

April 2008 (Vol. 7, No. 4)

New Head of Office of Disability Employment Policy



The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), the Federal agency that funds EARN, has a new Assistant Secretary – Neil Romano. Mr. Romano has dedicated his career to the marketing of ideas and messages to help save lives and promote public policy. He founded Romano & Associates Inc., which produced highly visible and effective public awareness programs, as well as America's Strength, through which he worked with industry to promote the importance to them of hiring individuals with disabilities.

Mr. Romano's extensive professional background includes tenure as director of communications for the White House Office of Drug Abuse Policy. In that role, he worked on campaigns such as "Just Say No" and "America Responds to AIDS." He has been a member of the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. He also has served a number of diverse boards of directors, including those of the United Cerebral Palsy of Central Maryland, Oral Health America and the Professional Baseball Athletic Trainers Society. Additionally, he has advised the Association for People in Supported Employment and the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®), which uses a "business to business" approach promoting the imperative of hiring people with disabilities.

Mr. Romano was confirmed by the Senate on March 13, 2008. Already immersed in a lengthy "must do" list, he has let his staff know that, because of his disability, he works best with verbal briefings, rather than written material. Mr. Romano's dynamic presence and boundless energy are contagious. He has hit the ground running, excited about this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of Americans with disabilities and committed to helping employers fully understand the value of people with disabilities in their workforces. On April 9, he did two radio interviews and on April 18, he presented at Deloitte's event, "Home from Iraq and Afghanistan: A Tribute to US Heroes."

[Read Assistant Secretary Romano's full bio.](#)

Deadline for New Freedom Initiative Award Nominations is Fast Approaching

The deadline for nominating employers for the US Department of Labor's (DOL) prestigious **New Freedom Initiative (NFI) Award** is May 30th. The Award is given annually to employers that demonstrate a solid commitment to the hiring, retention and advancement of people with disabilities.

Additional information on the award and specific nomination criteria are available in the [Federal Register](#). Questions may be addressed to the Labor Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), Division of Policy Communication and Outreach, at 202-693-7880.

DID YOU KNOW...?

The Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) will present *Employer Best Practices: Recruiting and Hiring of People with Disabilities* on Tuesday, May 20, as part of an audio conference series. The session will highlight two powerful best practices developed by the Walgreen Company and Cincinnati Children's Hospital regarding the recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities. Participants will learn what it took to gain support within these organizations and the benefits that they have realized as a result. Strategies and common sense approaches will be discussed. Both Walgreens and Cincinnati Children's Hospital have become models in the business community for embracing people with disabilities as part of their diverse workforces. [Register for the conference.](#)

Join the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®) in Portland, Oregon on October 5-8 for its 11th Annual Conference and National Career Fair. The conference will feature over 40 Educational Sessions, including Keynotes and a SuperTrack of sessions by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). [Visit the USBLN® website](#) for more information.

The Workforce Recruitment Program Off to a Great Start

The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) database was released in mid-March and already over 200 candidates have been hired. The database contains over 1,750 profiles of students with disabilities seeking permanent or internship positions and EARN is the only avenue for private-sector, non-profit and state and local government agencies to tap into it. An EARN Employment Specialist can search the database for candidates by location, type of position sought, and other criteria. Contact an Employment Specialist at earn@earnworks.com or 1-866-327-6669 for more information about the WRP or to request a search.

Ernst & Young Commended for Internal Communication Disability Awareness Tools

Recently, the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®) commended the efforts of one of its member companies, Ernst & Young LLP, for its actions to “promote accessibility and an inclusive workplace.” A leading professional services firm, Ernst & Young has developed a suite of resources to educate all of its employees on disability employment and inclusion matters. The “AccessAbilities” suite of materials includes a six-page brochure that highlights the firm’s commitment to being an employer of choice for individuals with disabilities; one-page briefs providing guidance on various disability-oriented topics; a poster designed to raise awareness about hidden disabilities; and a DVD featuring success stories.

In a press release, the Chair of the Board of Directors of the USBLN®, Katherine McCary, indicated that Ernst & Young was being praised for “further defining itself on a daily basis as a leader committed to corporate diversity... these resources highlight so many important aspects of the workplace – including appropriate language, etiquette and inclusive work habits.”

Ernst & Young’s resources serve as a model for any employer interested in educating its employees on disability matters and elevating its status as an employer of choice for people with disabilities.

[Watch Ernst & Young’s AccessAbilities video](#) for a sample of their suite of tools.

GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK

IF YOU HAVE AN EARN SUCCESS STORY, TELL US ABOUT IT. WE WOULD LIKE TO FEATURE YOUR STORY IN THIS NEWSLETTER AND ON OUR WEB SITE.

E-MAIL YOUR STORY TO:
EARN@EARNWORKS.COM

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

- [DisabilityInfo.gov](#)
- [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)
- [Ticket to Work](#)
- [Job Accommodation Network](#)
- [National Organization on Disability](#)

INFORMATION YOU CAN USE

ODEP's Universal Design Strategies explained – Universal Design provides an important toolset for companies seeking to provide advantages for their customers and for their employees, who also want to feel welcome and respected, and who require adequate and timely information to do their jobs. [Read more.](#)

EARN SUPPORT

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