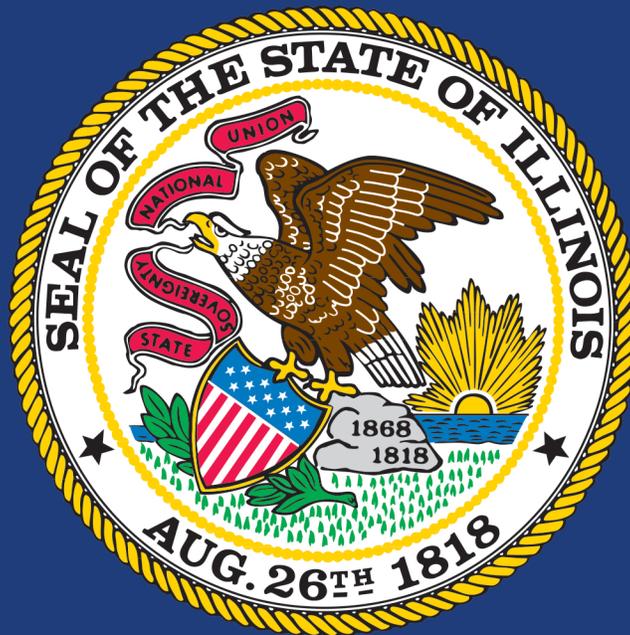


Disabled Hiring Initiative Report

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023



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, 2023



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Acting Director, CMS



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Secretary, DHS

Disabled Hiring Initiative Report 2022-2023
(Pursuant to P.A. 96-0078/Senate Bill 40)
September 1, 2023

MANDATE

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

The Disabled Hiring Initiative Report is submitted annually by CMS and DHS to provide an overview, assessment, and update on the progress of programs and initiatives supporting employment opportunities for disabled workers in Illinois State government. This report will provide information on the following.

1. Programs and Services
2. Outreach and Collaboration
3. Initiatives and Process Improvements
4. Agency Report on Progress of Disability Hires
5. Report on 2022-2023 Directives
6. 2023-2024 Directives

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Successful Disability Opportunities Program

CMS administers the Successful Disability Opportunities (SDO) Program, which serves to qualify individuals with disabilities for positions within State government. DHS is a partner with CMS in the certification of candidates for the SDO Program. While the program's name has changed over the years, it was initially implemented in 1976.

CMS and DHS work together to build the SDO pool of candidates with disabilities that are available across a wide range of position titles and geographic areas of the State. CMS, DHS, and the Department of Human Rights (DHR) continue to educate agency Personnel Managers and Equal Employment Opportunity Officers about the SDO Program and encourage them to consider individuals with disabilities when making their hiring decisions.

As of June 30, 2023, there are approximately 773 participants in the SDO Program with eligible validations to apply for vacant positions throughout the state qualifying for services under SDO Program guidelines. Applicants are required to establish a profile on the SuccessFactors career portal and apply directly to targeted vacancies. Counseling, assistance with the online platform, and online resources and guides are available.

As of June 30, 2023, employees with disabilities comprised approximately 10.4% of the State workforce, according to the annual Mandatory Disability Survey. Individual initiative participants and State employees with disabilities are identified only through self-disclosure of a disability.

Disabled Workers Trainee Program

This initiative was set in place by Public Act 101-0533, mandating the creation of a training program that will lead to employment with agencies having 1,500 or more employees. The program allocates one position per year to an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. CMS in partnership with the members of the Illinois Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities (EEOPD), has laid the groundwork, rules, and processes for the program. This was the first year of implementation.

The Disabled Workers Trainee Program (DWTP) as currently structured allows for one clerical level (Clerical Trainee) title or one professional level (Public Admin Intern) title to be used in the application process, where an individual who meets the required education level of the designated trainee title (High School/Bachelors equivalent respectively) can enter the State workforce, gain experience on the job, and certify into a full-time title within the State of Illinois. The program intends to give those who do not have the means to gain experience an opportunity to gain the required experience through the training program.

Agencies with more than 1,500 employees include the Illinois Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Corrections (DOC), Healthcare and Family Services (HFS), Human Services (DHS), Revenue, and Transportation (DOT). Agencies that have volunteered to participate include Central Management Services (CMS) and the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities. Clerical level trainee titles are exclusively included in AFSCME and would require following all bargaining unit bidding processes in filling the DWTP target title.

