



**State of Illinois**  
Department of Central Management Services

# **DISABLED HIRING INITIATIVE REPORT**

## **July 2013-July 2014**

**In accordance with Public Act 96-0078, the Directors of the Departments of Central Management Services and Human Services submit this report to the members of the Illinois General Assembly September 1, 2014**

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ACTING DIRECTOR

## **Central Management Services and Department of Human Services**

### **Joint Report Disabled Hiring Initiative 2013-2014**

**(Pursuant to P.A. 96-0078/Senate Bill 40)**

**September 1, 2014**

#### **Mandate**

Public Act 96-0078 (effective July 24, 2009) requires that the Departments of Central Management Services (CMS), Human Services (DHS), Employment Security (DES) and other agencies develop and implement programs to increase the number of qualified employees with disabilities working in state government.

#### **Background**

CMS administers the Successful Disability Opportunities (SD) Program which serves as a means to qualify individuals with disabilities for positions within state government. DHS is a partner with CMS in the certification of candidates for the SD Program. The program's name has been changed over the years and was initially implemented in 1976.

State agencies are not required to, but may request the SD candidate list at the point in the hiring process when an Open Competitive eligible list might otherwise be requested.

Since 2003, CMS and DHS have been working to build the SD candidate list so that eligible candidates with disabilities are available across a wide range of position titles and a wide geographic area of the state. CMS, DHS and the Department of Human Rights (DHR) also have been working to educate agency Personnel Managers and Equal Employment Opportunity Officers about the SD Program and encourage them to consider individuals with disabilities when making their hiring decisions.

Currently there are 498 active participants in the SD Program who are eligible for more than 136 different position titles.

#### **Meeting the Challenge**

Due to the continuing budgetary situation, limited hiring, absolute Veterans Preference and the large number of positions subject to collective bargaining agreements, it is a challenge to significantly increase the number of individuals with disabilities hired as new state employees.

Upon Senate Bill 40 becoming law (P.A. 96-0078), CMS formed a committee of state agencies to develop initiatives within their budgets and within the law to work toward increasing the number of qualified applicants with disabilities hired. The Disabled Hiring Initiative Committee is currently comprised of CMS, DHS, DES, DHR, Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS).

Employees with disabilities currently comprise 7.39% of the state workforce as compared to 4.95% of the state's labor force. State employees with disabilities are identified through self-disclosure of a disability.

## **SUMMARY OF DIRECTIVES**

### **NETWORKING DIRECTIVES**

CMS, DHS, DHR, DES, DCEO and DVA have made concerted efforts to continue to network with state Agency Personnel Managers, Equal Employment Opportunity Officers and Recruitment Program staff to educate them on the Successful Disability Opportunities (SD) Program and the Disabled Hiring Initiative, and to distribute that information to potential candidates with disabilities. Below is a summary of those efforts.

#### **UbiDuo Equipment Acquired from Illinois Assistive Technology Project**

The Illinois Assistive Technology Project (IATP) notified DCEO that two UbiDuo units were available at no cost to any entity that could utilize the equipment to facilitate communication with hearing impaired clients/customers. DCEO, an active member of the DHIC, alerted CMS that this equipment was available and facilitated the contact with IATP staff.

The UbiDuo is a portable, wireless, stand alone communication device that facilitates simultaneous face to face communication by means of two screen displays and two keyboards.

CMS Examining & Counseling was able to obtain these two UbiDuo units from IATP for no cost. One is being used at the Springfield Assessment Center and one at the Chicago Assessment Center. These units allow front desk, counseling and testing staff to communicate with hearing impaired applicants more efficiently on a walk-in basis when an American Sign Language Interpreter has not been requested and scheduled ahead of time. Staff and the customer can use the keyboard and screen to have a conversation face to face, and more effectively than with paper and pen.

American Sign Language Interpreter services continue to be scheduled if an applicant requests an accommodation in advance.

#### **Meetings with Equal Employment Opportunity Officers**

Staff from the CMS Disabled Workers Program and DHR continue to conduct meetings with multiple agencies to educate them about the Successful Disability Opportunities (SD) Program and the Disabled Hiring Initiative. DHR identifies categories of underutilization, including employees with disabilities. Agencies who need to increase the number of employees with disabilities can utilize the SD candidate list as a way to address those underutilizations.

