



**Connect with DRS:**

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services  
3535 NW 58th St, Suite 500  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112  
405-951-3400  
800-845-8476 Toll Free  
www.okdrs.gov

**DRS Business Services Team:**

800-487-4042 Toll Free  
www.okdrs.gov/business-services

**Who we are:**

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services expands opportunities for employment, independent life and economic self-sufficiency by helping Oklahomans with disabilities bridge barriers to success in the workplace, school and at home.

**EMPOWER OKLAHOMANS WITH DISABILITIES**



**UNITING TALENT WITH OPPORTUNITY**

*Connecting Oklahoma Businesses with a skilled and loyal workforce*

It's about  
**ability**  
not disability.



Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

**EMPOWER OKLAHOMANS WITH DISABILITIES**

DRS Pub. #16-5

Date: November 2016

This publication is authorized by the Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services in accordance with state and federal regulations and printed by the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services at cost of \$1,280 for 5,000 copies. This publication is available on the DRS website. DRS offices may request copies via iDRS. For additional copies, contact DRS Central Departmental Services at (405) 951-3400 or 800-845-8476 toll free.



# WORK READY

## DRS's Business Services Team helps build your business by:

### We send you qualified candidates

Your new staff member will be ready to work. DRS makes sure of that. Workers with disabilities have equal or higher performance ratings than non-disabled workers.

### Lower turnover

You can save money on recruitment and training costs. Overall, turnover rates for workers with disabilities are four to five times lower than other workers.

### We can share startup costs

Our job seekers are trained and ready to work, but there are always things no one can know about a job until they begin working.

DRS may co-share the costs of bringing your new employee up to speed.

### Transportation

Persons with disabilities are capable of supplying their own transportation.

## BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

### Braden Echard, production manager Cintas, Oklahoma City

Every former DRS job seeker working at the Cintas plant in Oklahoma City is in the top 10-percent in workforce performance, and Production Manager Braden Echard calls the hiring of employees with disabilities a "great" move.



Echard said his plant has four deaf employees – one of which is deaf-blind.

"In Oklahoma City, it is hard to hire good people," he said. "Being able to hire good people through DRS has saved me from being very shorthanded. I haven't had a

“*Being able to hire good people through DRS has saved me from being very shorthanded. I haven't had a single turnover.*”

single turnover.”

When DRS job seekers begin work, Echard said the learning curve is short because they are very intuitive employees.

"They (DRS job seekers) have great attitudes, really as good as it gets," he said. "They do not want to be standing still. If you see someone sweeping the floor because there is nothing to do, it is one of our deaf partners who is doing it."

## BUSINESS EXPERIENCE



### Brenda Burgess, director of business affairs Southwestern Oklahoma State University

Brenda Burgess oversees the business arm of Southwestern Oklahoma State University, and keeping her office humming, requires quality employees.

Burgess, who is director of business affairs and comptroller at SWOSU, said her accounts payable clerk is a tremendous asset to her office and a former DRS job seeker who has

worked with her for two years.

"She is an excellent employee and has an excellent attitude," Burgess said.

When she hires again, Burgess said she will look to DRS first.

"Absolutely, I would hire a DRS client again," she said. "I could not be happier."

## Five facts on people with disabilities:

### Fact one

**610,198** Oklahomans have a disability. Just over 36 percent of those have jobs. That is a huge talent pool of potential employees and customers.

### Fact two

**Expect a 120-percent decline in absenteeism!**

Walgreens distribution center employees with disabilities represent between 30 to 50 percent of its workforce.

Studies of the Walgreens experience show "a 120-percent" decline in absenteeism, less turnover and improved safety, according to a 2013 plan released by Delaware Gov. Jack Markell, who served as chair of the National Governors Association from 2012-2013.

### Fact three

Research shows that workers with disabilities have nearly identical job performance ratings to employees without disabilities — (Susanne Bruyers, Cornell University, "What the Research says about employing people with disabilities.")

### Fact four

Some of the top innovators in the United States have disabilities including chief executive officers of Ford Motor Company, Apple, Xerox and Turner Television.

### Fact five

**More than 600,000** scientists and engineers who are currently employed in the United States have disabilities. People with disabilities bring valuable skills to the work force.

# RETURN ON INVESTMENT

## Hiring people with disabilities is an investment that pays off:

**People with disabilities are a talented and often untapped labor pool**

Walgreens distribution center employees with disabilities represent between 30 to 50 percent of its workforce. Studies of the Walgreens experience demonstrate “a 120 percent productivity increase,” declines in absenteeism, less turnover, and improved safety, according to a 2013 plan released by Delaware Gov. Jack Markell, who served as chair of the National Governors Association from 2012-2013.

