



The Connection

July 27, 2023

Welcome to Employment Connections' (EC) Division newsletter - *The Connection!* This newsletter focuses on sharing information to connect, engage, support, and excel.

Read regular updates on projects and programs, and messages from Director, Ismaila "Ish" Maidadi. We also want and need to hear from you! Send your thoughts and suggestions to the [EC Virtual Suggestion Box](#); and for newsletter ideas and comments, you can share those by emailing the EC Communications [inbox](#), and we'll be in touch with you!

- [Message from the director](#)
 - [Strategic Initiatives Update: "Keeping Score"](#)
 - [Out and About: WorkSource Columbia Basin and Walla Walla](#)
 - [Washington Service Corps gears for recruitment.](#)
 - [Management tips: Compassion fatigue and communicating with kindness.](#)
 - [Americans with Disabilities Act Day – July 26, 2023](#)
-

Message from the director



Greetings, Employment Connections team,

The past few weeks of warmer days and blue skies really scream "Summer is here!" I hope all of us make time to enjoy the beautiful state we call home. This is prime time to appreciate what we have right here in the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

A few of our leaders were out around the state this month visiting local partners and WorkSource offices. ESD Commissioner Cami Feek was in Vancouver connecting with [Workforce Southwest Washington](#), the Local Workforce Development Board, and other local partners (Read [Cami's July 21 message](#)).

On June 18 and 19, Alberto Isiordia, Assistant Director of Operations, and I were in Kennewick and Walla Walla to talk with the WorkSource teams about daily operations and to celebrate their successes. Phil White, ESD Deputy Commissioner, and Ayanna Colman, Director of EDI, joined us for part of our trip.

If you missed it, here is [Phil's message](#) thanking WorkSource Columbia Basin; and for more on our visit to southeast Washington, read Alberto's update later in the newsletter.

While in Kennewick, we celebrated Jennie Weber, Eastern Region Director, as she retires after 45 years. It has been wonderful to experience all the gratitude and joy colleagues are sharing as she prepares to wear shorts, sandals, and visit some sandy beaches. She is leaving us in the capable hands of [John Dickson](#), and they have been working together toward a seamless transition.



Left to right: Ismaila Maidadi, EC Director, Jennie Weber, Eastern Regional Director, and Alberto Isioridia, Assistant Director of Operations; John Dickson, incoming Eastern Regional Director, with Jennie Weber.

As we finalize and wrap-up the sunsetting of the Professional Pathways program, I'm happy to report that all Professional Pathways participants have made their choice. Almost all are promoting to a WorkSource Specialist 4, and 95% of wage benefits were processed before the July 25 pay period deadline. Again, a big thank you to the EC Pathways team and Human Resources – Sandi Watson, Jason Johnson, and Caleb Baldwin – for the heavy lifting and attention to detail required to have this all completed so quickly.



By this week, all WorkSource staff should be aware of the hybrid work schedules for your local areas. These decisions were determined on the operational need to support your communities and were informed by all the work of the Hybrid Service Delivery Innovation Project Team. I ask for everyone's patience as we make these adjustments workable and see what is best for each local team and how we can best support and respond to local business and customer needs. Our leadership team is totally supportive and committed to a hybrid workplace culture, and I know we can all make it work.

Through our programs, we are tasked with supporting historically underprivileged and marginalized populations; and there are unique challenges that come with each demographic group. As we look at

how to more equitably serve those individuals who have been socially disadvantaged and denied full access to services, we must recognize justice-involved individuals as a group with some of the highest hurdles and toughest barriers.

As of June, the [Washington State Department of Corrections reported](#) that Washington has approximately 13,880 individuals incarcerated (94% male/6% female) in state facilities and approximately 18,000 persons in communities who are under active supervision. This does not include local city or county jails or the federal prison at SeaTac. Approximately 42% are considered low risk to re-offend; however, there is a 22% recidivism rate of individuals who will return to an institution within three years.



I believe we can make a difference in the odds for success for those individuals, and EC leadership is fully committed to developing services to support justice-impacted individuals. We are forming a special workgroup; and if you are currently doing this work or have an interest in joining that team, reach out to anne.goranson@esd.wa.gov.



