

·STATE OF DELAWARE·

Employment Network!

Work Experience Opportunities
for People with Disabilities

Work Experience Development Program

PROGRAM GUIDE

2022



Department of
Human Resources
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OVERVIEW

The EMPLOYMENT NETWORK! (EN), a Work Experience Development Program, was created to provide work experience opportunities for people with disabilities. This program was designed to allow people with disabilities to gain useful, employment-based knowledge and experience within varied state government career paths.

The EN Program should be a critical part in each agency's recruitment plan as these types of programs are a key component in achieving successful recruitment outcomes, establishing consistent applicant pipelines, and play a major part in achieving the organization's diversity initiatives.

The EN Program allows the agency to continue their goals of building successful, positive relationships in the communities, and other outreach opportunities that will produce targeted talent pipelines in which to recruit, assess, and retain top talent, in addition to building and maintaining a strong diverse workforce. By offering work experience development programs, the State of Delaware is taking the strategic approach, proactively, to prepare for and meet our future employment needs.

The EN Program also provides excellent opportunities for leadership and management growth experiences within the organization. Establishing mentor's and program designees by utilizing pre-existing staff members to oversee their agency's EN Program and its participants can potentially assist with agency's employee retention efforts as well.

This manual is a resource guide for managers, supervisors, and human resources professionals, as it provides extremely useful information and guidance on hiring EN Program Candidates.

ADMINISTRATION OF EMPLOYMENT NETWORK! PROGRAM

The Department of Human Resources, Talent Acquisition (DHR TA) team oversees this process. For information and guidance, you may contact jobs@delaware.gov – Subject Line: “*EN Program Request*”, and/or by phone at 302-739-5458.

The Department of Human Resources Agency Lead (Agency HR) will act as the liaison between the Hiring Manager and DHR Talent Acquisition.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) will coordinate program assignments for People with Disabilities (PWD) with DHR.

They can be reached at:

DVR Phone: 302-761-8275

DVR Email: Dol_dvr@delaware.gov

DVI Phone: 302-255-9800

DVI Email: infodvi@delaware.gov

PURPOSE

The State of Delaware is committed to advancing employment opportunities for People with Disabilities and is **dedicated to having each agency host at minimum, one EN Program Assignment per year**. It is designed to give people with disabilities an opportunity to gain entry level skills in varied careers in State government.

PROGRAM GOALS

CANDIDATE:

- Exposure to State job opportunities
- Acquire competitive, transferable, and marketable job skills.
- Job Opportunities with the State or other Delaware companies.

STATE:

- Assist people with disabilities in acquiring competitive, transferable, and marketable job skills.
- Mentor and provide a supportive environment to help PWD Candidates gain valuable work experience.
- Introduce State Agencies to the talents of people with disabilities.
- Build an inclusive workforce and talent pipeline.

The EN Program will be ongoing. Each department should host **at least one EN Program** assignment each year, for a minimum of **six months**. This will provide talent pipeline in which to recruit, assess and retain top talent and help build and maintain a diverse workforce.

The EN Program is designed for people with disabilities who have interest in job opportunities with the State of Delaware. The EN Program Candidate will have access to a job coach if needed. Agencies will request a EN Program Candidate by emailing the DHR Program Coordinator, along with a EN Program Agreement form to jobs@delaware.gov - Subject Line: ***“EN Program Request”***.

HOSTING A EN PROGRAM CANDIDATE

EN Program assignments should be developed to provide the EN Candidate with a meaningful experience where they can acquire competitive, transferable, and marketable job skills. This requires planned assignments coupled with proper supervision, evaluation, and feedback.

Learning objectives must be developed when considering a EN Program opportunity at your agency. You must identify clear job duties and/or a defined project scope that demonstrates how the learning objectives for each individual will be met. The Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) or the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) can help in reviewing essential job functions and evaluate the need for accommodations, if necessary.

