

# Disability Employment Initiative

Increasing access to educational, training, and employment opportunities for adults with disabilities

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has awarded over \$21 million to nine states under the **Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)** to improve education, training, and employment opportunities and outcomes of youth and adults with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed, and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits. In Maine, funding from the DEI grant will be used to increase access to these opportunities for adults with disabilities through Maine’s workforce development system.

**Program partners include:**

- **Maine Local Workforce Investment Boards**
  - Region 1 – Aroostook/Washington Workforce Board (Northern Maine Development Corporation) Aroostook and Washington Counties [**Kent DeMerchant 207.493.5780**]
  - Region 2 – Tri-County Workforce Board (Eastern Maine Development Corporation) Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Hancock Counties [**Gwen LaPointe 207.561.4095**]
- **Maine Department of Labor**
  - Bureau of Employment Services’s (BES) network of CareerCenters
  - Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)
- **Community-based organizations serving people with disabilities**

**Maine’s Grant Award:**  
\$1.5 million

**Grant Term:**  
October 1, 2010 –  
September 30, 2013

These partners will work together to revise and/or establish new permanent statewide and regional systems and policies to better serve people with disabilities.

**Key elements and award requirements:**

- Focus on providing services to adults with disabilities
- Staffing includes:
  - One state-level DEI project lead at BES
  - Two Disability Resource Coordinators employed by their local workforce investment boards
  - Two Rehabilitation Counselors employed by BRS
- Assurances that people with disabilities will have programmatic, physical, and communications accessibility at CareerCenters

**Strategies to be deployed:**

- Integrated Resource Team (IRT) coordination of services to meet the needs of a job seeker with a disability
- Leveraging of resources by utilizing funds from multiple sources to contribute to individual goals
- Asset development to represent various approaches to enhance long-term economic self-sufficiency
- Partnerships and collaborations that impact the ability of people with disabilities to participate in education, training and employment opportunities
- Outreach with employers to promote hiring of people with disabilities; focus groups will be conducted
- Expansion of Social Security Ticket to Work program statewide, with focus on Regions 1 & 2 in 2011

For more information visit:  
[www.maineccarecenter.com/disabilityservices](http://www.maineccarecenter.com/disabilityservices)