



**One Stop
Career System
Access
for Persons
with Disabilities:**

**What is the Role of the
Employment Counselor?**

Acknowledgements

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One Stop Career System Access for Persons with Disabilities: The Employment Counselor's Role

Why is Access for Persons with Disabilities Important?

According to the 2000 Census, there are an estimated 49.7 million Americans living with disabilities; approximately one in five of us¹. Despite the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which provides increased civil rights protections for people with disabilities, and more recent legislation such as the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), people with disabilities are still significantly unemployed or underemployed compared to their peers without disabilities.

This brochure discusses the role that One Stop Career Systems and employment counselors have in contributing to the increased employment and long-term successful career outcomes for people with disabilities. The individual employment counselor in the One Stop Career Center has multiple issues to consider when serving people with a variety of disabilities, including: programmatic and physical access; confidentiality and disclosure for people with disabilities; marketing elements that are accessible to people with a variety of disabilities; and how to effectively serve customers of the One Stop Career Center who have disabilities.

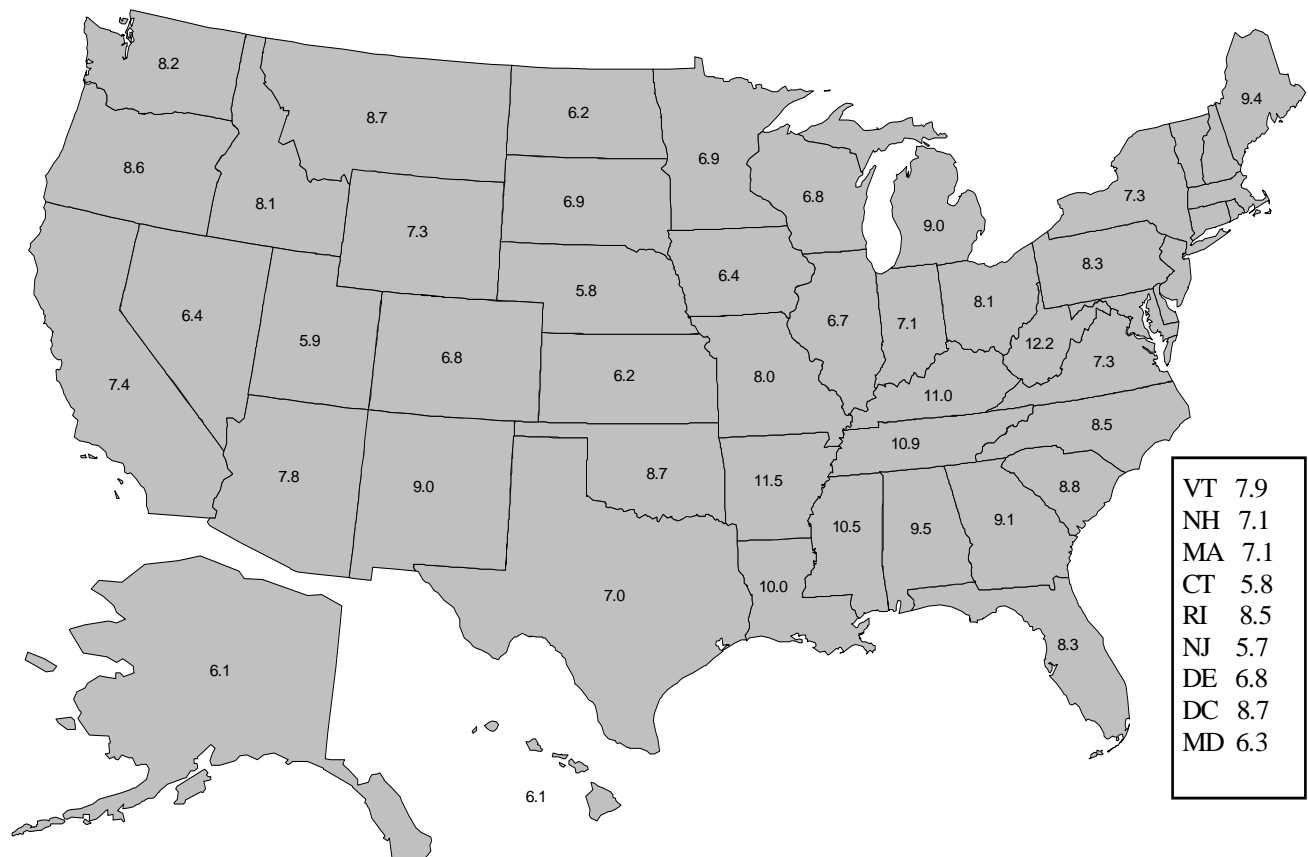
Brochure content developed by Susanne M. Bruyère, Ph.D., CRC, President of the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) and Director of the Cornell University Program on Employment and Disability; this effort supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research to Cornell University for a Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Economic Research for Employment Policy for Persons with Disabilities.

