

# An Inclusive Workforce Must Include People with Disabilities

BY KEN SKLENAR

IF YOU ARE A BUSINESS that prides itself on having a diverse and inclusive workforce but people with disabilities are not among your employees, you are missing an untapped resource that can improve not only your company's work culture, but also its bottom line. Fortunately, Easterseals can help.

Here are just a few reasons why people with disabilities should be a part of your diverse workforce:

- People with disabilities are an untapped workforce, especially in 2021. The National Organization on Disability found that nearly one million people with disabilities have lost their jobs during the pandemic.
- Employees with disabilities have far less turnover than others. The U.S. Department of Labor found that employers who diversify with employees with disabilities saw a 90% increase in employee retention.
- Workers with disabilities are capable, productive, friendly and they often drive innovation in the business.
- Giving employees with disabilities customized job tasks creates a more productive workforce by freeing up the time of other staff.

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- Hiring people with disabilities generates loyal customers both with and without disabilities.

Helping people with disabilities connect with meaningful, appropriate employment in the community is a critical part of Easterseals' mission. Our Supported Employment program matches participants with jobs in local businesses so they can earn competitive wages with the assistance of job coaching and training.

Currently, Easterseals works with more than 60 businesses statewide and supports more than 80 individuals with disabilities in competitive employment. To learn more about how Easterseals can help you find the perfect employee for your business, please reach out to Easterseals' Director of Employment Services, Jane Schuler, at [jschuler@esdel.org](mailto:jschuler@esdel.org) or 302-324-4444. ■

### SUCCESS STORY: PATRICIA



Patricia has been working at the same position at Silver Lake Center, a skilled nursing facility in Dover, for 12 years. Throughout the pandemic, she is working her hardest to keep residents safe. In fact, she increased her hours. She says, "My goal is to keep my residents safe while still being able to support them emotionally and physically."

# Guide to Workforce Development

## SUCCESS STORY: BILLY



Billy has been a stellar employee for 24 years and continued to work hard at Bayhealth Hospital through the pandemic. "I work hard to make sure our hospitals are clean and properly disinfected because I care about our patients and my coworkers," says Billy. "I want to keep them safe."

## SUCCESS STORY: COLIN



Colin showed his character in a big way when he was one of only two baggers who decided to work through the pandemic at the Giant store in Millville.

## SUCCESS STORY: AVANTE



Avante loves baking and now, thanks to Easterseals, he is getting paid to do what he loves. He likes making chocolate chip cookies as a bakery assistant at Giant Food Stores, and relishes seeing his customers enjoy them.

## SUCCESS STORY: CASSIE



Cassie and her husband were able to buy a home thanks to the competitive wages she makes from her job at Lowes with the support of Easterseals Supported Employment services. She is known for her strong work ethic and positive attitude.



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