During the 2013-2014 report period, CMS Disabled Workers Program staff and IDHR staff met with the following agencies to present information on the SD Program and discuss

agency underutilization of employees with disabilities: Department on Aging – January 27, 2014; Department of Agriculture – February 11, 2014; Illinois State Police – February 27, 2014; Illinois Environmental Protection Agency – March 11, 2014.

During the 2012-2013 reporting period, the following meetings were conducted: Department of Veterans Affairs – March 6, 2013; Department of Healthcare & Family Services – March 19, 2013; Department of Commerce & Economic Development – April 17, 2013.

CMS Disabled Workers Program staff met with CMS hiring managers on February 25, 2014 to present information about the SD Program and gather information about the position titles for which CMS most often is able to access the outside candidate list.

CMS and DHR staff will continue to meet with other agencies on this issue.

### **Presentations to Agency Personnel Managers**

In advance of Disability Awareness Month, on September 24, 2013, a current state employee and member of the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities, ICED, presented information on her experience raising a child with Autism. A DHS employee also presented his success story about participating in the SD Program and being hired as a state employee. Finally, the CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator presented information about the SD Program.

On July 21, 2013, CMS Disabled Workers Program staff presented information regarding the state employee response to the online Disability Survey. Historically, the response rate has been 80% or more across all state agencies. This year the response rate was 73%. CMS and DHR made efforts to increase participation in the survey. DHR reached out to agency EEO staff and CMS reminded Agency Personnel Managers at this meeting to encourage their employees to participate in the survey. The survey is available to employees any time of the year. It accomplishes the following: (1) provides data on employees with disabilities for purposes of affirmative action monitoring; and (2) provides information to agencies regarding employees' need for emergency evacuation assistance. In response to these efforts, participation rose to 76%. It is expected that it will continue to rise as agencies continue to publicize the survey.

### **State Employment Webinars for Persons with Disabilities**

The Disabled Hiring Initiative Committee and the Department of Revenue hosted two webinars on state employment. The first was conducted on February 26, 2014, and 69 individuals participated. The second was conducted on March 26, 2014, and 39 individuals participated. Presentations were made by DHS-DRS about Rehabilitation Counselor services; by CMS about the SD Program; and by a current state employee who utilized DHS-DRS Rehabilitation services and participated in the SD Program to obtain state employment. Libraries across the state served as sites for group participation in the webinar.

### **Veterans Outreach Program and Diversity Enrichment Program**

CMS has programs for veterans, minorities, women and individuals with disabilities seeking employment with the state. Program staff have been educated about the SD Program and the Disabled Hiring Initiative, and are instructed to provide information about opportunities for their clients with disabilities through the SD Program. Staff from the CMS Veterans

Outreach Program and CMS Diversity Enrichment Program (DEP) attend job fairs and recruiting events on a regular basis around the state.

The Veterans Outreach Program conducts job fairs and Employment Workshops on a regular basis in coordination with DES, DVA, DOT and other outside organizations. Information about the Successful Disability Opportunities Program is presented at each workshop and job fair. DES Veteran Employment Representatives have been briefed about the Successful Disability Opportunities Program and provide this information to their clients as well.

Veterans Outreach Program staff attended 19 job fairs and Employment Workshops statewide between July 2012-July 2013. 185 veterans with service-connected disabilities were reached through these events and provided information about the state employment process and the SD Program.

Career Counseling for veterans is offered through the CMS Veterans Outreach Program to provide applicants with an overview of the state employment process. 37 veterans with service-connected disabilities were counseled and provided information about the SD Program.

Diversity Enrichment Program (DEP) staff attended 40 minority targeted job fairs between July 2013 and July 2014 and made 10,127 applicant contacts (disabled and not disabled). DEP staff provided career counseling for approximately 354 individuals between July 2013 and July 2014.

### **Career Counseling Services for Individuals with Disabilities**

Career Counseling is offered through CMS Examining and Counseling to provide applicants with an overview of the state employment process and the SD Program. Applicants' qualifications are reviewed to provide specific job title recommendations. The CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator counsels disabled applicants and also provides information on available accommodations for testing. From July 2013 to July 2014, 129 applicants with disabilities were provided career counseling services.

