

**John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development**  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

# **Toward the Accessible Workplace: Strategies for Competitive Employment Among New Jerseyans with Disabilities**

A Report Based on a Statewide Symposium,  
*Restricted Access to Work*

Sponsored by:  
The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development,  
New Jersey Department of Human Services,  
Division of Disability Services  
and the New Jersey Commission on  
National and Community Service

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# 1. Executive Summary

People with disabilities are capable of competing successfully in the labor market. However, thirteen years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that mandated greater access to the workplace for people with disabilities, disability remains a barrier to obtaining competitive employment. People with disabilities are underrepresented in the labor market, despite the desire and ability to work. Although many employers express a willingness to employ people with disabilities, misconceptions regarding hiring and accommodation abound.

This symposium examined the barriers to the workplace that continue to exist for people with disabilities, as well as current incentives and disincentives to work created by the public disability support system. Participants determined that these barriers are threefold: barriers created by the private sector that block entry to competitive work of job seekers with mental and physical disabilities; personal disincentives to work on the part of individuals; and penalties attached to earned income by the public financing system that supports many people with disabilities. To overcome these obstacles, a number of diverse strategies are needed.

In both the morning panel discussion and the afternoon workgroups, a number of themes emerged, including:

- **Employer Reluctance.** When asked their opinion as to the greatest barrier to people with disabilities finding employment, participants cited most frequently the reluctance of employers to hire people with disabilities, transportation to work, and lack of experience and skills on the part of the job seeker. Many participants noted also discrimination and

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finding a job that persons with disabilities can perform. Regarding the greatest barriers to employers hiring people with disabilities, participants answered most frequently employer discomfort/unfamiliarity with hiring people with disabilities, lack of knowledge/information on people with disabilities, and concern regarding litigation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- **Fear of Increased Costs.** Many employers still believe that the work of their organization cannot be performed by people with disabilities, and fear the cost and potential legal consequences under the ADA of hiring disabled workers.
- **Employment Disincentives.** People with disabilities experience a wide range of personal disincentives to work that range from fear of the loss of health insurance, to lack of training and experience, to fear of change. The issue of health insurance is particularly problematic and intractable, and acts as a major barrier to employment for many. While employers must do their part to create an accessible and equitable workplace, the onus is on workers and job seekers themselves to attain the work readiness and job specific skills demanded by today's workplace.

- **Fragmentation.** There exists a disconnect in New Jersey among the many groups that offer employment and career education services to youth and adults with disabilities. In addition, there are not enough programs in the state focusing on employment, nor are current organizations sharing information and collaborating to make such programs known to the public.
- **Accessibility is Crucial.** One-Stop Centers and all mandatory partners should be physically and virtually accessible to people with disabilities and better equipped to meet their service needs. At the same time, staff must be better prepared to serve customers with disabilities by being better educated about employment services and available resources for job seekers with disabilities.

## 2. Symposium Background

The Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, conducted a symposium on October 10, 2003, on the subject of people with disabilities and work in the State of New Jersey. The symposium, entitled “Restricted Access: Opening Doors and Removing Barriers for People with Disabilities,” builds upon the Heldrich Center’s March 2003 Work Trends survey *Restricted Access: A Survey About People with Disabilities and Lowering Barriers to Work*. This symposium was designed with the goal of developing a policy blueprint for New Jersey regarding strategies to assist people with disabilities to enter competitive work and retain employment. It was funded by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Disability Services, from the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) and the New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service. Co-sponsors included the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS).

The Heldrich Center and its partners convened the symposium to:

1. Examine what barriers to the workplace continue to exist for people with disabilities, as well as to explore current incentives and disincentives to work created by the public disability support system.
2. Issues related to the challenging process of youth with disabilities transitioning into the workplace.
3. Methods for developing an inclusive, effective public workforce development system in New Jersey that meets the needs of people with disabilities (and all



job seekers).

