



## CAIP Innovative Attitude Change Project Proposal - Advancing Access and Inclusion

<b>Project Title:</b> “Risk” free employment for people with disabilities
<b>Submitted by:</b> Robert Shaw
<b>Sector Targeted for Attitude Change:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employers, <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (preschool – Grade 12), <input type="checkbox"/> Community (geographic community or community of interest)
<b>Specific Audience To Be Reached:</b> Employers
<b>Specific Attitude To Be Established:</b> That employees with disabilities are not a financial liability and in fact are beneficial to have as part of an organization/business.
<b>Geographic Reach:</b> nation wide
<b>Project Description Summary:</b> Several myths exist regarding hiring/employing someone with a disability. As more research has been performed in this area more and more myths are being debunked. Unfortunately, despite the research, one prevailing attitude still exists, and that is that hiring someone with a disability just doesn’t make financial sense when compared to hiring an equally qualified person without a disability. This negative explicit attitude stems from the uneducated assumption that someone with a disability will either a) be absent from work more frequently, b) will have more accidents at the workplace, c) will require specialized equipment, d) cause worker compensation premiums to increase. The project I will briefly describe will hopefully change these attitudes. I propose that instead of employers covering the health/dental insurance of employees with disabilities that the federal government creates a program that covers these costs for the first 2 years that an employee with a disability is hired. This program would allow employers to hire people with disabilities “risk” free and show them (over the course of two years) that employees with disabilities do not necessarily cause any of the 4 points previously mentioned. The program could then be extended by having the federal government cover 50% of all health/dental claims for years 3-5 that an employee is employed (within the same organization) which would encourage companies to keep employees with disabilities around for the long haul. Keeping an employee around for several years would also allow employers to recognize the added benefits that often result when hiring someone with a disability (e.g. less sick days from other staff members). Businesses and employers respond to ideas that are financially appealing. This program could help to change employers attitudes towards hiring an employee with a disability by increasing their contact time with employees that have disabilities while taking on no “perceived financial risk”.
<b>Project Outcomes:</b> Increase contact time between employers and employees with disabilities to allow employers the opportunity to see that hiring someone with a disability is not a financial risk.
<b>Project Lead and Partners:</b> Robert Shaw, potentially an organization like the Institute for Work & Health, a major insurance company