I have been hearing nothing but positive reports about the first *Compassion Fatigue and Avoiding Burnout* workshops that were scheduled in June. We have another three courses planned in August. These fill up quickly; so, if you want to attend, check with your supervisor and [sign up soon](#). After August, we will have had 180 team members complete the training. That puts us at about 33% of EC staff. That's impressive! We'll keep up trainings and look for more ways to keep all of you emotionally supported and connected as you provide services and support to our customers.

The [Washington Workforce Association \(WWA\) Conference](#) is scheduled for November in Tacoma and it will be here before we know it. ESD is a sponsor along with the Washington State Department of Commerce, and we have several team members who are serving as presenters.



My vision and desire would be to have everyone in EC attend, but that's not feasible or practical. Nonetheless, for those of you who would like to attend, we have come up with a solution. We have created scholarships to cover attendance and travel to Tacoma. I encourage all of you to apply to be one of the 150 to attend. Just complete [this survey](#) by close of business on Friday, August 4. If you have questions, [Anne Goranson](#), EC's Strategic Initiatives Manager, is our point person. Apply! You may just win the EC WWA scholarship lottery!



July and August are prime member recruitment months for Washington Service Corps, and the WSC team is geared and ready for recruiting AmeriCorps and VISTA members to serve and help address our unmet community needs. If you know of a young graduate or someone looking to switch careers, AmeriCorps service can be an open door and the benefits aren't too bad either. Look for the WSC article on their new application process later in the newsletter.

The month of July is also [Disability Pride Month](#). Our ESD Pride Employee Resource Group (Pride) and the Disability Employee Resource Group (DERG) have posted meaningful stories to create awareness and honor the unique capabilities we all bring to being human. This week, on July 26, we recognize [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Day](#) as the day 33 years ago that the ADA was signed into law; and there has been no turning back or ignoring this significant civil rights law and the empowerment it has given the disabled community as they do hero's work.

While we take advantage of the nice weather, we also need to take the next few weeks to pull together our game plan and strategy to take back the [Combined Fund Drive \(CFD\)](#) softball trophy and have a day full of family fun on Saturday, August 26 at [Auburn's Game Farm Park](#). I have already kicked-off a competition with ESD Executive Leaders for the BEST gift basket for the CFD raffle. The day is going to be full and packed with fun stuff. ESD will have three teams playing; and Jeanne Lenz, EC's CFD coordinator, has pulled together teams from other state agencies, as well. We might be a few people short; so, please call or [email Jeanne Lenz](#)! If you play, you'll get a game-day t-shirt with this year's logo!



We need you to be part of this day, and we want to hear your fun ideas! If you can't be there in person, there are things that you can do locally in your hometown to be a part of the action: find local nonprofit options that are on the CFD list and set your donation amount or hold a bake sale or yard sale and donate your proceeds to CFD. There are lots of options, and we want all who can participate to join in the fun – no matter where you live.

I am always here to listen and learn and each day my appreciation grows as I experience how you show up with commitment and heart to do this work and support your teammates. I am proud of all that our EC team is accomplishing toward our 2023 goals. We wouldn't be where we are today without every one of you.

You should all be proud of your efforts, and always remember – you are appreciated daily.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ismaila Maidadi'.

Ismaila "Ish" Maidadi
Director, Employment Connections

[Return to Page 1](#)

Strategic Initiatives Update – “Keeping Score”

Submitted by Anne Goranson, Strategic Initiatives manager, Employment Connections.

During one of last week's Playbook Open House feedback sessions, we received some feedback about the term "Scorecard." It is always helpful to hear how the terminology we use is landing across the division, and I am so glad that feedback was shared. Feedback gives us an opportunity to go deeper, and to make sure we align the words we use. The changes to the Playbook won't happen in time for this

newsletter, so for now, “Scorecard” is the name we’re using to describe a new report that will be available for all EC team members.

Several years have passed since we’ve routinely used this kind of statewide report to gauge our overall progress. Some of you may have enjoyed that respite. Others (like me) have missed knowing whether we’re hitting our targets as a system.

When I think of the term “scorecard,” I think of sports. I’ve never been much of an athlete myself, but I am a huge sports fan! Basketball and football are my favorites, and I rarely miss a Seattle Seahawks football game or a Duke Blue Devils men’s basketball game. This week it’s the US women’s soccer team in the World Cup that is catching my attention. I love watching the players dig deep to finish a game strong, even when they are losing. I also love watching how coaches interact with their teams – by inspiring their players to do their very best, in whatever way makes the most sense for each player. My favorite sports moments wouldn’t have been the same without a scoreboard.