Assistance from Andrea Haenlin Mott, Project Director, and Amy Welch MSW, LCSW-C, Training Coordinator of the Northeast ADA & IT Center at Cornell University, which provides training and technical assistance on the ADA and accessible Information Technology throughout New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands; the Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

What is the Prevalence and Relative Employment Rates of People with Disabilities?

People with disabilities are a focus for One Stop System employment counselors because of the sheer size of the population with disabilities and the significant ongoing disparity in the employment rates of people with disabilities compared to their peers without disabilities. With accurate information about disability statistics, state One Stop Career Systems can compare the number of people they serve to the estimated number of working-age people with disabilities in their state. Figure 1 provides the prevalence of disability among the working age populations in each of the states across the U.S. (Houtenville, 2001a).²

Figure 1. Estimated Percentages of Non-Institutionalized Civilians Aged 25 through 61 with a Work Limitation for Each State and the District of Columbia, 1981-1999



Providers of employment services for people with disabilities in the One Stop Career System may also find useful state estimates of the relative employment rate for people with disabilities. *(The relative employment rate is the employment rate of those with disabilities as a percentage of the employment rate of those without disabilities. The larger the number is, the closer are the employment rates of those with and without disabilities.)*

Such information can help employment service providers, state labor force policy makers, and disability advocacy leaders to assess whether over time the employment rate of people with disabilities is improving, given policy, regulatory, and service intervention strategies. The employment rates of people with disabilities relative to those of people without disabilities vary greatly across states. In many states, the relative employment rate of people with disabilities has fallen over the last 20 years. (Houtenville, 2001b).

What are the Accessibility Considerations for People with Disabilities?

One Stop Career Centers are covered by WIA's Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Regulations (Section 188), as well as Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), affecting state and local governments and access to their programs by people with disabilities, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the provision of services by recipients of Federal funds. All three of these pieces of legislation say essentially the same thing: One Stop Career Centers must provide universal access in their services to people with disabilities.

Universal access means assuring that all people have equal opportunity to find out about and use the full array of services provided by One Stop Career System. This includes, but is not limited to, accessible informational brochures (print and on-line) on the services of the One Stop; assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, and needs for support services that allow for accommodations for people with various disabilities; information about local education and training services providers; help filing unemployment claims and evaluating eligibility for job training and education programs; and career counseling, job search, and placement assistance as well as modifications for training programs.

Universal access usually begins with assessing the physical accessibility of the building. This means having accessible parking within easy reach of the Center's main entrance, and an accessible route that does not require stairs. If the primary entrance is not capable of being made accessible, an alternative accessible entrance may be possible, but needs to be clearly marked, with directional signage indicating how to locate the accessible entrance. Once inside the facility, an accessible path of travel to reception areas, rooms, offices and restrooms must be provided and clearly indicated via appropriate accessible signage. Understanding that many One Stop Career Centers are housed as tenants in buildings owned by landlords, some of the physical accessibility issues need to be worked out through the contractual agreement with the building owners or managers.

Once physical access issues are addressed, another element of universal access is communication accessibility. Communication with customers with disabilities must be equally as effective as communication with anyone without a disability. On-line and web-based information about the One Stop Career Center's services, as well as print brochures describing services, must be accessible to people who have disabilities that may affect cognition, vision, hearing or dexterity. Alternate formats for any information and application materials, including large print, Braille, or diskette, should be provided upon request. Paying for sign language interpreters is a significant consideration that many One Stop Career Centers need to address. Sign Language interpreters may be requested for any and all services available to the One Stop customer. Therefore, a plan should be developed as to how to find qualified sign language interpreters locally, and how the One Stop Career Center and its partners will pay for these services. People inquiring about services by telephone who have a hearing or speech disability may be using a TTY or relay service. A TTY on site is always recommended, but at the very least, all staff should be educated as to how to use the relay service to communicate with customers who use a TTY.

