

ALASKA WORK MATTERS: EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Talking Points

- Employment for all is a cost-savings for Alaska! Employment has been associated with lower health care costs to federal/state benefit programs.
- With the aging of the Baby Boomer generation, employers would benefit from tapping into this segment of the workforce and hiring more qualified individuals with disabilities.
- Work provides a meaningful outlet for skills and talents. It is often how individuals form their identity within their community. **Individuals with disabilities want the opportunity to work!**

RECOMMENDATION:

Initiate an “Alaska Work Matters” Work Group or Commission

- Further implement the 2014 Employment First law concepts of competitive and integrated employment for Alaskans with disabilities to provide better employment outcomes.
 - **Competitive:** To be paid at minimum wage or above, 20 hours or more per week, being paid at the same rate as others without disabilities.
 - **Integrated:** To be working alongside people with and without disabilities.
- Lead the way in ramping up Alaska’s State as a Model Employer (SAME) efforts within state government.
- Enhance apprenticeship opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities.
- Enhance Alaska’s re-entry process and system (making employment/work experience an area of even stronger focus) as individuals with disabilities are a large portion of our incarcerated population.

The Council stands ready to facilitate this work group or commission at no additional cost.