Below outlines an update on vacancies throughout this reporting period:

Agency	Requisition	# Applicants	Result
CMS	18451	5	requisition closed/lack of qualified candidate(s)
DCFS	17531	111	position offered to a DWTP participant
DHS	17175	33	requisition closed – Agency will repost
DHS	28812		reposted 17175 - posting ready to go live
DOC	18282	35	position filled with a DWTP participant
DOT	19836	64	position offered to a DWTP participant
HFS	18857	91	position filled with a DWTP participant
Revenue	18781	36	position filled with a DWTP participant
Revenue	22671	39	position offered to a DWTP participant

Alternative Employment Program (AEP)

The CMS Risk Management Division is responsible for the administration of workers' compensation claims for work-related accidents by 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 aids in these efforts.

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

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

Exempt and non-certified employees are potentially eligible for re-employment through the SDO Program, and certified employees are potentially eligible for re-employment through the AEP. Additionally, any on-leave employee may apply to open positions following bargaining unit bidding processes. Referring eligible employees with worker’s compensation claims to these programs is beneficial to the employee, the Risk Management Program, and the Disabled Workers Programs.

As of June 30, 2023, 32 State employees on disability leave are actively participating in the AEP Program. During the 2022-2023 reporting period, nine employees were placed in various positions through AEP eligible lists, almost double the previous year.

Reporting Period	Participating Employees	Employee Placements
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019	34	7
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020	29	6
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	23	3
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022	32	5
July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023	32	9

Veterans Outreach Program and Office of Diversity & Inclusion

CMS continues to operate programs for veterans, minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities seeking employment with the State. Program staff routinely provide information about the SDO Program and the Disabled Hiring Initiative opportunities for their clients with disabilities. Staff from the CMS Career Services Centers, CMS Veterans Outreach Program and CMS Diversity Equity and Inclusion attend job fairs and recruiting events in person and via virtual platforms on a regular basis around the State where information on minority-centered programs is readily available. These events are highlighted in the Job Fairs section of this report.

Career Counseling by mail, email, or virtually for Veterans is offered through the CMS Veterans Outreach Program to provide applicants with an overview of the State employment process. Between the five CMS examining test center locations, 190 Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities were verified, and/or given information about the application process as well as the SDO Program. The Veteran verification document process continues to be an electronic, remote process. Continued use of career counseling by email and the addition of a virtual option has eliminated a large backlog of counseling requests, allowing for much faster turnaround times.

Career Counseling Services for Individuals with Disabilities

Career Counseling continues to be offered through CMS Career Services and Hiring Resources to provide applicants with an overview of the State employment process and if qualified, the SDO Program. Applicant qualifications are reviewed to provide specific job title recommendations. Career Counseling is offered to applicants via mail, email, or virtually.

The CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator counsels disabled applicants and provides information on available accommodations for any job title that might require automated testing. From July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, 37 applicants with disabilities were provided career counseling services by email and given information on possible targeted position titles, up slightly from the previous year. Others continue to be referred by their established DHS Rehabilitation Services Vocational Counselor.

Disability Resource Center

To assist State agency staff engaged in the hiring process, as well as current State employees and State job applicants who may need to seek an accommodation, CMS operates as a centralized source of information on reasonable accommodations and provides professional consultation to both State agency staff and job seekers on issues concerning reasonable accommodations in the State employment process. Individuals may contact the CMS Disability Resource Center by e-mail at: CMS.DisabilityResCen@illinois.gov.

Reasonable accommodations requests granted for automated testing decreased significantly due to changes in the application process, moving away from testing to a more comprehensive validation of qualifications and broader evaluation of skills and experience. The Upward Mobility Program continues to offer assessments and courses for targeted position titles to State employees, providing career advancement opportunities to more challenging, higher paying positions.

Reporting Period	Automated Testing Accommodations
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020	101
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	108
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022	34
July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023	11 (Upward Mobility)

OUTREACH, COLLABORATION, AND DISABILITY AWARENESS

Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED)

In 2016, PA 99-0314 expanded the Inter-agency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED). Currently, the committee’s membership consists of five State Constitutional Officers, six State Agencies under the Governor, and seven State employees with disabilities. The ICED committee continues its efforts to date with scheduled quarterly meetings, as well as monthly Outreach and Recruitment Sub-Committee meetings. ICED Sub-committees include the Hiring Process and Review Committee, the Nomination Committee, and the Annual Awards Ceremony Committee.

