

Program Background

1. Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) is sponsored nationally by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) in close partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). DMD is a large scale broad-based effort to promote internships and employment opportunities and career development for students and job seekers with disabilities as mentees. DMD originated in the White House in 1999 and is observed on the third Wednesday of October every year in conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Independent Living Resources has sponsored an event every year since October, 2000. The event has grown from six participants in 2000, to over 150 participants in La Crosse and Richland Center. We've had this event in Dodgeville since 2006 and it continues to be even bigger and better!
2. DMD is designed to enhance internship and employment opportunities for students with disabilities by bringing them together with employers from the public, private, non-profit and educational sectors for a day of job shadowing and other hands-on career exploration activities. DMD is an event to help break down employers' fears about hiring people with disabilities and increase the latter's confidence in securing gainful employment.
3. The goals of DMD are to enhance partnerships and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. To promote disability as a central component of diversity recruitment for a more inclusive workforce, to dispel employers' fears about hiring people with disabilities, to increase confidence among students and job seekers with disabilities and to launch a year-round effort to foster mentoring opportunities.
4. This fall, the Iowa and Lafayette County Transition Advisory Council (TAC) will have a local organizing committee for DMD. The committee plans for an event to take place on October _____. The TAC will be coordinating with employers in the Dodgeville area, as well as agencies that serve persons with disabilities, to make the event a success.
5. The schools that are participating will have students interested in participating in DMD, complete an application packet that includes a career clusters worksheet, a mentee application and an evaluation.
6. Every year there has been excellent media coverage for DMD through television, radio and newspaper. Independent Living Resources, Inc. publishes a newsletter quarterly and each fall DMD is featured. This along with employer contacts has promoted disability as a central component of diversity recruitment for a more inclusive workforce. We hope to have media coverage for this event in October.
7. DMD offers an experience to students, which allows them to see themselves out in the workforce, get a chance to see their area of interest and in some instances DMD has opened up volunteer and paid opportunities for participants. The events have always been a component in increasing the confidence among the participants.
8. To maximize participation for this event the organizing committee consists of members of the Iowa and Lafayette County Transition Council. Members are representing the schools, as well as agencies in the

community including Independent Living Resources, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and The Hodan Center.

The committee has the mentees and employers/mentors fill out an evaluation sheet. The committee captures testimonials from mentees to see how the experiences opened up any opportunities for them.

Follow up visits with the mentor sites have been found to be valuable in building on NDMD not only with the mentees but with the local organizing committee as well.