

## Workplace Diversity & Disability Inclusion

Thursday, May 12th, 2011  
 11:30 am—Doors Open  
 11:45am-1:00pm—Lunch & Meeting

Featuring:  
 Windmills Attitudinal Training

Facilitator:  
 Sandra Cohen, MA



This program has been approved for 1 (General) recertification credit hour toward PHR, SPHR and GPHR recertification through the HR Certification Institute.

### Meeting Cost:

Early payment: \$20.00/members,  
 \$25.00/non-members  
 At the door: \$30.00/members, \$35.00/  
 non-members  
 (lunch provided)

### Come join us!

Please confirm your attendance  
 with Christy Tomlinson by  
**Monday, May 2nd** at  
[ctomlinson@cashmerevalleybank.com](mailto:ctomlinson@cashmerevalleybank.com).

Attitude often remains the most significant barrier to employment. Join us to discover how to overcome these barriers and open the lines of communication among participants and across cultures, genders, backgrounds and levels of ability.

### VOLUME XV, NO. 5

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## Workplace Diversity & Disability Inclusion

Many organizations would like to employ persons with disabilities, but find that fears, biases and myths create barriers in the hiring process. Although federal and state laws prohibit employment discrimination against persons with disabilities, attitude often remains the most significant barrier to employment by interfering with our ability to live and work to our highest potential.

A fun and informative introduction to **Windmills**, this high impact, attitudinal training program was originally developed by the California Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons. **Windmills** training focuses on attitudes and human factors, while addressing legal requirements and accommodation. The training modules consist of exercises relevant to the everyday world of work to which participants can relate and remember on the job. The program also incorporates the language and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.



Sandra Cohen is the Administrator of Community and Employment Services Training for Service Alternatives Training Institute in the Seattle area. She has her BA and MA in Psychology, and an MA in Human Development. She has worked with children and adults with disabilities over the past 25 years, several of which were spent as a Mental Health Therapist.

In her training sessions, participants are challenged to take a look at their own perceptions and biases, and to share and learn from others. This sharing of knowledge opens the lines of communication among participants and across cultures, genders, backgrounds and levels of ability.

**When: Thursday, May 12th, 2011**  
**11:30 a.m. Doors Open**  
**11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch & Meeting**

**Where: Confluence Technology Center**  
**285 Technology Center Way**

**Cost: Mail your payment to be received by Friday, May 6th for reduced cost of \$20.00/members, \$25.00/non-members (lunch provided). Submit payment to: AVHRA, P.O. Box 4489, Wenatchee, WA 98807-4489.**

**Pay at the door for cost of \$30.00/members, \$35.00/non-members.**



Please confirm your attendance with Christy Tomlinson at 662-5071 or email at [ctomlinson@cashmerevalleybank.com](mailto:ctomlinson@cashmerevalleybank.com) by Monday, May 2nd.  
 For more program information, visit our website at [www.avhra.org](http://www.avhra.org)



If you were unable to attend our April meeting focusing on “Just Cause & Termination,” we invite you to download the entire PowerPoint presentation from the meeting at our website, [www.AVHRA.org](http://www.AVHRA.org) under the Calendar of Events tab.

A special thanks to Myla Hite for bringing us a wonderful presentation!

## Leading Practices for Disability Employment Highlighted

By Kathy Gurchiek - 4/15/2011

Representatives from U.S. companies and the federal government extolled the business case for a more diverse workforce and its positive impact on the bottom line during the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Business Leadership Network’s (USBLN) Corporate Disability Employment Summit on April 12, 2011, in Washington, D.C.

That workforce can include persons with developmental disabilities, “wounded warriors” and persons with short- and long-term disabilities as well as an aging population, speakers noted.

“Too many employers still are not aware of the pool of qualified workers” among the disabled population, “do not know how to reach them, and are concerned about the perceived cost and challenge of providing accommodations,” Chamber CEO and President Thomas J. Donohue said during opening remarks.

