

DISABLED HIRING INITIATIVE REPORT

July 2014-July 2015



**In accordance with Public Act 96-0078, the Directors of the
Departments of Central Management Services and Human
Services submit this report to the members of the**

Illinois General Assembly

September 1, 2015

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DIRECTOR

CMS ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL
MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Central Management Services and Department of Human Services
Joint Report Disabled Hiring Initiative 2014-2015
(Pursuant to P.A. 96-0078/Senate Bill 40)
September 1, 2015

Mandate

Public Act 96-0078 (effective July 24, 2009) requires that the Departments of Central Management Services (CMS), Human Services (DHS), Employment Security (DES) and other agencies develop and implement programs to increase the number of qualified employees with disabilities working in state government.

Background

CMS administers the Successful Disability Opportunities (SD) Program which serves as a means to qualify individuals with disabilities for positions within state government. DHS is a partner with CMS in the certification of candidates for the SD Program. The program's name has been changed over the years and was initially implemented in 1976.

State agencies are not required to, but may request the SD candidate list at the point in the hiring process when an Open Competitive eligible list might otherwise be requested.

Since 2003, CMS and DHS have been working to build the SD candidate list so that eligible candidates with disabilities are available across a wide range of position titles and a wide geographic area of the state. CMS, DHS and the Department of Human Rights (DHR) also have been working to educate agency Personnel Managers and Equal Employment Opportunity Officers about the SD Program and encourage them to consider individuals with disabilities when making their hiring decisions.

Currently there are 550 active participants in the SD Program who are eligible for more than 140 different position titles.

Meeting the Challenge

Due to the continuing budgetary situation, limited hiring, absolute Veterans Preference and the large number of positions subject to collective bargaining agreements, it is a challenge to significantly increase the number of individuals with disabilities hired as new state employees.

Upon Senate Bill 40 becoming law (P.A. 96-0078), CMS formed a committee of state agencies to develop initiatives within their budgets and within the law to work toward increasing the number of qualified applicants with disabilities hired. The Disabled Hiring Initiative Committee is currently comprised of CMS, DHS, DES, DHR, Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS).

Employees with disabilities currently comprise 7.09% of the state workforce as compared to 4.95% of the state's labor force. State employees with disabilities are identified through self-disclosure of a disability.

SUMMARY OF DIRECTIVES

NETWORKING DIRECTIVES

CMS, DHS, DHR, DES, DCEO and DVA have made concerted efforts to continue to network with state Agency Personnel managers, Equal Employment Opportunity Officers and Recruitment Program staff to educate them on the Successful Disability Opportunities (SD) Program and the Disabled Hiring Initiative, and to distribute that information to potential candidates with disabilities. Below is a summary of those efforts.

Meetings with Equal Employment Opportunity Officers

Staff from the CMS Disabled Workers Program and DHR continue to conduct meetings with multiple agencies to educate them about the Successful Disability Opportunities Program (SD) and the Disabled Hiring Initiative. DHR identifies categories of underutilization, including employees with disabilities. Agencies who need to increase the number of employees with disabilities can utilize the SD candidate list as a way to address those underutilizations.

During the 2014-2015 report period, CMS Disabled Workers Program staff and DHR staff met with the following agencies to present information on the SD Program and discuss agency underutilization of employees with disabilities: Illinois State Police – September 11, 2014; Department of Corrections – May 28, 2015.

During the 2013-2014 reporting period, the following meetings were conducted: Department of Aging – January 27, 2014; Department of Agriculture – February 11, 2014; Illinois State Police – February 27, 2014; Illinois Environmental Protection Agency – March 11, 2014.

CMS and DHR staff will continue to meet with other agencies on this issue.

Presentations to Agency Personnel Managers

Prior to Disability Awareness Month, on September 30, 2014, a DHS employee presented her success story about participating in the SD Program and being hired as a state employee to a group of state agency human resources managers and staff. In this same meeting, the CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator presented information to agency human resources staff regarding the SD Program. On December 2, 2014, the CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator presented information to agency human resources staff regarding the Alternative Employment Program (AEP) and answered questions.