Staff and partners of the One Stop Career Center should have a plan for procuring alternative formats when requested. This includes locating vendors that can provide Braille materials or sign language interpreters, or it may be as simple as teaching staff how to enlarge materials on an everyday copier or word processing program.

Universal accessibility extends to assessment services, career counseling, and job placement. Most One Stop Career Centers provide computer labs for many or all of their assessment, training and job search services. As with all other tools made available to job seekers at the One Stop Career Center, computer workstations must be accessible. Accessibility considerations include physical accessibility of the station, ergonomic elements, alternate input and output devices such as voice recognition software, software that reads the text on the screen to the user or enlarges text on the screen, and alternative mouse options such as a trackball.

Other issues to consider may include allowing a test taker additional time, providing a scribe for a person with an upper extremity limitation which prevents him or her from responding independently to a paper and pencil test, and modifying policies or procedures that would allow a person with a disability to participate, for example requiring a driver's license as a proof of identity.

The largest population of people with disabilities that the One Stop may serve is people who do not have obvious disabilities. These include people who have mental health disabilities, learning disabilities, cognitive disabilities and disease-based disabilities such as cancer, diabetes, or heart disease, and people living with HIV and AIDS. These individuals may not even consider themselves people with disabilities, and may not identify themselves as such when discussing their employment goals with an employment counselor. Nevertheless, they may benefit from reasonable accommodations in the workplace that would assure more successful employment outcomes. They may or may not qualify for vocational rehabilitation services, but could certainly benefit from the many services that One Stop Career Centers offer.

The employment considerations for people with obvious and non-obvious disabilities may be very different, and employment counselors and One Stop Career Centers need to be aware of these distinctions and how to customize their services to meet individual needs.

What are the Confidentiality Considerations for People with Disabilities?

There are two main focus areas for confidentiality issues: one in providing services for people with disabilities as customers of the One Stop Career Center, and the other in ensuring that, as job seekers, appropriate and legal questions are asked of them in interviews for employment. Employment counselors may ask about disability in limited circumstances, such as for the:

- Determination of the eligibility of the individual for special services or funding as a result of the individual's disability;
- Data collection purposes as required by the WIA Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity regulations;
- Assurances that accommodation needs are met so individuals can fully benefit from services provided by the One Stop Career Center.

Requests for information concerning the presence of a disability cannot be used as a basis for excluding individuals from receiving services.³

In the context of employment interviews, potential candidates may not be asked general questions about the existence of a disability at an interview that takes place prior to a job offer.⁴ However, job seekers with obvious and non-obvious disabilities should be prepared as to how they will handle disclosure, legal and potentially illegal questions, and whether reasonable accommodations should be requested at that interview. The discussion needs to focus on the abilities of the person and how the accommodation will enhance his or her job performance without placing undue burden on the employer. Employment counselors should be aware of the rights and responsibilities of the employer and the job seeker in terms of disability and disclosure to ensure the most successful outcome possible.

What Outreach is Available to Potential Customers with Disabilities?

There are a number of state and local community agencies that are natural conduits for facilitating outreach to potential One Stop Career Center customers who are job seekers with disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation agencies often are one of the main One Stop Career Center partners, and can be your best resource for information as to how to better serve all customers with disabilities, as well as provide specific assistance to give better access to particular individuals.

Many communities also have community rehabilitation programs that specialize in providing job training and placement services for people with disabilities,⁵ as well as disability advocacy organizations, such as independent living centers⁶ and other advocacy associations targeting people with particular disabilities. These organizations are experienced potential partners that could be included in One Stop Career Center outreach planning efforts to people with disabilities who are active or potential job seekers.

In Summary

Many people do not know exactly how to interact with a person with a disability. Perceptions, misconceptions, discomfort and stereotypes often cloud common sense and lower expectations of people who have disabilities. Many of these elements are barriers to employment of people with disabilities. Overcoming the lack of expectation of people with disabilities is a necessary element in facilitating the systems change that needs to occur in the US. As stated in the beginning of this article, the employment rate of people with disabilities is far below that of other minority groups, and ironically there are many qualified people with disabilities who want to actively participate in the labor force. The One Stop Career Center and its services provide the opportunity to connect people with disabilities in search of employment and employers in search of qualified candidates and facilitate successful outcomes for both.

