



DISABILITY MENTORING DAY

DRS Staff Guide

What's the first thing I should do?

Begin by selecting 2 or more customers you think can benefit from a short on -the - job experience.

Think of customers who may need some career exploration or have only a vague idea of the kinds of jobs they may be able to do or enjoy doing. Emphasis that one should look for career options where they will enjoy the day to day duties and challenges of the job.

Consider customers who are job ready and are starting to look for actual jobs and may benefit from the employer and worker contacts and the networking involved with DMD.

You may want to consider High School and College students who could benefit from being able to see jobs that are in a career path they are considering and will be very useful as they continue with their education.

The ideal candidates are those who are eager to learn and explore the world of work. Customers who are sincere about becoming employed will learn and benefit from the experience and will make a great impression on the employer.

Remember that DMD is about relationship building, learning and career exploration, while we love it when a mentoring situation ends with a job offer, mentoring is just as successful for a customer who learns that a job they had previously considered is not really one that they want to do. If your customer learned something, and the employer learned something or felt that they were able to contribute, it was a successful encounter.

Ok, I have folks who want to be mentored, now what?

Next, contact an employer who has a position that is similar to the type of work each customer would like to do. You can ask your ERS for suggestions, you can call places where you do business like banks and stores, or you can cold call out of the phone directory. Some DRS staff have had great luck sending out letters to area employers and asking them to participate. Follow up your letters with a phone call or visit to the businesses, (even if they failed to respond to your letter). If they have seen your name on state letterhead and been exposed to DMD, they may be more likely to take a moment to talk to you about DMD and DRS services in general. DMD can and should be an office project. Work as a team with other staff members to create a network of employers who are willing to assist. Also, involve the customer. Ask your customers if they know of a company or a person who already does the job they are interested in exploring. Teaching the value of networking is an important goal for DMD. You can involve the customer in doing research on the company or jobs. This can be a great time to teach customers how to do a labor market research or where to find job leads in the community. Most employers are sincerely pleased to assist.

How do I approach the employer?

Call the employer and say, "I'm Xavier Wilson (of course you could use your own name) with Department of Human Services. We are celebrating Disability Awareness Day by calling employers and asking them to help our customers with some career exploration. I am working with a person who would like to work in the field of _____. Could you let him/her observe for a day or 1/2 a day to get a real feel for the job? Maybe you could critique her resume and give her some tips on how to prepare for this work and where to look for employment. Can we set a date that's good for you?"

Make sure you address accessibility issues that your customer may need. If an interpreter is needed for a customer who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, or a guide for a person who is blind or has a vision loss, make sure those details are addressed. Don't take the employer by surprise. If the disability is obvious, you may wish to address it in advance of the mentoring day. The employer will want to make his/her business open and welcoming to the mentee, the insights you provide may go a long way to make everyone feel more at ease. You do not need to go into detail about medical or disabling conditions, just provide basic information about the accommodation that may be needed. For example: "Mary uses a sign language interpreter, we will provide the interpreter for the mentoring experience. When you speak to Mary, speak directly to her; make eye contact with Mary not the interpreter. The interpreter will sign everything you say and will express verbally what Mary says". The employer may make the assumption that Mary is Deaf, and that may be correct. But if Mary shows up on mentoring day with an interpreter, the employer will figure it out anyway. Better to give the employer an idea what to expect. When in doubt, ask the customer to sign a release of information so that you can be sure accommodations are in place to make the day a success.

Send the employer a letter or email going over the facts of who will be coming, when and on what date. There are forms in the national web site or create your own letters. Part of this guideline contains information for employers. You can create a packet to take to the employer when you meet to finalize the date and expectations for the day.

What should I tell the customer?

Call and write the customer and give all the details: time, names, addresses, place, and accessibility. The DMD planning guide also contains a section for customers. You could create a packet for the customers and help them prepare for the experience by knowing how to dress, what to expect, how to research the company, what kinds of questions they may want to ask. Make sure the customer has all the information they may need regarding transportation, whether to bring a lunch. If possible, the customer should have a copy of his/her resume to take to the experience.

Anything else?

Keep notes. Send Thank You's. It can be as simple or complex as you want it to be. Be sure to follow up with both the employer and the customer a day or two before the event. Make sure that both have all the information they need and see if there are any last minute questions or concerns. Don't expect that just because it was all set up that everything will fall into place. Plan to be the facilitator for the employer and customer; they are both counting on you to be sure that this event will occur with minimal glitches.

Make sure that part of your follow up includes some form of appreciation for the employers. A Thank you note or certificate of appreciation may make a world of difference next year when you are looking for employers.

Where can I find more information?

Your ERS is available to serve as a resource and help you find employers or materials that will make the day a success. Here is the main link to national: <http://www.dmd-aapd.org/>. You can find mentee applications, brochures, and more in the AAPD Toolkit.



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Consent and Release Form

(Please Print)

I, _____, hereby give and grant to the Department of Human Services unlimited right to use my name, likeness, photographs and/or video tape, audio recordings or story made with me as a model or interviewee with such alterations, additions, or editing as deemed necessary by the Department of Human Services. The right to use and distribute such photographs and/or video tape, audio recordings, story shall lie solely within the discretion of the Department of Human Services and by signing this release form, I further agree to refrain from instituting any future legal action against the Department of Human Services regarding such use or distribution of any photographs and/or video tape recordings, story now and forever. I understand that this information will not be used for profit and that I will not be paid for their use.

Printed Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Telephone

Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date

(Please Print) Witness