In our world of workforce development, we’re not competing against another team, although we are striving to continually improve outcomes for our customers, and that involves an element of competition. We are actively competing against our previous work, with the intention to do better.

It would be easy in our world to view other offices or teams as our competition. But we’re all on the same team. That means that if our “score” doesn’t look as good as we had hoped, we all have an opportunity to think about what we can do to improve our outcomes. Did we share information? Did we provide clear direction? Did we give each customer our full attention? Did we record services as expected? Did we ensure that our workloads were distributed in ways that promote success?

Our work is complex, and while we won’t ever manage a perfect “score,” it is inspiring to be part of a team that continually works to understand overall trends and seek opportunities that will lead to success for our customers. If we are using data correctly, we will focus on the work, and the numbers will follow.

Employment Connections Scorecard

Data Measures

Region: WDA Office: Central
 WDA 08 - North Central WorkSource Central Basin

Year	Month	Unique Job Seekers	Unique Program Participants	Unique Visits	Unique CFT Records	Unique Special Population	Special Population %	Job Activity Services	RESEA Partner Referrals	Employers Served
2023	May	327	231	571	451	177	54.13%	7	14	11
2023	June	294	174	464	480	173	58.84%	12	16	
PY Total		3,363	2,447	8,315	5,317	1,953	58.07%	345	52	252

Wages 2 Qtrs After Exit

PY	Quarter	Employed
2021	2	70.12%
2021	3	81.89%
2021	4	78.62%
2022	1	60.34%
Total		74.81%

* Wage information does not include SWIS data or educational certificate attainment.

EC Projects

Project name	Start Date	End Date	Status
WIT Replacement	12/17/20	1/31/25	🔄
WorkSource Site Slowness			⬇️
Hybrid Service Delivery Project	3/15/23		★
WP Full Registration Process Improvement	1/1/23		➡️
Customer Flow Tracker Improvement Project	3/1/23	9/29/23	🔄
Resource Room Links Landing Page Pilot	6/1/23	8/31/23	🔄
Kahoot License Rollout	3/15/23		⬇️
WebEx/Cisco Smart Board Integration for MS Teams & Zoom	3/1/22		⬇️
EC Scorecard	3/1/23	7/31/23	⬆️
EC Professional Development Modernization			○
PDP Training for Supervisors	3/1/23		○

*****Some Start Dates Are Approximate*****
This list includes key EC projects, but is not comprehensive. If there is a project you would like to see on this list, please email anne.goranson@esd.wa.gov

Status

- ★ Complete
- ⬆️ On Track
- 🔄 Making Progress
- ➡️ At Risk
- ⬇️ Behind Schedule
- Not Started

I encourage you to go back to your teams and talk about the numbers that you’ll find in the [new EC Scorecard](#). Start by familiarizing yourselves with the definitions and notes. Then look at the numbers

that make the biggest difference for the customers you serve. Where is there cause for celebration? How might we do better?

It is my hope that our new Scorecard doesn't become a new form of stress. It is not intended as a "gotcha" to catch folks who aren't living up to standards. It is intended to help us focus on what is most important, and to tell a story of progress as we work together to become a championship team.

When we are champions, our customers win. When our customers win, our communities win. Together we will all thrive and celebrate together.

I'm so glad to be on this team with each of you!

Anne

[Return to Page 1](#)

Out and about: Creating connections. Building belonging.

Highlights from WorkSource Columbia Basin and Walla Walla.

Contributed by Alberto Isiordia, EC assistant director of Operations, Victoria Pruett, communications consultant, Employment Connections.

On Tuesday, July 18, Director Ismaila Maidadi, Assistant Director Alberto Isiordia, and a few ESD executive leaders - Deputy Commissioner Phil White and EDI Director Ayanna Colman - found their way to **WorkSource Columbia Basin in Kennewick**. The day was planned by the local team with fun and celebration honoring Jennie Weber, Eastern Regional Director, as she winds down her last few weeks and transitions her duties before she retires at the end of this month. Local workforce development partners were also there to recognize the long-standing relationships she has built over the years.



