

Advancing Policy for a More Inclusive Workforce

Understanding Your Important Role

State and city governments play a vital role in building a strong, inclusive workforce poised to respond to global challenges, remain competitive and leverage the skills and talents of all constituents, including individuals with disabilities. In that spirit, policymakers have a responsibility to develop and advance policies that create accessible and inclusive environments, which facilitate greater workforce participation and employment success for all citizens, particularly people with disabilities and other underserved communities.

SEED: Supporting Your Disability-Inclusive Workforce Goals

Each city and state has unique challenges and opportunities, but many strategies and policy actions can be successfully replicated by others. The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy launched the State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED), a unique federal-state-local collaborative, to leverage the sharing and adoption of policy best practices. SEED helps state and local policymakers implement policies to address barriers that hinder employers from tapping into the skills and talents of people with disabilities. We offer background information on disability employment-related policy and practices, clearly identify how inclusion intersects with specific policy goals and, if needed, assist in shaping and articulating policies that both reflect a policymaker's unique priorities and align with our nation's disability and civil rights laws.

SEED supports states and localities through:



Testimony and subject-matter expertise.



State priority mapping, data collection and policy analysis.



Policy development and implementation support.

Fostering Relationships to Address Policy Barriers

To best assist policymakers in promoting inclusive workforce development efforts, SEED designs customized resources and facilitates knowledge-sharing opportunities by collaborating with intermediary organizations, including:



Inclusive Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning

Tools for Building a Skilled Workforce

Combining classroom instruction with on-the-job training, the benefits of apprenticeships are widely recognized, helping businesses – and state and local governments – bridge skills gaps and attract new, more diverse talent into the workplace. In addition, apprenticeships open doors for individuals to long-term career pathways in both traditional fields and high-growth, high-demand fields.

The Benefits of Apprenticeship:



For Individuals

- ✓ Get paid to learn
- ✓ Combination of hands-on training, classroom instruction and mentorship
- ✓ Portable credential
- ✓ Access to meaningful, high-earning career opportunities



For Businesses

- ✓ Customizable training to fit specific business needs
- ✓ Increased productivity, retention and profitability
- ✓ Pipeline of highly-skilled workers



For States

- ✓ A skilled, diverse workforce ready for the jobs of today and the future
- ✓ Increased labor participation with higher earning potential
- ✓ Support and attract new businesses
- ✓ Inclusive, sustainable economy

Given states' and localities' interest in ensuring that job seekers and employees have access to essential education and training, inclusive apprenticeship and work-based learning remains one of SEED's policy focus areas. Below are some tools and resources from SEED and its partners related to the topic:

[📄 The Future of Apprenticeship: Inclusion, Expansion, and the Post-Pandemic World of Work \(CSG\)](#)

[📄 Apprenticeships: A Pipeline for an Inclusive Recovery \(NCSL\)](#)

[📄 The Future of the Workforce: Approaches to Increasing Access & Inclusion \(CSG\)](#)

[📄 States Expand Employment and Training Opportunities for People with Disabilities \(NGA\)](#)

[📄 Utilizing Public Sector Apprenticeships to Improve Employment Outcomes \(CSG\)](#)

[📄 Advancing Inclusion and Diversity in the Workforce \(USCM\)](#)

[📄 Learning on the Job for People with Disabilities \(NCSL\)](#)

[📄 Post-Secondary Education to Inclusive and Equitable Workforce Readiness \(WIG\)](#)

To learn more about inclusive apprenticeships, work-based learning and other workforce development policies, contact the SEED team at dol.gov/agencies/odep/state-policy/contact-seed.