To promote informed discussion at the symposium, invitations were sent to key policymakers and practitioners involved in serving people with disabilities, as well as research organizations and employers. Public agency representatives included project managers and program personnel in a wide range of disability areas. Presenters in the morning session were asked to discuss the present situation facing workers and job seekers with disabilities, and to outline for the audience the policy, organizational, and management challenges and opportunities facing New Jersey.

Appendix A includes the symposium agenda. Following the morning panel session, participants were separated into work groups by topic area. Facilitators for each work group asked participants to discuss the barriers and challenges facing people with disabilities, the effectiveness of the service delivery system and resources that provide assistance, and issues pertaining to the transition of youth with disabilities into the workplace. Finally, participants were asked to provide recommendations for further improvement and assistance. Appendix B outlines in detail the issues identified by the symposium participants in all three work

### 3. Summary of Proceedings

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CPS data indicate that while the majority (82%) of working age Americans are in the labor force, and 65% are working full time, less than one-third (29%) of people with disabilities are in the labor force, and only 18% are working full time.

groups.

#### *The Problem*

Many working age Americans have a disability that influences the kind or amount of work they can do. The Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey (CPS) tracks people with work disabilities. In 2001, the CPS found that 9.6% of people between the ages of sixteen and sixty-four had a work disability. Of those, 29.4% were in the labor force, compared with a labor force participation rate of 82.1% for those without a work disability.<sup>1</sup> People with a work disability faced an unemployment rate of 10.2%, compared with a rate of 4.4% for those without a work disability.<sup>2</sup> CPS data indicate that while the majority (82%) of working age Americans are in the labor force, and 65% are working full time, less than one-third (29%) of people with disabilities are in the labor force, and only 18% are working full time.<sup>3</sup> Employers surveyed by the Heldrich Center express diverse opinions as to why this is so, including lack of physical accessibility, lack of experience on the part of disabled jobseekers, employer reluctance to hire a worker with a physical

or mental disability, and discrimination against such workers.<sup>4</sup>

The Heldrich Center report, *Restricted Access: A Survey of Employers About People With Disabilities and Lowering Barriers to Work*, surveyed 500 of the nation's employers regarding their views on people with disabilities in the workplace, the accommodation of these workers, and policy strategies needed to increase workplace accessibility for all workers and job seekers. This report is one in a series that polls American workers and employers about issues regarding the economy, the workforce, and the workplace, and how they view the policy choices made by lawmakers to address their concerns.

#### *Barriers to Work for People with Disabilities*

In the morning session, symposium panelists—Dan Sullivan, Bob Williams, and Kathy Krepcio—held that current barriers to the workplace are significant, and that the partnerships between the public and private sector that many agree are necessary to create a fully accessible labor market do not yet exist. The panelists noted that these barriers are threefold: barriers created by the private sector that block entry to competitive work by job seekers with mental and physical disabilities; personal disincentives to work on the part of individuals; and penalties attached to earned income by the

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, March 2001 Current Population Survey. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/cps/cps101.html>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. *Work Trends. Restricted Access to Work: Opening Doors and Removing Barriers for People with Disabilities* (New Brunswick, NJ: 2003), <http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/worktrends.asp>

public financing system that supports many people with disabilities.

In the afternoon, participants attended one of three work groups that focused on many of the issues presented in the morning session: Supports, Incentives and Disincentives to Work for People with Disabilities, moderated by Javier Robles, deputy director, Division of Disability Services, New Jersey Department of Human Services; Transition of Youth with Disabilities to Work, moderated by Rowena Madden, director, New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service; and Workforce Development: Developing an Inclusive Public Workforce Development System in New Jersey, moderated by Brian Fitzgibbons, chief of planning and development, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, New Jersey Department of Labor. Each session included an extensive discussion of the issues surrounding employment of people with disabilities and suggestions and solutions for change.

### *Barriers to Employment: The Private Sector*

Kathy Krepcio, executive director of the Heldrich Center, presented information based on the findings of *Restricted Access*, including the dramatic underrepresentation of workers with disabilities in the workplace and the subsequent challenge of overcoming the bias of the private sector:

- People with disabilities are underrepresented in the workplace. Only 26% of all employers say they have hired a person with a mental or physical disability.
- Nearly one-third (32%) of employers believe that the nature of the work their company does is a barrier to hiring people with disabilities.