Notes

¹ Statistics from the U.S. Bureau of the Census website at:

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2002/cb02ff11.html>

² A full copy of this report, entitled Economics of Disability Research Report #1: Estimates of the Prevalence of Disability in the United States by State, 1981 through 1999 prepared by Andrew Houtenville, Ph.D., is available from the Cornell University web site at:

http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped/download.html?pub_id=653

³ This material is adapted from a related publication by the Institute for Community Inclusion, entitled Access for all: A resource manual for meeting the needs of One-Stop customers with disabilities. For further information contact Children's Hospital Boston at web <http://www.childrenshospital.org/ici/rrtc/>

⁴ For more information about Pre-Employment Disability Related Questions and Medical Examinations, please refer to the EEOC Enforcement Guidance at <http://www.eeoc.gov/docs/preemp.html>

⁵ A listing of accredited employment and community services providers is available from CARF, the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission at Voice/TTY (520) 325-1044, or web <http://www.carf.org/>

⁶ A listing of independent living centers nationally is available from the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) at Voice (703) 525-3406, TTY (703) 525-4153, or web <http://www.ncil.org/>

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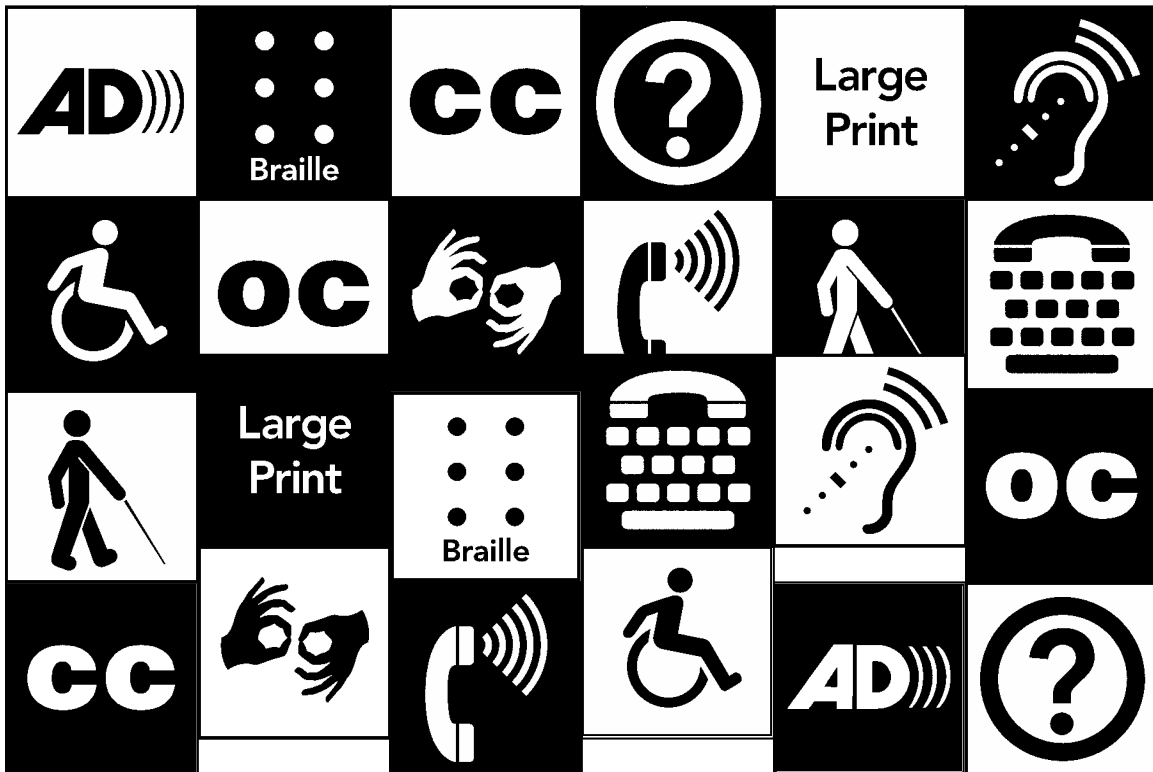
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Houtenville, A. (2001b) State estimates of employment rates for persons with disabilities: Report summary. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Economic Research on Employment Policy for Persons with Disabilities.



