

# NICIL NEWS

**Northwestern Illinois Center for Independent Living**

**SUMMER 2018 \* [WWW.NICIL.ORG](http://WWW.NICIL.ORG) \* 815-625-7860  
412 LOCUST ST \* STERLING \* IL \* 61081**

## Legislature Edition

### **LEGAL RIGHTS IN THE WORK PLACE**

Although unemployment is currently the lowest it has been in Illinois, at least in the past few years, there are a number of people still struggling to find work. There is an entire population of people who have been discouraged to even attempt employment, people with disabilities. There seems to be many misconceptions about people with disabilities being active members of the workforce. The biggest misconception, of both the employer and person with disabilities, is that in order to employ a person with a disability the employer may have to accept that this person is not the best person for the job. This is blatantly incorrect! There are a number of laws in place to protect both the employer and employee under the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

EEOC has laid out rules to ensure fair and equitable employment practices for all, regardless of person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. For employers, these laws provide guidelines on which individual business policies can be written and followed by all employees. For employees, or potential employees, it protects against unfair practices. EEOC, however, does not protect an employee who does not do their job, or is unable to perform the tasks required to be hired for a specific position. In a nutshell, these laws allow the person most qualified for the job to be hired!

If any of your constituents would like more information on this topic, please have them contact us at **815-625-7860** to schedule an appointment.

### **HIRING A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY IS A PLUS**

Employers who give consideration to hiring people with disabilities, may have come across questions about the **Americans with Disabilities Act**, about how to find qualified employees, about tax incentives, about communication, and about myths and facts about hiring people with disabilities.

#### **Benefits and Opportunities for Employers Who Hire People with Disabilities**

- By opening your job searches to qualified people with disabilities, employers gain access to a new and vital talented pool of workers
- A healthy workforce includes people with different abilities
- A diverse workforce gives employers a competitive advantage by adding new ideas, viewpoints and approaches to solving business challenges
- Employees and customers appreciate diversity
- The average accommodation costs less than \$500
- Employing people with disabilities makes good business sense because it has a direct impact on the employers bottom line

We recommend that employers examine their open employment opportunities and then examine the people with disabilities to determine if their abilities, not their disabilities, make them a good match for the position you need. Abilities, not disabilities, make a good employee. People with disabilities still have many abilities, and those abilities might make money for you, the employer, and for them.

## DIRECTORS PEN

I love my job at NICIL! Each day I get to be part of a team who has the honor and privilege in helping change lives. Each and every day I have this blessing. That doesn't mean that it isn't without serious challenges, long hours, or barriers set by the very people we are working for and with. God didn't say it was going to be easy, but He did say it would be worth it, and it is!



As a person with multiple disabilities some days are challenging trying to navigate life with the issue of one or more of my disabilities. I will admit sometimes it is hard to be motivated to go to work through the pain. Over the years I have been very cautious about whether to disclose my disabilities to anyone including my employer. When I came to work for NICIL, I realized that I needed a workplace accommodation and would need to disclose. I filled out the accommodation form and waited for feedback wondering if this would be an issue, even though I know it legally would not be. What relief I felt when the accommodation form was approved. Why was I worried?

There is no reason to worry about work place accommodations or asking for them! Accommodations are meant to allow something to be put into place at the workplace to make your work time easier, in fact most employers encourage it! It means that you will be more productive if your environment is accommodated to your needs.

### NICIL Team Members

#### *\*Administrative Services*

Michele - Executive  
Director

Amy Jo - Fiscal/  
Operations  
Bookkeeper

Marisa - Receptionist

#### *\*Direct Services*

Emily - Special Projects  
Coordinator

Julie - Independent Living  
Coordinator

Jessica - Home Services  
Coordinator

Bethany - Program  
Specialist

Do you know someone that desires returning to work or going to work for the first time? Do they need an accommodation to ensure their workplace meets their needs? Don't let them be afraid, it is easier than they think!

Want to talk about accommodations in the workplace with experts in this field? Call the NICIL office at **815-625-7860** and talk to one of our team members!

### FEATURED PARTNER



Goodwill Industries currently has a Supported Employment Program with openings in the Northern Illinois area. While employed in the program, participants will work a couple of hours a week in the store alongside a job coach, they also meet with the job coach 1 on 1 each week to work on their resume, interviewing skills, and apply for jobs in the community.

As of right now, this program is limited to two stores in the northern area, Sterling and Rockford. Funding for this program is from the State of Illinois, Department of Human Services- Division of Rehabilitation Services.

For more information please call 815-965-3795 or visit [www.goodwillni.org](http://www.goodwillni.org)

## MISSION STATEMENT

*NICIL is committed to promoting and delivering the Independent Living Philosophy throughout Northwestern Illinois.*

*Our Pledge is to cordially assist all persons with disabilities in an efficient compassionate and compliant manner while seeking out agency growth opportunities.*