State Employment Webinars for Persons with Disabilities

The Disabled Hiring Initiative Committee hosted two webinars on state employment. Both webinars were conducted on March 17, 2015, and approximately 31 groups of individuals participated. A webinar was also hosted by DHS on December 9 and 11, 2014, and approximately 60 individuals participated. In the March webinar, presentations were made by DHS-DRS regarding services provided to clients by Rehabilitation Counselors; by CMS about the SD Program; and by a current state employee who utilized DHS-DRS Rehabilitation services and

participated in the SD Program to obtain state employment. Libraries across the state served as sites for group participation in the webinar.

Veterans Outreach Program and Diversity Enrichment Program

CMS has programs for veterans, minorities, women and individuals with disabilities seeking employment with the state. Program staff have been educated about the SD Program and the Disabled Hiring Initiative, and are instructed to provide information about opportunities for their clients with disabilities through the SD Program. Staff from the CMS Veterans Outreach Program and CMS Diversity Enrichment Program (DEP) attend job fairs and recruiting events on a regular basis around the state.

The Veterans Outreach Program conducts job fairs and Employment Workshops on a regular basis in coordination with DES, DVA, DOT and other outside organizations. Information about the Successful Disability opportunities Program is presented at each workshop and job fair. DES Veteran Employment Representatives have been briefed about the Successful Disability Opportunities Program and provide this information to their clients as well.

Veterans Outreach Program staff attended 26 job fairs and Employment Workshops statewide between July 2014 – July 2015. 84 veterans with service-connected disabilities were reached through these events and provided information about the state employment process and the SD Program.

Career Counseling for veterans is offered through the CMS Veterans Outreach Program to provide applicants with an overview of the state employment process. 40 Veterans with service-connected disabilities were counseled and provided information about the SD Program.

Diversity Enrichment Program (DEP) staff attended 64 minority targeted job fairs between July 2014 – July 2015 and made 16,700 applicant contacts (disabled and not disabled). DEP staff provided career counseling for approximately 582 individuals between July 2014 – and July 2015.

Career Counseling Services for Individuals with Disabilities

Career Counseling is offered through CMS Examining and Counseling to provide applicants with an overview of the state employment process and the SD Program. Applicants' qualifications are reviewed to provide specific job title recommendations. The CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator counsels disabled applicants and also provides information on available accommodations for testing. From July 2014 to July 2015, 116 applicants with disabilities were provided career counseling services.

Consult & Coordination with CMS Division of Risk Management

The CMS Risk Management Division is responsible for the administration of workers' compensation claims for work-related accidents of state employees. One of the primary objectives of the Workers' Compensation Program is to return employees to productive work as safely and quickly as possible. The CMS Disabled Workers Program provides assistance with these efforts.

In many situations, workers who are no longer able to perform their current job duties are able to perform other work. Workers may be eligible for re-employment through the SD Program or the Alternative Employment Program (AEP), which are administered through the CMS Disabled Workers Program.

CMS Disabled Workers Program staff and CMS Legal staff continue to be available to Risk Assessment Staff to provide information about these programs and to explain how they can assist with meeting their objective to return employees to productive work.

Exempt and non-certified employees are potentially eligible for re-employment through the SD Program, and certified employees are potentially eligible for re-employment through the Alternation Employment Program (AEP). Additionally, any on-leave employee may obtain promotional grades and bid on open positions. Referring eligible employees with workers compensations claims to these programs is beneficial to the employee, the Risk Management Program and the Disabled Workers Programs.

Currently, there are 39 state employees on disability leave participating in the Alternative Employment Program.

Job Fairs/Conferences

CMS, DHS, DES, DCEO and other agencies have attended multiple job fairs and other events. When CMS and DHS did not attend, materials regarding the SD Program were provided to those attending. Due to limited travel and staff resources, these agencies coordinate so that every agency is not at a single job fair and that information is distributed about the SD Program at as many employment and disability-related events as possible.