The main purpose and function of the committee are to provide a forum where problems of general concern to State employees with disabilities can be raised and methods of their resolution can be discussed. Appropriate State agencies provide a clearing house of information for State employees with disabilities by working with those agencies to develop and retain the information and promote affirmative action efforts about the employment of persons with disabilities. The group can recommend, where appropriate, means of strengthening the affirmative action programs for employees with disabilities in State agencies. The Committee completes an annual report on achievements and accomplishments to the General Assembly.

Key highlights of the 2023 Report include:

- ICED Committee members worked in consultation with other State Agencies around the State to create Reasonable Accommodations Guidance for State Agencies. The information includes:
 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
 - Reasonable Accommodations Process and Forms
 - Know Your Rights
 - Reasonable Accommodations PSA/Training video established.
- Collaborated with multiple State agencies including Central Management Services (CMS), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Employment Security (IDES) and the Employment Economic Opportunity for People with Disabilities (EEOPWD) to support the creation of model programs for employing people with disabilities.
- 2022 ICED annual awards celebration was held on October 6, 2022. Award recipients included:
 - Outstanding Employee of the Year – Janinna Hendricks, Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (ICDD)
 - Outstanding Advocate of the Year – Karen Tamley, Access Living
 - Outstanding State Agency of the Year – Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT)
 - Outstanding Legislator of the Year – Lindsey LaPointe – State Representative, 19th House District

New this year, the ICED Committee, in concert with the CMS Illinois Office of Information and Communication, produced a video delineating the Reasonable Accommodations process. The video provided guidance on the programs as well as testimonials from multiple State employees whose work and life have been impacted by the program.

Additional information can be found in the annual report and on their website: <https://iced.illinois.gov/>

Agency Networking

Central Management Services (CMS), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Human Rights (DHR), Department of Employment Security (DES), Department of Community and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (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 Disabled Hiring Initiatives and the SDO Program. Working together they distribute program information to potential candidates with disabilities.

In addition, regular participation in additional committees to further the advancement of people with disabilities has been paramount over the past year. It is important to recognize that multiple committees exist throughout State government with the intent of advancing job placement for those with disabilities. Below is a summary of these efforts and networking in action.

Meetings with Equal Employment Opportunity Officers

The CMS Disabled Workers Program continues to work with and educate agencies about the SDO Program and the Disabled Hiring Initiative. Agencies that need to increase the number of employees with disabilities can utilize the SDO candidate list to address areas of underutilization. CMS has utilized multiple platforms throughout the year to encourage the use of the SDO. Those platforms include routine statewide personnel manager meetings, hiring workshops hosted by CMS Disabled Workers Program, Career Services and Hiring Resources, and directly interfacing with agency recruitment leaders.

State Employment Webinars/Teleconferences for Persons with Disabilities

The CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator presented at ten virtual webinars in the 2022-2023 reporting period in collaboration with DHS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, as well as current and potential rehabilitation services clients, regarding the State employment process, the SDO Program, and the DWT Program.

Annual Disabled Workers Program/Disabled Hiring Initiative Training

Per SB 1136, PA 101-540, CMS provides agency-wide training to highlight all aspects of the hiring resources allocated to State Agencies and disabled applicants alike which highlights the processes for the SDO program, Alternative Employment Program, Reasonable Accommodations, and the Disabled Workers Trainee Program. With Success Factors employment processes now active, this reporting period, training was distributed within a Q&A-type format during bi-weekly personnel management meetings with Hiring Resource Team staff.

Job Fairs/Conferences

CMS, DHS, and other collaborating agencies attended more than 60 virtual job fairs and other events. When CMS and DHS did not have representatives in attendance, efforts were made to provide information about DWP to attendees with disabilities. DHS’ Division of Rehabilitation Services hosted State of Illinois Virtual Career Fairs for Persons with Disabilities. CMS Disabled Workers Program attended and presented, with dates highlighted in the list below.

State agencies continue hosting and attending virtual job fairs, and a more regular event rhythm has resumed and ultimately bolstered outreach capabilities. For job seekers with disabilities, a virtual career fair is convenient and allows the attendee the ability to not worry about whether the event is accessible. The targeted audience can join a virtual career fair from anywhere with the click of a button and be comfortable in their own surroundings. Below is a partial listing of events that took place between July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023, which included specific outreach initiatives for minorities, veterans, and persons with disabilities:

Date	Summary/Lead Agency
8/9/2022	DHS Rehabilitation Services End of Summer Virtual Hiring Event
8/23/2022	Statewide Recruitment WebEx
8/23/2022	IDOC Employment Workshop
9/15/2022	State Employment Workshop by IDES & American Job Center
9/15/2022	SIU College of Business Career Fair
9/20/2022	DHS Directors Series – Region 1 North event
9/21/2022	Goodwill Workforce - State Employment – How to Apply

