



Solicitation of Proposals for

Louisiana Employer Toolkit: Hiring and Supporting People with I/DD

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) wants to increase employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) across Louisiana.

The Council is looking for a group to create and promote a detailed toolkit for Louisiana employers. The toolkit should help businesses understand the benefits of hiring people with I/DD and give employers the information, tools, and contacts they need to recruit, hire, train, support, and keep employees with I/DD.

The toolkit should do more than explain disability employment. It should help employers understand that people with I/DD are an often-overlooked group of potential employees. It should answer common employer questions and concerns and explain the help that is available to make employment successful for both the business and the employee.

What is This Project About?

People with I/DD want opportunities to work, earn money, build relationships, learn new skills, and become more independent.

Louisiana businesses also need dependable workers. However, some employers may not consider hiring people with I/DD because they do not know how the process works or what help is available.

Employers may have questions such as:

- Where can I find applicants with I/DD?
- What kinds of jobs can people with I/DD do?
- Will it cost my business more to hire someone with I/DD?
- Will the employee need more supervision?
- What is a reasonable accommodation?
- Who pays for accommodations?
- What is a job coach or employment specialist?
- Can someone help train or support the employee?
- Are there tax credits or other financial benefits for my business?
- How should I interview a person with I/DD?
- How can I make my job postings easier to understand?
- How should I prepare supervisors and coworkers?
- Who can I call if I have a question or problem after someone is hired?

Wrong information, concerns about cost, or simply not knowing where to start can keep employers from hiring people with I/DD.

The toolkit should answer these questions in a clear and practical way. It should help an employer move from thinking about hiring a person with I/DD to knowing what steps to take.

Who Should Use the Toolkit?

The toolkit should be useful for:

- Small businesses
- Large employers
- Business owners
- Human resources staff
- Hiring managers
- Supervisors
- Chambers of commerce
- Economic development organizations
- Business groups
- Workforce development organizations

The toolkit should be useful for employers who have never hired someone with I/DD as well as employers that already have experience hiring people with disabilities.

What Should the Toolkit Help Employers Understand?

The toolkit should help employers:

- Understand the benefits of hiring people with I/DD
- See people with I/DD as potential employees who can help meet their workforce needs
- Understand how employment helps people with I/DD earn money, become more independent, build relationships, and be part of their communities
- Learn the facts about common myths and misunderstandings
- Understand possible costs and savings
- Learn about tax credits, financial help, and other supports that may be available
- Understand what job coaches, employment specialists, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, and other programs can do to help
- Write job postings that are clear and easy to understand
- Recruit applicants with I/DD
- Interview applicants fairly
- Understand reasonable accommodations
- Train and support employees with I/DD
- Help supervisors and coworkers create an inclusive workplace
- Address problems if they come up
- Keep good employees and help them grow in their jobs
- Know who to contact for help

What the Toolkit Should Include

The toolkit should give employers practical information they can use when considering, hiring, and supporting employees with I/DD. At a minimum, it should address the following areas:

Why Hire People with I/DD?

Explain why people with I/DD are an often-overlooked source of employees and how hiring people with disabilities can benefit businesses, employees, and communities. Address common myths and include reliable employment data and real-world examples when possible.

Employer Concerns and the Bottom Line

Address common employer concerns such as cost, productivity, supervision, training, accommodations, safety, and workplace fit. Explain what supports are available and how employers can get help when needed.

Tax Credits and Employer Supports

Provide clear information about tax credits, financial incentives, workplace accommodation assistance, training supports, and other programs that may benefit employers. Information should be current and include where employers can go for help.

Job Coaches and Employment Specialists

Explain what job coaches and employment specialists do, how they can support the employer and employee, and how businesses can connect with these services.

Recruiting and Hiring

Provide guidance on writing clear job postings, recruiting applicants with I/DD, creating accessible application processes, conducting inclusive interviews, and choosing candidates based on their ability to do the job.

Reasonable Accommodations

Explain reasonable accommodations in a simple and practical way, including examples of common low-cost or no-cost accommodations and where employers can get technical assistance.