Every Monday throughout the year, DHS, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), does a weekly orientation with Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance, Illinois Work-net Center, Springfield. Also, the third Wednesday of each month DHS – DRS conducts informational meetings regarding DES at the Community Connections Resource Fair, Salvation Army Homeless Shelter and Springfield Community Federation.

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| 7/11/14 | American Legion Job Fair/ Veteran Outreach/CMS | Springfield |
| 7/14/14 | Gardner Initiative Hope Job Fair | Chicago |
| 7/15/14 | Skills for the Search Employment Workshop | Chicago |
| 7/16/14 | Decatur Job Fair/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Decatur |
| 7/21/14 | State Employment Workshop-Upward Global/CMS | Chicago |
| 7/22/14 | Social Service Worker State Employment Workshop/CMS | Chicago |
| 7/23/14 | State Employment Workshop-Veterans/CMS | Hines |
| 7/30/14 | Reemployment Resource Fair/IDES | Chicago |
| 7/30/14 | ADA Celebration-DHS | Springfield |
| 8/1/14 | Resource Fair/ St Augustine College | Chicago |
| 8/8/14 | Sen. Radogno, Rep Durkin/CMS Job fair | Darien |
| 8/10/14 | Illinois State Fair/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Springfield |
| 8/12/14 | Asian Am E.P.C Session & Application Workshop | Des Plaines |
| 8/15/14 | U.S. Rep Rush Employment Opportunity/Resource Fair/CMS | Chicago |

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| 8/24/14 | DuQuoin State Fair/Veteran Outreach/CMS | DuQuoin |
| 8/27/14 | Sen. Harris Employment Resource Fair/IDES | Harvey |
| 8/28/14 | Navigating the State Employment Workshop/IDES | Chicago Ridge |
| 9/6/14 | Conference for Caregivers Area Agency on Aging/DHS | Springfield |
| 9/11/14 | IDES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Peoria |
| 9/19/14 | Waubensee Job Fair/CMS | Aurora |
| 9/23/14 | IL State Rep Turner Community Meeting CMS | Chicago |
| 9/24/14 | Rock Valley College/Rockford Univ. Job Fair/CMS | Rockford |
| 9/25/14 | UIS Foot in the Door Job Fair/DHS | Springfield |
| 9/25/14 | Scott AFB Network Fair/ Veteran Outreach/CMS | Scott AFB |
| 9/25/14 | UIC Fall Career Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 9/26/14 | Ill Assoc of Hispanic State Employees Job Fair/CMS | Northlake |
| 9/27/14 | United in Peace, Inc/Job Resource Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 10/1/14 | Alderman Moore Fall Job/Resource Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 10/2/14 | Chicago State University Fall Career Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 10/4/14 | Expungement Job Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 10/4/14 | Resource Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 10/14/14 | St. Xavier University Job Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 10/16/14 | Harold Washington College Fall Career Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 10/16/14 | John Logan College Job Fair/CMS | Marion |
| 10/17/14 | Town of Cicero Job Fair/CMS | Cicero |
| 10/21/14 | Tom Cullerton Job Fair/CMS | Villa Park |
| 10/22/14 | Northeastern Illinois University Fall Career Fair | Chicago |
| 10/23/14 | Wright College Fall Job Fair | Chicago |
| 10/24/14 | 2 nd Congressional District Hiring Event/CMS | South Holland |
| 10/28/14 | Asian American Employment/Resource Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 10/29/14 | DHS/DRS Job Fair/DHS/CMS | Springfield |
| 10/29/14 | Moranine Valley/IDES Navigating State Employment Workshop/IDES | Palos Hills |
| 10/29/14 | DHS/DRS Job Fair | Springfield |
| 11/5/14 | Job Fair/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Belleville |
| 11/08/14 | Hearing Loss Seminar/Deaf & Hard of Hearing Commission/DHS | Springfield |
| 11/12/14 | Veterans Networking Session/Morton College | Cicero |
| 11/13/14 | Rep Willis/State Employment Workshop | Northlake |
| 11/14/14 | IDES Employment Briefing/ Veteran Outreach/CMS | Springfield |
| 11/15/14 | Rep Solo Information Session/Job Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 11/19/14 | Urban League Chicago/CMS | Chicago |
| 11/21/14 | 12 th Annual Ill Latino Caucus Foundation Conf | Rosemont |
| 11/26/14 | DHS Job Fair/DHS | Springfield |
| 12/3/14 | Scott AFB Job Fair/ Veteran Outreach/CMS | Scott AFB |
| 12/11/14 | ILFC in Partnership with NLEI/IL State Jobs Boot Camp | Chicago |
| 1/11/15 | Illinois is Back Job Fair/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Springfield |
| 2/2/15 | Skills for the Search | Chicago |
| 2/6/15 | State Employment Workshop/CMS | Chicago |
| 2/6/15 | IDES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Springfield |
| 2/11/15 | State Employment Workshops at Daley College | Chicago |
| 2/17/15 | Back on Track Job Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 2/17/15 | UIS Job Fair/DHS | Springfield |