### **Consult & Coordination with CMS Division of Risk Management**

The CMS Risk Management Division is responsible for the administration of workers' compensation claims for work-related accidents of state employees. One of the primary objectives of the Workers' Compensation Program is to return employees to productive work as safely and quickly as possible. The CMS Disabled Workers Program provides assistance with these efforts.

In many situations, workers who are no longer able to perform their current job duties are able to perform other work. Workers may be eligible for re-employment through the SD Program or the Alternative Employment Program (AEP), which are administered through the CMS Disabled Workers Program.

CMS Disabled Workers Program staff and CMS Legal staff continue to be available to Risk Assessment Staff to provide information about these programs and to explain how they can assist with meeting their objective to return employees to productive work.

Exempt and non-certified employees are potentially eligible for re-employment through the SD Program, and certified employees are potentially eligible for re-employment through the AEP Program. Additionally, any on-leave employee may obtain promotional grades and bid on open positions. Referring eligible employees with workers compensation claims to these programs is beneficial to the employee, the Risk Management Program and the Disabled Workers Program.

Currently, there are 39 state employees on disability leave participating in the Alternative Employment Program.

**Job Fairs/Conferences**

CMS, DHS, DES, DCEO and other agencies have attended multiple job fairs and other events. When CMS and DHS did not attend, materials regarding the SD Program were provided to those attending. Due to limited travel and staff resources, these agencies coordinate so that every agency is not at a single job fair and that information is distributed about the SD Program at as many employment and disability-related events as possible.

7/16/2013	ADA Celebration-DHS	Chicago
7/18/2013	Women Veterans Fair-DCEO	Aurora
7/24/2013	ADA Celebration-CMS/DCEO/DHS/ICDD/DHR	Springfield
8/1/2013	Asian American/Harper College-CMS/DVA	Palatine
9/4/2013	Wright College Counselor Wkshp-CMS/DVA	Chicago
9/12/2013	Employment Wkshp Joliet Jr. College-CMS	Joliet
9/13/2013	Am Legion Veterans Job Fair-DHS	Springfield
9/16/2013	APC Resource Center Job Fair-CMS	Chicago
9/19/2013	NEIU Employment Workshop-CMS	Chicago
9/25/2014	Greater Spfld Job/Career Fair-DHS	Springfield
9/26/2013	UIC Fall Diversity Job Fair-DCEO	Chicago
9/26/2013	UIS Foot in the Door Career Fair-DHS	Springfield
10/2/2013	Deaf Awareness Day-DHS	Chicago
10/4/2013	Mayor's Office for People w/Disabilities Disability Mentoring Day-DHS	Chicago
10/8/2013	DHS Virtual Job Fair-DHS/CMS	Springfield
10/13/2013	Ability Links 24/7 Virtual Job Fair-DHS	Chicago
10/15/2013	IDES Employment Briefing-CMS	Springfield
10/18/2013	CMS Veterans Outreach Conference	Decatur
10/25/2013	IL Assoc of Hispanic State Employees Conference DCEO/CMS/DVA	Chicago
11/6/2013	Morton College Resource Fair-CMS/DVA	Cicero
11/6/2013	IDES Job Fair-CMS/DVA	Belleville
11/8/2013	Truman College Veterans Job Fair-CMS	Chicago
11/8/2013	IDES Employment Briefing-CMS/DVA	Springfield
11/8/2013	Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities Disability Mentoring Day-DHS	Chicago
11/9/2013	North Park Univ Leadership Diversity Wkshp-CMS	Chicago
12/6/2013	LAC Family Institute Day-CMS	Chicago
1/14/2014	IDOT Employment Workshop-CMS	East St. Louis
1/15/2014	IDES Miners Union Job Fair-CMS	Litchfield