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Nearly one-third (32%) of employers believe that the nature of the work their company does is a barrier to hiring people with disabilities.

- Many employers report that the cost of accommodating a worker with a disability is less than they had anticipated, with the majority (61%) reporting that the average cost was only \$500 or less.
- The majority of employers have taken few steps to make their workplace more accessible. However, many employers express interest in developing strategies and policies to more aggressively recruit, hire, train, and support workers with disabilities.

Work group participants discussed many of these issues and recommended potential action steps. For example, participants stressed that government and employers can form effective partnerships to facilitate the entry of job seekers with disabilities into the labor market by exchanging information about workers with disabilities in the workplace, accommodation resources, tax incentives, and on-the-job training. However, participants noted that it is a “disheartening truth” that there are few good examples of such partnerships.

The issue of whether employers need or should be offered incentives to hire job seekers with disabilities generated much discussion. First and foremost, participants noted, employers need skilled, job ready workers, and workers who can do “a day’s work for a day’s pay.” This must be the starting point for all strategies and incentives to help job seekers gain competitive employment. In many instances, no further hiring incentive will be needed, particularly in times of low unemployment. At the same time, many employers will not be able to “see” past the disability of a job seeker,

regardless of qualification, and it is at this juncture that intervention, incentives, and education is required.

The American with Disabilities Act dominated the conversation of one workgroup. Many participants believe that the ADA scares employers. In addition, some disability researchers argue that the ADA's antidiscrimination and reasonable accommodation mandates have made people with disabilities more expensive to hire.<sup>5</sup> As a result, employers are more concerned about compliance issues and may intentionally or unintentionally not interview or hire people with disabilities because they fear possible repercussion for any missteps or misunderstandings.

Finally, the group identified one major New Jersey employer in particular that can take steps to create a more accessible workplace: state government. Participants asserted that the government can do more to employ people with disabilities in government agencies, and should act as a model employer, for both disabled and nondisabled workers. At the same time, questions arose as to the role of government as an employer; specifically, what steps New Jersey has taken to employ more people with disabilities. One New Jersey Equal Opportunity Employer representative stated that many hiring opportunities exist within state government, such as civil service jobs and unclassified appointments.

#### *Action Steps:*

- Participants proposed the creation of a liaison office that would provide employers with information about available incentives and resources, and other information about employees with disabili-

ties. In particular, employers need information about the Americans with Disabilities Act and other relevant legislation.

- Participants support the reinstatement of NJDOL employer seminars that should include speakers from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services who can address a number of employer issues related to workers with disabilities.
- The state should expand its efforts to recruit and hire people with disabilities. For many workers, including job seekers with disabilities, the Commissioner of Personnel can waive the standard testing process and test only for job upgrades or promotions.

#### *Barriers to Work: Personal Disincentives to Work on the Part of Individuals*

Dan Sullivan, executive director and founder of hireAbility, gave the second panel presentation. Sullivan's presentation was based on his extensive experience working with employers and job seekers with disabilities and his work with hireAbility, a regional nonprofit employment service for people with disabilities.

Sullivan discussed the barriers that exist for workers with disabilities seeking to enter the workplace, as well as the responsibility each worker has to be both job ready and job qualified and to fit into the workplace:

- Employers need skilled, qualified workers. If a person can do the job, many employers will not consider a disability to be a factor.

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<sup>5</sup> David C. Stapleton and Richard V. Burkhauser, Eds. *The Decline in Employment of People with Disabilities*. W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research (Kalamazoo, MI: 2003).

- Employees with disabilities must assume a large part of the responsibility of educating their coworkers about working with a disabled person.
- In assisting a job seeker with a disability, the disability should be looked at as just one of a host of unique factors that can affect a person's employment prospects. Every person who walks into a One-Stop or into an employment agency has a set of characteristics that make him or her different. A disability is not an affliction or something that someone "suffers" from, but a difference. The set of services a person needs is based on these differences.
- Parents, family, and schools have a critical role to play in preparing youth with disabilities for entrance into the workplace. Career preparation, started early and emphasized throughout the K-12 system, is critical for all students.

