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Christine M. Griffin confirmed Deputy Director of OPM

Christine Griffin, a strong advocate for women's rights and the rights of individuals with disabilities, has been confirmed as Deputy Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and will play a key role in shaping and managing the Federal government's 1.9 million employees. While serving as Vice Chair at EEOC, Ms. Griffin implemented the LEAD Initiative - Leadership for the Employment of Americans with Disabilities - to address the significant under-employment of individuals with severe disabilities in the Federal government.

New EEOC Guides Aid Federal Hiring

Advancing its campaign to increase federal hiring of employees with disabilities, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued a set of guides on leveraging Schedule A, an authority available to federal agencies to hire and/or promote individuals with disabilities without competing the job. Each guide is designed for one of the participants in the federal hiring process and includes service providers, applicants with disabilities, HR professionals, hiring managers, and Disability Program Managers and/or Selective Placement Coordinators.

These guides were made possible through a partnership between EEOC and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and are designed to promote a significant increase in the population of individuals with severe disabilities in the federal sector.

Read the [EEOC guidelines](#).

International Day of Persons with Disabilities Proclamation by President Obama

In an effort to renew its global commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms for persons with disabilities, the United States became a proud signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, urging equal protection and benefits for all citizens and reaffirming the inherent dignity and independence of the 650 million people living with disabilities worldwide.

"I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 3, 2009, as International Day of Persons with Disabilities. I call on all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs. The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is a time to renew our commitment to the principles of empowerment, dignity, and equality."

Read the [Proclamation](#).

** In December 2009, the percentage of people with disabilities in the labor force was 21.6 compared with 70.0 for persons with no disability. The unemployment rate for those with disabilities was 13.8 percent, compared with 9.5 percent for persons with no disability, not seasonally adjusted.*

DID YOU KNOW...?

Government Websites Still Lack Accessibility

Under federal law, government Web sites are required to include audio screen readers, photo and video captioning, and other features to assist users with disabilities. But as the Obama administration has created new online services to improve transparency, the accessibility of those sites has been lagging. [Read more](#)

New Cell Phone Technology Allows People who are Deaf to Communicate

For the deaf and hard of hearing community, cell phone use has been mostly limited to text messaging. However researchers at Cornell University have created cell phones that allow people who are deaf to communicate through sign language, the same way hearing people use the phones for voice communication, in real time via video-conferencing software. [Read more](#)

THE DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

December 2009*

[Percentage of people with disabilities in the labor force:](#)

21.6 %

[Unemployment rate of persons with a disability:](#)

13.8 %

[Commonly Used Terms](#)

Stevie Wonder Named UN Messenger of Peace

On December 3, 2009 American singer-songwriter Stevie Wonder, who is blind since birth, was named the 11th UN Messenger of Peace, joining such a prestigious line of outstanding personalities as Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, actors George Clooney and Michael Douglas, conductor Daniel Barenboim and cellist Yo-Yo Ma. The songwriter, who has won 25 Grammy awards, is being recognized for his years of philanthropy, which included his work with the U.S. President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the Children's Diabetes Foundation and Junior Blind of America.

Introduced by UN Secretary-general Ban Ki-moon in observance of the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, Wonder told reporters that being named UN Messenger of Peace is an honor of a lifetime.

SHRM Renews Agreement with ODEP

On November 20, 2009, Kathy Martinez, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Disability and Employment Policy, and Laurence G. O'Neil, President and CEO of Society of Human Resource Management signed a two-year alliance agreement at SHRM's annual Leadership Conference in Arlington, Va. The agreement is designed to foster the relationship between the two organizations in order to improve employment opportunities for job qualified seekers with disabilities. Read the [full article](#).

Can Autism be an Asset Rather than a Liability?

Companies around the globe have discovered that some traits of high-functioning adults with autism are just the ones they are seeking. One such company in the US is the Chicago-based non-profit [Aspiritech](#) which recently launched a pilot program to train testers for software developers. Another is Specialisterne in Denmark, which prepares individuals with autism as hourly consultants to do data entry, assembly work, and other similar jobs many employees may shy away from due to the repetitive nature of the tasks involved.

Click here to read the [full story](#).

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Olympic Committee Launch Paralympic to Serve Veterans with Disabilities

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) signed a memorandum of understanding to provide Paralympic sport programming and additional community support, including funding and resources, to injured service members and veterans across the country.

"Research shows that sports and physical activity provide incredible healing power and contribute significantly to successful rehabilitation and re-engagement in life for people and soldiers who become physically disabled," said Charlie Huebner, Chief of Paralympics, USOC.

For additional information click on the [printable version](#)

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

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

INFORMATION YOU CAN USE

Senate Approves Funding For Service Dogs for Veterans

By a vote of 57-35, the Senate yesterday gave its final approval to the FY 2010 Omnibus Appropriations Act, funding a key priority of Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.), which is providing service dogs to veterans with disabilities.

EARN SUPPORT

EARN is funded by the [U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy](#).



ODEP

Office of Disability
Employment Policy

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