2/7/2014	IDES State Employment Briefing-CMS	Springfield
2/13/2014	St. Xavier University Job Fair-CMS	Chicago
2/20/2014	Spfld Collegiate Career Fair-DHS	Springfield
2/21/2014	Veteran Transition Assistance Event-CMS	Scott Air Force Base
2/22/2014	Spfld School Dist 186 Disability Fair-DHS	Springfield
2/26/2014	College of Lake County Employment Wkshp CMS/DVA	Grayslake
2/27/2014	Douglas Community Center J.O.B.S. Fair CMS/DVA	Champaign
3/13/2014	UIC Latin American Recruitment-CMS	Chicago
3/14/2014	Kennedy King College Re-employment Fair-CMS	Chicago
3/19/2014	IAHSE/IAACOMA Employment Workshop-CMS	Springfield
3/20/2014	IAACOMA Workshop-CMS	Springfield
3/21/2014	Islamic Foundation Job Fair/Wkshp-CMS/DVA	Villa Park
3/25/2014	Joliet Jr. College Veterans Job Fair-CMS	Joliet
3/27/2014	College of DuPage Employment Workshop-CMS	Joliet
3/27/2014	Asian American Information & Application Wkshp DCEO/CMS	Glen Ellyn
3/28/2014	DES/IDVA Job Fair-CMS/DES/IDVA	Peoria
4/5/2014	Spfld School Dist 186 "Get it Done"-DHS	Springfield
4/10/2014	Richland Community College-CMS	Decatur
4/15/2014	IDES Employment Briefing-CMS	Decatur
4/16/2014	Rock Island Arsenal Job Fair-CMS	Rock Island
4/21/2014	Greater Spfld Job/Career Fair-DHS	Springfield
4/23/2014	Morton College Job Fair/Employment Wkshp CMS	Cicero
4/23/2014	Urban League Employment Workshop-CMS	Peoria
4/24/2014	NEIU Employment Workshop-CMS/DVA	Chicago
4/25/2014	IDES Re-Employment Workshop-CMS	Chicago
4/30/2014	Disability Awareness Day-Chicago State Univ DHS	Chicago
5/5/2014	DHS Job Fair-CMS/DHS	Chicago
5/5/2014	Family & Community Supports/Rehab Services Open House-DHS	Chicago
5/8/2014	Natl Latino Education Institute-Job/Resource Fair CMS/DVA	Chicago
5/10/2014	DES Job Fair-CMS	Springfield
5/12/2014	Asian American Employment/Resource Fair-CMS	Chicago
5/14/2014	Sr Services of Central IL-Sr Celebration-DHS	Springfield
5/15/2014	St. Augustine College Resource/Job Fair-CMS	Chicago
5/16/2014	DES State Employment Briefing-CMS	Champaign
5/21/2014	SERS Veterans Job Fair-CMS/DVA	Cicero
5/22/2014	Jesse Brown VA Hiring/Resource Fair-CMS	Chicago
5/31/2014	IL Latino Resource Family Advocacy-CMS	Chicago
6/6/2014	DES State Employment Briefing-CMS	Rock Island
6/10/2014	Tower of Refuge Summit of Hope-DHS	Springfield
6/25/2014	Elgin Community College Employment Wkshp CMS/DVA	Elgin

7/11/2014	Am Legion/DES Career Fair-CMS/DES	Springfield
7/14/2014	Gardner Initiative Hope Job Fair-CMS/DVA	Chicago
7/15/2014	Loyola University-Employment Workshop-CMS	Chicago
7/16/2014	DES Career Fair-CMS/DES	Decatur
7/17/2014	Access Chicago-City of Chicago-DHS	Chicago
7/21/2014	Upwardly Global Employment Workshop-CMS	Chicago
7/22/2014	Conrad Sulzer Library Employment Wkshp-CMS	Chicago
7/23/2014	Hines VA Veteran Employment Wkshp-CMS/DVA	Hines
7/30/2014	2 <sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian Church Re-Employ Fair-CMS	Chicago
7/30/2014	ADA Celebration-DHS/DHR/CMS/IDHR	Springfield

### **DHS Mentoring Day**

In October 2013, the individual offices of the Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DHS-DRS) connected their customers directly with employers in the local community as part of Disability Mentoring Day (DMD). DMD not only offers job seekers with a disability experience in the workplace, but it also provides a first-hand opportunity for employees with disabilities to exhibit their skills and abilities.