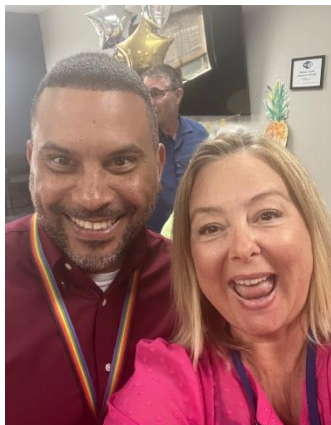
Left to right: Jessie Cardwell, Workforce Programs manager, Benton-Franklin WDC, EC's amazing Jennie Weber, Cynthia Garcia, Youth Programs manager/EO Officer, Benton-Franklin WDC; Jose Sandoval, LVER, WS Columbia Basin, the authentic Jennie Weber, ESD Deputy Commissioner Phil White; Crystal Bright, WS System coordinator, a joyous Jennie Weber, Brooke Menter, supervisor, WS Columbia Basin.

The team met to talk about what's working and where they need assistance to deliver services even more efficiently. Our meeting gave us the opportunity to see what gets the Columbia Basin team excited about their work and how collaborative and team-oriented they are to make it all run smoothly. There

were several requests for workplace flexibility in how and where we meet our customers. One idea advocated for was mobile WorkSource units especially in rural areas of the state and flexibility in service hours to accommodate individuals and families that are on different schedules than weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Community partners, like Goodwill and the community college, are finding ways to pilot and test needed classes for GED, ESL, and computer skills – at times and places that work for local farmworker families. In rural areas, this helps eliminate time and transportation challenges for workers and job seekers. WorkSource works collaboratively with all local partners and is starting similar class offerings. An additional goal is to launch an “outstation” model with small resource hubs that customers can come to for support rather than travel longer distances. The WorkSource team is “ready” and has asked for information and policy guidance on how to get started.

The Columbia Basin team stays on top of services by reviewing performance data and reports that keep the team on target for seasonal cycles and aiming for their highest and best. Post pandemic does not just represent a restart of the work. It’s starting new, taking a fresh look, and delivering services in new and different ways to meet the needs of customers and to support our own teams. Getting the word out about WorkSource services involves multiple messages and channels. Finding funds and ways to support marketing and outreach has always been a challenge. The team is looking for ways to get WorkSource back as the primary “Go to” for local job seekers and employers in the area.



“If you have not met Rebecca Williamson, Administrator, WS Columbia Basin, you are missing out! Talk about high energy, a big heart, and an extraordinary personality ... Rebecca is the embodiment of our agency values with skin on ... “

Phil White, ESD deputy commissioner

There are several areas where EC Central Operations can be of support and provide solutions for this and other WorkSource teams. For example, the local farmworker community is needing information on Paid Family Medical Leave and Leave & Care support with Spanish translations. The [Paidleave.wa.gov](https://paidleave.wa.gov) site is available in [Spanish](#); and there are applications and other forms available with Spanish instruction available for download ([Applying for Leave Checklist](#) and [PL Certification Form/Spanish](#)).

Use of state electric vehicles is a challenge and may just not be feasible for the near future. There aren’t enough charging stations in an area with lots of miles to cover. The needed infrastructure just doesn’t exist yet in rural and remote areas.

The team wrapped up the day in Kennewick and headed to Walla Walla for the next day’s meetings on Wednesday, July 19. At **WorkSource Walla Walla**, leaders connected with a small but mighty team tasked with serving five counties. Rural locations have a greater area to cover and that creates its own set of challenges in providing services where and when customers need them.

The WorkSource Walla Walla team works well together and was ready to talk about opportunities and challenges as well as ideas and solutions. Right now, the WorkSource office is feeling understaffed to meet the community's needs. The benefit of co-location and collaboration with more partners was brought up as one solution along with alternative ways to look at resources and creative funding support to address specific needs.

This team is managing through technology challenges with bandwidth capacity and Resource Room software availability along with some other targeted support needs for online trainings. There may be an opportunity to assist rural communities with telecommunications support through the [federal Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program](#) expanding high-speed internet access (See [Funding by State/Territory](#) Internetforall.gov).

Walla Walla is the location of a primary state correctional facility housing 2,500 inmates. Working on re-entry programs and creative solutions such as a past model like the [Hope Café](#), would help support a community in transition. With a new justice-involved workgroup being launched, EC will be looking at options to better serve this challenged population across the state.

