

## PA Business Leadership Network

Many employers today are unable to find diverse and qualified job applicants through their normal channels of recruitment and/or may be experiencing higher instances of disability amongst their existing workforce. Others are looking at how to give their company a competitive edge in the marketplace and better reach the customers with disabilities that are said to represent one trillion dollars of buying power.

In response to the business community's needs for a diverse set of qualified workers to fill its labor needs, meet its compliance requirements, and respond effectively to the needs of its diverse customers, AHEDD began coordinating a statewide business initiative, The Pennsylvania Business Leadership Network (PA BLN), in 2000.

Today, the [Pennsylvania Business Leadership Network \(PA BLN\)](#) is an employer-driven program designed for business leaders to promote hiring practices that enable qualified people with disabilities to enter and succeed in the workplace. Business Leadership Networks have been established in many states as part of a national initiative now guided by the [US Business Leadership Network \(USBLN\)](#). All BLNs have a focus on providing a business friendly environment with opportunities for peer-to-peer/business-to-business interaction.

The PA BLN specifically offers employers:

- access to pertinent disability related information
- a network of employers who can share experiences and best practices
- exposure to qualified job applicants with disabilities
- training on disability related resources, strategies, etiquette, and more
- opportunities for positive public relations to promote "disability friendly" status

The support provided to companies through the PA BLN is definitely connected to our employment expertise at AHEDD, but it also goes beyond just the assistance that can be offered by our agency. The efforts of the PA BLN are focused on giving employers a business friendly resource to assist them in reaching their diversity goals and finding solutions to specific recruiting and accommodation needs. Through the PA BLN, AHEDD is able to help small to large PA employers with navigating and connecting to additional resources which can improve their company's diversity and inclusiveness for both customers and employees with disabilities.

AHEDD is a specialized human resource organization with a mission to serve the community as a catalyst in the employment and development of persons with a disability, AHEDD provides community employment services through a network of field offices throughout Pennsylvania. For more information, contact Ms. Stacy Kyle, Project Director at (717) 763-0968, ext. 90115 or email [stacy.kyle@blnofpa.org](mailto:stacy.kyle@blnofpa.org).