

Partnership Opportunities to Respond to Workforce Development Needs of Low- and Moderate-Income Individuals with Disabilities

Banks have a unique opportunity through Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) investment of funds to respond to an unprecedented need for workforce development supports for this targeted low-and moderate-income (LMI) population. Office of Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) and the other bank regulators (FDIC and the Federal Reserve) recognize that CRA investments and services by banks may support workforce development activities designed to improve employment opportunities for LMI individuals with disabilities.

CRA Investment Opportunity

State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (SVRAs) help people with disabilities gain employment and advance self-sufficiency. However, many states lack the state matching dollar amount they need to capture the full federal funding allocated to their delivery of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services. (Over 300 million was relinquished by SVRAs because of a lack of match in 2020.)

A financial institution would have the opportunity to provide Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) support to a state and their SVRA. The financial institution’s funds would be used for match to meet the employment service needs of youth and adults with disabilities. **For each dollar a bank invests, \$3.69 in federal dollars would be captured** for workforce development activity that would allow a state to provide more services and achieve more employment outcomes for LMI people with disabilities.

EXAMPLE OF PARTNERSHIP

Challenge: People without a high school education are at a disadvantage in career opportunities. Accessibility limitations in existing centers to achieve high school equivalency certification are a challenge for blind individuals.

Activity: Add High School Equivalency Training and Certification to FDBS Training Center in Daytona.

Impact: Increased educational competency for participants, and increased # of LMI individuals with disabilities receiving VR services -- 24 individuals that are blind complete high school equivalency. 46 LMI individuals that are blind receive rehabilitation services for one year. With additional funding, in 3 years, at least 23 will experience successful employment outcomes.

Investment: \$25,000 **Leverage:** additional \$92,370.89 in federal funding

Project Partner: Florida Division of Blind Services

EXAMPLE OF PARTNERSHIP

Challenge: 83% of people with disabilities are LMI and lack access and training to digital literacy = lag in employment

Activity: Add Digital Literacy Assessment and Training to Rehabilitation Services in Partnership with Easterseals.

Impact: Increased digital literacy and employment rate for LMI individuals with disabilities, and increased # receiving VR services -- 25 complete training and experience increased placement outcomes in 4 years (above agency outcome average). Additional 15 receive rehabilitation services for one year. With additional funding, in 3 years at least 20 successful employment outcomes.

Investment: \$25,000 **Leverage:** additional \$92,370.89 in federal funding

Project Partner: will share with permission for serious inquiries

MUTUAL BENEFIT

Financial Institutions – CRA

- Meet CRA criteria for qualified CRA investment activities
- Provides multiplier effect of bank's invested dollars: \$3.69 credit per \$1.00 invested by bank
- Receive data that aligns with CRA requirements for documentation of LMI status on an individual level
- Demonstrate impact of CRA investment related to workforce development activities and successful employment outcomes for LMI people with disabilities
- Increase support to the disability community in a bank's footprint of a population previously underserved by CRA activities

- Opportunities for teaching financial education and job candidate pipeline.

State Workforce Development System

- Expand resources to assist individuals with disabilities to benefit from workforce development activities and employment outcomes
- Increase number of individuals with disabilities gaining college education, receiving skills training, participating in apprenticeships, and/or starting a business.
- Support states reeling from increases in COVID-19-related expenses and unable to draw down their full share of federal dollars for workforce development.

To learn more about these and other pilot opportunities, contact Michael Roush at mroush@ndi-inc.org. Please visit the [Center for Disability-Inclusive Community Development](#).