The DHS Bureau of Accessibility and Job Accommodation (BAJA) participated in Disability Mentoring Day activities in 2013. BAJA hosted three mentees, two identified by DHS-DRS and one identified by the City of Chicago, Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities for Groundhog Job Shadow Day. At least one mentee’s experience assisted with securing a full-time position as a Public Aid Eligibility Assistant with the DHS Roseland Family and Community Resource Center.

In 2014, DHS is seeking to hire a student intern with a disability through the ICED Internship Program.

## **PROCEDURAL DIRECTIVES**

### **Disability Survey – Department of Human Rights**

DHR conducts an annual survey of state employees to determine the number of state employees with disabilities and thus to assist in complying with the requirements of the Illinois Human Rights Act. This information, as well as U.S. Census data, is used to determine which agencies need to increase the number of employees with disabilities to address any underutilization within each agency.

The disability survey is conducted online via a dedicated web site. The web site enables all state agencies to track and sort data, as well as generate a variety of informational and statistical reports. It also automates the transaction process between the state agency and CMS when an agency hires or promotes an employee with a disability, or when a current employee develops and reports a disability.

The web site is an efficient, far-reaching survey tool used to gather more complete data than its predecessor paper copy survey form. Better data establishes a solid base of knowledge to work from to more effectively target disabled hires. Employees are asked to voluntarily respond to the survey.

The survey web site is available year round and is accessible for new hires to complete and for current employees to update their disability status. Also, another important feature of the survey is for employees to indicate their need for assistance during an emergency evacuation.

At the end of June 2014, participation in the 2014 survey was below the targeted 80% level. Efforts made by DHR and CMS to encourage agency EEO staff and Personnel Managers to remind employees to participate in the survey successfully raised the participation level to 76%. It is expected that it will continue to rise as agencies continue to publicize the survey.

### **Transactions Statement**

The process for notifying hiring agencies in regard to the availability of eligible SD Program candidates when requesting an Open Competitive Eligible list was changed in 2014.

Currently, the CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator sends information on a quarterly basis to Personnel Managers and EEO staff about the titles and work locations where SD Program candidates are available. Hiring agencies can then use this information to specifically request the SD Program candidate list if they are filling a vacancy from an Open Competitive eligible list. This change in process was made due to staff shortages and high volumes of transactions received at CMS..

Also, throughout the year, DHR staff monitors the state job postings. When positions are posted at agencies that are underutilized in employees with disabilities, DHR consults with the CMS Disabled Workers Program and alerts the hiring agency when there are SD Program candidates available to consider if the position is able to be filled by other means.

State agencies may request the SD candidate list at the point in the hiring process when an Open Competitive eligible list might otherwise be requested. Existing law (Personnel Code & Veterans Preference) precludes hiring preference for these candidates over other candidates; the Personnel Rules, including Veterans' Preference provisions, are applied to the SD list as with other eligible lists.

### **SD Re-grades**

In April 2010, CMS Examining and Counseling began allowing SD Program candidates to re-grade current passing scores from an open competitive exam to an SD grade upon receipt of certification paperwork from DHS-DRS for the same exam title without the previous requirement of re-taking the exam. This practice eliminates the delay in establishing an SD grade for qualifying disabled candidates who would otherwise be waiting to be scheduled to take an additional exam. During this reporting period, 226 re-grades have been processed.

### **Non-code Positions-Access to Disabled Job Candidates**

CMS does not maintain a database of qualified disabled candidates for non-code positions (those positions that are fully exempt from the Personnel Code and therefore do not require grading by CMS). However, CMS and DHR continue to work to set up procedures by which disabled candidates may learn about opportunities for employment in non-code positions.

There are nearly 10,000 non-code positions in governmental entities monitored by DHR. DHR has contacted several of these entities to determine their interest in accessing qualified

disabled candidates. Several governmental agencies with non-code positions have specifically indicated interest. DHR meets regularly with these governmental entities in regard to underutilization in employees with disabilities and other minority categories and seeks to provide resource referrals to resolve any underutilizations.

To provide a link between disabled candidates and agencies with non-code positions, the following procedures have been established. These agencies can contact DHR when seeking disabled candidates for vacant positions, and DHR then consults with DHS-DRS. The local DRS office where the position is located is contacted so that DRS Rehabilitation Counselors may alert clients who may qualify for the position.

