



TARGET ACCESS

WRP Works for USDA

The Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities (WRP) is a competitive, nationwide program which identifies qualified students with disabilities for full-time permanent work or summer internships, primarily with the federal government.

“WRP is a key resource for potential employers to find qualified students and recent graduates who are eager to enter the workforce and prove what they can do,” noted Assistant Secretary for the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Roy Grizzard. ODEP, in cooperation with the Department of Defense (DoD), administers the program for the over 1,600 job seekers with disabilities. A wide variety of other agencies, including the USDA, participate in the consortium.

In fiscal year 2003, agencies hired 329 WRP

individuals, 25 of them at the USDA alone. The USDA ranked second in the number of WRP hires, just behind the co-sponsoring agencies (DoD and the Department of Labor).



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Issue # 8

March 2004

WRP, continued...

According to Samantha Schmucker, the USDA's WRP coordinator, the WRP pre-screens its candidates during face-to-face interviews in order to create a group of highly-motivated candidates for agency hiring officials. These officials have access to referral pools tailored to specific job requirements, access to candidates across the country, and the opportunity to conduct their own independent interviews.

Additionally, WRP hires are particularly valuable to the USDA because they undertake special projects which may have previously been postponed due to lack of resources. They also assist staff with projects and assignments, sharing specialized knowledge and innovative technical skills. "I hope that hiring officials and program managers across the Department make full use of this opportunity to help meet their disability hiring goals while attracting qualified staff for permanent positions or for summer hires," Schmucker emphasized. "The program works."

Approximately 1,500 students with disabilities are interviewed for the WRP each year at colleges and universities nationwide. Recruiters then prepare interview summaries and enter information into a recruitment database which is made available to government and private sector employers.

Director Bruce McFarlane of the USDA's TARGET Center, returning from a recruitment trip to the west coast noted, "I'm not sure who gains more out of this process, the students or the recruiters. The students gain valuable interview experience, with a roughly 25 percent chance of obtaining a summer job in the federal sector. Recruiters get to visit various college campuses around the country, but more importantly, we get to meet with some incredible people that have a wealth of experience and training that would be so valuable to federal managers. It's hard work, but easily a win-win program for all involved."



USDA/CAP Partnership **UPDATE**

The USDA/CAP Partnership continues to be a successful venture for USDA employees with disabilities. As the point of contact for the USDA, the TARGET Center strives to keep clients informed of changes and additions to the program. You will continue to find these announcements in TARGET Access, as well as on our web site.

CAP has recently reviewed and identified the need to revise their monitor policy. This decision has been made because many agencies provide 17 inch computer monitors as part of the desktop computer configuration. In addition, technology has improved the image resolution to adequately support screen magnification. Computer monitors are not considered assistive technology and therefore CAP will no longer provide them.

CAP feels this decision will allow them to more effectively accommodate more employees. Low vision employees are encouraged to continue utilizing the USDA/CAP Partnership to request accommodations such as screen magnification software, closed circuit televisions, and other assistive technology solutions.

For more information on the USDA/CAP Partnership, please visit www.usda.gov/oo/target/cap or call 202-720-2600 (v/tty).

TARGET **N** FOCUS

Job Training Counselor Enables Workers

As a Job Training Counselor within USDA's Mail and Reproduction Management Division (MRMD),

Florence Martin is happy to help employees with developmental and learning disabilities with tasks that many people may take for granted.

"It's a rewarding position," said Martin, "because I enable workers who are grateful for the assistance."

MRMD employees rely on Martin for a wide range of needs from rudimentary typing courses to mediation with supervisors. If a mail room employee needs information on how to retire, she goes to Florence. If an employee is dealing with stress or has behavioral problems, he goes to Florence. Ms. Martin even helps employees work to improve their reading level if necessary.

As a TARGET Center contractor, most of Ms. Martin's work is done with Office of Operations employees responsible for mail distribution and document preparation. In addition, 20-30 students with developmental and learning disabilities from D.C. Public Schools and youth programs will find their first part-time jobs through Florence this summer.

Often times, for students with developmental or learning disabilities, the transition from class room to work force can be a difficult experience. Without the proper guidance from a Job Training Counselor, they can lose the initiative to arrive at work every day.

Last summer, Florence assisted three high school students who worked in the mail room and reproduction. Staring at an otherwise uncertain future after graduation, these students excelled at

their positions and were each able to turn summer opportunity into a full-time job. This success story

would not have been possible without the help of Florence Martin.

"Whatever their needs are, I am here for them," said Martin. "Nothing gives me greater satisfaction than helping people by giving them a fair chance. In fact, I'm not happy if the day goes by and I have not helped anyone."



Learning Disability

- A disorder in basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or use mathematical calculations.
- Includes conditions such as perceptual disability, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

Developmental Disability

- A severe, chronic disability manifested before age 22, likely to continue indefinitely, attributable to a mental and/or physical impairment, resulting in substantial functional limitations in three areas of major life activity, and reflecting the person's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other service.



The TARGET Center's annual Spring Open House will take place on Tuesday, April 20, 2003, from 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Please visit the TARGET Center during these times for open tours of the center, demonstrations of various technologies, and introductions to our three monthly training courses:

- Making Accessible PDFs
- Customizing Your PC
- Being Comfortable At Work

Please visit www.usda.gov/oo/target for more information on this event, including a complete description and schedule.

A sign-language interpreter has been scheduled.

Please contact 202-720-2600 (v/tty) to request alternative formatting or other necessary accommodations.



USDA TARGET Center Calendar of Events

- **April 14th & May 12th , 12 pm - 1 pm**
Making Accessible PDFs
Location: USDA TARGET Center
- **April 21st and May 19th, 12 pm - 1 pm**
Customizing Your PC
Location: USDA TARGET Center
- **March 24th and May 5th, 12 pm - 1 pm**
Being Comfortable At Work
Location: USDA TARGET Center
- **March 25th, 10 am - 12 pm**
Interpretype Technology Demonstration
Typing device to communicate with deaf
Location: USDA TARGET Center
- **April 20th, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm**
TARGET Center Spring Open House
See sidebar to the left.

Please visit our web site for more information and a complete listing of disability related events.

The electronic version of this publication, also available on our web site, can be read by a screen reader and adjusted in Acrobat Reader for low-vision users.

If you need the print publication in an alternative format such as Braille or large print, please contact the TARGET Center.



Helping People. It's What We Do.

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