9/26/2022	DHS Directors Series – Region 1 South event
9/28/2022	DHS Directors Series – Region 2 event
10/11/2022	IDES Job Fair - Harvey
10/12/2022	DHS Directors Series – Region 4 event
10/13/2022	Triton College Career Fair
10/13/2022	Kennedy King College Career Fair
10/16/2022	DHS Directors Series – Region 5 event
10/18-20/2022	DHS Department of Rehabilitation Services VR – 2nd Annual NDEAM Workshop and Hiring event (3-day virtual event)
10/19/2022	Harry S Truman College Fall Career Fair
10/24/2022	Goodwill Workforce - State of Illinois Recruitment Overview
10/25/2022	Arlington Heights Diversity Job Fair
10/27/2022	Wright College Virtual Career Fair
11/3/2022	Shawnee Community College Career Expo
11/16/2022	Chicago Lighthouse Virtual Career Fair
11/19/2022	DWTP – Training for DHS/VR Counseling staff
12/6/2022	State Employment Career Fair – Will County
12/13/2022	IDES Meet the Employer Workshop – Mt Vernon
12/15/2022	IDES Job Fair - Sterling
1/10/2023	IDES Employment Workshop - Marion
1/24/2023	IDES Employment Workshop – Mt Vernon
1/25/2023	Metro East / Southern Illinois Virtual Hiring Event
1/26/2023	Goodwill Workforce State of Illinois Recruitment Overview
2/7/2023	State Employment Workshop Will County Workforce Center
2/7/2023	IDES Employment Workshop – Mt Vernon
2/10/2023	Alderman Taliaferro Career Fair
2/14/2023	IDES Employment Workshop - Maywood
2/15/2023	East St. Louis Recruitment Fair
2/21/2023	IDES Employment Workshop – Marion
2/22/2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Job Fair - Carbondale
3/1/2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Job Fair – Arlington Heights
3//2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Job Fair – Oakbrook
3/8/2023	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Job Fair - Decatur
3/9/2023	Goodwill Workforce Connection Center
3/14/2023	IDES Employment Workshop - Marion

3/15/2023	Shawnee Community College Career Fair
3/16/2023	Lewis University Career Fair
3/16/2023	IDES Outreach Job Fair - Moline
3/22/2023	John A Logan College Career Fair
3/23/2023	DHS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Training - SDO Program
3/28/2023	IDES Employment Workshop – Mt Vernon
3/31/2023	Richland Community College Career Fair
4/1/2023	Triton College Career Fair
4/20/2023	Harry S Truman College Spring Career Fair
4/27/2023	IDES Employment Workshop - Burbank
5/9/2023	IDES Employment Workshop - Marion
5/16/2023	IDES Employment Workshop - Champaign
5/23/2023	IDES Employment Workshop – Mt Vernon
5/24/2023	5th Annual Career de Mayo – National Able Network
6/6/2023	DCFS on the Spot Hiring Event - Rockford
6/6/2023	IDES Employment Workshop - Champaign
6/7/2023	State of Illinois Employment Workshop – SIC - Carmi
6/10/2023	State Representative Emanuel "Chris" Welch's Annual Job Fair
6/12/2023	DCFS on the Spot Hiring Event - Bloomington
6/13/2023	IDES Employment Workshop - Marion
6/20/2023	IDES Employment Workshop - Champaign
6/21/2023	10th Annual Citywide Job Fair/The Chicago Urban League - UIC
6/28/2023	IDES Employment Workshop - Harvey

INITIATIVES & PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Disability Survey

CMS works with DHR to conduct an annual survey of State employees to determine the number of employees with disabilities 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 address increasing the number of employees with disabilities.

The disability survey is conducted online via a dedicated website. The website enables all State agencies to track and sort data, as well as generate a variety of reports. When an agency hires or promotes an employee with a disability, or when a current employee develops and reports a disability it is captured for tracking and reporting purposes.

The website is an efficient, far-reaching survey tool used to gather complete data as compared to its preceding paper-based survey form. Better data establishes an improved base of knowledge to work

from, and therefore more effectively targets hires of persons with disabilities. Employees are asked to voluntarily respond to the survey.

The survey website is available year-round and is accessible for new hires to complete, and for current employees to update their disability status. Another important feature of the survey is that it serves to indicate which employees need assistance during an emergency evacuation.

