



Washington Insider – Monthly Newsletter

*Building a Better Economic Future for Americans with Disabilities
and Their Families*

National Disability Institute (NDI) is a not-for-profit research and community development organization dedicated exclusively to promote work, saving, and asset building for persons with disabilities and their families nationwide. As the creator of the Real Economic Impact Tour NDI is creating a roadmap to financial stability and independence for people with disabilities and their families. From Capitol Hill to state capitols, from urban centers to rural communities across the country, NDI invites you to join with us to promote an economic empowerment agenda, with a focus on policy change and public-private collaboration. Help advance solutions to the challenges of poverty adversely impacting the independence and quality of life for millions of individuals with disabilities regardless of age, gender or race.

In This Issue:

[NDI Presents At World Bank](#)

[FY 2010 Budget & Appropriations Update](#)

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education provides strong guidance to Department of Labor on Disability Program Navigator initiative

[Legislative Update](#)

ABLE Act Continues to Gain Momentum

[Special In-Focus](#)

Recommendations for Enhancing Federal Support of Self-Employment and Entrepreneurism among Individuals with Disabilities

PLEASE NOTE:

Due to the August Congressional Recess, the next issue of the NDI Washington Insider will not be published until the week of September 28th

National Disability Institute

NDI presents at World Bank Summit on Asset Development for People with Disabilities

NDI recently participated in an international forum looking at ways to foster disability-inclusive economic development throughout the world. The tremendous results of the Real Economic Impact (REI) Tour were highlighted as an innovative model for encouraging asset development among individuals with disabilities at a meeting hosted by the World Bank on June 10th. “*Foundations and Grant Makers Forum on Disability-Inclusive Development*”, introduced the economic and legal justification for disability-inclusive development and presented good practices for including people with disabilities in foundation policies, initiatives and programs. The event was sponsored by the Global Partnership for Disability and Development, who shared the successes of its member organizations to demonstrate the impacts of international Disabled People’s Organizations (DPOs). Fondazione CRT presented its experiences as the primary funder of the 2006 Paralympic Winter Games held in Turin, Italy. Dr. Johnette Hartnett, Director of Research & Strategic Partnerships for NDI and Director of the REI Tour, then facilitated a discussion of the powerful impact of private-public partnerships by presenting the REI Tour as a successful case study that included partners representing the corporate, disability and governmental sectors.

The Forum is one in a series of World Bank discussions on the development of individuals with disabilities in both developed and developing nations. An internal educational session for key World Bank executives entitled, “Work and Employment: CPRD and Good Practices”, will be hosted on August 26th by the World Bank’s Social Protection and Labor Sector (HDNSP) of the Human Development Network and the US International Council on Disabilities. NDI anticipates the World Bank to play a leading role in the emergence of an international focus aimed at increasing employment and economic development opportunities for people of various ability. [Back to top](#)

FY 2010 FEDERAL BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education provides strong guidance to Department of Labor on Disability Program Navigator initiative

During the past six years, ETA has funded demonstration grants (Work Incentive Grants: WIGs) to over 48 states/territories to improve physical and program access in One-Stop centers and cross agency coordination of employment-related services and supports to meet the needs of job seekers with disabilities. The WIGs’ deployment of

National Disability Institute

Disability Program Navigators (DPNs) to serve as a liaison in various One-Stop Career Centers between the generic workforce development arena and the disability population has proven to be an effective strategy to improve meaningful participation of individuals with disabilities and advance valued employment outcomes. In recent months, NDI has reported with concern efforts within the federal government to eliminate the DPN Initiative, based on assumptions that the mission of the demonstration had been accomplished.

Under the leadership of U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, efforts to eliminate the program were largely thwarted as the Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Committee called for the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment & Training Administration (ETA) as well as the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) to collaborate in developing and implementing a plan for improving effective and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the workforce. The Senate version of the FY 2010 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill directs both the ETA and ODEP to each invest \$12 million toward continuing the promising practices implemented by the DPN initiative, including: effective deployment of staff in selected states to improve coordination and collaboration among employment and training and asset development programs carried out at a State and local level, including the Ticket to Work program; and the continued building of effective community partnerships that leverage public and private resources to better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes. The funding provided by both ETA and ODEP comes in place of additional funding for the WIGs, which was eliminated by both the House and Senate during Appropriations Committee deliberations.

The Committee also directed the ETA and ODEP to co-develop appropriate objectives and performance measures by which this initiative will be evaluated, and to submit a joint plan to the Senate Committee on Appropriations no later than 30 days after the date of enactment of the FY2010 Appropriations Act. [Back to top](#)

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: *ABLE Act Continues to Gain Momentum*

Organizations in support of the ABLE Act joined forces on July 21st to host a Congressional luncheon to educate Members and staff about the bill. U.S. Representative Ander Crenshaw (R-FL), the original sponsor of H.R. 1205, addressed the audience, and Representative Cathy McMorris-Rodgers spoke of her personal interest in the legislation as a parent of a child with Down Syndrome. Several other speakers presented on technical aspects of the bill, including Steve Mendelsohn of the National Disability Institute. Key topics included highlights of the tax advantages anticipated with the introduction of ABLE accounts; impacts of the accounts on federal public benefits; and expenses for which funds in an ABLE account may be spent. The