Another focus for this agricultural community is support for [Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers](#) (MSFW). One simple idea is being able to distribute water on visits to farm and employer sites. There are also some new outreach opportunities in small communities like [Prescott](#) (population: 326 and ranked one of the top Washington small towns) where some potential grant funding could make a difference in workforce development for the community.

Other items that came up for WS Walla Walla were related to providing employers with [SharedWork](#) education to help preserve jobs (the website is in English/Spanish with webinars for employers statewide) and for Spanish language training support for valued programs like Strategies for Success (SFS). In case you didn't know, [SFS was nominated for the NASWA Pinnacle Award for Business Development](#) by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NAWSA) in January 2019.



Jennie Weber, Eastern Regional director and soon-to-be retiree, and Lisa Mathias, administrator, WorkSource Walla Walla, in front of the newly dedicated Weber Room!

Resources and other updates

Washington Service Corps gears for recruitment.

Member recruitment efforts are expanding this year!

Submitted by Ashley Palmer, director, and Kendra DeBow, Site and Member Services supervisor, Washington Service Corps.

Summertime means member recruitment for the [Washington Service Corps](#) (WSC) and this year you will see WSC advertised directly to WorkSource customers!



The graphic features the Washington Service Corps logo on the left, which includes the text "WASHINGTON SERVICE CORPS" and "EST 1983". To the right of the logo is the text "Washington Service Corps" in a large blue font, with the tagline "Serve Today for a Better Tomorrow" below it. Underneath the tagline is a smaller line of text: "An AmeriCorps program connecting service members and under-resourced communities throughout Washington state".

Below the text are several images: a woman in a white shirt holding a certificate, a person in a blue jacket holding a small tree, a person in a black shirt with "CHANGE WATER" on it, a person in a blue shirt working in a kitchen, a person in a blue jacket and hat, and a person in a grey jacket and yellow hard hat working on a roof.

On the left side of the graphic, there is a list of member benefits under the heading "Member Benefits":

- Gain professional skills
- Build a career pathway
- Serve your community

Below the benefits list is the heading "Member Benefits" followed by:

- Monthly living stipend
- Health coverage
- Education award
- Childcare assistance

At the bottom left, there is a QR code and the text "Apply for a position today!".

At the bottom center, there is the heading "Connect with Us" followed by the website URL "https://washingtonserviccorps.org/", a phone icon with the number "1-888-713-6080", and an email icon with the address "wscmail@esd.wa.gov".

At the bottom right, there is the AmeriCorps logo, which consists of a stylized "A" inside a circle, with the word "AmeriCorps" below it.

We've created a streamlined process to reduce time for WSC staff to learn of people's interests in AmeriCorps positions. By skipping the full AmeriCorps application up front, interested applicants can now [review open positions](#) and complete an online form through the [WSC website](#). This form has fewer barriers, is quicker to fill out, and informs the applicant of what to expect during a term of service.

This new “fast track” process will allow WSC to prescreen candidates for eligibility and forward interested applicants’ information to hiring projects. The “fast track” application screener will have links on [WorkSourceWA.com](https://www.worksource.wa.gov) and in technology centers soon. This will inform and screen interested customers for local service positions then forwards their contact information to WSC sites for interviews to be scheduled. This is prime recruitment time and project partners are hiring for the 2023-2024 program year starting on September 1, 2023.

Keep an eye out for new WSC marketing materials and information at your local WorkSource centers. These are planned to go out soon and will promote WSC service positions as a pathway to career development and many more benefits.

[Return to Page 1](#)

Compassion fatigue and gracious communications.

How to overcome ‘compassion fatigue.’

Coming through a global pandemic and experiencing the aftershocks of that event, there has been a movement to research and fully understand empathy-based stress. This stress results from a process of traumatic stress exposure, empathic experience, and a person’s adverse reactions. Any empathetic role where individuals engage with someone who has experienced trauma can result in 1) compassion fatigue, 2) secondary traumatic stress and 3) vicarious traumatization.

