

State of New Hampshire
By Her Excellency
Jeanne Shaheen, Governor
EXECUTIVE ORDER 2002-9

An order establishing the Governor's Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities ("Task Force")

WHEREAS, there are many qualified individuals with disabilities in New Hampshire that are unable to obtain competitive employment and the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities far exceeds the unemployment rate of persons without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, state and local communities have invested millions of dollars to educate and train persons with disabilities to be qualified workers; and

WHEREAS, there has been a history of barriers to equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities in New Hampshire and many of these barriers continue to exist in the public and private sectors; and

WHEREAS, it would be in the best interests of the state of New Hampshire to realize a return on its educational investment in persons with disabilities and expand the availability of qualified workers to New Hampshire business; and

WHEREAS, it would be in the best interests of the state of New Hampshire if there were a coordinated and comprehensive approach to policy and programs to increase the employment rate of adults with disabilities to equal that of the general adult population; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to undertake efforts to develop partnerships with public and private sector employers, organizations that represent people with disabilities, organized labor, veterans service organizations, local governments, and others in order to promote the employment and gainful economic activities of people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, since 1999, the Task Force has met to address the challenges to employment for people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the efficacy of this Task Force has *proven* that coordination improves efficiencies and communication so as to eliminate the physical and attitudinal barriers to competitive employment of persons with disabilities, and that this Task Force should be continued on a permanent basis.

NOW, **THEREFORE**, I, Jeanne Shaheen, Governor of the State of New Hampshire, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by Part II, Article 41 of the New Hampshire Constitution, do hereby order the following:

Section I. Establishment

The Governor's Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities to advise the Governor on policy and program issues that will increase employment and economic opportunity for persons with disabilities is established.

Section II. Membership

- A. The Task Force shall be comprised of representatives from several state agencies including but not limited to: the Governor's Office; the Division of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation, Office of Special Education of the Department of Education; the Governor's Commission on Disability; the Division of Developmental Services, the Division of Behavioral Health, the Division of Adult and Elderly Services, and the Office of Health Planning and Medicaid, all of the Department of Health and Human Services; the Office of the Commissioner of Employment Security; the Division of Personnel of the Department of Administrative Services; the Department of Justice; the Insurance Department; the Department of Transportation; the Human Rights Commission; and the Developmental Disabilities Council. The members of the Task Force shall make the activities and initiatives of the Task Force a priority within their respective agencies.
- B. The Task Force shall also be comprised of representatives from nongovernmental organizations including: the Mental Health Consumers Affairs Council; Granite State Independent Living; the Workforce Opportunity Council; the New Hampshire Brain Injury Association; the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority; the Disabilities Rights Center; and the New Hampshire Institute on Disability; and others deemed important to achieving the goals of the Task Force.
- C. The Task Force shall also be comprised of a minimum of three, and not to exceed seven, individuals with disabilities to assure that the interests of consumers are represented.
- D. The Task Force members shall serve for a term of three years.
- E. The current members of the Task Force are appointed effective today to serve on the Task Force established by this order.
- F. Task Force members shall serve voluntarily and will receive no compensation for their services. This does not exclude the provision of supports for persons with disabilities to actively participate in Task Force activities.

Section III. Functions

The Task Force shall do the following:

- A. Analyze the existing programs and policies of Task Force member agencies to determine what changes, modifications, and innovations may be necessary to remove barriers to employment facing people with disabilities, including barriers such as transportation, housing, insurance, program accessibility and benefit structure;
- B. Analyze State and private disability systems (e.g., workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, private insurance, and State mental health and developmental disabilities systems) and their effect on employment of adults with disabilities;

- C. Consult with state agencies on state personnel policies including hiring, promotion, benefits, retirement, workers' compensation, retention, accessible facilities, and job accommodations to increase the employment of people with cognitive, developmental and severe emotional disabilities;
- D. Recommend to the Governor any additional steps that can be taken to promote the state as a model employer to advance the employment of adults with disabilities, including legislative proposals, regulatory changes, provision for technology, and program and budget initiatives;
- E. In conjunction with the Youth Council of the Workforce Opportunity Council, analyze youth programs related to employment (e.g., Employment and Training Administration programs, special education, vocational rehabilitation, school-to-work transition, vocational education, and Social Security Administration work incentives) and the outcomes of those programs for young people with disabilities;
- F. Develop and support any legislation that will promote the employment of people with disabilities and/or remove barriers to such employment;
- G. Review and/or develop state and national cost data, research, and policy studies on public subsidies, employment, employment discrimination, and rates of return-to work for individuals with disabilities;
- H. Evaluate and, where appropriate, participate in research and demonstration priorities of Task Force member agencies related to employment of adults with disabilities;
- I. Produce and distribute a biennial report on the status of employment of people with disabilities in the State of New Hampshire;
- J. Member agencies of the Task Force shall report to the full Task Force their work to assist individuals with disabilities to attain meaningful, competitive employment including efforts to assist low-income adults, including those with disabilities, to create small businesses and micro-enterprises;
- K. The Task Force may adopt any By Laws or other procedure to assist in the facilitation of its mission.

Given under my hand and sea at the Executive
Chambers in Concord, this 4th day of Dec, in
the year of our Lord, two thousand and two.


Governor of New Hampshire