PROCEDURES

The procedure for working with DVI or DVR and establishing a program assignment for a person with a disability is as follows:

1. **IDENTIFY LIST OF CANDIDATES.** DVI and DVR will identify people with disabilities that would be a good fit for the program. They will work with DHR Talent Acquisition to determine what job classifications would be appropriate for the EN Program Candidate.
 - DHR Talent Acquisition will create a recruitment link that DVR/DVI EN Candidates will use to submit their resume.
 - DHR Talent Acquisition will work with DVR/DVI to evaluate and determine appropriate job class(es).
 - Agency HR will be able to view the applications (resumes) submitted and share with Hiring Managers. These applications will be dispositioned in the system as “*INT*” by DHR Talent Acquisition.
2. **DEFINE THE WORK.** Prior to requesting a EN Candidate, the hiring manager should define the program assignment to provide a meaningful work experience that corresponds to the available opportunity.
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3. **REVIEW RESPONSIBILITIES.** Prior to submitting a *EN Program Agreement* form requesting a candidate, supervisor’s may be required to take specific trainings developed for this program.

Training could include:

 - Hiring and Retaining People with Disabilities
 - Disability Etiquette
 - ADA Accommodation: Supervisors and the Interactive Process
4. **REQUEST TO FILL.** Work with your agency DHR staff to complete the agency sections of the *EN Program Agreement* form and email to DHR at jobs@delaware.gov Subject Line: “*EN Program Request*”. This request must include assignment duties and goals. Funding for paid EN Candidates will be approved by Agency DHR staff before submitting the request to DHR Talent Acquisition.
5. **CANDIDATE SELECTION.** When a candidate is selected by the Agency, Agency HR will work with DHR Talent Acquisition and DVR/DVI to ensure all onboarding, accommodations and necessary preparation steps are in place.

DVI/DVR will work with Agency HR and the Hiring Manager to review essential job functions and evaluate the need for accommodations, if any.

Accommodations may include:

- Specialized equipment
- Modifications to the work environment
- Adjustments to work schedules or responsibilities, etc.

If needed, DVI/DVR will coordinate with the agency for the acquisition of any training on equipment, arrange for job coaching assistance, and provide technical assistance for the duration of the program assignment.

6. **APPOINTMENT.** Agency HR will complete the *EN Appointment Letter* template. The EN Candidate will be hired using Casual/Seasonal funding and complete all new hire paperwork.
7. **PREPARING.** The *Agency HR* and *Hiring Manager* will work together in planning for the EN Candidates arrival.
8. **COMPENSATION & TIMEKEEPING.** Salary will be determined by the agency and confirm the funding is available. Agency HR will hire the EN Candidate in PHRST as a *Casual/Seasonal*. The EN Candidate will record hours biweekly using the timekeeping system of the agency. Remember, EN Candidates have the same protections as other employees, and laws like the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and minimum wage laws, among others. This also includes such protections as meal and other breaks, and overtime wages, if earned as well.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES UPON HIRE

1. **WELCOME TO THE AGENCY.** The *EN Appointment Letter* that is sent by the Agency HR indicated dates, schedule, location, and supervisor's name, in addition to any required processes or documents that would require attention prior to their start date. The Hiring Manager will need to review work expectations, appropriate attire, evacuation procedures, policies, procedures, use of office equipment, call out procedures, and any other pertinent information the candidate will need.

Be sure to formally announce the EN Candidate's arrival and introduce them to the team they will be working with. Also outline the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the candidate and staff to ensure all parties are aware of their duties.

2. **RESOURCES.** Ensure the EN Candidate has a designated workspace. Do not put them in a hallway or transfer them from desk to desk. Their computer access, phone, access cards, keys, and office supplies should be ready upon their arrival.
3. **ORIENTATION.** Agency/Department Orientation should be conducted immediately to ensure they are comfortable in their new space. Give them a tour of the facility and

introduce them to co-workers. Making them feel welcome and comfortable in the office is the first step to making their experience a positive one.

