

Services for Business

ADRS and Business: A Winning Combination

For 24 years, the *ADRS business relations team* has continued to *build partnerships* with Alabama businesses throughout the state, Southeast and nation. These partnerships are based on *the foundation of trust and attention* to the *customized needs* of each business in the partnership.

In fiscal year 2008, the 16 ADRS employer development coordinators worked with 1,637 businesses in either long-term partnerships or “real-time” interactions, providing 7,026 products and services to those businesses. They also provided 11,611 employment-related services to 1,883 of the VR consumers who were identified as “ready for employment” by their counselors while conducting 89 “job readiness” classes for these individuals, always focused on improving the talent bank from which ADRS business partners could recruit. Subsequently, 773 individuals with disabilities became employed or retained their jobs.

Leading the list for products and services sought after by business in partnership with ADRS were:

- *recruitment, pre-hire screening and referral of candidates* for targeted company jobs at entry level and higher on-going follow-up and support post-hire
- *job-site coaching* for employees and supervisors
- *in-service training* for staff and co-workers
- *a wide variety of consultant services* on accommodations, emergency preparedness, diversity, and disability

Other services that addressed the needs of business customers in their partnership with ADRS included assistance with tax credits; leadership and middle management training to include diversity and disability issues; assistance with retention of employees whose jobs were affected by illness, injury or disability; job analysis; job site accommodations for employees; and assistance with affirmative action mandates.

Leading Business Partners

(top users of ADRS services)

- Walgreens Customer Care Center, Muscle Shoals
- Holiday Inn, Decatur
- WalMart, Statewide
- VA Medical Center, Birmingham
- Manpower, Inc., Birmingham
- Personnel Board of Jefferson County
- Crothell, Inc., Birmingham
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- UAB Hospital
- Wachovia Bank, Birmingham
- American Impact Marketing, Tuscaloosa
- Phifer Wire, Tuscaloosa
- Marshall County Corrections
- West Corporation, Huntsville
- Mobile Infirmary



Helen Keller Hospital

Employer: Helen Keller Hospital

Location: Sheffield

Description: Helen Keller Hospital is a 185-bed, not-for-profit hospital that provides health care for the residents of Northwest Alabama

Number of Employees: 900

ADRS Employer Development

Coordinator: Dawn Huntzinger, Muscle Shoals VRS

Human resources director: Pamela Bryant

For Pamela Bryant, human resources director at Helen Keller Hospital, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is just a short phone call away.

Pamela calls Dawn Huntzinger, ADRS employer development coordinator, if she needs assistance with Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accommodations, has questions about an employee with a disability, or wants to hire someone with a disability.

“My relationship with Dawn is priceless,” Bryant said. “I know I can always call and she is quick to respond.”

Bryant has been the human resources director for 16 years and has worked with ADRS from the beginning, maintaining the relationship that the previous human resources director had with the department.

Through the years, Dawn has assisted Helen Keller with the hiring of and accommodations for a number of people with disabilities.

“There have been so many, I’ve lost count,” she said.

With Dawn’s assistance, Helen Keller Hospital has hired people with all kinds of

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disabilities, including individuals who are blind, have Williams syndrome, and have learning disabilities.

Pamela is impressed that Dawn understands the hospital so well that she only recommends the most qualified applicants to her.

“I know that if she brings a client to us, she’s already checked them out, recognizes their ethics and skills,” Pamela said. “She knows our jobs and what we need.”



Phifer Wire Products, Inc.

Employer: Phifer Wire Products, Inc.

Location: Tuscaloosa

Description: Phifer Wire Products is a manufacturer of fabricated wire products that provides products used in all 50 states and more than 125 countries.

Number of Employees: 1,300

ADRS Employer Development

Coordinator: Leslie Dawson, Tuscaloosa

Employment manager: Russell Dubose

When Russell Dubose changed his hiring process two years ago to get more qualified applicants, he noticed that he was no longer getting people with disabilities as applicants. Dubose was concerned because he wanted to hire people with disabilities.

“What you get is loyal, long-term people who are going to love working here,” he said. Out of its 1,300 employees, 57 of his employees have disabilities. Russell did not want to eliminate people with disabilities from his hiring process.

“I needed to call the experts,” he said.

Dubose met with Leslie Dawson, ADRS employer development coordinator,

and arranged a meeting with a group of Vocational Rehabilitation Service staff.

At the meeting, the team learned Dubose’s new hiring process and helped him refine it. If a consumer is hired, the rehabilitation counselor goes over the pre-employment packet with him or her. ADRS also hires a job coach to assist the consumer with learning the job. Five people have already been hired with this new process, most with hearing impairments.

Dubose said he is grateful he can work with ADRS to hire more people with disabilities.

“ADRS is a great resource and asset,” he said. “They are a natural business partner that understands the business skill set we need and helps us with development and training of our employees. They are a great business partner.”



Jefferson County Personnel Board

Employer: Personnel Board of Jefferson County

Location: Birmingham

Description: The Personnel Board of Jefferson County recruits, trains, and retains employees for civil service in Jefferson County. It serves 23 jurisdictions as part of the merit system of Jefferson County.

Number of Employees: 9,000

ADRS Employer Development

Coordinator: Stella Pelham, Homewood VRS

Assistant vice president of human resources management: Roger McCullough

Roger McCullough created a wonderful program to make sure the Personnel Board of Jefferson County recruits people with disabilities for civil service positions. McCullough, assistant vice president of human resources management, designed the program to level the playing field for people with disabilities who would have a more difficult time competing in the merit system.

Called Certifying Eligible Applicants with Disabilities, or CEAD, the plan includes three ways a person with a disability can get a job in civil service in Jefferson County. The first way is the regular process of the person with a disability applying for a job, testing for the position and landing in the top 10 of the register.

The second way is for the person to apply and test for the job and be added to the register regardless of his or her ranking.

In both instances, Stella Pelham, ADRS employer development coordinator, calls the employer to advocate for the person and to let the employer know that there is a person on the register who has a disability and explain the benefits of hiring that person.

The third way is the non-competitive way. She goes to McCullough and says she has a consumer. He looks at available jobs and calls the hiring department about the person working temporarily for six months. If the employer likes the person, then the next time a register is created, the client’s name is added to the register.

Pelham says employers love the process of working with ADRS to hire people with disabilities.

With ADRS, they know that they are getting a person who has been screened instead of a random name on a register. They also know that ADRS will be there to help with training and accommodations for the employee.

McCullough said he enjoys working with ADRS through the program.

“It is a mutually beneficial partnership,” he said. “It is not what we can get from them, it is how we can help each other.”