

Groups Launch Job Board for Disabled Individuals

By Martin C. Daks

AN INTERNET JOB SITE designed to connect employers with qualified disabled candidates was launched last week to help shrink the unemployment rate of 44.2 percent among disabled people while further diversifying businesses' employee base.

The site, www.AccessibleEmployment.org, is a joint effort of the Trenton-based New Jersey Business Leadership Network, the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce and the West Orange-based Henry H. Kessler Foundation.

The job board gives employers a central place to post positions and search resumes posted by disabled job candidates. Companies pay a fee to post job offers, but candidates can post their resumes and search for free.

"Statistically, employees with disabilities have better retention rates [than nondisabled workers]," says Dan Honig, who administers the site. "Workers with disabilities are rated consistently as average or above-average in performance, quality and quantity of work, flexibility and attendance."

Some employers believe they will incur significantly greater costs to accommodate disabled individuals in the workplace, but such concessions actually cost \$600 or less on average, Honig adds.

"In addition, many organizations earn tax credits and experience a savings in health care costs when they hire a disabled employee," he says. "Diversity programs may be one of the factors in a job seeker's decision-making process, enabling businesses to tap into a wider talent pool."

He also says diversity initiatives of many industries are being scrutinized by a variety of individuals and organizations, and "companies must be prepared for shareholders and social activists to raise questions about their diversity practices. AccessibleEmployment.org enables subscribers to be proactive by providing them with another outlet for publicizing their diversity efforts." ♦

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