4. **TRAINING.** Determine what training materials the EN Candidate will need. Every new employee MUST complete *DTI's Security Awareness* and the *Respectful Workplace and Anti-discrimination* course. Work with HR to ensure all required trainings are properly assigned to the EN Candidate and prepare a schedule to complete if necessary.
5. **CORRESPONDENCE TO EN CANDIDATE.** All formal correspondence to the EN Candidate should have a CC to the assigned DVR/DVI Counselor.

EN CANDIDATE FEEDBACK

1. **EVALUATION.** All EN Candidates should be provided with on-going feedback from their manager, including expectations of their position and meeting the goals of the program. The manager must regularly review the duties performed by the EN Candidate to ensure the following:
 - a. They are engaged in meeting their learning objectives.
 - b. They have a solid understanding how their work is contributing to the agency.
 - c. Areas of improvement are addressed and recognize work they have mastered.
 - d. If appropriate, assign the EN Candidate with a presentation at the end of the assignment or in specified intervals throughout, to demonstrate how the learning objectives were met.
2. **MIDTERM EVALUATION.** At the halfway point of the EN Program assignment, a formal DHR evaluation will be completed both by the EN Candidate and the manager. The completed evaluation will be sent to DHR Talent Acquisition and DVR/DVI. The information will be used to provide valuable feedback to all program participants to enhance their experience.
 - a. **DVR/DVI** will provide assistance if there are any deficiencies in the EN Candidates work if appropriate.
 - b. **AGENCY HR** will work with the manager on any concerns or improvements needed from the feedback.
3. **FINAL EVALUATION.** At the completion of the EN Program Assignment, both the EN Candidate and the manager will complete an evaluation and submit to DHR Talent Acquisition at jobs@delaware.gov. Subject Line: ***“EN Exit Survey”*** or ***“EN Evaluation”***. The information will be used to provide valuable feedback to managers for future program planning and enhancements to the program.

- a. Manager completes: *EN Evaluation Form*
 - b. EN Candidate completes: *EN Exit Survey*
4. **CAREER COUNSELING.** DHR shall arrange a *Career Counseling workshop* for the EN Candidate before they end their assignment. This will be to help them understand the State of Delaware’s hiring and application processes, and the *Selective Placement Program*.

CONDUCT & PERFORMANCE

EN Candidates are “*at will*” employees and the employment relationship may be terminated by either party at any time without cause or prior notice. All paid and unpaid interns must comply with the [State of Delaware Standards of Conduct Policy and Procedures](#).

Hiring Managers should address performance issues, and unacceptable conduct by consulting with Agency HR. DVR/DVI must be consulted if discipline or termination is requested.

COMPLETION OF EN ASSIGNMENT

1. Upon completion of the assignment, the Hiring Manager should contact Agency HR and DHR Talent Acquisition.
2. The EN Candidate and Manager will ensure the *EN Evaluation* form is completed and returned to DHR Talent Acquisition and DVR/DVI within 7 days of program’s end.
3. A *Certificate of Completion* will be sent to the EN Candidate to acknowledge their work and achievement, once DHR Talent Acquisition receives their *EN Exit Survey*.
4. Agency may utilize the *Selective Placement Program* to directly hire the EN Candidate into an open position.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

1. EN Program Agreement Form
2. EN Appointment Letter
3. EN Evaluation
4. EN Exit Survey
5. Certificate of Completion

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

1. What is the purpose of the EMPLOYMENT NETWORK! Program?

The purpose of this initiative is to introduce people with disabilities to state agencies and provide them with entry level skills and experience for varied employment opportunities throughout.

2. Why utilize People with Disabilities (PWD)?

Organizations that incorporate inclusion programs for candidates with disabilities are suggested to expect an increase in productivity, employee morale, and a more extensive customer outreach. It is also proven to reduce turnover and vacancy timelines, which are key factors in preventing unnecessary employment burdens, such as: “burnout” in existing employees, and decrease to overall positive workplace morale.