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| 2/18/15 | IDES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Rock Island |
| 2/18/15 | Veterans Assistance Commission/CMS | Chicago |
| 2/19/15 | Chicago Marines Network/CMS | Oakbrook |
| 2/21/15 | Disabilities to Possibilities workshop/DHS | Springfield |
| 3/3/15 | St Xavier University Job Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 3/20/15 | State Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Sterling |
| 3/24/15 | 2015 Career Fair/CMS | Forest Park |
| 3/25/15 | Vets to Careers Job Fair/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Macomb |
| 3/26/15 | Chicago State Spring 2015 Career Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 3/26/15 | Employer Business Needs Workshop/IDES/DHS | Springfield |
| 3/27/15 | IDES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Peoria |
| 3/30/15 | IDES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Ottawa |
| 4/7/15 | Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce Job Fair/DHS | Springfield |
| 4/8/15 | Good Works Connect Networking reception/DHS | Springfield |
| 4/8/15 | Chicago Job Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 4/9/15 | Progress Center for Independent Living/CMS | Forest Park |
| 4/9/15 | Harold Washington College 2015 Career Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 4/9/15 | Richland CC Career Fair/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Decatur |
| 4/10/15 | IDES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Springfield |
| 4/15/15 | Veterans Employment Event/CMS | Rock Island |
| 4/16/15 | Kankakee Comm. College Veterans Club Mtg/CMS | Kankakee |
| 4/16/15 | Governors State Univ. Job Fair | University Park |
| 4/23/15 | Veteran Job Fair/IDES | Chicago |
| 4/23/15 | Wright College Spring Job Fair & Career Day | Chicago |
| 4/24/15 | Employer Business Needs Workshop/DHS | Springfield |
| 4/29/15 | Morton College Job Fair | Cicero |
| 5/1/15 | Illinois Rehabilitation Association Conference/DHS | Springfield |
| 5/1/15 | DES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Bloomington |
| 5/5/15 | Springfield Housing Authority Job Fair/DHS | Springfield |
| 5/5/15 | ISP Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Collinsville |
| 5/8/15 | IDES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Decatur |
| 5/9/15 | IAACOMA/CMS | Springfield |
| 5/12/15 | ISP Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Springfield |
| 5/13/15 | Alderman Moore 2015 Job/Resource Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 5/15/15 | IDES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Danville |
| 5/15/15 | IDES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Champaign |
| 5/15/15 | 11 th Annual Wellness Employment Fair/DES | Chicago |
| 5/19/15 | State Police Recruiter Training/ISP | Chicago |
| 5/19/15 | ICED Awards Ceremony/ DHS/CMS | Springfield |
| 5/21/15 | 2015 Spring Job Fair/ SERS | Cicero |
| 5/27/15 | Memorial Day Veterans Hiring Fair/CMS | Chicago |
| 6/5/15 | IDOC Summit of Hope/DHS | Springfield |
| 6/6/15 | Rep. Emmanuel Welch's Job Fair | Forest Park |
| 6/16/15 | DHS Comm. Resource Fair for Persons w/ Disability | Chicago |
| 6/16/15 | ADA 25 th Anniversary Celebration/DHS/CMS | Springfield |
| 6/17/15 | Urban League Chicago/CMS | Chicago |
| 6/17/15 | IDES Employment Briefing/Veteran Outreach/CMS | Quincy |
| 6/18/15 | Mayor Webb, City of Markham/ Veterans Job Fair | Markham |
| 6/18/15 | IDES State Employment SD Workshop/DHS/CMS | Springfield |