Onboarding and Supervision

Give employers and supervisors practical tips for orientation, training, communication, setting expectations, giving feedback, and supporting employees to become as independent as possible on the job.

Workplace Inclusion

Provide guidance on creating a welcoming workplace where employees with I/DD are included as coworkers and have opportunities to build relationships and participate fully in workplace activities.

Retention and Advancement

Include strategies for keeping good employees and ensuring employees with I/DD have opportunities for training, increased responsibilities, raises, promotions, and career growth.

Employer Roadmap and Resources

Provide an easy-to-find guide that tells employers where to go for help at different stages of the employment process. Include Louisiana-specific resources and contact information whenever possible.

Louisiana Success Stories

Include examples of Louisiana employers that successfully hire and support employees with I/DD. When possible, include both employer and employee perspectives and practical lessons other businesses can use.

Applicants may recommend other topics, tools, or approaches that would make the toolkit more useful to Louisiana employers.

Input and Testing

People with I/DD and employers should have a meaningful role in developing the toolkit. The selected group should gather input from people with I/DD and from employers with different levels of experience hiring people with disabilities.

Feedback from people with I/DD and employers should be used to improve the final toolkit.

Promotion and Outreach

Creating the toolkit is only part of this project. The group selected will also need to promote the toolkit to employers across Louisiana.

Promotion could include:

- Chambers of commerce
- Economic development organizations
- Business and employer associations
- HR organizations
- Workforce development organizations
- Disability organizations
- Presentations or webinars
- Employer events and conferences
- Email and newsletters
- Websites and social media
- Direct outreach to employers

Applicants should explain how they plan to reach employers and encourage them to use the toolkit.

Project Timeline:

- The project will start on **October 1, 2026**, and end on **September 30, 2027**.

How Much Money is Available?

- Up to **\$45,000**.
- If federal funds are not received, the Council cannot move forward with this project.
- Indirect costs (like office expenses) cannot be more than **8.7%** of the total budget.

Cost-Share and In-Kind Contributions:

- The group must also provide a **match contribution** of **25%** of the total project budget.
- This can include things like:
 - Time spent creating materials
 - Staff time or volunteer hours
 - Other resources that help the project

What You Will Need to Do:

The group chosen for this project will need to:

- Research current information and promising practices related to disability employment
- Gather input from people with disabilities, employers, and other key partners
- Identify common employer questions, concerns, and misconceptions
- Develop an accessible and easy-to-use employer toolkit
- Include practical tools, resources, and Louisiana-specific information
- Submit a draft toolkit to Council staff for review
- Make revisions based on feedback
- Produce a final accessible toolkit approved by the Council
- Develop and carry out a plan to promote the toolkit across Louisiana
- Work with employer, workforce, disability, and community partners to increase the toolkit's reach
- Track outreach, distribution, and engagement
- Provide a final report summarizing project activities, outreach, results, and recommendations

Who Can Apply?

The Council will choose a group based on their ability to:

- Demonstrate knowledge or experience related to disability employment
- Develop clear, practical, and accessible materials
- Engage Louisiana employers and business organizations
- Meaningfully involve people with disabilities in the project
- Collaborate with workforce systems, providers, and community organizations
- Maintain strong financial management and accurate recordkeeping

How to Apply:

Deadline: Applications must be received by **4:00 p.m. on Monday, August 31, 2026.**

How to Apply: Email your application to Stephanie.Carmona@la.gov

What to Send:

- **Cover Sheet and Information Packet:**
 - [Application Cover Sheet](#)
 - [W-9 Tax Form](#) (available online)
 - Paper that says who owns your group or a board resolution ([sample](#))
- **Summary of Qualifications (up to 5 pages):** Explain how you meet the project requirements.
- **Proposal/Work Plan:** Include:
 - Activities and timelines
 - How you will measure success
 - Detailed budget
- **Letters of Support:** At least **two letters** from people who believe you can do this work.

You can find more information on the Council's website, including [guidelines](#) and a [funding manual](#).