Lowe’s Co. Inc. is among U.S. employers that have recruited persons with disabilities. Stephen Szilagyi, the company’s senior vice president for distribution, told attendees success stories about employees such as Chad Guerrero, who is legally blind. Guerrero was unemployed for a decade until Lowe’s hired him as part of its [outreach program that it piloted](#) at its Regional Distribution Center in Pittston, Pa., which opened 2009.

Guerrero works in the shipping department, where he trains other workers. “He’s exactly the kind of person you want on your team, but you can’t have him. He’s ours,” Szilagyi said. It was a refrain he repeated as he told of other successful hires, including a man who exceeds productivity levels in his department despite having Down syndrome, and another with cerebral palsy who has limited use of his left hand.

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The only real accommodation employers have to make, Szilagyi said, is the change needed in the “five inches between your ears.”

“We found it wasn’t enough to just open our doors wider.” What’s needed is to recruit and partner with an agency to find qualified job candidates, he said. “Everyone can do what we’re doing. We didn’t wait to implement universal design” for work stations, for example. “We just jumped in. We’re still figuring it out.”

The Lowe’s program was inspired by the one that [Walgreens](#) opened in 2007 at its distribution center in Anderson, S.C., under its Initiative for Employing People with Disabilities.

Employees with and without disabilities are held to the same standards, receive the same pay and perform the same jobs, said Deb Russell, the company’s manager of outreach and employee services. Russell, who serves as USBLN board chair, spoke at the summit.

Walgreens partnered with the Anderson County Disability and Special Needs Board. Finding a partner with shared goals and values is important to a successful diversity and inclusion program, Russell said.

“Sometimes you find partners that say they have the same goals, then they want to make exceptions,” she said. For example, the partner might want the business to deviate from what it considers acceptable performance from an employee.

It’s important, Russell said, that a business hold its ground on its standards, have ambassadors and champions for the program and face co-workers’ fears with education.

Lori Golden, AccessAbilities Leader for Ernst & Young and a USBLN board member, shared practical tips for creating a more-inclusive work environment.

DiversityInc named Ernst & Young among the [2011 top 10 companies for people with disabilities](#). Its practices include captioning and/or making transcripts available for webcasts, providing automatic transcriptions of voicemail and auditing its offices for accessibility. That audit includes business processes and whether often-used supplies are stored at wheelchair level.

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Employers need to recognize, Golden said, that integrating disabled employees into the organization is part of everything the organization does—not just training.

She said there are four areas on which employers can focus for success:

- Recruit the best talent in whatever packaging that talent arrives.
- Enable the employee to do his or her best by providing access to tools, resources, information, equipment and career opportunities.
- Plan for career development and advancement.
- Educate everyone to build an inclusive nature—not just supervisors and recruiters.

### **Don't Lower Expectations**

Many speakers emphasized that hiring a worker with a disability is about creating an inclusive workforce, not charity or entitlement or establishing quotas.

“There’s nothing wrong with expecting people to be qualified for the jobs you want them for,” said Debra Ruh, founder and CEO of [TecAccess, an accessibility and risk management consulting firm](#) and a USBLN board member. Ruh, whose daughter Sara has Down syndrome, started the company in 2001 with the goal of hiring primarily people with disabilities.

“I’ve hired people with disabilities and I’ve fired people with disabilities,” said Ruh, whose company employs more than 60 employees with physical and developmental disabilities.

[Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa](#), noted that since the start of the recession in 2008, adults with disabilities have been leaving the labor force at more than 10 times the rate than adults without disabilities, adding to the taxpayers’ burden. He called on CEOs and business owners at the summit to join him in his goal of increasing the number of American workers with disabilities from 4.9 million in 2011 to 6 million in 2015.

He sponsored the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, called a hearing in March 2011 to identify barriers to employment for people with intellectual disabilities.

“We’re not asking any business to employ someone who cannot work in competitive employment,” Harkin said. However, “there are millions of people out there ... who can work in competitive employment” and are promotable.



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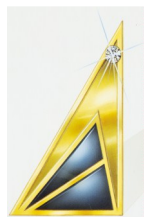
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