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| 6/19/15 | Mayor Ward, Village of Robbins Job Fair/CMS | Robbins |
| 6/19/15 | Resident Resource Fair/Housing Authority/DHS | Springfield |
| 6/20/15 | Juneteenth Celebration/DHS | Springfield |
| 6/25/15 | Sen. Cunningham/IDES Hiring Event/DES | Orland Park |

PROCEDURAL DIRECTIVES

Disability Survey – Department of Human Rights

DHR conducts an annual survey of state employees to determine the number of state employees with disabilities and thus to assist in complying with the requirements of the Illinois Human Rights Act. This information, as well as U.S. Census data, is used to determine which agencies need to increase the number of employees with disabilities to address any underutilization within each agency.

The disability survey is conducted online via a dedicated web site. The web site enables all state agencies to track and sort data, as well as generate a variety of informational and statistical reports. It also automates the transaction process between the state agency and CMS when an agency hires or promotes an employee with a disability, or when a current employee develops and reports a disability.

The web site is an efficient, far-reaching survey tool used to gather more complete data than its predecessor paper copy survey form. Better data establishes a solid base of knowledge to work from to more effectively target disabled hires. Employees are asked to voluntarily respond to the survey.

The survey web site is available year round and is accessible for new hires to complete and for current employees to update their disability status. Also, another important feature of the survey is for employees to indicate their need for assistance during an emergency evacuation.

At the end of June 2015, participation in the 2015 survey was 78.8%. Efforts made by DHR and CMS to encourage agency EEO staff and Personnel Managers to remind employees to participate in the survey successfully raised the participation to this level, which is up from 74.0% from last year. It is expected that it will continue to rise as agencies continue to publicize the survey.

Transactions Statement

Currently, the CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator sends information on a quarterly basis to Personnel Managers and EEO staff about the titles and work locations where SD Program candidates are available. Hiring agencies can then use this information to specifically request the SD Program candidate list if they are filling a vacancy from an Open Competitive eligible list. Also, throughout the year, DHR staff monitors the state job postings. When positions are posted at agencies that are underutilized in employees with disabilities, DHR consults with the CMS Disabled Workers Program and alerts the hiring agency when there are SD Program candidates available to consider if the position is able to be filled by other means.

State agencies may request the SD candidate list at the point in the hiring process when an Open Competitive eligible list might otherwise be requested. Existing law (Personnel Code & Veterans Preference) precludes hiring preference for these candidates over other candidates; the Personnel Rules, including Veterans' Preference provisions, are applied to the SD list as with other eligible lists.

SD Re-grades

In April 2010, CMS Examining and Counseling began allowing SD Program candidates to re-grade current passing scores from an open competitive exam to an SD grade upon receipt of certification paperwork from DHS –DRS for the same exam title without the previous requirement of re-taking the exam. This practice eliminates the delay in establishing an SD grade for qualifying disabled candidates who would otherwise be waiting to be scheduled to take an additional exam. During this reporting period, 171 re-grades have been processed.

Non-code Positions-Access to Disabled Job Candidates

CMS does not maintain a database of qualified disabled candidates for non-code positions (those positions that are fully exempt from the Personnel Code and therefore do not require grading by CMS). However, CMS and DHR continue to set up procedures by which disabled candidates may learn about opportunities for employment in non-code positions.

There are nearly 10,000 non-code positions in governmental entities monitored by DHR. DHR has contacted several of these entities to determine their interest in accessing qualified disabled candidates. Several governmental agencies with non-code positions have specifically indicated interest. DHR meets regularly with these governmental entities in regard to underutilization in employees with disabilities and other minority categories and seeks to provide resource referrals to resolve any under utilizations.

