY

People with disabilities are our state's largest minority group — 20% of all Hoosiers. 29% of all families include a member with a disability. Recent breakthroughs in education, rehabilitation, assistive technology, and transportation have added many people with disabilities to the work force. Information indicates that:

People earn more and pay back in the form of taxes to the state and purchasing power.

- For every Indiana tax dollar spent, \$5.59 is returned to Indiana's economy in the first year in the form of Hoosier earnings (a \$1.19 return for every combined Federal/Indiana tax dollar).
- The return on investment increases exponentially each year as prior years' clients retain employment and new clients enter the workforce each year.

Figures taken from: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/service/disabl/vr/infosheet.html>

- People in supported employment in Indiana increase earnings 5 times.

Day and Employment Services Outcome Systems Report, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, 2005

Costs for long-term services are less when people are working.

- An 11 year study completed in Indiana supports that Medicaid cost for individuals with a mental illness are reduced when the individual returns to competitive employment.
- The average cost of returning a typical individual with a mental illness to work is approximately \$2,280.

Perkins, Born, Gaines, and Galka, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, Winter 2005

Businesses benefit from hiring people with disabilities through increased productivity.

- People with disabilities have above average safety records, above average job performance and above average attendance.
 - Every \$1 employers spend in disability-related accommodations saves \$34 in Workers' Compensation, insurance and training costs.
 - Employers consistently report satisfaction with the person they hire and the services they receive from the supported employment staff.
- www.doleta.gov



Additional incentives make it easier than ever to hire.

- Architectural /Transportation Tax Deduction — up to \$15,000 per year.
 - Small Business Tax Credit — 50% credit for expenditures between \$250 and \$10,250.
 - Work Opportunity Tax Credit — federal tax credit reducing employers' federal income tax liability by as much as \$2,400 per qualified new worker.
- www.doleta.gov



EMPLOYMENT SUMMIT — AN INVESTMENT IN INDIANA'S ECONOMY

People with disabilities are an important employment resource. On September 29, 2005, the Employment First Coalition brought together Leaders of Government, Business, Labor, Community and Education and the non-profit sectors to create a strategic plan ensuring employment is an outcome for all Hoosiers with disabilities. Read more about the outcomes on page 2.

For more information, contact srinne@kiva.net.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INDIANA'S EMPLOYMENT FIRST! SUMMIT

On September 29, leaders from government, business, community, education and private sectors gathered in Indianapolis to begin creating a strategic plan for ensuring employment is an outcome for all Hoosiers with disabilities. Recent breakthroughs in education, rehabilitation, assistive technology, and transportation have added many people with disabilities to the workforce.

However, Hoosiers with disabilities have the highest unemployment rate of any minority. They want to work and reduce their reliance on state and federal subsidies. Some are able to secure employment on their own but many need assistance to overcome stereotypes, develop work experience, and become independent. The Indiana Employment First! Coalition believes that a strong economy is fueled by all Hoosiers working and contributing to the bottom line. Hoosiers with disabilities must be enlisted as part of the economic development strategy to move the Indiana workforce forward.

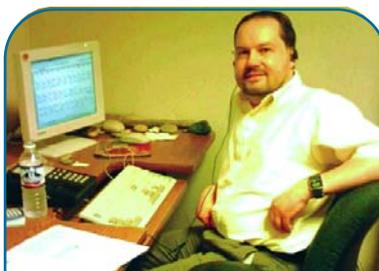
During the Employment First! Summit, participants identified many strengths of Indiana's current employment system to build upon, such as:

- *Ensuring accurate and timely information about the impact of work on benefits* through the Benefits Planning, Assistance & Outreach program and the innovative Benefits Information Network;
- *Maximizing income and asset opportunities* through the M.E.D. Works program for employees with disabilities moving toward self-sufficiency and greater financial independence; and
- An *employment vision and guidance* from key leaders participating in Indiana's Employment Leadership Group.

Finding Solutions to Remaining Barriers to Employment

Summit participants focused heavily on identifying strategic solutions toward reducing remaining barriers to employment for people with disabilities. These solutions included:

- Establishing *reliable, accessible and affordable transportation* for workers to get to and from the job;
- Connecting to the economic development systems, such as the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, to *ensure employers have what they need* to offer jobs to Hoosiers with disabilities;
- Developing more *financial incentives* for service providers to make competitive employment a shared outcome;
- Disseminating more *information* to people about the benefits of employment — and, the resources that this untapped workforce can bring to our economy;
- Coordinating *integrated, community support* for people to make living and working in the community the “norm”; and
- Maximizing opportunities for our young people by *improving transition supports and increasing work experience* for our high school age youth.



Tom has worked successfully for over three years as a switchboard operator at a large hospital. "Helping to organize my job search was key in my securing the position."



Carolyn (right) with her supervisor (left) receives an appreciation gift for her 10-year anniversary with McDonalds.

The Employment First! Coalition will continue to bring together key stakeholders to implement these strategies.

For more information on the Summit, contact Susan Rinne at srinne@kiva.net.

THE 2005 EMPLOYMENT FIRST COALITION

Indiana Association for Persons in Supported Employment, INARE, Indiana Arc, Social Security Administration, Office of Medicaid Planning and Policy, Vocational Rehabilitation, BehaviorCorp, Mental Health Association in Indiana, Indiana Protection & Advocacy, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, SECT Center and Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities