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March 17, 2016

## RespectAbility – Public Comments – Kentucky Combined State Plan

RespectAbility is pleased to submit the following comments regarding the current draft of Kentucky's Combined State Plan as required under Section 102 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). We are pleased to have this opportunity to offer our comments, raise our questions, and provide our suggestions about the content of the state plan.

To state the challenge directly, Kentucky remains one of the worst states in the country as measured by the employment rate of people with disabilities. **Currently, the Bluegrass State ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation as measured by jobs for people with disabilities and only 27.3% of the approximate 404,100 working age Kentuckians with disabilities are employed. Further, there are over 23,700 youth ages 16-20 with disabilities. Each year a quarter of them will age out of school into an uncertain future.**

**We know that Kentucky faces significant barriers in terms of encouraging more people with disabilities to pursue employment.** We know that some want the meager amount of money that comes from benefit checks and that there have been instances of fraud where people have claimed a functional impairment in order to get on disability. **For some people, dependency on government has become a way of life.** Kentucky has many challenges including significant problems around substance abuse of both prescription and illegal drugs.

Your state recently had an election and with a new Administration come new opportunities. **Likewise, thanks to WIOA, Kentucky has the chance to build on innovative work that is already being done around empowering more youth with disabilities to successfully transition from school to work.** In [Louisville, KY, the Transitional Learning Center](#) is doing great work thanks to a public-private partnership between UPS, the school system, and Kentucky's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. At the Center, youth with disabilities receive the soft skills training they need to succeed. Likewise, [the Best Buy Distribution Center in Sheperdsville](#) is a model employer whose efficiency has been improved by integrating employees with disabilities into their workforce. These examples reflect the types of best practices that have help other states have used to dramatically increase their employment rates for people citizens with disabilities. [People with disabilities in the Dakotas, Iowa, and Wyoming are employed at a rate twice that of Kentucky.](#) The experience of these states shows ways that Kentucky can dramatically improve their outcomes.

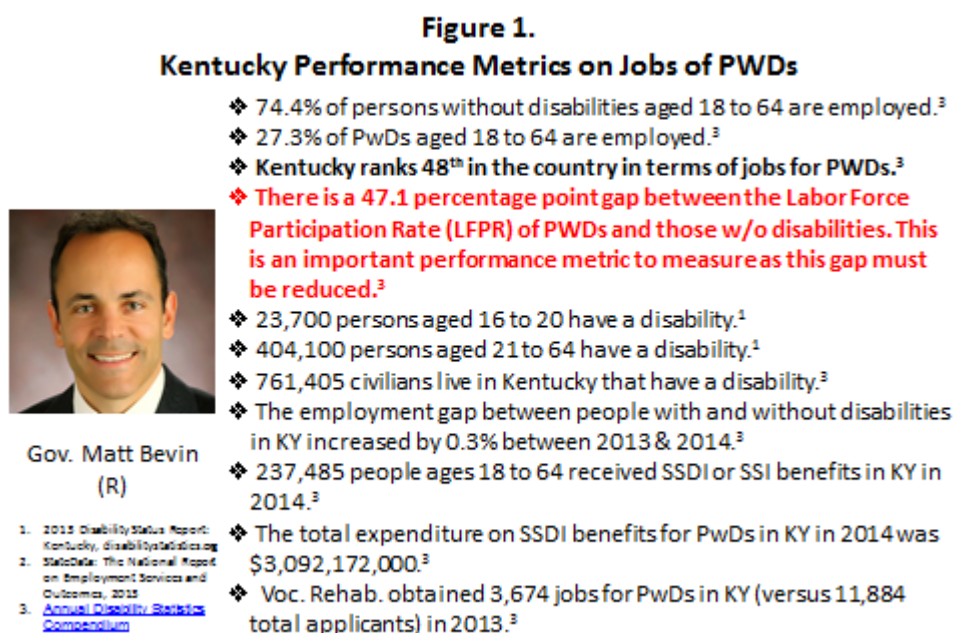
**To help the states succeed in this process we developed a resource called the Disability Employment First Planning Tool.** This document details best practices and effective models. This toolkit contains models that are proven to work, be cost effective to implement, and be successful. [We have developed an extensive collection of data on disability and employment in Kentucky](#) . That information is also attached to our comments.

**Our public comments on Kentucky's WIOA State Plan are structured around those points where greater clarity, precision, and data are needed to ensure that people with disabilities will be better equipped to pursue the American Dream.** From the accessibility of the workforce system to employer engagement to investing in transition programs for youth with disabilities, our comments are intended to help your state push hard to see improved integrated employment outcomes for Kentuckians with disabilities.

**1. Make sure that the best disability data points, especially those around youth with disabilities as well as the gap in Labor Force Participation Rates (LFPRs) between people with and without disabilities, are included in your Workforce Analysis:**

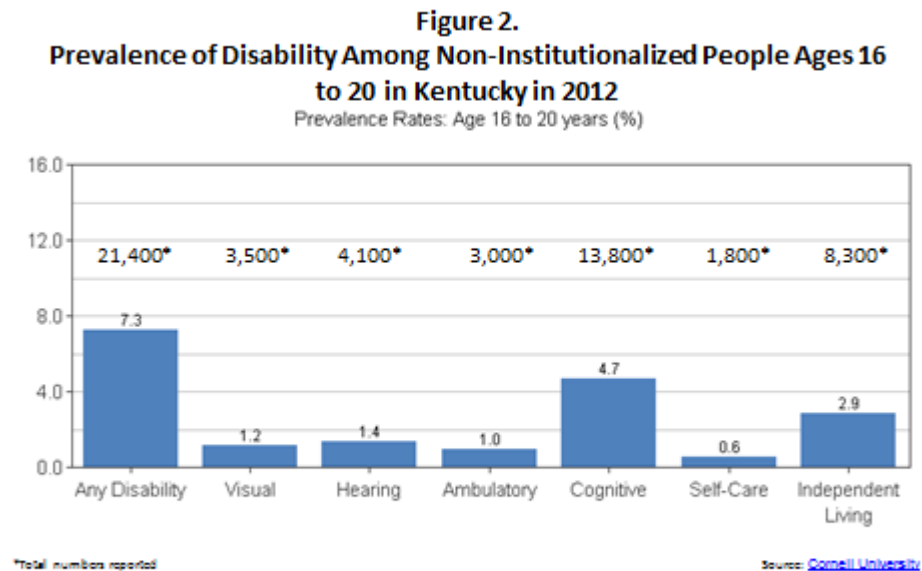
From our review of the current draft of Kentucky's Combined State Plan we know that you have access to the right data to drive decision making. Tracking unemployment information (which only reflects people actively looking for jobs) and job placements (which only monitors people who interface directly with the workforce system) is necessary, but not sufficient to drive true performance metrics that will create success.

We appreciate the inclusion of information lifted directly from Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics on page 12 of your State Plan in the section describing "Individuals with Disabilities." This section goes on in great detail regarding the number of working age Kentuckians who have disabilities and reports that "employment rates are far lower for individuals with disabilities than in the general population" of the Bluegrass State. Further, and most important from our perspective, the State Plan notes "an employment gap in Kentucky of 46.7 percent" between people with and without disabilities. This gap is one of the most important data points in your Combined State Plan and it needs to drive the development of your state performance metrics. Closing this gap will require the focused energy and effort.



We want to help your state to begin moving in the right direction. Moving the needle at all in Kentucky will require hard work and clear policies. As it stands now, Kentucky is ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in the country in terms of job opportunities for people with disabilities. When you look at the gap in the labor force participation rate between people with and without disabilities, Kentucky slips to 49<sup>th</sup> in the country. The only state with worse outcome by that measure is Maine. Kentucky can and must do better. Good data is essential for any attempt to increase the number of people with disabilities who are succeeding in competitive, integrated employment. **As an example of the data that is needed, below are several charts which show the challenge in your state.**

- A. Youth with disabilities who are aging in the workforce (ages 16-20).** If Kentucky's workforce system is to seriously deliver on the promise of improving school to work transitions for youth, it is critical to know how many youth with disabilities will be aging out of school



- B. What types of disabilities does transitioning youth have?** This information is critical important because youth with vision, mobility and hearing disabilities need specific types of tools and training, but may otherwise be ready for jobs. To support youth with cognitive disabilities, it will be critical to provide early work experiences.

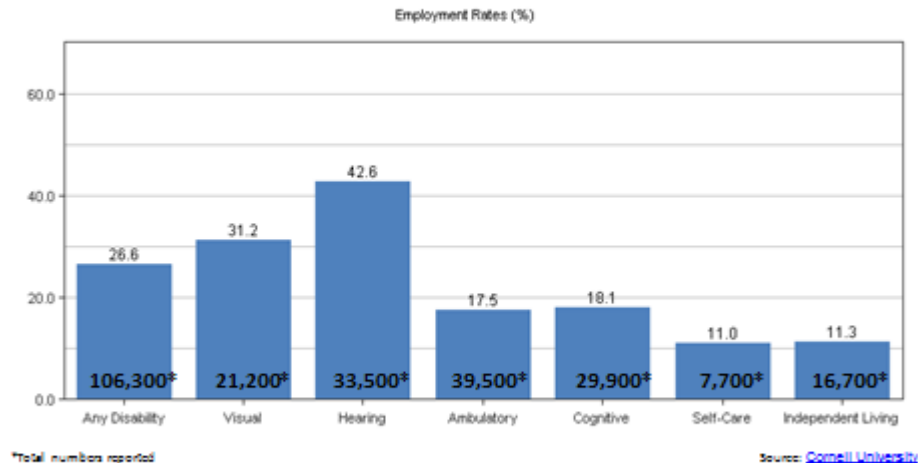
**Figure 3.**  
**Children with disabilities in Kentucky**  
**Ages 6 To 21 Served Under IDEA**

	2012	2012
All Disabilities	80,100	80,135
Specific Learning Disability	14,154	14,450
Speech or Language Impairment	19,433	19,332
Intellectual Disability	13,982	13,546
Emotional Disturbance	4,734	4,644
Multiple Disability	2,185	2,054
Hearing Impairment	605	594
Orthopedic Impairment	435	518
Other Health Impairment	13,452	13,436
Visual Impairment	489	446
Autism	4,321	4,810
Deaf Blindness	14	12
Traumatic Brain Injury	217	218
Developmental Delay	6,079	6,175

Source: [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)

**C. Labor Force Participation Rates broken down by disability type.** From the data, we often find that people who are blind or have vision loss are employed at higher rates than people with self-care or independent living disabilities. Similarly, we find that people with hearing differences are also employed at higher rates than are people with intellectual or developmental disabilities

**Figure 4.**  
**Employment of Non-Institutionalized Working-Age People (Ages 21 to 64) by Disability Status in Kentucky in 2012**



Additionally, while Kentucky may only rank 48th in the nation in terms of the employment rate for people with disabilities, it is highly illustrative to look at the experience of those with disabilities who are succeeding in the world of work. **From the data, we find that only 31.2 percent of the 21,000 Kentuckians who are blind or have vision loss are employed while 42.6% of the 33,500 with hearing differences are also employed.** Given the flexibility and availability of assistive technology solutions, the employment rate for this subgroup should be much higher. Many people who are blind or deaf have incredible talent potential that can be unleashed by something as simple as a smartphone.

**Sadly, we also see that only 18% of Kentuckians with intellectual or developmental disabilities are employed.** For this demographic, workforce solutions may take more time and resources. **However, there will be a considerable return on investment if Kentucky's workforce system expands successful school to work transition programs.** The State Plan does, discuss an effective model for expanding outcomes for this subpopulation. However, the challenge is not addressed with anywhere near enough ambition to move the needle on employment outcomes. We have more to say on this point later in our public comments.

**This data will be essential as Kentucky's state leaders move forward with WIOA, because there are unique barriers to employment for peoples with disabilities.** We hope that this data will be used to develop and implement the performance metrics needed to guide resource investment and workforce programs.

## **2. Strong Sector Strategies need to be part of your state's approach to expanding employment opportunities for Kentuckians with disabilities:**

As required by WIOA Sec. 102(b)(1)(A), State Plans must include a detailed analysis of the economic sectors of the state economy that are growing and are forecasted to grow in the future. The success of WIOA depends on being an employer driven paradigm shift. Expanding opportunities for people with barriers to employment such as disability requires strong partnerships with employers in those sectors which are rapidly expanding.

The structure of Kentucky's continuing economic growth is clear from page 5 of the State Plan. This section details "employment growth areas" across Kentucky in a wide range of job sectors. From this analysis, we find that "computer and mathematical occupations" will add 6,700 jobs to the state economy and account "19.5 percent" of job growth. Other critical areas of growth are in the "health care support occupations" for a total of "12,800 jobs." The talent needs in this sector alone will account for 23.9 percent of job growth in Kentucky until 2022. Also important are the "food preparation and serving occupations" which will involve over "14,500 jobs" growing "9 percent" in that same period.

We submit to you that people with disabilities can be outstanding employees in any of these sectors and directly benefit the bottom line of these categories of employers. As we stated at the beginning of our comments, Kentucky has some of the worst employment outcomes of any state in the country. Our nation was founded on the principle that anyone who works hard should be able to get ahead in life. People with disabilities deserve to be able to work to achieve the American dream, just like anyone else. Nationally, the data shows that many people with disabilities are striving for work. We know from speaking with leaders and community members in Kentucky that is not true of everyone and sometimes that is not the case at the local level. Indeed for many they have only ever known lives of endemic poverty and government benefits and not work. However, Kentucky will see a big return on investment by working hard to create career pathways for youth with disabilities to be trained for jobs in the sectors discussed above.

There are 23,700 youth with disabilities in Kentucky and one quarter of them will exit the school system every year. Instead of allowing them to be trapped into dependency on government, Kentucky should be looking at way to prepare this untapped labor resource to become a pipeline of talent to your state's talent needs. The bottom line is that expanding job opportunities for people with disabilities is a win-win for employers and taxpayers. It is good for employers in healthcare, food preparation, and computers because the loyalty, talent, and skills of workers with disabilities contribute to the bottom line. It is good for taxpayers who should not have to pay for government benefits for people who would rather be working. The job gains in these sectors offer a great opportunity for focused sector strategies sustain and build on employment outcomes. Here are our thought on how Kentucky can do just that:

### **a. Health Care and Social Assistance:**

"Health Care/Social Assistance" is clearly a priority sector strategy in Kentucky's Combined State Plan. It is a sector with rapidly growing talent needs and people with disabilities can be part of the solution. The rapid emerging talent needs in health care represent both a challenge and an opportunity for the nation's workforce system. It is challenge propelled by an aging population resulting in increasing demand for qualified workers ready to fill the talent needs of hospitals, assisted living centers, and nursing home. It is opportunity to channel the incredible talents of people with disabilities into the workforce. This is a topic that needs to be examined closely and has implications for people with disabilities who want to work.



On page 5 in Section ii, the State Plan projects continued job growth in the fields of “Education and Health Care.” **People with disabilities can and should be part of the solution to this critical demand in the labor market.** A 2014 report from the [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) (ODEP) captured this opportunity clearly, saying that “[people with disabilities] not only represent an untapped talent pool, but also offer significant value and insight” in the field of healthcare. It is important for healthcare institutions to reflect their customers, and people with disabilities interface more with the healthcare system. There are [numerous examples of young people with disabilities doing incredible work in the fields of healthcare, elder care, and in assisted living](#). **Employers working in health and elder care can greatly benefit from the loyalty, dedication, and retention rates of employees with disabilities.**

**However, despite these clear examples, Kentucky’s State Plan neglects one of the most cost-effective ways of training youth with disabilities to become outstanding employees in health care.** What we mean is that there are only minimal references to the Project Search model of school to work transition training. Specifically, on page 116, the State Plan mentions OVR’s continuing commitment to “partner with local initiatives like Project SEARCH in Northern Kentucky.” **However, as stated above, the talent needs of health care employers are such that Kentucky should be rapidly expanding Project Search as has been done in Wisconsin and Florida.**

Nationally, each year approximately 2,700 such young people, spread out in 45 states, do a nine month, school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. This innovative, business-led model features total workplace immersion, which facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and worksite-based training and support. Nationally, Project Search sites overall have been achieving outstanding results for people with disabilities, employers, and taxpayers alike. For example, [the first longitudinal study of the program found “a 68% success rate in transitioning students from high school into competitive employment” and “Project SEARCH sites in Upstate New York that have an impressive 83% success rate overall.”](#) The goal for each program participant is competitive employment. We suggest that you look to follow the example set by the state of Wisconsin where they started with three Project Search sites and are expanding to twenty seven sites in total.

Governor Scott Walker has become a champion of the Project Search model because it is so effective in producing outstanding employees and cost-effective to implement. Wisconsin is a living example of the return on investment that comes from empowering youth with disabilities through the transformative power of a job. As such, we seriously encourage state leaders in Kentucky to learn from the experiences of the dedicated state officials, VR counselors, workforce professionals, and special educators who have increased Wisconsin’s Project Search programs. Thinking long-term, investments in Project Search and other such programs will save big money for taxpayers while also strengthening the talent pool for employers.

**b. Science, Tech, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and The Autism Advantage:**

Exciting opportunities for improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities lay in the fields related to STEM jobs. **As has been documented in many cases, there can be an “Autism Advantage” in the STEM space. Indeed, some people on the Autism spectrum can have the very best skills in science, math and engineering.** [Microsoft, SAP, and Specialisterne](#) have committed themselves to “[provide employment opportunities for people on the autism spectrum in roles such as software testers, programmers, system administrators, and](#)

[data quality assurance specialists.” The Israeli Defense Forces recruits and trains their citizens on the Autism spectrum for work in their elite intelligence unit.](#)

Delaware’s Governor Jack Markell is partnering with companies to employ more people on the Autism spectrum in STEM jobs. Such examples need to be implemented by other states. This issue of STEM and access for student with disabilities is a natural point of partnership between the workforce system and the educational system. That work needs to start young, be matched with high expectations for success, and designed to ensure people with disabilities have the chance to become future scientists, engineers, doctors and mathematicians. **(Ensuring the Accessibility of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Programs and Careers for People with Disabilities, especially Students with IEPs, is vital.** As Carol Glazer of the National Organization on Disabilities wrote in *Huffington Post*, “[America is already lagging when it comes to STEM-skilled workers. The U.S. will have more than 1.2 million job openings in STEM fields by 2018.](#)” Governors in other states have looked at STEM needs and begun to develop solutions. For example, [in New York State Governor Cuomo has ensured that magnet schools for STEM are located near IBM, a major STEM employer in their state.](#) Kentucky could look at ways to follow this model. Together, state workforce system and educational system can look to supported-employment programs such as Project Search, Specialisterne, and [the Marriot Foundation's Bridges to Work Program](#) as models for developing a systematic approach to providing the supports necessary for our students on the autism spectrum to excel in STEM.

**c. High Turnover Jobs: Hospitality/Accommodations, Food Service, Retail Trade:**

Millions of dollars are lost each year due to employee turnover. [For all jobs earning less than \\$50,000 per year, the average cost of replacing one employee is between \\$6,000 and \\$20,000.](#) Research shows that employees with disabilities, when their interests and abilities are aligned with the needs of employers, are more productive and loyal than their non-disabled peers. Company records show that even when the relatively more expensive accommodations were factored in, the overall costs of disability accommodations were far outweighed by the low turnover rates and better tenures of the employees with disabilities.

**A great example of an employment sector where employees with disabilities can be tremendously successful is the hospitality industry.** Accommodations and food service are extremely high turnover jobs and numerous studies show that people with disabilities can be outstanding in those fields and have significantly higher employer loyalty.

An outstanding example of the type of work needed is found in Missouri. As part of the Poses Family Foundation’s Workplace Initiative, a coalition of employment service providers has launched a successful training and placement program with the hospitality sector in St. Louis. This training runs for up to 12 weeks, and takes place on site at the hotel; all participants are paid by the hotel for the duration of training. Since the summer of 2015, two cohorts of trainees have completed training at the Hyatt Regency. Trainees have gone on to permanent employment at the Hyatt and other hotel partners in a range of departments—culinary; auditing; and customer service. This type of training and Poses’ Workplace Initiative could easily be part of your overall Sector Strategies. Likewise, in other states, [hotels and other hospitality employers have found Project SEARCH to be an amazing source of talent.](#) [The work done by Embassy Suites and David Scott](#) in Omaha, Nebraska offers [valuable lessons states as they look to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities.](#) State Boards, along with other components of the workforce system, should connect with employers in the hospitality sector to begin figuring out how to benefit from these models.

**Another sector with high turnover and big potential is retail trade.** Many companies, including [UPS](#), [Wal-Mart](#), and [OfficeMax](#) have proven records of success. [Walgreens has demonstrated that workers with disabilities in their distribution centers are as productive, safer, and turn over less when compared to peers without disabilities.](#) These efforts have taken the logistics sector by storm with [Lowe's](#), [OfficeMax](#), [Pepsi](#), as well as [P&G](#) are all launching their own successful disability hiring initiatives. For example, [as reported by the National Organization on Disability, "Lowe's hired more than 150 new workers with disabilities in the first year, and an additional 250 workers in the following 18-month period."](#) They can be outstanding partners for disability employment as these industries suffer from high turnover rates and people with disabilities are proven to have significantly higher retention rates. It is important to identify more specific opportunities with employers and to cite them inside the plan, as well as the criteria by which to continue and to expand such partnerships in the future.

Probably highlight the UPS training program here as well

UPS has demonstrated a great deal of success with its Transitional Learning Center in this area.

**d. Jobs with state government and state contracting can also be sources of opportunity:**

While the focus of our comments on the State Plans are around aligning the workforce system to create opportunities for people with disabilities in the private sector, public sector employment should not be neglected. In the year ahead, the workforce of many state governments is likely to be impacted by the cresting wave of Baby Boomers retiring just as other sectors are being shaken.

As such, adopting affirmative actions to hire people with disabilities could be a solution to this coming challenge. Other states have adopted such steps as an opportunity measure in their state hiring policies. This was first discussed in Governor Markell's *Better Bottom Line* Initiative and later in RespectAbility's *Disability Employment First Planning* Toolkit. In Governor Markell's own words, ["One key action is to set a state goal for hiring people with disabilities through an executive order and hold agencies accountable for achieving that goal."](#)

This is an issue that Governors both Republican and Democrat have taken action address. In many different states, Governors have worked hard to expand the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities for jobs in state government. For example, [Governor Rick Snyder of Michigan](#) has very clearly stated that "People with disabilities have much to offer our great state and should be provided the same opportunities for employment as everyone else." Likewise, [none other than Governor Asa Hutchinson](#) has recently committed his state government to hiring more people with disabilities for jobs in state government. As he said in a Memorandum launching the effort: "a coordinated effort by the state is needed to reduce dependence on public benefits and to increase economic opportunities for Arkansans with disabilities." "It is important," he said, "that our state government set the example of this commitment." The untapped potential of people with disabilities is such that a full-spectrum, all-of-the-above-and-more approach is needed. While our priority is on seeing the talents of people with disabilities channeled into the private sector, employment opportunities in the public sectors shouldn't be over looked as part of the state's overall workforce strategy.



## **2. Busting Stigmas Should Be a Key Part of Kentucky's Workforce Strategy:**

Low expectations and misconceptions are critical barriers to employment for people with disabilities. [A Princeton study shows that while people with disabilities are seen as warm, they are not seen as competent.](#) Similarly, [a study published by Cornell Hospitality Quarterly found that companies share a concern that people with disabilities cannot adequately do the work required of their employees.](#)

**As such, we recommend that Kentucky's Plans be amended to include a comprehensive, proactive communications/public relations strategy for reducing such stigmas.** The best way to fight stigmas is to let employers see the facts from other employers who are already succeeding by hiring people with disabilities. **In order to ensure that such efforts have the biggest possible impact, it needs to be supported by a serious, systematic and ongoing communications campaign that highlights the benefits of inclusive hiring.**

One of the necessary first steps is to have key state leaders who understood the value that employees with disabilities possess and who know how to communicate the business imperative for hiring diverse talent. Two great examples of how this work can be done come from leaders in Wisconsin and Michigan. [In Wisconsin, Governor Walker has actively championed the growth of Project Search and conducted regular site visits to model employers.](#) [In Michigan, Lieutenant Governor Caley and Justice Bernstein have lead what they call "Hidden Talent Tours" that showcase the benefits to the bottom line that come from hiring people with disabilities.](#) Both of the example offer valuable insights in work that can be done in Minnesota.

In terms of potential employer partners, we encourage your state plan to look at [Disability Equality Index that assesses the inclusion and hiring efforts of major employers.](#) It was put together by the United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN) which operates [a network of affiliates across the country that can and has been before, through OFB partnerships \(page 181, collaborative agreements\), an incredible resource for your work.](#) However, it should be a component of Kentucky planning and implementation of a serious business-to-business PR effort. The companies which scored 100% in the USBLN index can be a great resource. These are Ameren Corporation, AT&T, Booz Allen Hamilton Inc., Capital One Financial Corporation, Comcast, NBC Universal, Ernst & Young LLP, Florida Blue, Freddie Mac, Highmark Health, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Lockheed Martin Corporation, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), Procter & Gamble, Qualcomm Incorporated, Sprint Corporation, Starbucks Coffee Company, and TD Bank N.A.

Polls and focus groups show that there are three types of messages and audiences that are needed to expand employment for people with disabilities. Serious communications campaigns are needed for all three:

- A. CEOs/business leaders need to understand the value proposition/business case for their specific company as to why they should focus on putting people with disabilities into their talent pipelines.** This is best done through business-to-business success stories. People with disabilities can work successfully in hotels, healthcare, tend our parks and facilities, assist aging seniors, and they can be super talents in developing computer software and engineering solutions. CEOs and business leaders need to know that people with disabilities can be the BEST people to get a job done.
- B. Human resources professionals and on-the-ground supervisors need to understand that hiring people with disabilities is generally easy and inexpensive, and that any costs incurred are more than offset from increased loyalty.** Hiring managers and supervisors are key players who can turn high minded policy and business goals into

action at the ground level. However, studies show that many are uninformed about people with disabilities. They are afraid of potential legal action, costs, or other failures. They need supports that will empower them to overcome their own fears and to excel at recruiting, hiring, supervising, or working with teammates who have disabilities. VR staff and community agencies can fully support human resources professionals and managers in dealing with their own specific fears and stigmas surrounding hiring people with disabilities, and should do so, given that they are one of the few states who have opted to go for a dual-customer approach at their program centers. Moreover, online and in-person training is readily available to help from a variety of sources. RespectAbility has online webinars, as [does ASKJAN.org](#), USDOL and others. Partners like [the Poses Family Foundation Workplace Initiative](#) can provide training to the workforce staff and volunteers systems-wide as well as to community agencies in supporting companies through messaging efforts around related to fear and stigma. [The National Organization on Disability](#) and [the U.S. Business Leadership Network](#) offer strong resources as well.

- C. People with disabilities and their families need high expectations. From the time of diagnosis, education for high expectation must begin. Kentucky needs a public relations campaign that will inspire Kentuckians with disabilities to set their hopes high, as low expectations and low self-esteem are a barrier to employment.** For example, Virgin Airways founder Sir Richard Branson and finance wizard Charles Schwab are also dyslexic. Scientist Stephen Hawking and multi-billionaire businessman Sheldon Adelson, like Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas and President Franklin D. Roosevelt before them, are wheelchair/mobility device users. The CEO of Wynn Casinos, Steve Wynn, is legally blind. Arthur Young, co-founder of the giant EY (formerly Ernst & Young) was deaf. Success sells success and that is something the workforce system should utilize in order to motivate and inspire in an intentional manner moving forward.

As an example of the power and value of making the business care for hiring people with disabilities, we offer Kentucky the insights gained from our [#RespectTheAbility](#) campaign. The campaign focuses on how hiring people with disabilities can make organizations stronger and more successful. It highlights the benefits to employers that look beyond the disability and imagine the possibility when hiring talented employees with disabilities.

**3. Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act and Federal Contractors offer states the chance to innovate, collaborate, and expand opportunity:**

Almost all of the state plans that we have reviewed have neglected to mention important rules surrounding the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Most State Plans lack references to the employment opportunities and talent challenges created by the recently implemented Section 503 regulations regarding federal contractors and subcontractors. Your State Plan does not discuss [the new 7% utilization goal set for companies](#) to recruit, hire, and retain qualified individuals with disabilities in all job categories.

Kentucky should respond to these newly enacted regulations by adopting a strategy focused on competitive advantage, not just compliance. These regulations and requirements entail far more than just new rules for businesses to play by. Section 503 is an opportunity that could potentially have a broad impact on the employer engagement work of the entire workforce system. The companies who must comply with Section 503 have an opportunity to teach companies not impacted by the regulations how to effectively employ, engage, and retain

workers or customers with disabilities. Specific companies that should be included in your outreach efforts include Humana Inc., Lockheed Martin Corp., Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass a Joint Venture, and Los Alamos Technical Associates Inc. Further, UPS is a federal contractor meaning there is an opportunity to build on the partnership that current supports the Transitional Learning Center at the Louisville Airport. More detailed information regarding federal contracts in [Kentucky can be found here](#).

**4. Ensure that the Assurances in Your WIOA Checklist are matched up to a strategy to fully implement them and be successful:**

The Common Assurances required of the entire workforce system and the program specific Assurances outlined in the Kentucky Combined State Plan on page 55 are critical factors in the overall implementation and ultimate success of WIOA. As such, it is critical that each assurance is matched up with a strategy fitted to meeting and, if possible, exceeding the requirements of the law.

As a good example of the level of detail needed here, consider WIOA Section 188. The anti-discriminatory rules originally outlined under WIA need to be updated to reflect the steps needed towards making universal access a reality. For example, in seeking to meeting Common Assurance #7 listed in the State Plan, we are directing states to consider the resources made available from the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP.) [They have recently released a guide that digs deep into what universal accessibility will mean for the workforce system.](#) Further, Common Assurance #10 affirms each state plan's commitment to meeting the requirement that "one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990." However, merely meeting legal requirements should not be the end of this process. Indeed, looking at physical and programmatic accessibility can be an opportunity to invest in a more proactive workforce system very actively committed to collaboration and partnerships. However, if there is no plan that specifically identifies how the state is going to get to the commitment made in the assurance, then Kentucky is facing a serious problem.

**5. Avoid the Opportunity Costs of Focusing Too Much on One-Stop Centers. Programmatic and Database Accessibility and Privacy is Critically Important:**

Public policy is about the allocation of scarce resources to meet infinite needs. It is vital to invest resources on those points where they can have the greatest effect. **One challenge that we have seen in many states WIOA plan has been the prioritization of expensive bricks and mortar One-Stops as the primary access point for programs and services under WIOA.** Focusing exhaustively on One-Stop Centers, physical infrastructure, and co-locating services comes at the opportunity cost of losing the chance to improve supports and increase outcomes. Page 52 of Kentucky's Combined State Plan, we find the full summary of the Bluegrass State's efforts to ensure the accessibility of the Kentucky Career Centers (KCC) System. The State Plan reports that "Accessibility is a part of the required certification process", OVR and OFB staff are "are housed in many of the career centers", and "Career centers are also required to be fully ADA-compliant." Further, the Plan assures us that Centers "are required to provide assistive technology to help customers with disabilities (visual, hearing, physical) access computers and other center resources and services" and moving forward with plans to "design a computer workstation/kiosk that can be used by individuals with the widest possible range of abilities and/or circumstances." Lastly, this sections states the KCCs will be following the "Job Accommodation Network, One-Stop Disability Resource Manual."

We are glad to see such strong language around accessibility, however, we take a different view of how to structure and sustain the workforce system. **The workforce needs of state economies are evolving rapidly thanks to technology and globalization.** Investing excessive resources on physical locations at the expense of improving online delivery of workforce services and supports is an example of looking backwards, not forwards. Moreover, [the District of Columbia and others have successfully moved much of their one-stop services to trained staff with laptops that go to schools, hospitals, and community organizations where they are better able to serve the public.](#)

With that said, there are other signs that Kentucky's workforce system is evolving in the right direction. Those steps are discussed on page 41 of the State Plan contains Section 2 "The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies." Specifically, "Kentucky is currently testing a common intake and service delivery approach based on a Sales Force platform." This process is just beginning and is intended to cut across the entire workforce system in Kentucky. As this section goes on to report, "Additional building blocks that enable this system to serve as an integrated case management system across the majority of core partners and to exchange data with KYAE will be added as priorities are determined and funding becomes available." This important work and has significant implications for Kentuckians with disabilities. Given Kentucky's stated efforts at ensuring physical accessibility, this new "common intake and service delivery approach" and databases must be fully accessible to people with disabilities who use screen readers or who need captions to understand videos that explain how to use the system. Lastly, a critical element of the applying the disability lens to this effort is the importance of ensuring privacy protections is in place in this new platform. Disability status, should not be shared where it is not needed and appropriate.

**6. Resurrecting Kentucky's affiliate chapter of the US Business Leadership Network, will be a great tool for effectively engaging employers and reaching the right audience:**

As we stated previously about communicating the business case for hiring people with disabilities, effective employer engagement is a necessary component of achieving improved employment outcomes. One of the most effective means of carrying that message forward is to have a network of engaged businesses whose bottom line has benefited from the talents of employees with disabilities. Business to business communication can help tear down the misconceptions and stigmas which are barriers to employment.

Kentucky has previously benefits from one of the most important, effective tools for employer engagement and expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In the past, Kentucky had an active, affiliate chapter of the U.S. Business Leadership Network. **On page 182, the State Plan talks about the work of the Office for the Blind (OFB) and specifically states that Kentucky Business Leadership Network is "currently inactive but plans are place to reestablish the network."** We are glad to see this commitment made in the State Plan. If plans to resurrect the Kentucky BLN are successful, we hope that it will convene partnerships beyond OFB and become a resource for the entire workforce system.

We have two final suggestions on this point. First, Kentucky should look at the successes achieved in Wyoming, which possesses one of the most effective, engaged, and active affiliate chapters in the country. The Wyoming BLN, despite the challenges of a largely rural population and limited resources, has been achieving outstanding employment outcomes. Second, we look forward to seeing Kentucky's WIOA Team connect with Lynn Kirkbride the USBLN's Director of Affiliate Relations. She is an incredible asset and has extensive experience around overcoming barriers to employment. Her email is [lynn@usbln.org](mailto:lynn@usbln.org) and she can be reached by

phone at (307) 631-0894. Her efforts, and those of the Wyoming BLN, offer profound insights into how to effectively engage employers around the business case for hiring people with disabilities.

## **7. Ensure that Apprenticeship Programs are Fully Accessible and Actively Recruiting Young People with Disabilities, Especially with Government Contractors:**

The Kentucky State Plan does much to emphasize the critical importance of apprenticeship programs. As stated on page 64 of the Plan, “Registered Apprenticeship (RA) is an important component of potential training and employment services” and that “the need for skilled tradesmen or craftsmen in Kentucky is more critical than ever.”

Far too often people with disabilities are excluded from such training system or employment opportunities. However, we found some signs that the lens of disability is being applied to these types of programs so that Kentuckians with disabilities, especially youth, can benefit from this type of training. For example, on page 18 of the State Plan, it says that “OVR can work with consumers on internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training arrangements as additional options on the career pathway to employment.” Likewise on page 20, the State Plan says that “OVR can work with consumers on registered apprenticeships through the Kentucky Department of Labor.” Later on, in the “pre-employment transition services” section on page 116, the State Plan reports that “OVR will work with partner agencies in Workforce Development to identify existing apprenticeship programs with employers with which OVR may partner to focus on incorporating students and youth with disabilities into the programs.” Further, OVR is collaborating with the Office of Autism “to understand how to assist youth on the spectrum with attaining and maintaining employment” by “creating apprenticeship opportunities for students and youth with disabilities.” This is very exciting, very focused work and we hope it will directly expand employment opportunities for young Kentuckians with disabilities.

As your partner agencies endeavor to turn these commitments into realities, we hope your workforce system will make full use of the best available resources to ensuring the accessibility of apprenticeships. At the federal level, the Office of Disability Employment Policy has worked hard to generate resources which can open up these exciting programs to “youth and young adults with a full range of disabilities.” The regulations related to apprenticeship which have recently come out of the Department of Labor provide states the flexibility they need to refine and design training programs that maximally inclusive of people with diverse talents. [We encourage you to invest time and energy to understand the best practices contained in ODEP’s apprenticeship toolkit.](#)

Next, we have some thoughts on potential employer partners whom you could work with to create new “apprenticeship opportunities for students and youth with disabilities.” We would suggest that there is a critical opportunity to look at Section 503 and federal contractors as a partner in expanding apprenticeship programs. Funding to cover training costs could be a very attractive selling point for federal contractors looking to meet their 503 requirement. Further, we would also recommend looking at the intersection of apprenticeships and sector strategies. Not only can apprenticeships be set up in traditional fields such as construction, but they can also be incredibly useful in health care and computer jobs. Look at the successes achieved by Project Search at a wide range of employers in different sectors across the country. As such, we recommend that key leaders in Kentucky’s workforce system and members of your State Board investigate how and to create apprenticeship opportunities in new career fields as well.



## **8. Overcome the gap between disability services and career services in Post-Secondary Education:**

**There is a fundamental disconnect in most post-secondary education programs between disability services and careers.** This is not a new issue and it is one that other organizations have raised in the past. However, with the priorities put into place by the implementation of WIOA, there is a historic opportunity to bridge this gap and to improve career and technical education for young people with and without differences. As formulated by the National Organization on Disability, at most educational institutions, “the career services office, which assists students in preparing for” the workforce [“lack a strong—or any—connection to the office of disabled student services, which ensures proper accessibility and accommodations on campus for students with disabilities.”](#)

The result is a price we pay as a society is twofold. First, it costs employers who are unable to find qualified job candidates. Second, it costs students with disabilities who may be able to graduate with a degree thanks to accommodations but will go on to struggle to succeed in the working world. Nationally, there are 1.3 million young Americans ages 16-20 with disabilities. [They have high expectations to go into the workforce but currently only 53% of college graduates with disabilities are employed](#) as opposed to 84% of graduates with no disability. In total, only about 7% of people with disabilities will earn a college degree and less than half of the 2.3 million with a degree are employed.

[Due to the mandate created by Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, federal contractors now have a utilization goal to make sure that 7% of their employees across all job groups be qualified people with disabilities.](#) This regulation is actually a huge opportunity because companies are actively looking to hire recent graduates with disabilities. The first place for new recruits is college and campus recruiting. Your state has the chance to demonstrate to business that college students with disabilities are on campuses and that they should be actively targeting those with disabilities just as they do all other diversity recruiting on college campuses.

While the statistics cited above are national ones, they have bearing on the work that needs to be done through your community college system. Beyond just WIOA, community colleges are uniquely positioned to innovate in order to expand opportunity. Community colleges are very closely connected to the working world and the specific training requirements of employers.

## **9. Getting Out the Word on Free and Accessible Services and Resources:**

**There are many online and in person resources to help employers and people with disabilities come together to build success.** However, all the stakeholders need to be educated to know that these resources exist, and that they are free and user-friendly. These resources must also all be accessible. We know that broadband access is a huge issue in rural states. However, it's important to ensure that online resources enhance the effort of your workforce system.

**Your state needs to make an effort to demonstrate to employers and prospective employees that these services exist. Doing so by coordinating it with the possible public relations campaign is one way to go about this. Also, your state should be careful not to waste money trying to re-invent the wheel in creating online resources as [ASKJAN.org](#), [the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment](#) Policy, [our organization and others also offer free toolkits, webinars and training opportunities](#). [Another resource is Understood.org](#). This is a comprehensive resource to help families and individuals with learning and attention issues build their educational and career plans. It will be helpful to collaborate with**

those groups however to ensure that the best tools are created to fit the training and information needs on these issues.

#### **10. Nothing About Us Without Us:**

**“Nothing About Us without Us” has long been a rallying cry for the one-in-five Americans who have a disability and it has implications for the workforce system.** Section 107 of WIOA dictates the establishment, criteria, and membership for the Local Workforce Development Boards that are crucial implementers of each state’s overall workforce strategy. **As such, we feel there is a critical need to ensure that people with disabilities are represented on such local boards and make their voices heard.** Section 107(b)(2)(A)(iii) of WIOA specifically states that “community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment needs of individuals with barriers to employment” may be represented on the boards and this includes “organizations....that provide or support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities.”

Even a non-voting, ex-officio member of a WIB can bring critical perspectives that improve the WIB’s efforts overall. As such, we recommend that states look for ways to recruit local community organizations or self-advocates for inclusion on their local boards. One avenue for doing so comes in the Title I-B Assurances on page 78 of the State Plan. Among the requirements set in WIOA is that “Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership.” Perhaps this could be a natural point of partnership for Independent Living Centers across the country that do crucial work supporting employment and independence for people with a wide range of disabilities.

## **11. Transportation is a vital component and it must be addressed directly:**

One significant reservation that we have regarding many of the state plans that we have reviewed has been the limited attention given to the issue of transportation. This issue is critically important for both people with disabilities and other low-income communities. Many people with disabilities do not drive. Others cannot afford private transportation.

Transportation as a barrier to employment is addressed in several sections of the current draft of Kentucky's WIOA State Plan. The best statement of the challenge is on page 168 of the State Plan where it reports that "The lack of accessible and dependable transportation often limits access to supported job opportunities." Further, on page 142, "ancillary services to consumers, including options for transportation" is discussed among the Supported Employment Goals set in this section of the Plan. We are very glad to see transportation raised on page 153 as a key strategy among the work being done to advance "Priority III." We are also glad to see a specific commitment to "Partner with SOAR to increase transportation options in the Appalachian region" Such agreements and efforts are critical because people with disabilities need transportation solutions.

Public transportation need not be the only solution. In places where it is not possible to coordinate a bus route, states could look at partnering with Uber, Lyft, or other new transportation solutions. For people with disabilities who do drive, [such companies as Uber and Lyft can also provide a way to enter into the workforce with flexible hours](#), so a state could also look at developing partnerships with these sorts of companies.

Public sector employers and federal contractors who have Section 503 obligations are key places for apprenticeships and internships and onboarding of talent. It is important for them to play a key role in planning for public transportation as well.

## **12. Aging workers and those who acquire disabilities need to be specifically addressed:**

**Attention should start BEFORE aging workers and those with recently acquired disabilities lose their job due to aging and/or a newly acquired disability. Many people who have been in the workforce for decades find that before full retirement age they cannot keep up with the physical demands of their jobs. It is vital to start working with them BEFORE they lose their jobs.**

There is critical work to be done as workers get older and before they exit the workforce. There are some oblique references to serving older workers through the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program discussed on page 264 of your State Plan. However, there is a unique chance to address this challenge and we would encourage your state to look to the state of Iowa for ideas around innovative best practices to support older workers.

In Iowa, IVRS works with a major employer, Unity Point Hospital to "re-home" employees to other jobs within the same company when good workers can no longer do physical jobs and need a new assignment. They find that Emergency Room nurses, for example, come to a point where they can no longer keep up with the physical demands of that job. They have a department that works to "re-home" talented and valued employees who either age into a disability or acquire a disability through accident or illness. Empowering youth with disabilities to enter the workforce should be your highest priority, but keeping aging workers in the workforce until retirement age is also important. This will take a specific strategy and effort so that you don't have massive numbers of people going onto disability rolls and out of the workplace prematurely. (

### **13. Strategic Engagement to Build a Mentor System for Customers of the Workforce System:**

**Government can't and shouldn't do everything. There is a massive role that can be played by volunteers who are willing to help people with barriers to work, including people with disabilities, find and keep jobs. There is a critical, cooperative role for non-profits and faith-based organizations to play.** Local workforce development areas, for example, could be encouraged to recruit volunteers from local faith communities or local non-profits. However, much more can and should be done to work with parents of teens and young adults with disabilities, and to create volunteer mentorships for people with disabilities who are looking for work or need supports to stay employed and/or grow their careers.

Faith-based organizations and many others can fill massive gaps. [There is a terrific booklet, Clearing Obstacles to Work, put out by the Philanthropy Roundtable that is rich with potential partners and proven programs.](#) This is a huge missed opportunity as you will see in the booklet we just mentioned above. It's all about teaching people to fish (helping them get and keep a job) rather than just giving them fish. It is also important to note in terms of the SNAP and TANF programs that too many faith-based programs focus on giving out food without giving out the volunteer support to help people sustain themselves through gainful employment. [In looking to rethinking policies around SNAP funding, we suggest looking at the innovative efforts of the Seattle Jobs Initiative \(SJI\) to realign that funding into more productive, employment outcomes.](#)

### **14. The disability issues of people involved in the corrections system must be addressed:**

**There are several points where the current draft of Kentucky's Combined State Plan addresses the unique workforce challenges facing ex-offenders as they attempt to reenter society.** For example, page 33, in section "A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy", talks about how "core partner agencies will coordinate" to align services for ex-offenders and "OVR and OFB work closely with this target population in providing services." We are glad to see this link in place. Later in the State Plan, on page 39, it reports that "KYAE partners with the Department of Corrections to serve both full-service jails' correctional offenders and state adult institution inmates." Further, on page 136, the Plan talks about Establishment Grants in connection with OVR and specifically highlights improving "outcomes and services for ex-offenders" as a goal. Lastly, on page 182, the Plan discusses the wide range of work being done through OFB which specifically includes collaborating with "the correctional system in assisting consumers with visual disabilities who are offenders." This is critical work and we hope it will result in improved transitions back into society.

**We raise these issues because the lens of disability needs to be applied to the work your state is doing to meet the requirements under section 225 of WIOA.** [According to recently published data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, "An estimated 32% of prisoners and 40% of jail inmates reported having at least one disability."](#) This issue is a serious one and it needs to be addressed at the state level. Frequently people are involved in the criminal justice system because they have disability issues, including learning differences, ADHD, executive function, and mental health issues that went undiagnosed and/or unaddressed through childhood and into the school years.

**Given these statistics from the BJS, it is vital that states identify how many of the individuals in the corrections system and in the ex-offender pipeline have disabilities.** There are two related challenges here. First, there is a need to identify potential disability issues among inmates during the intake process and ensure their needs can be met. Ideally, this type of

assessment could be done within the first thirty days of their sentence. Clearly from the State Plan, OFB has been working to address the needs of “consumers with visual disabilities who are offenders.” However, what about prisoners with other types of disabilities? Second, are the issues related to preparing inmates for their release and reintegration into society? Whether it is mental health supports or learning accommodations helping ex-offenders to find employ when they are home is a critical workforce development challenge. It is a challenge that only grows more complicated when a disability remains unaddressed. The price paid for ignoring these issue are higher rates of recidivism and greater costs to society. Addressing these issues at the beginning and at the end of the corrections process will have downstream effects and hopefully will enable states to address the intersectionality of workforce, disability, and justice issues.

### **Conclusion:**

Despite a few outstanding programs, Kentucky remains one of the worst states in the country as measured by the employment rate of people with disabilities. It can and must do better. This is an issue that Kentucky has the opportunity to address because of WIOA and it must be addressed through the State Plan. Failing to properly train and prepare job seekers with disabilities costs our state’s economy incredible talent and shatters the aspirations of so many people with disabilities who want to pursue the American Dream, just like everyone else.

The bottom line is that expanding job opportunities for people with disabilities is a win-win-win for employers, taxpayers and people with disabilities alike. It is good for employers because the loyalty, talent, and skills of workers with disabilities contribute to the employers’ bottom line. It is good for the workforce system because improving services and supports for job seeker with disabilities will benefit others with different barriers to employment. It is good for people with disabilities who want the dignity, pride, friendships, independence and income that work provides. We are happy to answer any questions you have and to help in any way.





## The Difference in the Employment Gap Between Disabled and Non Disabled Adults 2014

	State	Gap		State	Gap		State	Gap		State	Gap		State	Gap
50	Maine	47.4	39	Mass.	43.5	28	Delaware	40.7	17	Minnesota	38.5	6	Alaska	35.3
49	Kentucky	47.1	38	Georgia	43.5	27	New York	40.4	16	Washington	38.3	5	Hawaii	34.2
48	South Carolina	45	37	Florida	43.3	26	Louisiana	40.3	15	Nebraska	37.9	4	South Dakota	33.6
47	Michigan	45	36	Mississippi	43.1	25	Virginia	40	14	Connecticut	37.7	3	Utah	33.5
46	West Virginia	44.9	35	N. Carolina	43	24	Illinois	40	13	Colorado	37.4	2	Nevada	33.4
45	Arkansas	44.6	34	Ohio	42.5	23	Kansas	39.9	12	Texas	37.3	1	North Dakota	32.1
44	Tennessee	44.5	33	Pennsylvania	42	22	Arizona	39.7	11	New Jersey	37.3		Washington DC	45.2
43	Missouri	44.4	32	Wisconsin	41.4	21	Oklahoma	39.2	10	Montana	37.3			
42	Vermont	44.2	31	New Hampshire	41.3	20	Maryland	39.1	9	Idaho	37		<a href="#">Source: Annual Disability Statistics Compendium</a>	
41	Alabama	44.1	30	New Mexico	40.8	19	California	38.9	8	Wyoming	35.9			
40	Rhode Island	43.8	29	Indiana	40.7	18	Oregon	38.5	7	Iowa	35.7		USA	40.3



# RESPECTABILITY

## KY and Jobs for PwDs

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, President

[www.RespectAbilityUSA.org](http://www.RespectAbilityUSA.org)

# Kentucky

- ❖ 74.4% of persons without disabilities aged 18 to 64 are employed.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ 27.3% of PwDs aged 18 to 64 are employed.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ **Kentucky ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the country in terms of jobs for PwDs.<sup>3</sup>**
- ❖ **There is a 47.1 percentage point gap between the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of PwDs and those without disabilities. This is an important performance metric to measure as this gap must be reduced.<sup>3</sup>**
- ❖ 23,700 persons aged 16 to 20 have a disability.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ 404,100 persons aged 21 to 64 have a disability.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ 761,405 civilians live in Kentucky that have a disability.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ The employment gap between people with and without disabilities in KY increased by 0.3% between 2013 and 2014.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ 237,485 people ages 18 to 64 received SSDI or SSI benefits in KY in 2014.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ The total expenditure on SSDI benefits for PwDs in KY in 2014 was \$3,092,172,000.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ Voc. Rehab. obtained 3,674 jobs for PwDs in KY (versus 11,884 total applicants) in 2013.<sup>3</sup>



Gov. Matt Bevin (R)

1. 2013 Disability Status Report: Kentucky, [disabilitystatistics.org](http://disabilitystatistics.org)  
2. StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2013  
3. [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)

# Kentucky Data

		People with Disabilities (%)		People without Disabilities (%)	
		2013	2014	2013	2014
Poverty <sup>1</sup>	US	28.7	28.2	13.6	13.0
	KY	33.4	34.2	15.2	15.3
Smoking <sup>1</sup>	US	25.4	24.5	16.2	15.3
	KY	33.6	36.1	23.7	21.9
Obesity <sup>1</sup>	US	40.1	41.1	25.0	25.2
	KY	45.3	41.1	28.4	27.5
Employment <sup>1</sup>	US	33.9	34.4	74.2	75.4
	KY	26.9	27.3	73.7	74.4

1. [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#). Pg 84, 88, 128, 129, 53



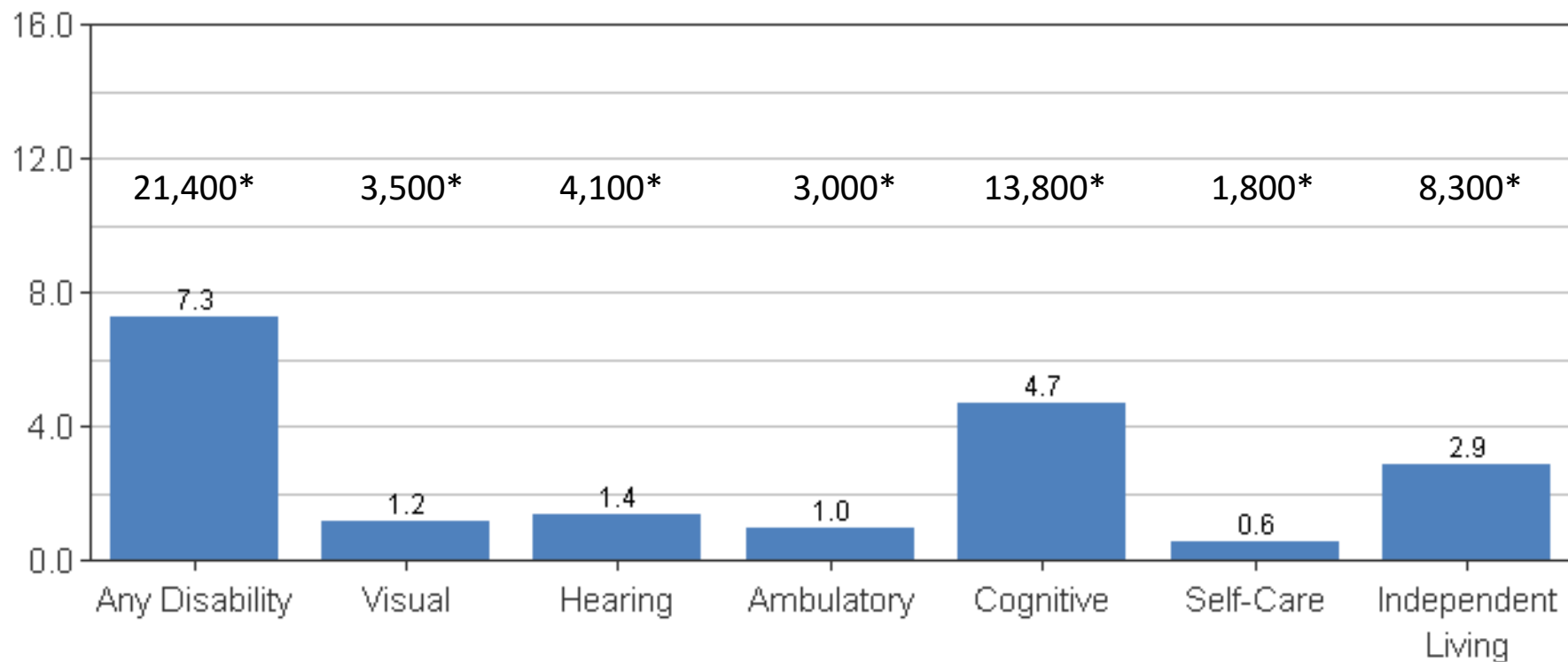
# KY Ages 6 To 21 Served Under IDEA

	2012	2012
All Disabilities	80,100	80,135
Specific Learning Disability	14,154	14,450
Speech or Language Impairment	19,433	19,332
Intellectual Disability	13,982	13,546
Emotional Disturbance	4,734	4,644
Multiple Disability	2,185	2,054
Hearing Impairment	605	594
Orthopedic Impairment	435	518
Other Health Impairment	13,452	13,436
Visual Impairment	489	446
Autism	4,321	4,810
Deaf Blindness	14	12
Traumatic Brain Injury	217	218
Developmental Delay	6,079	6,175

Source: [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)

# Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 16 to 20 in Kentucky in 2012

Prevalence Rates: Age 16 to 20 years (%)

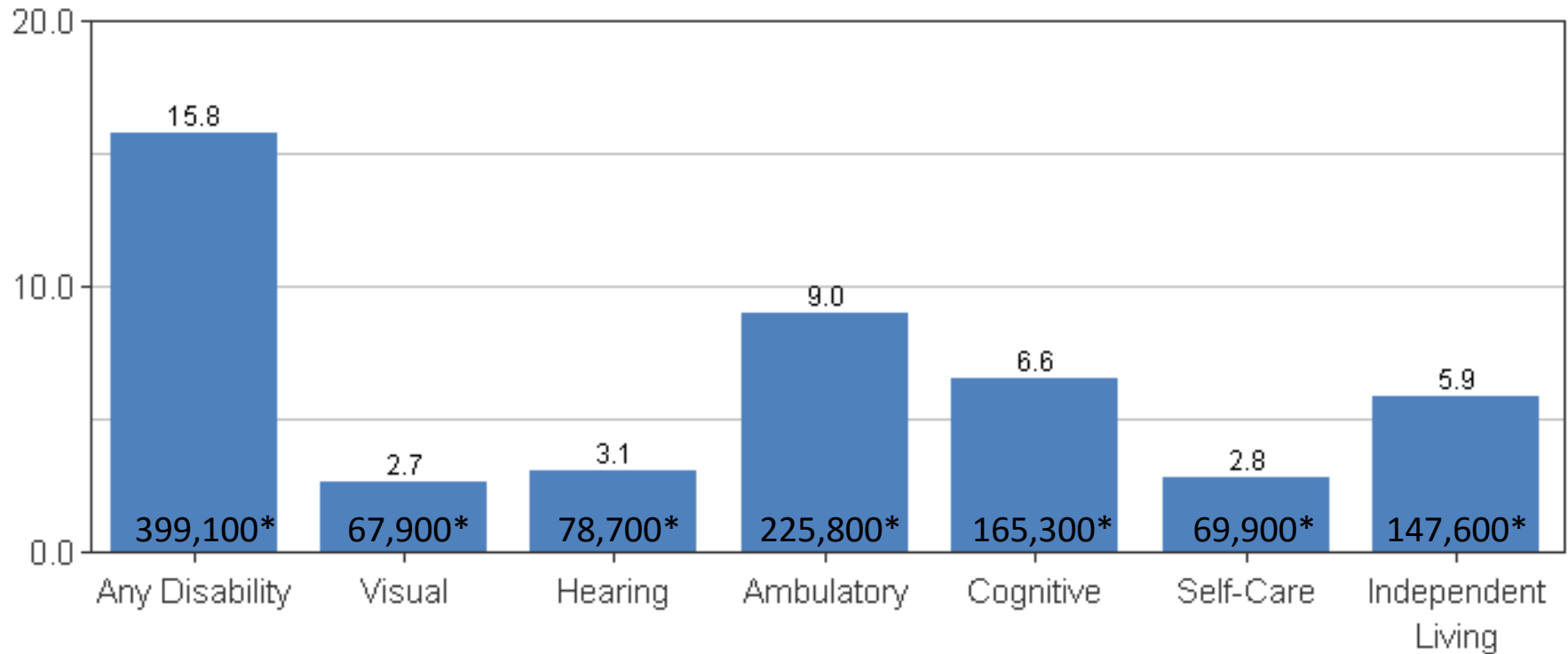


\*Total numbers reported

Source: [Cornell University](#)

# Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 21 to 64 in Kentucky in 2012