Also, in 2014 DHR proposed legislation (HB 4665, 98<sup>th</sup> General Assembly) to add the Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Comptroller, Treasurer and Attorney General to the membership of the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED). The inclusion of these entities in the ICED would further enhance the existing partnership among all of the Constitutional Offices to include more employees with disabilities in the state's workforce. The bill passed the House unanimously and advanced to 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading in the Senate before the legislature adjourned the Spring 2014 Session. ICED and the DHIC will continue to pursue this legislation.

## **TRAINING INITIATIVES**

### **Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees Training Event**

The Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees held a training event on October 25, 2013, in Chicago. The agenda included a workshop for the public regarding the state application process. DES and CMS presented information about the SD Program at this event.

### **Disability Awareness Training**

The DHS Bureau of Accessibility and Job Accommodation (BAJA) developed and delivers a "Communication Access" curriculum that provides DHS personnel with information on effective communication strategies for persons who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. Reference materials on "Communication Access" also are posted on the DHS web site and DHS Intranet.

A PowerPoint training was developed by BAJA on "Evaluating Physical Accessibility" and an at-a-glance site accessibility guide was shared with appropriate DHS and CMS staff.

DHS BAJA staff periodically review and revise the "Meeting the Challenge of Inclusion" curriculum that is made available as a Computer Based Learning (CBL) module. This training encompasses the goal of reinstituting uniform Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) training for supervisors that includes on-line and face-to-face strategies.

DHS BAJA staff hosts a monthly ADA Teleconference in conjunction with the Illinois ADA Project to provide updated information on various ADA and disability-related topics presented by prominent guest speakers. In addition, DHS hosts annual ADA Celebration events in Chicago and Springfield. The events feature ADA workshops, an employment and

resource fair, various exhibitors demonstrating implementation of the ADA, and a variety of other activities.

### **DISABILITY HIRES**

#### **All Agency Total Disability New Hires 7/1/2013-7/1/2014**

This data is based on a report using the processed date for new hires. Please note that there is a lag between individuals being hired and the transaction being processed. The data reported is the most consistent and reliable way to report these figures.

Agriculture	1
Central Management Services	2
Children & Family Services	4
Corrections	12
Criminal Justice Authority	1
Employment Security	1
Environmental Protection Agency	1
Financial & Professional Regulation	3
Gaming Board	1
Healthcare & Family Services	8
Historic Preservation Agency	1
Human Services	76
Juvenile Justice	1
Law Enforcement Training & Standards Board	1
Military Affairs	1
Natural Resources	4
Public Aid	1
Public Health	10
Revenue	4
State Police	3
Veterans Affairs	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>141</b>

\*43 of the total new hires of individuals with disabilities were hired through the SD Program. Also, though hires were not made, the Department of Insurance and the Department of Financial & Professional Regulation requested the SD eligible list to consider disabled candidates for vacant positions.

### **STATUS OF 2013-2014 DIRECTIVES**

1. Continue to explore solutions to providing a more advanced technological accommodation for vision impaired applicants seeking to qualify for job titles requiring a keyboarding exam that calculates words per minute. The current accommodation is listening to the keyboarding exam verbiage on a Dictaphone while taking the keyboarding exam on the existing WinCATs automated testing system. JAWS, a screen reading technology that converts text into synthesized speech, is an option that has been

explored in the past but has come up short in regard to compatibility with the existing employment testing system.

**Status:** CMS's Bureau of Communications and Computer Services continues to advance toward developing a means for applicants to use JAWS on a standalone test station, separate from the existing WinCATs test stations that will allow visually impaired applicants to be administered a keyboarding exam with screen reading capability. Blind applicants will be consulted in regard to specific keyboard preferences, and the JAWS program, when installed, will have three reading/speaking speeds to select from. JAWS will stop reading/speaking at the end of each sentence, prompting the applicant to hit a key to move on to the next sentence when they are ready. When ready for deployment, this new accommodation will be installed at all five Assessment Centers across the state – Chicago, Springfield, Rockford, Champaign and Marion.

2. Establish an exploratory committee to research the demonstration of job skills by applicants as a reasonable accommodation for applicants with disabilities (i.e. developmental disabilities, brain injuries, speech impairments, etc.) participating in the Rutan interview process.

