



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

TO: DDS Qualified Providers
FROM: Jordan Scheff, Commissioner
DATE: December 26, 2019
RE: Administration for Community Living Challenge

In support of the Governor's Committee on Employment for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Aging and Disability Services, and the Department of Labor, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) would like to extend an invitation to participate in the Administration for Community Living challenge: An Inclusive Talent Pipeline for American Businesses.

The premise of the challenge is to motivate businesses to create a model program that advances employment, recruitment, training, and retention for individuals with disabilities. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is looking for innovative workforce pipelines that specifically address employment barriers for individuals with intellectual disability and redefine career development requirements and pathways using non-traditional methods. Through this challenge, businesses will be able to develop and share innovative models that create wider talent pools and more opportunities for employment for people with disabilities.

The ACL is also looking for workforce pipelines that lead to competitive, integrated employment. This message has long been a part of the narrative at DDS. We are an Employment First state and agency and believe:

- Everyone can work and there is a job for everyone. Our job is to be creative and persistent in providing supports that help people with intellectual disabilities to find, get and keep real pay.
- Not working should be the exception. All individuals, schools, families and businesses must raise their expectations.
- People will be hired because of their ability not because they have a disability.
- Communities embrace people who contribute.
- Everyone has something to contribute and needs to contribute.
- People are healthier, safer and happiest with meaningful work.
- True employment is not a social service.
- Employment is a win/win for everybody.

This challenge represents an opportunity for our community to highlight partnerships already benefitting from an inclusive workforce and support the growth and expansion of new business ventures.

ACL believes that businesses are best suited to develop innovative solutions that work for employers for hiring and retaining workers with disabilities. Cash prizes will be awarded at each of the three phases of this competition. The cash prizes will serve as seed money to help the prize-winning businesses refine, develop, test, and implement their initial concepts.

Further information and details can be found at:

<https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/inclusive-talent-pipeline-american-businesses>
<https://www.challenge.gov/challenge/an-inclusive-talent-pipeline-for-american-businesses/>