



Employment First Florida Grassroots Group Online Meeting Summary

Date: April 19, 2016

Topic: The Abilities Work Help Desk and Web Portal

Presenters: Jeffrey Michaels, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Diane Vacca, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

Meeting Summary

The April Grassroots Group online meeting provided information about the resources available to help Florida's employers find information about hiring qualified employees with disabilities and to help link people with disabilities to available job openings. The presenters shared information about how employers and job-seekers with disabilities can use the Abilities Work Help Desk and Abilities Work Web Portal.

During the online event we learned about:

Q. What are the Abilities Work Help Desk and Web Portal?

A. They were created at the request of The Governor's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities. They recommended that:

...The Department of Economic Opportunity, along with the support of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, serve as a single-point of contact for employers that would: 1) assist them to access people with disabilities who are ready and able to work, for recruitment and hiring purposes; and 2) provide information on available services and supports that make it possible for persons with disabilities to succeed in the workforce.

Q. What does the Abilities Work Help Desk do?

A. The [Abilities Work Help Desk](#) is resource that connects employers to experts in employing people with disabilities. Employers can ask questions by email or phone about hiring and supporting employees with disabilities.

Some things the Help Desk can help employers to do:

- Connect with job candidates who have disabilities
- Get information about the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Understand the benefits of hiring employees with disabilities

Q. How can employers contact the Abilities Work Help Desk?

A. They can be reached Monday through Friday, 8am-5pm Eastern, at **844-245-3405** (toll free). Or you can email them at abilitiesworkhd@vr.fldoe.org.

Q. What is the Abilities Work Web Portal?

A. The Abilities Work Web Portal is a website where employers can register their business and post open jobs and where job seekers can learn about jobs in their community.

Q. How do job seekers use the Abilities Work Web Portal?

A. Job seekers can use it to:

- Register and apply for jobs through the Abilities Work Web Portal
- Find out where to go to get help with their Abilities Work account from their local CareerSource office
- Find general information and resources about employment on the web site and by calling the help desk
- Register, post a resume, or apply for services with an Employment First partner agency. You can get connected here - <https://abilitieswork.employflorida.com>

Q. What can I do with this information?

A. These resources make it easier for job seekers with disabilities to find work. The help desk could be a useful tool for people with disabilities who are already working, but whose employers have questions about disability policies and employment issues.

For more information about future Employment First Florida Grassroots Group meetings or learn about past events, visit <http://www.employmentfirstfl.org>

For more information about the Grassroots Group, contact John Kramer at john.kramer@umb.edu or by phone 617-287-4369.

The EmployMe1st project is a joint project of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services.

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