

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CENTER FOR WRITING AND COMMUNICATION PROPOSES TO INCREASE THE ROI OF DISABILITY INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

The Center for Writing and Communication (CWAC) 501(c)3, through Mentoring Individuals with Disabilities (MIWD), is looking to increase the already fervent support from disability agencies and the business community in order to provide this innovative mentoring experience by creating greater familiarity with the Return on Investment (ROI) of disability diversity in the workplace. The experience helps job-seekers with disabilities develop some of the necessary skills and experiences they'll need to compete in today's competitive workforce while assisting area companies to secure some of the most dedicated employees in the Columbus market.

While the unemployment rate for people with disabilities recently was reported at its lowest in three years, the *Allsup Disability Study: Income at Risk* reports that people with disabilities experienced an unemployment rate nearly 65 percent higher than the rate for people with no disabilities for the second quarter of 2012. As a result of MIWD, this employment inequity will be reduced as individuals with disabilities will:

- Increase earnings and earning potential
- Increase likelihood of securing health care benefits
- Increase self-esteem and self-worth
- Increase independence
- Increased inclusion through additional social and professional opportunities involving vocational goals, hobbies, and interests
- Reduce dependency on public and private vocational rehabilitation programs

Mentoring Individuals with Disabilities assists individuals with disabilities with person-centered job development activities for sustained, competitive employment. The program connects employees of varied physical and mental disabilities with employers through career exploration experiences at local businesses interested in diversifying their human resources recruitment on an on-going basis. The impacts of the on-going program pursuits are underscored by Mentoring Individuals with Disabilities Day. MIWD Day is a community-awareness building event held quarterly, focusing on sustainable, competitive employment for individuals with disabilities. MIWD seeks to match mentees (job seekers) with area businesses offering job shadowing and hands-on career exploration. Additional informational events are offered in October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Employers have the opportunity to hold American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and disability etiquette training for management and employees in their workplace as part of this program because understanding and knowledge eliminate barriers. Employers are provided with extensive ROI of Disability information, as well as marketing support to display in the workplace. Mentees are matched on a first-come, first-served basis in areas of their vocational goals and interests. A reception celebrating the event will be hosted at the end of the workday honoring our mentees, mentors, business partners and sponsors, and volunteers.

The combination of the Mentoring Individuals with Disabilities program and Mentoring Individuals with Disabilities Day allows The Center for Writing and Communication to apportion awareness to the fact that despite the additional obstacles that people with disabilities confront, they want to work and earn a living.

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