Work group participants noted and emphasized the disconnect in New Jersey among the many groups that offer employment and career education services to youth and adults with disabilities. They stress that there are not enough programs in New Jersey focusing on employment, nor are current organizations sharing information and collaborating to make such programs known to the public.

In overcoming personal barriers to work, participants surmised that many potential workers do not trust current incentives and are afraid or reluctant to challenge the status quo. For example, they are not aware that they can "test drive" employment for a period of time before they incur a loss of federal support benefits. In addition,

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issues such as transportation can be a significant disincentive for job seekers with disabilities. The group concluded that disincentives sometimes outweigh the incentives for people with disabilities to work and that, as different disabilities require different incentives and supports, a wider array of programs are needed.

The transition of youth to the workplace, participants agreed, is particularly problematic. Participants express strong agreement that state programs do not do enough to transition students from high school to work and careers. Noted one participant, "we are too busy trying to get job placements that we don't spend enough time helping them prepare for the transition from school to work." In addition, the group stressed the importance of starting career education and awareness much earlier than it does currently (for both disabled and nondisabled students), and making it a priority throughout the K-12 system.

In addition, students themselves need to be better informed about Social Security and other aspects of the federal support system they will use as adults. Participants note that many youth are not eligible for services because their parents' income is too high. At the same time, it is agreed that Supplemental Security Income (SSI) itself can serve as a barrier to the transition from school to career, as youth begin to think of SSI payments as the ultimate goal, not work

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Statistics show that people with disabilities are severely underrepresented in the workplace, a problem that is exacerbated by many issues, including employer hesitation to hire a person with a disability, particularly a significant disability, and regulatory issues surrounding health care for recipients of federal assistance.

and career.

#### *Action Steps:*

- Participants recommend a conference that focuses only on the legislation (WIA, TANF, etc.) that addresses people with disabilities and employment and the transition from education to employment. In addition, the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) conference should put youth with disabilities in transition on their agenda.
- The use of job coaches has proven successful and should be expanded for both adults and youth to provide the necessary support, resources, and information to job seekers and new workers.
- The AmeriCorps program is an option for post high school youth with disabilities. It is an opportunity for people with disabilities to serve their communities, earn money and educational benefits, and learn skills.

#### *Barriers to Employment: The Public Sector*

The third panelist was Bob Williams, co-director of Advancing Independence, a nonpartisan policy forum committed to strengthening the capabilities of Medicare and Medicaid to work together to further the goals of the Americans with Disabilities

Act. Bob Williams's presentation was based on his extensive disability policy background and in-depth knowledge of Medicaid, Medicare and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Williams outlined a number of economic and policy issues that contribute to the underrepresentation of people with disabilities in the workplace. He referenced many of the findings of the Heldrich Center's recent *Work Trends* report *Restricted Access*, outlining many of the barriers to work for people with disabilities, including attitudinal barriers on the part of both people with disabilities and employers. In addition, Williams notes that:

- Statistics show that people with disabilities are severely underrepresented in the workplace, a problem that is exacerbated by many issues, including employer hesitation to hire a person with a disability, particularly a significant disability, and regulatory issues surrounding health care for recipients of federal assistance.
- In particular, the regulations governing medical insurance continue to be a major barrier to people with disabilities who want to work. Because of earned income thresholds and the vagaries of private insurance, many people with disabilities cannot earn enough money to meet their medical needs, but will earn too much to maintain Medicaid. For many, the potential loss of health care coverage posed by employment is one they dare not risk.
- Public policy needs to create incentives and supports that enable more people with disabilities to find and retain competitive employment. Efforts such as the Ticket to Work Act and ADA are steps in that direction, but more needs to be done to open the workplace to disabled job seekers.

- Better coordination of services between clients, employers, and service providers is lacking, and the disability issues remain outside mainstream workforce development strategies.