ACA/NECA/ARCA Membership Information

Additional information about the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA), the National Employment Counseling Association (NECA), and the American Counseling Association (ACA), can be found at each organization's website. A brief description of the associations, along with web addresses, is given below.

The logo for the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) consists of the letters "ARCA" in a white, sans-serif font, oriented vertically within a grey rectangular box.

The American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) is an organization of professional rehabilitation counselors and students concerned with improving the lives of people with disabilities. The mission of ARCA is to enhance the development of people with disabilities throughout the life span and to promote excellence in the rehabilitation counseling profession. Individuals can join ARCA in conjunction with ACA or as an ARCA-only member; information is available from the ARCA website at: <http://www.nchrtm.okstate.edu/arca/member.html>.

The logo for the National Employment Counseling Association (NECA) features the letters "NECA" in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font.

The National Employment Counseling Association (NECA) was founded to offer professional leadership to people who counsel in an employment service or career development setting or to those employed in related areas of counselor education, research, administration or supervision. NECA is dedicated to helping people prepare for, enter, understand and progress in the world of work through legislative advocacy, establishing standards and guidelines, showcasing best practices and networking. Members come from a diversity of work settings including private practice, business and industry, community agencies, colleges, universities, federal, state and local government. Additional information on NECA and membership, as a part of ACA or as a NECA-only member can be found at: <http://www.employmentcounseling.org>.

The logo for the American Counseling Association (ACA) features the letters "ACA" in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. Below "ACA" are three horizontal lines, followed by the words "AMERICAN", "COUNSELING", and "ASSOCIATION" stacked vertically in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

The American Counseling Association (ACA) is the world's largest association exclusively representing professional counselors in various practice settings. ACA's contributions include: providing leadership training, publications, continuing education opportunities; setting professional and ethical standards for the counseling profession; making gains in accreditation, licensure, and national certification; representing the interests of the profession before congress and federal agencies; and promoting professional counselors to the public and the media. Additional information on the ACA can be found at www.counseling.org, or by calling toll free 1-800-347-6647, ext. 222.

**See Reverse Side of this Page
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ARCA, NECA & ACA
Membership Application**

ARCA/NECA/ACA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: First _____ M.I. _____ Last _____

Mail Address _____

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Country _____ Organization _____

Phone : Work () _____ Home () _____

Fax () _____ E-Mail _____

Social Security # _____ ACA Member # _____

MEMBERSHIPS

Check ACA + ARCA and/or NECA memberships on appropriate line

	ARCA With ACA	ARCA Only*	NECA With ACA	NECA Only*	ACA
Professional	<input type="checkbox"/> \$70.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$80.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$48.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$58.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$122.00
New Professional**	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$45.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$34.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 91.50
Doctoral Student**	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$45.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$34.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 91.50
Masters Student**	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$34.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 91.50
Retired	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$34.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 91.50

**Joining ARCA and/or NECA only: ACA \$10 processing fee included*

**Students: Institution _____ Exp Graduation ____/____

**New Professionals are prior-year Student Members.

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP DUES (✓s above) \$ _____

PAYMENT METHOD

Total amount enclosed or to be charged \$ _____

Check or money order, payable to ACA in U.S. funds, enclosed

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Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date ____/____

Cardholder's Name (print) _____

Phone () _____

Auth. Signature _____ Date _____

ARCA/NECA/ACA MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Four Easy Ways To Join

PHONE	800-347-6647 x222 (Have your credit card ready) M-F, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., ET
FAX	800-473-2329
WEB	<u>www.counseling.org</u>
MAIL	Application and payment to: P.O. Box 791006 Baltimore, MD 21279-1006

CODE OF ETHICS and PRACTICE

Membership in ACA means that you will abide by ACA's Bylaws and other governing documents and are qualified for the membership category selected. By becoming an ACA member, you are agreeing to be subject to the rules, regulations and enforcement of the terms of the ACA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, which can include appropriate sanctions up to suspension or expulsion from ACA and public notice about any such action. The ACA Code of Ethics is available at www.counseling.org.

There shall be no discrimination against any individual on the basis of ethnic group, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, record of public offense, and/or disability.