



Photography: Benjamin Margolis

As part of its job-matching role, the Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities identifies an employer's needs, finds a good match and sends out a job coach to help the employee learn needed job skills—at no cost to the employer.

Ready to Succeed

It's a myth that hiring a person with disabilities through the Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities takes more time and effort than traditional hiring. Here's how you can enhance your business culture, right now.

by Laura Briedis

Hiring people with disabilities is a sound business practice that helps a company to be more successful. It's not about being charitable," states Patti Hetkey, community relations coordinator for the Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The organization shows businesses how easy and rewarding it is to hire this untapped resource of employees.

And it is working. More than 60 area businesses are partnering

with the agency to reap the benefits of having a dedicated, loyal workforce. "Our agency partners with local businesses to provide employees with disabilities as a viable solution to staffing needs," says Ed Dryer, associate director of adult services. "We help businesses save money, as the employees we place, on average, stay at the same job for five years. Low turnover equals

greater productivity."

Take, for instance, Dan, who has been tending to the grounds and greens at Sharon Golf Club for 35 years, or Jane, who has worked for 20 years in Buehler's kitchen. Scott has been employed at Dairy Queen for 15-plus years performing just about every task there.

The Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities provides job placement and training to help employees with disabilities become contributing members of the workforce.

"We make it as easy as possible for businesses to hire employees with disabilities," says Patti. "And what most businesses don't realize is how quick the process is. We provide ongoing training for these employees to develop specific skills so they are ready to work even before a business contacts us."

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job skills—at no cost to the employer.

The first step of the process is job development, where the agency works with a business to understand its staffing needs and job openings. "Often we are able to offer solutions to companies that may only

need a little extra help by hiring an employee for five to 10 hours a week on a temporary basis or for seasonal work," says Laura Fechter, economic developer. "We also have employees who work 40 hours a week."

"After we assess the employer's needs, we match a person to the job and we can offer

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a job tryout for a couple of weeks to make sure it is a good fit before a business makes a commitment," Laura adds. "Our goal is to make sure both the business and the employee will be successful."

Once employees are placed, the agency's job coaches learn the specifics of a job and then teach the employees and work alongside them until they have mastered their job functions. "On average, job coaches work alongside employees for two weeks before the employees start working independently," says Tess Goodrow, the adult services manager who supervises job coaches. "Once the job coach finishes the training period then a community support supervisor will check in once a month with both the business and employee as follow-up and to provide any additional help that may be needed."

"Often times there is a misconception that hiring someone with a disability will take more time and effort, but that is not true. We partner with the business to place quality employees and give them the tools and resources needed to be successful."

Call 330-725-1373, email edd@mcbdd.org or visit MCBDD.org for more information on how you can benefit from job matching services. The Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities community employment office is located at 2736 Medina Road, Suite 107, in Medina.



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