To provide a link between disabled candidates and agencies with non-code positions, the following procedures have been established. These agencies can contact DHR when seeking disabled candidates for vacant positions, and DHR then consults with DHS-DRS. The local DRS office where the position is located is contacted so that DRS Rehabilitation Counselors may alert clients who may qualify for the position.

Also, in 2015, HB 4665 was passed to expand membership of the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities to include State Constitutional Officers, the Council on Developmental Disabilities, and three additional employees with disabilities. At this time, the bill has not yet been signed by the Governor.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees Training Event

The Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees held a training event on September 26, 2014, in Northlake. The agenda included a workshop for the public regarding the state application

process. CMS Diversity Enrichment Program staff presented information about the SD Program at this event.

DHS/CMS Training Webinars

Training webinars were held on December 19, 2014 and December 11, 2014 through a joint effort of DHS and CMS. The CMS Disabled Workers Coordinator presented information focusing on educating the DHS-DRS rehabilitation counselors statewide regarding the SD Program process.

Disability Awareness Training

The DHS Bureau of Accessibility and Job Accommodation (BAJA) developed and now delivers a “Communication Access” curriculum that provides DHS personnel with information on effective communication strategies for persons who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. Reference materials on “Communication Access” also are posted on the DHS web site and DHS Intranet.

A PowerPoint training was developed by BAJA on “Evaluating Physical Accessibility” and an at-a-glance site accessibility guide was shared with appropriate DHS and CMS staff.

DHS BAJA staff periodically review and revise the “Meeting the Challenge of Inclusion” curriculum that is made available as a Computer Based Learning (CBL) module. This training encompasses the goal of reinstituting uniform Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) training for supervisors that includes on-line and face-to-face strategies.

DHS BAJA staff hosts a monthly ADA Teleconference in conjunction with the Illinois ADA Project to provide updated information on various ADA and disability-related topics presented by prominent guest speakers. In addition, DHS hosts annual ADA Celebration events in Chicago and Springfield. The events feature ADA workshops, an employment and resource fair, various exhibitors demonstrating implementation of the ADA, and a variety of other activities.

DISABILITY HIRES

All Agency Total Disability New Hires 7/1/2014 – 7/1/2015

This data is based on a report using the processed date for new hires. Please note that there is a lag between individuals being hired and the transaction being processed. The data reported is the most consistent and reliable way to report these figures.

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Agriculture | 1 |
| Children & Family Services | 4 |
| Corrections | 6 |
| Employment Security | 1 |
| Environmental Protection | 2 |
| Financial & Professional Regulation | 3 |
| Gaming Board | 1 |
| Guardianship & Advocacy | 1 |
| Healthcare & Family Services | 7 |

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| Human Services | 64 |
| Insurance | 1 |
| Juvenile Justice | 2 |
| Labor | 1 |
| Natural Resources | 6 |
| Public Health | 4 |
| Revenue | 7 |
| State Police | 4 |
| State Retirement Systems | 1 |
| Veterans Affairs | 5 |
| <u>TOTAL</u> | <u>121</u> |

*36 of the total new hires of individuals with disabilities were hired through the SD Program.

STATUS OF 2014-2015 DIRECTIVES

1. Continue to explore solutions to providing a more advanced technological accommodation for vision impaired applicants seeking to qualify for job titles requiring a keyboarding exam that calculates words per minute. The current accommodation is listening to the keyboarding exam verbiage on a Dictaphone while taking the keyboarding exam on the existing WinCATs automated testing system. JAWS, a screen reading technology that converts text into synthesized speech, is an option that continues to be explored.

Status: A new WinCATS feature has been developed to replace the outdated Dictaphone equipment. The new feature introduces Screen Reading capability during the keyboarding component of examinations for the blind or severely visually impaired community. This new “Audio Performance Test for the Visually Impaired” feature includes two phases: Phase 1 – reads aloud the text to be typed by the applicant. The applicant listens to the audio via the headphones and types what they hear. There are options to select slow reading or faster reading paces along with the ability to stop the audio and back up a bit by hitting the tab key. A practice test is also available. This functionality will be available at all testing stations.