### You can obtain tax credits

You may get a federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit of up to 40-percent of the first \$6,000 of first-year wages of a new employee if the employee is part of a “targeted group” — <http://go.usa.gov/xTgZY>

WOTC reduces a businesses’ costs, requires little paperwork, and applying for WOTC is simple. There is no limit on the number of individuals a business can hire to qualify to claim the tax credit.

The WOTC is for businesses that hire targeted groups including people referred by DRS’ Vocational Rehabilitation and Visual Services.



The local Oklahoma Employment Security Commission office provides the WOTC certification.

For more information about WOTC, call or visit <http://go.usa.gov/xTgBx>

You may also visit [www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/wotcEmployers.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/wotcEmployers.cfm).

### Making your business accessible can also get you a tax deduction

Make your business accessible to employees with disabilities, and you may be able to take the **Disabled Access Credit**. Whatever you spent is subtracted from your total taxes owed. See more information at <http://go.usa.gov/xTgkC>.

With the **Architectural Barrier Removal Tax Deduction**, you may deduct up to \$15,000 per year for costs to remove architectural and transportation barriers for people

## BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

### Holly Fisher Cintas senior resource manager Tulsa

Holly Fisher, Cintas senior human resource manager at the Tulsa plant, said DRS’ ongoing support made the hiring of a worker with a disability a “great experience.”

“I think a lot of time employers think it is going to be expensive or burdensome or change their entire floor plan, but you don’t have to,” Fisher said. “You just have to see it from someone else’s perspective. Once we did that, it was very easy to make modifications with our maintenance partners to do those things for the forklift and lighting.”

She said Cintas would love to have a plant full of workers like Rusty.



“*I think a lot of time employers think it is going to be expensive or burdensome or change their entire floor plan, but you don’t have to.*”

with disabilities at the workplace.

For more information on what is covered by the Architectural Barrier Removal Tax Deduction, go to <http://go.usa.gov/xTg9Y>.

Tax credits can change. Please confirm status of tax credit opportunities at <http://go.usa.gov/xTg9B>

### Hiring people with disabilities improves corporate culture

A study by the Institute for Corporate

Productivity, which surveys and analyzes the practices of high-performing businesses, found that one of the reasons employers hire people with disabilities is that it supports their corporate culture.

As the report states, this positive impact “is brought about in two ways: it adds highly motivated people to the workforce (which can lead to increased productivity), and it promotes an inclusive culture that appeals to the talent pool organizations want to attract.

# BOTTOM LINE

## Myths and facts regarding the hiring of people with disabilities:

### Myth:

Hiring disabled workers increases workers compensation insurance rates.

### Fact:

Insurance rates are based solely on the relative hazards of the operation and the organization's accident experience, not on whether an employer has hired workers with disabilities.

### Myth:

Providing accommodations for people with disabilities is expensive.

### Fact:

For those who need an accommodation, 56 percent of these cost less than \$500, with many costing nothing at all. Available tax incentives make it even easier for businesses to cover accessibility costs.

### Myth:

Employees with disabilities have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.

### Fact:

Studies by firms such as DuPont show that employees with disabilities are not absent any



more than employees without disabilities.

### Myth:

The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) forces businesses to hire unqualified individuals with disabilities.

### Fact:

Unqualified candidates are not protected under the ADA. To be protected from discrimination in hiring, an individual must first meet all requirements for a job and be able to perform its essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations.

### Myth:

Under the ADA, a business cannot fire an employee who has a disability.

### Fact:

Businesses can fire workers

with disabilities under three conditions:

- (1) The termination is unrelated to the disability or
- (2) The employee does not meet the legitimate requirements for the job such as performance

or production standards with or without reasonable accommodation or

- (3) Because of the employee's disability he or she poses a direct threat to health or safety in the workplace.

## Resources to help you:

### Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

3535 NW 58th St, Suite 500  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112  
405-951-3400

800-845-8476 Toll Free

[www.okdrs.gov](http://www.okdrs.gov)

### DRS Business Services Team

800-845-8476 Toll Free

### Work Opportunity Tax Credit – Internal Revenue Service

<http://go.usa.gov/xTg9B>

### Tax Benefits for Businesses Who Have Employees with Disabilities

<http://go.usa.gov/xTgXV>

### Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/resources/EARN.htm>

### Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

[www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org)

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

[www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)



**OKLAHOMA  
WORKS**

[www.oklahomaworks.gov](http://www.oklahomaworks.gov)