Workshop participants concurred that the health care issue is a formidable one, and that recent efforts such as Ticket to Work have failed to address this issue and move job seekers with disabilities into the labor force in large numbers. In addition, the majority agreed that better coordination of services between clients, employers, and service providers is needed and that the disability issue needs to be integrated into the general discussion of service and workforce development issues.

#### *Action Steps:*

- Not enough is known about the opinions of workers, job seekers, and employers regarding disability in the workplace. Williams cited *Restricted Access* as a good first step in this direction, but suggested (and strongly encouraged) the Heldrich Center to incorporate demographic questions regarding disability in all of our *Work Trends* surveys and to conduct a follow up survey to *Restricted Access*.

### *Role of Public Workforce Development System*

Participants examined the role of the public workforce development system to serve both adults and youth and found it lacking in many respects. Participants are critical of the state One-Stop Career Center system's service to people with disabilities, both in terms of accessibility and resources. A significant issue is the relationship between the One-Stops and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and how service delivery to customers with disabilities should be shared between them. In general, the One-Stop system and its staff need signifi-

cant improvement and education to serve effectively customers with disabilities.

Participants agreed that One-Stop centers and all mandatory partners should be physically accessible to people with disabilities and better equipped to meet their service needs. These service needs may include software programs that enlarge print or transmit computer text to speech. It was stated that DVRS is currently working with the State Employment Training Commission's Disability Advisory Council and others to assist with accessibility issues of One-Stops.

Staff should be better prepared to serve customers with disabilities by being better educated about employment services and available resources for people with disabilities. While participants contend that customers should not be made to feel that DVRS is their only recourse, many explain that customers are defined by their eligibility to the various funding streams. Although the Workforce Investment Act mandates a "no wrong door" approach to workforce development services and DVRS is a mandated One-Stop partner, people with disabilities continue to experience a bifurcated system that frequently fails to meet their needs.

Some One-Stop service managers tell us that often their staff is so nervous or afraid of doing something wrong that they come across as being inconsiderate to people with disabilities. They further shared that they do not receive any training or tools to properly assist clients with disabilities. Other respondents note that when more people with disabilities are employed in the workforce, it will become more routine to work with them

When serving youth, One-Stop Career Centers should provide the skills and training students need. Students should understand the services provided by DVRS and the One-Stop system and be able to access a

set of services coordinated by the two. One-Stops should be a place that makes youth with disabilities feel secure and where there are alternatives after they finish high school, including work, school, or vocational education and training.

*Action Steps:*

- Participants concluded that job placement effectiveness is tied to: knowledge/awareness of employers' needs; job developer assessment skills; clients' abilities and needs; and employment specifications. Training should be developed for front-line One-Stop staff to meet these requirements for both disabled and nondisabled clients.
- Schools and One-Stops should form partnerships to meet the needs of youth with disabilities transitioning to work. One suggestion is for the schools to invite One-Stops to participate in the development of disabled students' Individualized Educational Programs (IEP), mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Act

(IDEA). IDEA requires that as students with disabilities approach high school age, schools provide transition planning and services to assist their transition from school to employment, postsecondary education, or vocational training. Schools and parents can work with their local One-Stop Career Center to develop a student's IEP that outlines the needed transition services and introduce the student to the services offered by the One-Stop system.

In conclusion, the symposium generated a discussion of several policy issues and key strategies needed to improve New Jersey's system of assisting and serving people with disabilities and facilitating better service delivery and performance. The Heldrich Center and its partners believe it can serve as an effective "jumping off point" for further research, discussion, and implementation of employment strategies to create a more accessible and diverse workplace in New Jersey.

## 4. Summary of Questionnaire Results

At the conclusion of the symposium, the Heldrich Center asked participants to complete a short questionnaire regarding the issues discussed (see Appendix C). When asked their opinion as to the greatest barrier to people with disabilities finding employment, participants most frequently cited the reluctance of employers to hire people with disabilities, transportation to work, and lack of experience and skills on the part of the job seeker (see Fig. 1). Many participants cited also discrimination and finding a job that persons with disabilities can perform. Regarding the greatest barriers to employers hiring people with disabilities, participants answered most frequently employer discomfort/unfamiliarity with hiring people with disabilities, lack of knowledge/information on people with disabilities, and concern regarding litigation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Participants suggested that there are several employment incentives that would be attractive to employers who hire people with disabilities, including tax credits, free support services for employees with disabilities, assistance with recruitment, and technical assistance and financial help with accessibil-

ity issues. At the same time, many participants asserted that incentives are not necessary if the person is skilled and well qualified for the job.

