



CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

Date: August 27, 2010	CC: Development
<u>Corporate Inkind Sponsorships</u>	
Action Requested/Deadline: October 15, 2010	

As part of the Year End Report – Part II, we have traditionally asked chapters to provide Corporate Sponsorship information. We have looked to see what information we could obtain from our systems and have revised our request to include only In-Kind Corporate Sponsorships for events or programs for fiscal year 2010. This information is used in coordination with cash sponsorships submitted in Altair to identify potential national or regional corporate sponsors. You can find the Corporate Sponsorship form on SharePoint, Chapter Management, Announcements. Please submit your information to Pat Abruzzo at patricia.abruzzo@nmss.org by October 15, 2010.

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PROGRAMS & SERVICES

August 27, 2010

CC: Advocacy

Chapter Presidents

U.S. Department of Labor's Disability Employment Initiative - Grant Announcement

In early August, the U.S. Department of Labor announced a solicitation for grant applications for approximately \$22 million to fund programs that will improve educational, training and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The new Disability Employment initiative is a joint project of the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration and its Office of Disability Employment Policy. Programs will serve eligible individuals who are unemployed or underemployed, including those receiving Social Security disability benefits.

As an organization we are ineligible to apply directly for these funds, however this is a unique and timely opportunity to engage in advocacy and education efforts with your state workforce agency (state Department of Labor), local one-stop employment offices, and state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies on the employment needs of people living with MS – not only for the short-term need of the grant, but with a longer term goal of establishing and maintaining strong collaborative partnerships with these employment resources.

Funds will be awarded to state workforce agencies, which will collaborate with workforce investment boards and local areas. Grant awards will range from \$1.5 to \$6 million each to be spent over a three-year period. Cooperative agreements will be used to foster service delivery through the public workforce investment system for job seekers with disabilities. Programs will build upon the Labor Department's Disability Program Navigator initiative

(http://www.doleta.gov/disability/onepagers/DPN_FACTSHEET_October2009.pdf) and other model service delivery strategies.

As a first step you may want to contact your state workforce agency to ascertain if the agency is moving forward with a grant application. If yes, take this opportunity to share the employment needs and concerns of people with MS. These could include issues surrounding disclosure, accommodations, implications of adult-onset disability and hidden symptoms, knowledge of legal protections in the workplace (ADA, FMLA, HIPAA, COBRA), and utilization of assistive technology. As part of Department of

Labor initiatives, workforce agencies work through one-stop employment centers and oftentimes, representatives from the state vocational rehabilitation agencies are present in those settings.

It might prove useful to contact those offices as well to educate and inform them of the employment concerns of people with MS and to obtain information about services available to job seekers. To determine your state's workforce agency, go to <http://www.jobcentral.com/state-workforce-agencies.asp>. For contact information for your one-stop employment office locations, please visit <http://www.servicelocator.org>. For a list of vocational rehabilitation agencies, visit <http://askjan.org/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902>.

To learn more about the grant RFP please visit <http://www.doleta.gov/grants> and in the What's New box click on New Grant Solicitation 08/2010. Please note – the deadline for the application is September 9, 2010.

Regardless of whether your state agency is applying for funds or not, it is critical to make and maintain connections with these employment resources in the community. The state VR agency provides services specifically for people with disabilities with the goal of helping people gain and maintain employment. One-stop employment centers provide employment services to any job seeker and should be accessible to everybody, including people with disabilities. For those times when we are not able to provide direct employment assistance to our clients with MS, it is critical to know where to refer them, to be knowledgeable about the services available, and to ensure that the agencies are properly equipped to serve people with MS and knowledgeable about MS and employment issues.

To keep this momentum going, over the next fiscal year you will learn more about the exciting and innovative employment initiatives in development across the country. The first call will be in late October/early November and will include a presentation by the Northeast Region's Employment Team on the work of the team to establish regional employment priorities, to include a discussion on the team's recommendations and outcomes. The date and time of this call will be communicated in a future news sheet.

For more information please contact Debra Frankel (617-795-7002 or debra.frankel@nmss.org), Kim Koch (303-698-6100, ext. 15158 or Kimberly.koch@nmss.org) or Bari Talente (202-408-1500 or bari.talente@nmss.org).