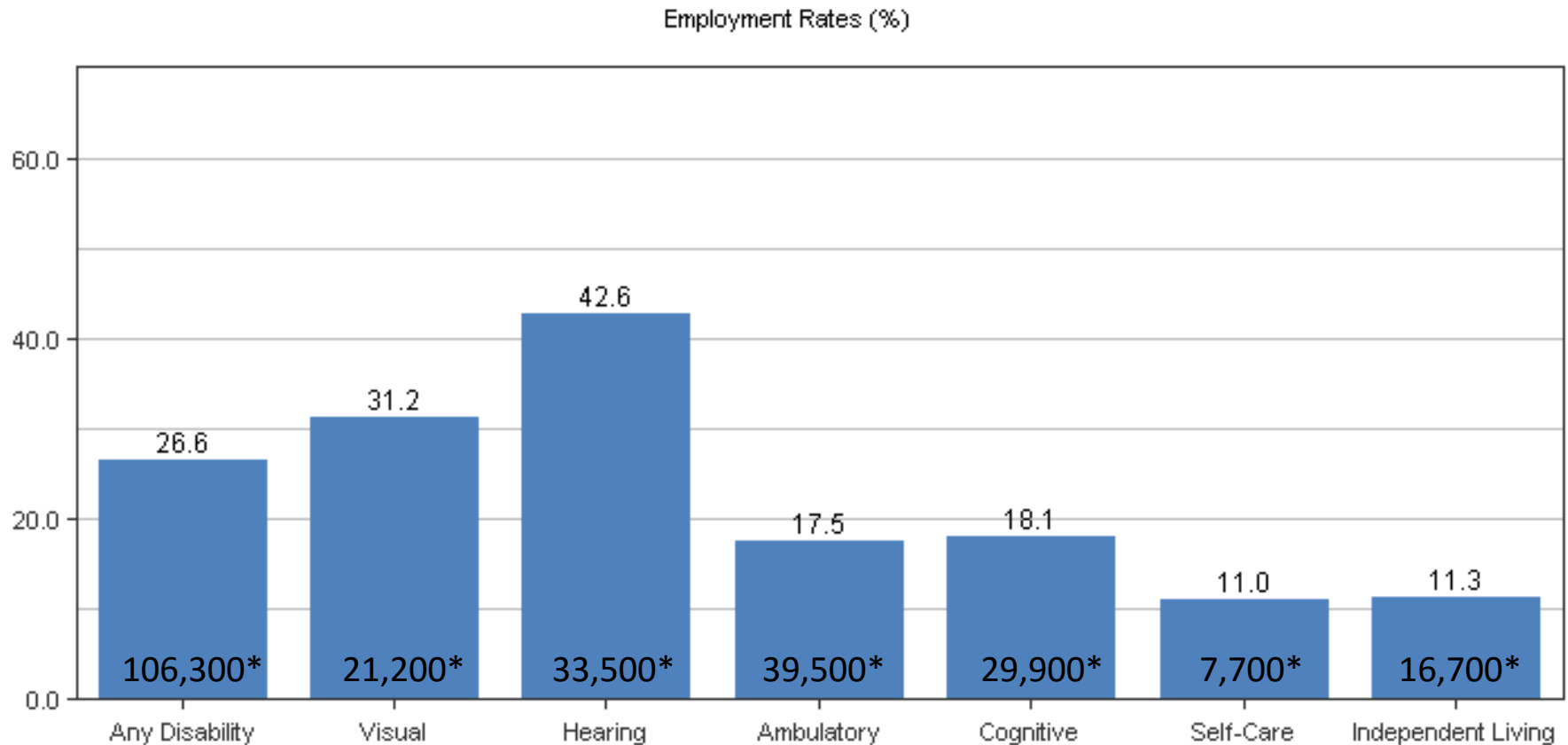
Prevalence Rates: Age 21 to 64 years (%)



\*Total numbers reported

Source: [Cornell University](#)

# Employment of Non-Institutionalized Working-Age People (Ages 21 to 64) by Disability Status in Kentucky in 2012



\*Total numbers reported

Source: [Cornell University](#)

# Project SEARCH: Program Description

- ❖ One school year or 9 months.
- ❖ 10 – 12 young adults with a variety of intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- ❖ Instructor and job coaches.
- ❖ Immersed in host business culture.
- ❖ Rotations through unpaid internships with continual feedback.
- ❖ Outcome of employment in the community.



# Project SEARCH: HUGE \$ SAVER!

## The Project SEARCH

### Definition of a Successful Outcome:

- ❖ Competitive employment in an integrated setting.
  - ❖ Year-round work.
  - ❖ 16 hours per week or more.
  - ❖ Minimum wage or higher.
- ❖ 273 programs in 44 states.
  - ❖ 2500 young people per year.
  - ❖ 60% healthcare, 40% broad mix of business types.
  - ❖ 68% employment.
  - ❖ 88% employee benefit eligible.
    - 35% take employee benefits, usually at 5 years.
    - Benefits alone save roughly 1 million dollars over a lifetime.
    - Family involvement curriculum to drive familial change in attitude.

# Contact Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH: [www.projectsearch.us](http://www.projectsearch.us)

Contact Erin Riehle at [Erin.Riehle@cchmc.org](mailto:Erin.Riehle@cchmc.org)

# Which Employers in Your State Must Meet 503 Rules (Hire PwDs)?

## ❖ Top contractors:

- Humana Inc.
- United Parcel Service Inc.
- Lockheed Martin Corp.
- Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass a Joint Venture
- Los Alamos Technical Associates Inc.

- For the complete list see the [fed spending website](http://www.fedspending.org/fpds/fpds.php?stateCode=KY&sortp=r&detail=-1&datatype=T&reptype=p&database=fpds&fiscal_year=2012&submit=GO)

[http://www.fedspending.org/fpds/fpds.php?stateCode=KY&sortp=r&detail=-1&datatype=T&reptype=p&database=fpds&fiscal\\_year=2012&submit=GO](http://www.fedspending.org/fpds/fpds.php?stateCode=KY&sortp=r&detail=-1&datatype=T&reptype=p&database=fpds&fiscal_year=2012&submit=GO)

- Complete federal lists of 2006-2013 → [Federal Procurement Data System website](https://www.fpds.gov/fpdsng/cms/index.php/en/reports/62-top-100-contractors-report3.html)

<https://www.fpds.gov/fpdsng/cms/index.php/en/reports/62-top-100-contractors-report3.html>

- How to get started: Job Accommodation Network → <https://askjan.org/>

US Business Leadership Network → <http://usbln.org/>

# Kentucky

- ❖ KYOVR has started efforts to train vocational rehabilitation counselors and other professionals in asset development.
- ❖ The State Plan for Independent Living now includes goals related to asset development.
- ❖ In 2012, developed a state Employment First Team.
- ❖ Began participating in the Department of Labor's Office on Disabilities Employment Policy's Employment Resource and Rebalancing Initiative and VisionQuest program.
- ❖ In 2013, became involved in the Employment Learning Community of the Institute for Community Inclusion.
- ❖ Selected by the Institute for Community Inclusion's SGA Project, under which 500 SSDI recipients will be served.

# Jobs in Kentucky

Fastest occupations in Kentucky with top growth from 2012-2022 are:

- Commercial pilots
- Reservation and transportation ticket travel clerks
- Rotary drill operators- oil and gas
- Home health aids
- Mathematicians

<http://www.careerinfonet.org/oview1.asp?level=overall&from=state&stfips=21>

- [Click for your State Development Board](#)

[http://workforceinvestmentworks.com/workforce\\_board\\_info.asp?st=KY](http://workforceinvestmentworks.com/workforce_board_info.asp?st=KY)

- [Click here for your State Development Plan](#)

<http://kwib.ky.gov/>

# Resources

- ❖ StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2013 (data from 2012)
- ❖ 2012 Disability Status Report United States, Cornell University, 2012: [www.disabilitystatistics.org](http://www.disabilitystatistics.org)
- ❖ Fedspending: [www.fedspending.org](http://www.fedspending.org)
- ❖ Project SEARCH: [www.projectsearch.us](http://www.projectsearch.us)
- ❖ Job Accommodation Network: <https://askjan.org/>
- ❖ State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency:  
[http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org\\_list.cfm?category\\_cd=SVR](http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_cd=SVR)
- ❖ RespectAbilityUSA: [www.respectabilityusa.org](http://www.respectabilityusa.org)



# More Resources

- ❖ Lead Center Employment First Website:  
<http://employmentfirst.leadcenter.org/>
- ❖ 2015 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium:  
<http://disabilitycompendium.org/statistics>

# Let Us Know If We Can Help!

**We have many resources for policy makers and employers on our website and are ready to help!**

**RespectAbilityUSA**  
**11333 Woodglenn Drive, #102**  
**Rockville, MD 20852**  
**[www.RespectAbilityUSA.org](http://www.RespectAbilityUSA.org)**  
**Cell: (202) 365 – 0787**  
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**President**  
**JenniferM@RespectAbilityUSA.org**