**Status:** An exploratory committee has been established to discuss potential accommodations during the Rutan interview process that would allow candidates to demonstrate their skills related to certain duties of a position. The committee has included staff from the CMS, DHR, DVA, DHS, the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities, and a private sector parent of an individual with developmental disabilities.

Objectives for the committee were established and include the following: 1) Explore the development of interview questions that allow the candidate to demonstrate his or her skills specific to performing the duties of the position; 2) Work through mock Rutan interview scenarios to be able to provide agency Interview & Selection staff advice on how to successfully engage with developmentally disabled candidates; and 3) Provide direction on assessing a candidate's merit based on how well the candidate's demonstration of skills meets the criteria established for the position.

CMS Legal staff provided the committee with a review of the Supreme Court decision in the Rutan case, the Rutan interview process requirements, , and the Administrative Orders that provide a framework for consistent and uniform approaches to selecting candidates based wholly on merit. The committee's goal is thus to accommodate disabled candidates within the Rutan interview process in a manner in which they can be fairly evaluated to determine whether or not they are the best candidate for the position. Because the Rutan process provides for evaluation of the candidate based on the pre-established criteria for the position, candidates are ranked against the criteria not the other candidates.

DHS staff provided the committee with a review of the Americans with Disabilities Act and its provisions regarding reasonable accommodations throughout the application, interview and employment process.

DVA has committed to working with the committee on a trial project to apply the demonstration of skills approach to their Support Service Worker position title. The

development of sample interview questions related to the skills required for that position, i.e. making a bed, was identified as a first step in the process.

The DHIC and the exploratory committee continue to work on this issue.

3. Present information on Autism to Personnel Managers of agencies under the Governor during Disability Awareness Month – October 2013.

**Status:** On September 24, 2013, a current state employee and member of ICED presented information on her experience raising a child with Autism. Also, a DHS employee presented his success story about participating in the SD Program and being hired as a state employee. Finally, the CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator presented information about the SD Program.

4. Conduct at least two State Hiring Information Webinars for disabled applicants interested in obtaining state employment.

**Status:** Webinars were conducted on February 26, 2014 (69 participants) and March 26, 2014 (39 participants) to present information about the state employment process, the SD Program, the DHS-DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor role and services, and a success story.

5. Review disability hires by state agency and determine targeted agencies to meet with to educate and encourage hiring officials in regard to accessing qualified candidates with disabilities for state employment.

**Status:** CMS Disabled Workers Program staff and IDHR staff met with the following agencies to present information on the SD Program and discuss agency underutilization of employees with disabilities. Department on Aging – January 27, 2014; Department of Agriculture – February 11, 2014; Illinois State Police – February 27, 2014; Illinois Environmental Protection Agency – March 11, 2014.

CMS Disabled Workers Program staff met with CMS hiring managers on February 25, 2014 to present information about the SD Program and gather information about the position titles for which CMS most often is able to access the outside candidate list.

#### **FUTURE DIRECTIVES 2013-2014**

1. Continue to explore solutions to providing a more advanced technological accommodation for vision impaired applicants seeking to qualify for job titles requiring a keyboarding exam that calculates words per minute. The current accommodation is listening to the keyboarding exam verbiage on a Dictaphone while taking the keyboarding exam on the existing WinCATs automated testing system. JAWS, a screen reading technology that converts text into synthesized speech, is an option that continues to be explored.
2. Continue to explore and research the demonstration of job skills by applicants as a reasonable accommodation for applicants with disabilities (i.e. developmental

disabilities, brain injuries, speech impairments, etc.) participating in the Rutan interview process.

3. Make a presentation at the quarterly Agency Personnel Managers meeting on disability awareness issues, the Successful Disability (SD) Opportunities Program, and other topics deemed pertinent to promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities in the state workforce in concert with Disability Awareness Month – October 2014.
4. Conduct at least two State Hiring Information Webinars for disabled applicants interested in obtaining state employment.
5. Review disability hires by state agency and determine targeted agencies to meet with to educate and encourage hiring officials in regard to accessing qualified candidates with disabilities for state employment.
6. Make efforts to promote the availability of Alternative Employment Program (AEP) to current state employees as well educating Agency Personnel Managers in regard to the program.