Phase 2 – adds JAWS software, which provides applicants the ability to turn on or off “keystroke echoing” (this reads aloud the keystrokes being typed by the applicant). This functionality will be available at two testing stations at each test facility.

Both phases have been completed and are ready for administration.
2. Continue to explore and research the demonstration of job skills by applicants as a reasonable accommodation for applicants with disabilities (i.e. developmental disabilities, brain injuries, speech impairments, etc.) participating in the Rutan interview process.

Status: It was determined and agreed upon by the Committee that the Mental Health Technician and Security Therapy Aide positions would not be the best to use as a model as we explore accommodations for developmentally disabled candidates who may be allowed to demonstrate skills as an accommodation during a Rutan interview. These positions

require an incumbent to monitor safety, assess incidents and write reports to accurately reflect what occurred at a facility. Many employees in these positions who develop cognitive disabilities are no longer able to do the critical functions of the positions are accommodated into office/clerical titles. It was agreed upon by the Committee that the Support Service Worker position would be a better position to use as a model in the exploration of accommodations for developmentally disabled applicants during the Rutan interview process. This position can include dietary, housekeeping and/or laundry duties which are more easily demonstrated skills. This position also can benefit from a job coach which would work with the incumbent for a short period of time to learn the details of the position. The Support Service Worker is used by DVA and DHS which have made a commitment to work with CMS and the Committee on this issue. Contact was made with 49 other State Rehabilitation Council contacts and found that none are working to address accommodation issues for developmentally disabled/cognitively impaired candidates during state government interviews. The DHIC and the exploratory committee continue to work on this issue.

3. Make a presentation at the quarterly Agency Personnel Managers meeting on disability awareness issues, the Successful Disability (SD) Opportunities Program, and other topics deemed pertinent to promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities in the state workforce in concert with Disability Awareness Month – October 2014.

Status: On September 30, 2014, the CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator presented information regarding the SD Program. Also, on December 2, 2014, the CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator presented information regarding the Alternative Employment Program.

4. Conduct at least two State Hiring Information Webinars for disabled applicants interested in obtaining state employment.

Status: Webinars were conducted on December 9, 2014 and 11, 2014 (60 participants) and March 17, 2015 (31 groups) to present information about the state employment process, the SD Program, the DHS-DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor role and services, and a state employee success story of being hired through the SD Program.

5. Review disability hires by state agency and determine targeted agencies to meet with to educate and encourage hiring officials in regard to accessing qualified candidates with disabilities for state employment.

Status: CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator and IDHR staff met with the following agencies to present information the SD Program and discuss agency underutilization of employees with disabilities. Illinois State Police – September 11, 2014; Department of Corrections – May 28, 2015.

6. Make efforts to promote the availability of Alternative Employment Program (AEP) to current state employees as well as educating Agency Personnel Managers in regard to the program.

Status: On December 2, 2014, the CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator presented information regarding the Alternative Employment Program.

FUTURE DIRECTIVES 2014-2015

1. Continue to explore and research the demonstration of job skills by applicants as a reasonable accommodation for applicants with disabilities (i.e. developmental disabilities, brain injuries, speech impairments, etc.) participating in the Rutan interview process.
2. Make a presentation at the quarterly Agency Personnel Managers meeting on disability awareness issues, the Successful Disability (SD) Opportunities Program, and other topics deemed pertinent to promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities in the state workforce in concert with Disability Awareness Month – October 2015.
3. Conduct at least two State Hiring Information Webinars for disabled applicants interested in obtaining state employment.
4. Review disability hires by state agency and determine targeted agencies to meet with to educate and encourage hiring officials in regard to accessing qualified candidates with disabilities for state employment.
5. Make efforts to promote the availability of Alternative Employment Program (AEP) to current state employees as well as educating Agency Personnel Managers in regard to the program.
6. Make efforts to promote the SD Program to veterans in order to increase veterans' participation in the program.