Incentives are also a tool to help people with disabilities become employed. For example, participants responded most frequently the ability to earn money and become self-supporting, feelings of self worth, and ability to retain medical coverage (Medicaid) while working as critical incentives to encourage people with disabilities to enter the workplace.

Finally, participants weighed in on the issue of the transition of youth. They contend that in addition to academic curriculum, the New Jersey public school system should provide disabled youth with additional education and skills to be job ready. Participants were most likely to say that job readiness training, independent living, information about civil rights as persons with disabilities, and compensatory strategies for dealing with their disability are the most important education and skills needed by youth entering the labor market.

Figure 1: Responses to Symposium Questionnaire

Greatest barriers to people with disabilities finding employment	Greatest barriers to employers hiring people with disabilities	Most attractive employment incentives for employers	Most important work incentives for people with disabilities	Skills and education schools should offer youth with disabilities
Reluctance of employers to hire people with disabilities	Employer discomfort or unfamiliarity with hiring people with disabilities	Tax credits	Ability to earn money and become self supporting	Job readiness training
Transportation issues	Lack of knowledge or information on people with disabilities	Free support services for employees with disabilities	Feelings of self worth	Independent living
Job seekers lack of skills and experience	Concern regarding the cost of accommodation	Assistance with recruitment of people with disabilities	Ability to retain medical coverage (such as Medicaid) while working	Information about civil rights as persons with disabilities
	Concern of ADA litigation			



# Appendix A: Symposium Agenda

## Restricted Access to Work:

### Opening Doors and Removing Barriers for People with Disabilities

*Sponsored by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development*

*Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

*October 10, 2003*

**Sponsors:** New Jersey Department of Human Services,  
Division of Disability Services  
New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service

**Co-Sponsors:** New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission  
New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

#### Agenda:

- 9:00–9:30AM Registration and Breakfast: Lafayette Foyer
- 9:30–1:00PM General Session: Salons A and B
- 9:30–10:00AM Welcome: William Ditto, Director, Division of Disability Services
- 10:00–12:00NOON Keynote Panel
- Kathy Krepcio, Executive Director, The Heldrich Center
  - Dan Sullivan, Executive Director and Founder, hireAbility
  - Bob Williams, Co-director Advancing Independence
- 12:00–1:00PM Lunch
- 1:00–3:00PM Breakout Discussion Groups:
- Supports, Incentives, and Disincentives to Work for People with Disabilities: Salon C
  - Transition of Youth with Disabilities to Work: Ewing Room
  - Workforce Development: Developing an Inclusive Public Workforce Development System in New Jersey: Mercer Room
- 3:00–3:30PM Presentation of Findings and Recommendations from Breakout Sessions: Salons A and B

