

CHAPTER 84

AN ACT establishing the Task Force to Promote the Employment by State Agencies of People with Disabilities and supplementing Title 34 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.34:1A-1.21 Findings, declarations.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

a. More than 19 million people in the United States work in state and local governments, and more than 570,000 people have public sector jobs in New Jersey, including 130,000 State government employees, employed in a wide variety of jobs and occupations, including accountants, corrections officers, mail clerks, chaplains, social workers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and computer programmers;

b. People with disabilities can benefit from the experience of employment in State agencies, gaining skills and receiving benefits through both internships and employment in the public sector and the State can benefit from the contributions that they can make as State employees;

c. Nine states have instituted within their human resources agencies policies and programs that foster the inclusion of people with disabilities into state government jobs, including provisional appointments, alternative examination and interview processes, trial work periods, and special appointment lists;

d. As a leading employer, and as an employer providing many well-paid, quality jobs with ample paid time off and medical and pension benefits, the State of New Jersey can set an important example to other employers, especially private sector employers, by increasing its efforts to recruit and retain in employment individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and

e. It is therefore appropriate to establish a Task Force to Promote the Employment by State Agencies of People with Disabilities for the purposes of studying the problem of unemployment and underemployment among individuals in New Jersey with disabilities, reviewing existing programs in this and other states, and private sector companies, to recruit and retain in employment individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and assisting in the identification and implementation of strategies to expand efforts of New Jersey State agencies to recruit and retain in employment individuals with disabilities, including by providing guidance and support to agencies and institutions of higher education.

C.34:1A-1.22 Task Force to Promote the Employment by State Agencies of People with Disabilities.

2. a. There is established, in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Task Force to Promote the Employment by State Agencies of People with Disabilities. The task force shall consist of 13 members, including one representative each for the Civil Service Commission, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the State Treasurer, the Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and their Families, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, the State Rehabilitation Council, and the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, who shall serve *ex officio*, and five members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate as follows: a member representing the Association for Choices in Community Supports and Employment Services (ACCSES New Jersey); a member representing The Arc of New Jersey; a representative of a community rehabilitation program, and two individuals who have a disability.

b. All appointments shall be made within 90 days after the effective date of this act. The appointed members of the task force shall serve for terms of three years. Vacancies in the membership of the appointed members of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

c. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as members of the task force, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the task force for its purposes.

d. The task force shall organize as soon as possible after the appointments are made and select a chairperson from among its members. The task force shall meet at least quarterly, may hold meetings and hearings at places and times as it designates, and may meet at any other times at the call of the chairperson. No action shall be taken by the task force except by an affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members.

C.34:1A-1.23 Purpose of task force.

3. a. The purpose of the task force is to study the problem of unemployment and underemployment among individuals with disabilities, review relevant, available programs within the State of New Jersey for State and local government agencies to recruit, hire, and retain in employment individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as similar programs in other states and private sector employers, and assist in the identification and implementation of strategies to expand efforts of New Jersey State and local government agencies to recruit, hire, and retain in employment individuals with disabilities.

b. The task force shall issue annual reports which offer a vision and provide viable recommendations on how the State can increase opportunities for employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities by expanding efforts of New Jersey State and local government agencies to promote the employment of such individuals by recruiting, hiring, and retaining them in employment, including by providing guidance and support to agencies and institutions of higher education.

c. The task force shall issue its first report to the Governor and Legislature not later than one year after the members of the task force are appointed. Each annual report shall be made available to the public by means including the posting of the report on the web sites of the State agencies represented on the task force.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved May 11, 2021.