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Dept. of Workforce Development: Celebrates 50th anniversary of anti-discrimination law protecting people with disabilities with launch of virtual accommodation training library

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MADISON – As the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) today celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – the first federal civil rights legislation protecting people with disabilities from discrimination – DWD is launching new training videos to help employers recruit, retain, and support the success of workers with disabilities.

The video library currently has five videos geared to employers, human resource professionals, current workers and career seekers, with additional videos to be added. The videos provide information to support employers' efforts to diversify their workforce and support people with disabilities in advancing their careers.

"The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provided important civil rights protections by making it illegal for federal contractors and federally funded programs to discriminate based on disability," DWD Secretary Amy Pechacek said. "Even as national protections have been in place for a half century, Wisconsin led the way as the first state in the country to outlaw job discrimination on the basis of disability in 1965. For today's employers, we hope modern tools such as the new video library help inform and encourage more hiring and retention of workers with disabilities now and in the decades to come."

The current training modules cover areas such as:

- Disability discrimination in the workplace.
- Requesting and providing a reasonable accommodation.
- Disclosing a disability to an employer.

A one-question survey accompanies the videos to help track viewers' perspectives on career advancement for people with disabilities.

DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) led the development of the videos and received technical assistance from the DWD's Equal Rights Division (ERD). The library is made possible through funding provided by the U.S. Department of Education's Career Pathways Advancement Initiative grant program. DWD was awarded $14 million in 2021 and another $6.4 million this year to invest in resources and individual training to drive employment for DVR consumers seeking to advance in high-demand careers.

The main goals of DWD's Career Pathways Advancement Initiative are to increase the number of DVR job seekers who successfully advance in select career fields, increase weekly wages for participating workers, expand employer-provided benefits offered to DVR job seekers, decrease the number of DVR job seekers using public benefits, increase job-driven skills training and industry recognized credentials, and improve and maximize competitive integrated employment outcomes for DVR job seekers.

The contents of the job accommodation videos were developed under a grant (H421C210018) from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3 and 3474).