



National Lieutenant Governors Association

NLGA Consensus Resolution on the State as a Model Employer (SAME) for Individuals with Disabilities

WHEREAS, more than 1 in 4 adults in the US have some type of disability,¹ and

WHEREAS, states play a critical role as major employers, and have a vested interest in leading by example through policies that promote inclusion in their workforce, and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities represent a significant yet untapped segment of the workforce, with an unemployment rate of 7.7% among working age adults, compared to adults without disabilities at 3.5%, contributing to higher poverty rates and limiting economic growth,² and

WHEREAS, inclusive employment practices that provide opportunities to individuals with disabilities can improve state services by bringing diverse perspectives and experiences to the public sector workforce, enhancing the quality of service delivery for all citizens, and

WHEREAS, state and territorial governments can take proactive steps to reduce barriers to employment, promote workplace accommodations, and ensure the equitable treatment of individuals with disabilities in state employment, including utilizing State as a Model Employer (SAME) policies and infrastructure as listed on the attached document.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) recognizes states and territories as potential models for inclusivity and accessibility by creating employment opportunities that empower individuals with disabilities, enhancing the inclusion and effectiveness of state workforces.

ADOPTED, this day, the 5th of December, 2024.

Proposed for the docket by: The State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED), NLGA Partner

¹ <https://www.mhanational.org/news/2024-state-of-mental-health-report>

² <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm>

**NLGA Consensus Resolution on the State as a Model Employer (SAME) for
Individuals with Disabilities – SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY STATES AND TERRITORIES

1. Adopting State as a Model Employer Policies and Infrastructure that,

- Adopt formal mechanisms (such as executive orders or legislation) committing to be model employers of people with disabilities.
- Create cabinet-level positions and/or state agencies dedicated to championing people with disabilities as part of the state workforce.
- Convene a task force or steering committee comprised of disability employment experts and stakeholders to develop strategies for recruitment, retention, and accommodation of workers with disabilities.
- Adopt strategic plans and agency reporting requirements for state employment of people with disabilities.
- Appoint Disability Program Managers and Special Program Placement Coordinators in each agency to facilitate recruitment, hiring, and retention of people with disabilities and provide training to managers and supervisors regarding best, promising and emerging practices regarding employment of people with disabilities; and

2. Increasing Hiring policy that:

- Establish measurable goals for increasing the employment of individuals with disabilities within state government, such as aiming to achieve a workforce that reflects the demographics of the state population, including a specific percentage of employees with disabilities.
- Develop hiring preferences, fast-track hiring systems, special appointment lists, trial work periods, and/or paid internships or apprenticeships inclusive to people with disabilities.
- Establish mechanisms for accountability and continuous improvement regarding hiring and retention, periodic reporting, and designation of responsible individuals; and

3. By creating Workplace Accessibility and Inclusion policy that;

- Mandate that each state agency develop and implement an annual employment plan to address the underrepresentation of people with disabilities, providing periodic reports on progress.

- Ensure compliance with national and state laws requiring reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities and promote telework options where appropriate.
- Provide centralized reasonable accommodation funds and expertise.
- Implement stay-at-work/return-to-work programs for state employment.
- Ensure state technology is accessible to people with disabilities.
- Provide personal care attendants to enable individuals with significant disabilities to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment; and

4. Through Collaboration with the Private Sector promote

- Partnering with private sector employers to share best practices, technical assistance, and strategies for increasing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in both the public and private sectors.
- Implement inclusive procurement policies and processes that encourage or set goals for procurement from disability-owned businesses and;

5. Provide Training and Awareness policies that:

- Require state agencies to conduct regular training for supervisors and employees on disability awareness, inclusion, and the benefits of a diverse workforce.
- Implement wellness programs that support both physical and mental health and include specific measures for supporting employees with disabilities; and