## Appendix B: Table of Issues Identified by Symposium Participants

<b>Barriers to Competitive Employment Identified</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Suggested Recommendation or Solution</b>
Lack of education and training and job readiness of first time job seekers with disabilities	Many job seekers with disabilities lack prior work experience and job specific skills	
Lack of career preparation and transition to work services for youth with disabilities	Schools do not prepare a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and assessment early enough Lack of collaboration between school districts and DVRS in helping students prepare for school exit Lack of information for parents re: the services available to their children.	Early preparation of IEP DVRS should be involved with the IEP Education of parents regarding transition and career preparation services Job coaching and other long term supports
Loss of federal health care upon employment	Earned income regulations of Medicaid discourage many people with disabilities from seeking employment	Legislation is needed that would protect the health care coverage of workers with disabilities, perhaps by raising the earned income threshold
Transportation difficulties	Many people with disabilities do not have access to reliable, accessible public or private transportation to work	
Reluctance of employers to hire people with disabilities	Many employers are uncomfortable hiring people with disabilities Many employers are concerned about the cost of accommodation Many employers are concerned about litigation under the Americans with Disabilities Act	Enhanced education and outreach to employers
Lack of service at One-Stop Career Centers	Confusion among One-Stop staff on many issues, such as confidentiality, role of DVRS, accessibility, etc.	Training of One-Stop staff re: employment services and resources Better coordination of services between customers, employers, and service providers
Lack of public-private partnerships to facilitate the entry of people with disabilities into competitive work	Some aspects of increasing accessibility to the workplace would be best facilitated by partnerships between government agencies and the One-Stop system and employers. Need for more communication across government departments and agencies	Maintain and increase DVRS dedicated staff for educating employers NJDOL should reinstate seminars in each county for employers on a wide variety of topics of interest to employers, including information about hiring people with disabilities. Create a liaison office to provide information and resources to employers re: hiring job seekers with disabilities
Personal disincentives to work	Some people with disabilities do not want to work, are afraid to change the status quo, are afraid to endanger their health care or other social supports, etc.	Increased outreach and education of people with disabilities regarding work and career options Job coaching and other supports to help new workers adjust to the world of competitive work

# Appendix C: Symposium Questionnaire

## Restricted Access to Work: Opening Doors and Removing Barriers for People with Disabilities

*Sponsored by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

Symposium Questionnaire: Please fill out and drop in the box as you exit or return by OCTOBER 17, 2003 to the address or fax number.

1. You are a: (please select all that apply)

State Agency Representative  
Legislator/Legislative Aide  
Rehabilitation Professional  
Employment Specialist  
Employer  
Person with a Disability  
Academic  
Other (please describe)

1. In your opinion, what is the greatest barrier to people with disabilities finding employment? Please rank your top three choices.

Lack of skills and experience on the part of the job seeker with disabilities  
Lack of information about job opportunities  
Need for special accommodations in the workplace  
Reluctance of employers to hire people with disabilities  
People with disabilities do not want to work  
Discrimination/Prejudice  
Transportation getting to work  
Physical limitations due to the disability  
Insufficient educational preparation  
Person's attitude/lack of confidence in themselves  
Economy/lack of jobs in general  
Finding a job they can perform  
Other (please describe)

2. In your opinion, what is the greatest barrier to employers hiring people with disabilities? Please rank your top three choices.

Employer discomfort/unfamiliarity regarding hiring people with disabilities  
Concern about how other employees will react  
Concern regarding the cost of accommodation  
Lack of knowledge about how to make job accommodations  
Actual cost of accommodating disability  
Concern of litigation under the Americans with Disabilities Act  
Nature of work is such that it cannot be effectively performed by people with disabilities  
Lack of knowledge/information on people with disabilities  
Concerns about increasing medical insurance costs/claims  
Discrimination/Prejudice  
None. I don't think there are any  
Other (please describe)

3. In your opinion, what types of employment incentives would be most attractive to employers who hire individuals with disabilities? Please select up to three choices.

- Tax credits
- Employer recognition
- Technical assistance with making job accommodations
- Free advertising for business
- Assistance with recruitment of employees
- Free or low cost loans for obtaining accommodations
- Financial help with physical/structural accessibility
- Free support services for employees with disabilities
- Other (please describe)

4. In your opinion, what are the most important incentives for people with disabilities to become employed? Please rank your top three choices.

- Ability to earn money and become self-supporting
- Potential for promotion and career advancement
- Ability to retain medical coverage (Medicaid) while working
- Feelings of self-worth
- Ability to make use of education and training
- Other (please describe)

5. In addition to the academic curriculum, what education and skills should school systems offer students with disabilities?

- Information about civil rights as persons with disabilities
- Compensatory strategies for dealing with their disability
- Job readiness training
- Work assistance
- Monetary/Financial Skills
- Cooking and Home Care
- Personal Health
- Independent Living
- Personal Safety
- Other (please describe)