SD Eligibility List

The implementation of PA 101-0192 on January 1, 2020, amends the Personnel Code to require CMS to issue a Successful Disability Opportunities Program eligible candidate list along with the Open Competitive eligible candidate list when requested by an agency. Existing law (Personnel Code & Veterans Preference) precludes hiring preference for these candidates over others; the Personnel Rules, including Veterans Preference provisions, are applied to the SDO list as with other eligible lists. Despite the preclusion of hiring preference, an all-agency requirement to receive the SDO eligibility list has positively impacted disability hiring across multiple agencies.

With continued enhancements in the SuccessFactors application portal and hiring processes, SD Program members meeting the minimum requirements of the position, are included in the interview process, subject to all bargaining unit contractual rights and filling of vacancies agreements.

Reporting Period	SD Program Placement
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019	15
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020	31
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	58
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022	38
July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023	42

Disabled Job Candidates - Access to Non-Code Positions

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.

Nearly 10,000 non-code positions in governmental entities are monitored by DHR. DHR has contacted several entities to gauge their interest in qualified disabled candidates. Several governmental agencies with non-code positions have specifically indicated such interest.

To provide a link between disabled candidates and agencies with non-code positions, the following procedures are now 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 has DRS Rehabilitation Counselors alert clients who may qualify for the position.

Agency Report on Progress of Disability Hires – Data for last Seven Reporting periods

This data is based on reporting using the processed date for new hires. Please note that there is a

lag between individuals being hired and the personnel transaction being processed. The data reported is the most consistent, reliable way to report these figures.

Agency	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
CMS	0	0	1	2	3	0	0
DCFS	6	2	1	2	1	2	3
DOC	6	7	16	9	5	5	5
Labor	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
EPA	0	0	1	2	3	2	4
HFS	2	10	1	6	6	3	10
DHR	0	0	2	2	2	2	2
DHS	20	15	8	7	41	37	23
DoIT	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
IDJJ	2	3	1	1	0	1	0
DNR	0	0	2	3	0	0	1
DPH	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
DOR	2	5	3	0	2	3	2
ISP	2	0	2	1	0	0	0
IDOT	0	5	3	1	0	0	0
DES	3	8	0	0	4	2	1
DHP	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
LOTTERY	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
DVA	2	4	0	2	2	2	0
AGING	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Military Affairs	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
Fire Marshall	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
ALPLM	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
IWCC	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
CJIA	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
DCEO	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
PTA Board	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
ISP	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Insurance	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
GAC	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
SRS	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
TOTAL	49	63	44	44	75	65	53

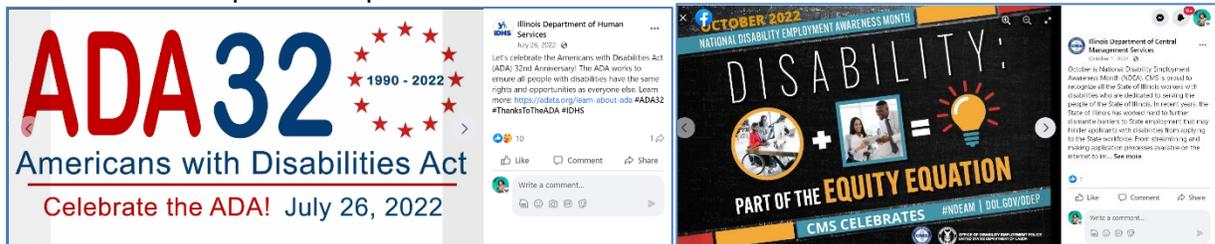
Note: Only agencies that have reported the hiring of individuals with a disability are listed. This list includes SDO Program hires, as well as applicants placed from the SuccessFactors application portal that marked disabled when applying.

2022-2023 Strategic Initiatives

1. Work to effectively promote and increase applicant participation in both the Successful Disabilities Program and the Disabled Workers Trainee Program.

Status: Flyers were distributed at more than 60 outreach events over the course of the reporting period. Flyers cover program eligibility, enrollment, and contact information, ensuring ease of access to individuals who have an interest in the program and are accessible to the blind via reader software compatibility. The programs have also updated their presence on work4illinois.gov to increase ease of access to program staff. Throughout the year, Social Media posts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn included links and information, encouraging people with disabilities to apply.

