

## HireAble Guest Blog Post

By Joany Callahan is the Human Resources Manager for the Alameda County Sheriff's Office.

Joel is a full-time employee working in the Human Resources Unit of the Alameda County Sheriff's Office who recently entered his sixth year of employment with the department. Why is this cause for celebration? As an adult with autism, Joel is one of the few individuals with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (IDD) who found full-time employment. In California, 9 out of 10 adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities are currently unemployed, despite the state's overall unemployment rate of 6%.



Joel started his job in 2009 through an internship program called Project SEARCH. It was during his internship with Project SEARCH that Joel proved to be a perfect fit for the Sheriff's Office Human Resources Unit. Project SEARCH is a program, operated through East Bay Innovations (EBI) that offers training to adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. They helped place Joel in the internship and provided on-the-job support and training as he moved into his full-time position. EBI continues to offer support, six years later, when and if there are questions either from Joel or his supervisor about job processes.

As the Human Resources Manager for the Sheriff's Office, I have the pleasure of working with Joel on a daily basis. A vital member of our unit, he helps with a number of tasks, including updating our Human Resources Management System, scanning documents and helping to maintain over 1,600 personnel files for the department. Joel's meticulous focus, phenomenal memory and contagious positivity make him a valuable asset to our unit.

The successful experience with Project SEARCH was a catalyst for hiring three additional employees through their job placement services. EBI understands the business needs of the department and they provide ongoing support and training when and if needed. The other individuals we hired work in a variety of jobs throughout the Sheriff's Office: Jason is currently scanning files at the Warrants and Records Unit for their new records management system; Jeff works in the mailroom at the Detentions and Corrections Division; and Connor works as a clerk in the Finance Unit.

The individuals we hired are highly capable employees who bring value and depth to the workplace. I encourage all Bay Area businesses, whether in the public or private sector, to get involved and diversify their staff to include people with disabilities. This untapped community is ready to work!