Compassion fatigue shows up as emotional, physical, and spiritual exhaustion stemming from repeated exposure to stressful situations. In the past, compassion fatigue was primarily reserved for those professions delivering trauma services like oncology and hospice nurses, natural disaster units and first-responders. Now, the impact goes far beyond healthcare and emergency staff, to cover front-line service workers including human services, educators, and workforce development.

In May and June, Employment Connections leaders empathized with the mounting stress of compassion fatigue and burnout for our EC teammates. They responded by providing the time and space to talk about the impacts along with an intensive one-day training on ***Compassion Fatigue and Avoiding Burnout***.

Three additional trainings are now available in August. Space is limited and will cover training for an additional 90 EC teammates. If you haven’t signed up and want to learn more, we recommend you register using these direct Learning Center links:

- [Alleviating Compassion Fatigue and Avoiding Burnout – Virtual 08/01/2023](#)
- [Alleviating Compassion Fatigue and Avoiding Burnout – Virtual 08/08/2023](#)
- [Alleviating Compassion Fatigue and Avoiding Burnout – Virtual 08/09/2023](#)

It doesn’t take reading recent research findings to understand that people who have undergone adversity and hardship have a greater sense of what it takes when it comes to helping others. Through their own tough life experiences, these individuals come to understand that even small acts of kindness have an impact on those in need. People who have suffered possess wisdom that lets them overcome the paralysis produced by compassion fatigue and compassion fade — fortunately, that wisdom is available to all of us.

To read more, go to “[How to overcome ‘compassion fatigue.’](#)” David DeSteno, The Washington Post, August 22, 2019.

Management tip: Practice gracious communication.

Most of us want to communicate with kindness, but it can be challenging to convey warmth and compassion under frustrating, stressful, or maddening circumstances.

Three practices can help you in your day-to-day interactions, as well as big, difficult conversations. First, meet confrontation with grace. This means wearing a smile and exuding patience and courtesy when an employee brings you difficult news or challenges your decision-making. An open-minded tone will signal that you're there to listen, process, and problem-solve—not to reprimand or enforce your own authority. Next, give credit whenever you can. Recognizing your employees and showing them gratitude will engender their enthusiasm, hard work, trust, and loyalty. Finally, give people space and clarity so you don't catch them off guard. Schedule conversations in advance or ask them if it's a good time to talk—and give them a quick preview of what you'd like to talk about.

These kind, simple gestures will give your team member an opportunity to prepare and make it clear that you're interested in listening to their response.

This tip was adapted from “[The Simple Power of Communicating with Kindness,](#)” by Sally Susman, Harvard Business Review, July 12, 2023.

[Return to Page 1](#)

Monthly Inspiration: Americans with Disabilities Act Day (ADA33)

Time to celebrate one of the most important civil rights laws enacted on July 26, 1990.

Every year on July 26, we celebrate the signing of the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) on July 26, 1990. This year is **ADA 33**, recognizing 33 years since that landmark day and honoring the accomplishments of people living with disabilities. The ADA is our nation's commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities have the right to live, work and participate in our communities as a fully vested citizen.



The American disability movement started in the 1960's, aiming to resist the age-old notion that people with disabilities are defective and need to be segregated from regular civic life. The movement was inspired by the broader civil rights movement at the time. It rejected the cruel attitudes of the past and advocated for full access to opportunities in education, public life, and employment.

The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, along with U.S. Attorneys' Offices across the country, enforce the ADA to realize the statute's goals. This work includes ensuring equal opportunity, full

participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for the 56 million Americans currently living with disabilities. As of June 2023, the ODEP statistics for individuals 16 years and over show that:

- 24% of the US labor force are people with disabilities; and
- Unemployment rate for people with disabilities is 6.8%.

For more employment statistics and an employment-population ratio map by state, you'll find more at [ODEP statistics on disability employment](#).

Back in 2013, Governor Inslee's Executive Order 13-02 established the [Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment](#) (GCDE) and set a standard that 5% of state workforce would be comprised of persons living with a disability. This group works out of our Employment Security Division and advises the governor and all state agencies on ways to work with and employ people with disabilities.

Please take a moment this week to celebrate those individuals in our offices and in our communities with disabilities. For those with disabilities reading this, we honor your strength, courage, and determination in overcoming barriers to lead full and independent lives; and we thank you for the perspective and talent your contributions make to our work and our culture.

[Return to Page1](#)

Wishing you fun-in-the-sun summer days!