DHS Facebook post example



CMS Facebook post example

2. Work to increase the 4.7% of disabled Illinois residents working for the State of Illinois to above 5%.

Status: Slight increases occurred in hires, applications, and participants in programs over the previous reporting period. Significant increases were made in both virtual and live hiring events to promote programs. Individual initiative participants and State employees with disabilities are identified only through self-disclosure of a disability. As of June 30, 2023, employees with disabilities comprised approximately 10.4% of the State workforce. This initiative will continue to the next reporting period.

3. Continue to utilize IOCI accessible approved literature in promoting the DWTP at all relevant outreach events in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) and [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#), and bolster program numbers in preparation for full program integration.

Status: Successfully integrated IOCI flyers and web design to increase ease of access. Also created and utilized a pipeline for effective social media posts to advertise presence at events for the disabled community.



4. Continue partnering with ICED and EOPD committees to develop outreach for Disabled applicants regarding State employment and interfacing with involved State

Agencies on a regular basis.

Status: Both partnerships are well-maintained, continue to meet quarterly and have shaped the connection and warm handoff process for DRS applicants and DWP SD enrollees. DWP also provided 2 training opportunities this year for DRS staff to familiarize with the new and ever-changing employment process utilizing the SuccessFactors online application portal, better preparing DRS counselors for initial contact with disabled applicants. EEOPD also receives a yearly report of DWTP activities and hires.

- 5. Continue efforts to attend and host virtual outreach events targeting disabled applicants and provide Agency training on the hiring of qualified disabled applicants, working with DHS-DRS and other partners.**

Status: CMS BoP has attended over 60 events with DWP advertisement and information available and hosted 10 virtual events to both public and SOI HR staff on rules and procedures and services offered by CMS Career Services. Updates and program process changes were communicated through BoP and CMS agency online meetings.

- 6. Monitor integration of the SD hiring process into the development of Success Factors, fully electronic hiring process working with the Hiring Resource Team. Continue to make recommendations for process flow and reporting improvements.**

Status: SD members have now been integrated into the hiring process in a meaningful way. Moving away from legacy SD lists, qualified SD participants are now identified in the system and integrated into the interview pool, following all bargaining unit bidding processes in filling of vacancies. **Completed.**

- 7. Continue to effectively promote and expand participation in the Alternative Employment Program to Agency human resource managers.**

Status: Agency HR staff received 2 training events throughout the course of the year highlighting the AEP process. Program coordinator works with each agency regarding each AEP application packet, to ensure accuracy and quick processing. Participation in this program is highly dependent on agency HR staff and the DWP coordinator to kickstart the AEP process for their disabled employee.

- 8. Continue to review disability hires by State agency and determine agencies that need to target the hiring of qualified candidates with disabilities. Connect with agencies that did not report any hiring of persons with disabilities in FY 22 and discuss various SDO practices to help increase the hiring of persons with disabilities.**

Status: Improvements in hiring processes and SuccessFactors makes it easier for agencies to identify SD participants. SD and AE programs have been streamlined, from grading to validation of participants. Currently underway are training resources and templates to assist agencies, answer questions, and encourage participation. This initiative is ongoing and will be carried over to the next reporting period.

2023-2024 Strategic Initiatives

1. Continue effectively promoting and increasing applicant participation the Disabled Workers Trainee Program to increase the number of participants in each program.
2. Working collaboratively between CMS/DHS-DRS and relevant community groups, reevaluate and evolve the Successful Disability Opportunities Program to serve a broader population of persons with disabilities.
3. Evaluate and transition the Alternative Employment Programs away from a passive program to an effective and proactive program intended to provide participants with career counseling to match and attain new State jobs.
4. Develop strong partnerships with agencies that did not report any hiring of persons with disabilities to discuss various SDO practices to increase hirings.
5. Continue work to maintain the number of disabled Illinois residents working for the State of Illinois to above 5%.
6. Develop additional interagency and participant resources, training programs, FAQs, videos, templates, and guides, hosted on updated DWP website for 24/7 access and assistance.
7. Continue partnering with ICED and EEOPD committees to develop outreach for Disabled applicants regarding State employment and interfacing with involved State Agencies on a regular basis. Utilize and synchronize efforts to accomplish strategic goals.
8. Continue efforts to attend and host virtual and live outreach events targeting disabled applicants and provide Agency training on the hiring of qualified disabled applicants, working with DHS-DRS and other partners. Increase social media presence to promote and partner with interest groups.
9. Actively engage the 773 participants in the SDO to apply for positions through emails, announcements, increased communications and program updates, and job alerts.