

Disability Program Navigators

Department of Labor, Division of Employment Security

WHAT: GF/MH funds to establish two full-time, permanent Disability Program Navigator positions: \$150,000

The purpose of the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) program is to increase the use of job centers by people with disabilities and increase their employment opportunities and self sufficiency.

- **Navigators in targeted job centers work with community resources to improve “seamless services” at the centers for persons with disabilities which include:**
 - ✓ Outreach to agencies and organizations that serve people with disabilities to encourage them to use the resources available at the job centers.
 - ✓ Guiding staff in helping individuals access and navigate the complexities of various programs that impact their ability to gain and or retain employment.
 - ✓ Developing linkages and collaborate on an ongoing basis with employers to facilitate job placements.
 - ✓ Developing partnerships to achieve integrated services, systemic change, and expand the capacity to serve customers with disabilities at the job centers.
 - ✓ Assisting in or out-of-school youth to obtain employment and economic self-sufficiency.
 - ✓ Serving as resources on the Federal, State, local and private programs that impact the ability of individuals to enter and remain in the workforce.

WHY:

- **The DPN program has been successful in meeting the needs of people with disabilities. Since implementation of the DPN program in 2003, there has been an increase in the:**
 - ✓ Use of job centers by people with disabilities from 2.3% (2003) to 4.4% (2007)
 - ✓ Percent entering employment from 50% (2003) to 61% (2007)
 - ✓ Percent retaining employment from 64% (2003) to 81% (2007)
- Recent federal funding cuts coupled with attrition and an increase in our job centers' resource room traffic has drastically minimized the amount of time devoted to DPN activities.
- The ability to provide core DPN services such as guidance to job center staff, outreach, and facilitated coordination of service providers is not possible with the current staffing levels.
- Alaska's workforce (ages 16-64) consists of 24% of the population who experience disabilities. Of this, 26% are unemployed. There is a clear and crucial need to provide these DPN services.