



About the Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities

A Task Force Fact Sheet

"By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to increase the employment of adults with disabilities to a rate that is as close as possible to the employment rate of the general adult population and to support the goals articulated in the findings and purpose section of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, it is hereby ordered the establishment of the Presidential Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities."

Equal and Accessible Employment for Adults with Disabilities

On March 13, 1998, President Clinton signed into law Executive Order 13078, establishing the Presidential Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities. The mandate of the Task Force is to evaluate existing Federal programs to determine what changes, modifications, and innovations may be necessary to remove barriers to employment opportunities faced by adults with disabilities. Some of the areas the Task Force will review include: reasonable accommodations, inadequate access to health care, lack of consumer-driven, long-term supports and services, transportation, accessible and integrated housing, telecommunications, assistive technology, community services, child care, education, vocational rehabilitation, training services, employment retention, promotion and discrimination, on-the-job supports, and economic incentives to work.

The President appointed Alexis M. Herman, U. S. Department of Labor Secretary, to serve as Chair of the Task Force, and Tony Coelho, Chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, to serve as Vice Chair. The Task Force is comprised of the Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Education, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Commissioner of Social Security, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Transportation, Director of the Office of Personnel Management, Administrator of the Small Business Administration, the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Chair of the Federal Communications Commission, the Chairperson of the National Council on Disability, and the Chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. This year, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Attorney General of the Department of Justice are joining the Task Force, bringing the number of cabinet-level and other agencies to eighteen.

The Task Force will implement an aggressive national public policy review and provide the President with recommendations on actions that can be taken to advance the employment of adults with disabilities, including legislative proposals, regulatory changes, and program and budget initiatives. Many of these initiatives, including the ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, and the budget proposal to create a new Office of Disability Policy, Evaluation and Technical Assistance within the Department of Labor, are detailed in the Task Force's November 15, 1999 report to the President. [Link to the 1999 Report.] The members of the Task Force have joined together with the President in his commitment to ensure that these national initiatives identified through these collaborative efforts receive high priority within their respective departments and agencies. Executive Order 13078 mandates the most comprehensive national public policy review to date with the goal of increasing the employment of adults with disabilities.

The Task Force is working through six federal interagency committees and one subcommittee. The committees, composed of senior officials from multiple federal departments and agencies,

meet regularly for the purpose of developing recommendations for change in many areas, including employment opportunities for youth, civil rights, health care, life long learning, and self-employment and entrepreneurship.

The Task Force issued its initial report to the President by November 15, 1998. [Link to the 1998 report.] and a second report on November 15, 1999 [Link to the 1999 Report.]. There will also be reports to the President on November 15, 2000 and a final report on July 26, 2002, the 10th anniversary of the effective date of the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The reports will describe the actions taken by, and progress of, each member of the Task Force in carrying out the mandate of the Executive Order.

Actions Mandated by the Executive Order

In addition to the broader mandate to evaluate existing federal programs to determine what changes, modifications, and innovations may be necessary, Section 2 of Executive Order 13078 directs certain agencies to take particular steps to increase the employment of adults with disabilities.

First, the Task Force will help ensure that the Federal Government does its part to employ adults with disabilities. By November 15, 1998, the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Labor, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission will submit to the Task Force a review of Federal Government personnel laws, regulations, and policies and, as appropriate, will recommend or implement changes necessary to improve Federal employment policy for adults with disabilities. This review will include personnel practices and actions such as: hiring, promotion, benefits, retirement, workers' compensation, retention, accessible facilities, job accommodations, layoffs, and reductions in force. Also, an evaluation of whether a single governmental entity or program should be established to provide computer and electronic accommodations for Federal employees with disabilities.

Second, the U.S. Departments of Justice, Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services will report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work with the States and others to ensure that the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act is carried out in accordance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This will give individuals with disabilities and their families the opportunity to realize the full promise of welfare reform by having an equal opportunity for employment.

Third, the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services, Small Business Administration, and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities will work together and report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work to develop small business and entrepreneurial opportunities for adults with disabilities and strategies for assisting low-income adults, including those with disabilities to create small businesses and micro-enterprises. These same agencies, in consultation with the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, will assess the impact of the Randolph-Sheppard Act vending program and the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act on employment and small business opportunities for people with disabilities. The Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development shall report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their examination of their programs to see if they can be used to create new work incentives and to remove barriers to work for adults with disabilities.

Fourth, the U.S. Departments of Justice, Education, and Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Social Security Administration will work together and report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work to propose remedies to the prevention of people with disabilities from successfully exercising their employment rights under the Americans

with Disabilities Act of 1990 because of the receipt of monetary benefits based on their disability and lack of gainful employment.

Fifth, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census, in cooperation with the U. S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, the National Council on Disability, and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities will, design and implement a statistically reliable and accurate method to measure the employment rate of adults with disabilities as soon as possible, but no later than the date of termination of the Task Force. Data derived from this methodology will be published on as frequent basis as possible.

Finally, the Task Force will analyze youth related employment programs administered at the U.S. Department of Labor, Department of Education and the Social Security Administration. It will include the review of Special Education & Vocational rehabilitation, school-to-work transition, vocational education, work incentives and other programs, as they may be determined.

For More Information

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