3. How long is a EN Program assignment?

The EN Program assignment should last at least 6 months but can extend to one year. One year is the maximum time for a EN Program assignment.

4. What if I want to keep the EN Candidate longer than 6 months?

Consult with the DHR Program Coordinator to determine if you should keep the EN Candidate longer or if you can hire as a *Selective Placement* candidate directly into a full time Merit position if they meet the job requirements.

5. How would I know what jobs have an eligible EN Candidate that meets the skills I need, and who should I contact?

Contact the agency’s Human Resources (HR) Department with the details of the opportunity such as program dates, schedule, title, supervisor, job skills/knowledge necessary for program consideration. DHR will work with DVR and DVI to determine what job classifications the EN Candidate would be most aligned with before you are sent the resumes. HR will provide the appropriate forms and process guides necessary to successfully onboard the EN Candidate. HR will advise you of any eligible candidates for consideration, and once a candidate has been selected, a formal request must be submitted.

6. Can I request more than one EN Candidate?

Yes!! EN Candidates are an untapped resource, and you can host as many as you can fund. We encourage you to request at least one a year, if not more.

7. How many hours a day should the EN Candidate work?

The EN Candidate should work a full-time schedule of 7.50 hours a day if possible, with their disability. Flexibility with hours is advised.

8. Can EN Candidates request time off?

Yes, you need to be flexible with the EN Candidate if they need time off for appointments or sickness. If they are missing too much time, consult with HR at your agency for advice.

9. Are the EN Program assignments paid, and what should I pay the EN Candidate?

EN Program assignments are a paid opportunity and will be funded by utilizing budgeted positions that are classified as “Casual/Seasonal” employment opportunities. The amount is variable, as it should reflect an appropriate amount for a candidate with the skills needed.

10. Is job placement guaranteed at the conclusion of the program?

No. However, if candidates meet the requirements for an available position within the department, the option to hire them directly through the *Selective Placement* program is available and would eliminate the need to post.

11. Does the state have "disability awareness" training that employees can take before the EN Candidate arrives?

The Delaware Learning Center has many classes and resources that employees can access to help them understand more about disability awareness.

Managers are required to take the below training courses:

- Hiring and Retaining People with Disabilities
- Disability Etiquette
- ADA Accommodation: Supervisors and the Interactive Process

12. Where can I get information about making workplace accommodations?

Hiring managers should consult with their Agency HR if they have questions about accommodations for a PWD Candidate. In addition, Human Resources will work with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) or the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) to determine the appropriate accommodations.

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) can also be a free resource of expert and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations. JAN's website is AskJAN.org. Live phone service is also available 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET by calling (toll-free) 1-800-526-7234 (voice) or 1-877-781-9403 (TTY).

13. What can an employer ask about a candidate's disability during the interview/hiring process? What questions may not be asked?

In general, the ADA does not allow an employer to ask any questions about disability or to conduct any medical examinations until after the employer makes a conditional job offer to the candidate. Employers may ask about a candidate's ability to perform specific job functions or tasks and ask them to describe or demonstrate how they would perform job tasks or achieve desired outcomes. Employers may also ask about a candidate's qualifications and

skills, such as the candidate's education, work history, and required certifications and licenses.

14. What if the performance and/or attendance of the EN Candidate is not acceptable?

If the EN Candidate is not working at the level of performance and/or attendance standards that you need, contact the DHR Program Coordinator so that they can work with DVR or DVI to have a job coach evaluate the situation.

15. What is a job coach and does every EN Candidate have one?

A job coach provides support to the EN Candidate, department, and is also responsible for ensuring that each EN Candidate completes assigned tasks properly. The job coach works through complications and challenges, facilitates conflict resolution, and will help develop strategies that support EN Candidates in completing their responsibilities.

16. Do Unpaid Interns have to comply with State of Delaware Code of Conduct?

All paid and unpaid interns must comply with State of Delaware Policies and Procedures including the [Standards of Conduct Policy and Procedures](#).