National Disability Institute

ABLE Act continues to make progress through the legislative process, with over 131 cosponsors to date in the House and 10 cosponsors in the Senate. Advocacy efforts will be heating up in September as the key working group of supporting organizations (including NDI) will be meeting with Congressional staff on the Key Committees of Jurisdiction to discuss future Committee action on the legislation. [Back to top](#)

SPECIAL IN-FOCUS: Recommendations for Enhancing Federal Support of Self-Employment and Entrepreneurism among Individuals with Disabilities

After receiving feedback from disability policy experts on the importance of including special emphasis on people with disabilities in future entrepreneurial development efforts, the Senate Committee of Small Business has taken steps to consider expanding the recently-passed S. 1229 to include some key provisions and reforms that would improve federal efforts to support individuals with disabilities who seek self-employment and entrepreneurship.

NDI expressed concerns earlier this summer that the legislation provided special emphasis on several disadvantaged subpopulations, but did not take into the account the significant challenges of individuals with disabilities in the employment sector. SBA-funded centers have consistently lacked the resources, tools and guidance in the past to effectively reach individuals with disabilities. Without the introduction of new methods that are proving effective in serving entrepreneurs with disabilities across SBA, as well as the need for better cross-systems partnerships overall, there is very little hope that the current system will change anytime in the future on its own. Plans submitted by SBA-funded centers are currently not required to specifically address the key areas of challenge for individuals with disabilities. Annual reports require no performance data that would substantiate effective service or outcomes for people with disabilities. No training, technical assistance, or demonstration funded activities have been routinely directed to overcome the identified barriers to effective and meaningful participation of people with disabilities. The lack of parity in SBA-funded activities, as well as the lack of recognition of business owners with disabilities to be considered SBA contractors, is a situation that has gone largely unaddressed.

Economic empowerment through entrepreneurship for people with disabilities should become a priority for new SBA administrators. NDI has made several recommendations to the Committee, including the following:

National Disability Institute

- Create a lead position at the highest level in the Small Business Administration focused solely on promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for individuals living with disabilities.
- Convene a discussion between the SBA and principal staff of the START-UP/New York, Alaska and Florida demonstration projects to gain a better understanding of promising practices that assist SBA counselors to better serve people with disabilities.
- Disseminate promising practices from the START-UP demonstration projects among all SBA-funded programs with links to materials and technical assistance resources.
- Convene a workgroup that includes Federal and selected state SBA staff and staff from the RSA Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and ODEP staff, along with expert advisors to discuss ways to generate more effective state and local partnerships for employment including better ways to blend and braid resources to support entrepreneurs.
- Direct the SBA to utilize their research and technical assistance budgets to study states that promote and support entrepreneurship for people with disabilities by specifically including them in their state's Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) legislation and gathering any statistics demonstrating the positive outcomes of these initiatives with a focus on dissemination and knowledge translation activities.

NDI will continue to work with the Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship as well as additional key stakeholders representing the Small Business Development Centers and Women's Business Development Centers to seek inclusion of the aforementioned policy recommendations into the final legislation. In the meantime, NDI is appreciative of any and all feedback readers of the *Washington Insider* may have with respect to enhancing federal efforts to better support business owners and entrepreneurs living with disabilities. Please email feedback to Serena Lowe at EwolAneres@gmail.com. [Back to top](#)

U.S. DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT PROFILE July 2009	
% of people with disabilities in the labor force	23.0%
Unemployment rate of persons with a disability	15.1%

As reported by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics for July 2009

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the August Congressional Recess, the next issue of the *NDI Washington Insider* will not be published until the week of September 28th.

National Disability Institute Staff

Michael Morris, Director, mmorris@ndi-inc.org

Johnette Hartnett, Dir of Strategic Partnership Development & Research
Director of the Real Economic Impact Tour, [jhartnett@ndi-inc.org](mailto:hartnett@ndi-inc.org)

Sharon Brent, Director of Training and Technical Assistance, sbrent@ndi-inc.org

Judy Stengel, National Resource Manager, jstengel@ndi-inc.org

Elizabeth Jennings, Program Associate, ejennings@ndi-inc.org

Michael Roush, Program Associate, mroush@ndi-inc.org

Laura Gleneck, Project Coordinator, DPN Initiative, lgleneck@ndi-inc.org

Miranda Kennedy, Program Associate, DPN Initiative, mkennedy@ndi-inc.org

Danielle Diamond, Program Associate, DPN Initiative, ddiamond@ndi-inc.org

Margaret Callahan, Office Manager, mcallahan@ndi-inc.org

Nakia Matthews, Program Administrator, nmatthews@ndi-inc.org

www.ndi-inc.org www.REITour.org

DISCLAIMER

This monthly publication is intended primarily for the thousands of volunteers, community organizers, asset building coalition members, business and government leaders and individuals with disabilities and family members who join with the National Disability Institute (NDI) to promote and build a better economic future for youth and working age adults with disabilities nationwide. This publication will provide a general overview of the federal government process and key developments in the federal policy arena. The content is intended to provide factual information, and any interpretative statements are solely those of the editor.