Presenters

Beth Gaertner
Director of Education,
SVRI

Brianne Warner
Assistive Technologist,
SVRI

Lynn Hardginski
Business Services
Consultant, WI DVR

Krissy Neyrinck
Vocational Rehabilitation
Counselor, WI DVR

University of
Wisconsin-Stout

WI DVR & SVRI Collaboration

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DWD
Department of Workforce Development

Vocational Rehabilitation

- The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a federal/state program designed to obtain, maintain, and advance employment for people with disabilities by working with DVR consumers, employers, and other partners

UW-Stout
Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute

- The Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) provides solutions to positively impact the future of people with disabilities through services, research and education programs that prepare VR professionals

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Objectives

1. Define disability, universal design & accommodation

2. Discuss the benefits of hiring those with disabilities, particularly in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives

3. Explore how universal design and accommodations impact the information technology sector

4. Share success stories

5. Learn about the Business Services Team at Wisconsin DVR and how to leverage their support

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Definitions of Disability

*The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability within a legal context but is important to remember that disability is defined differently in other settings.

Part 1

Physical or mental impairment
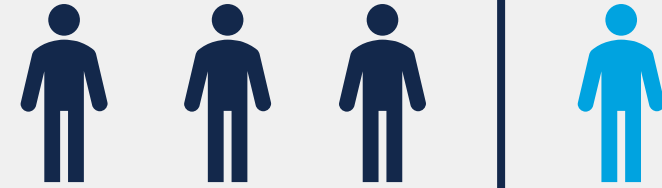
Part 2

Substantially limiting

Part 3

One or more major life activity

University of Wisconsin-Stout

How many adults in the U.S. report having a disability?

Disability and the Labor Force

U.S. Dept. of Labor – Disability Employment Statistics

Chart data:

	Persons with a Disability	Persons without a Disability
Labor Force Participation Rate (16+)	24.50%	67.60%
Unemployment Rate (16+)	6.60%	3.90%

University of Wisconsin-Stout
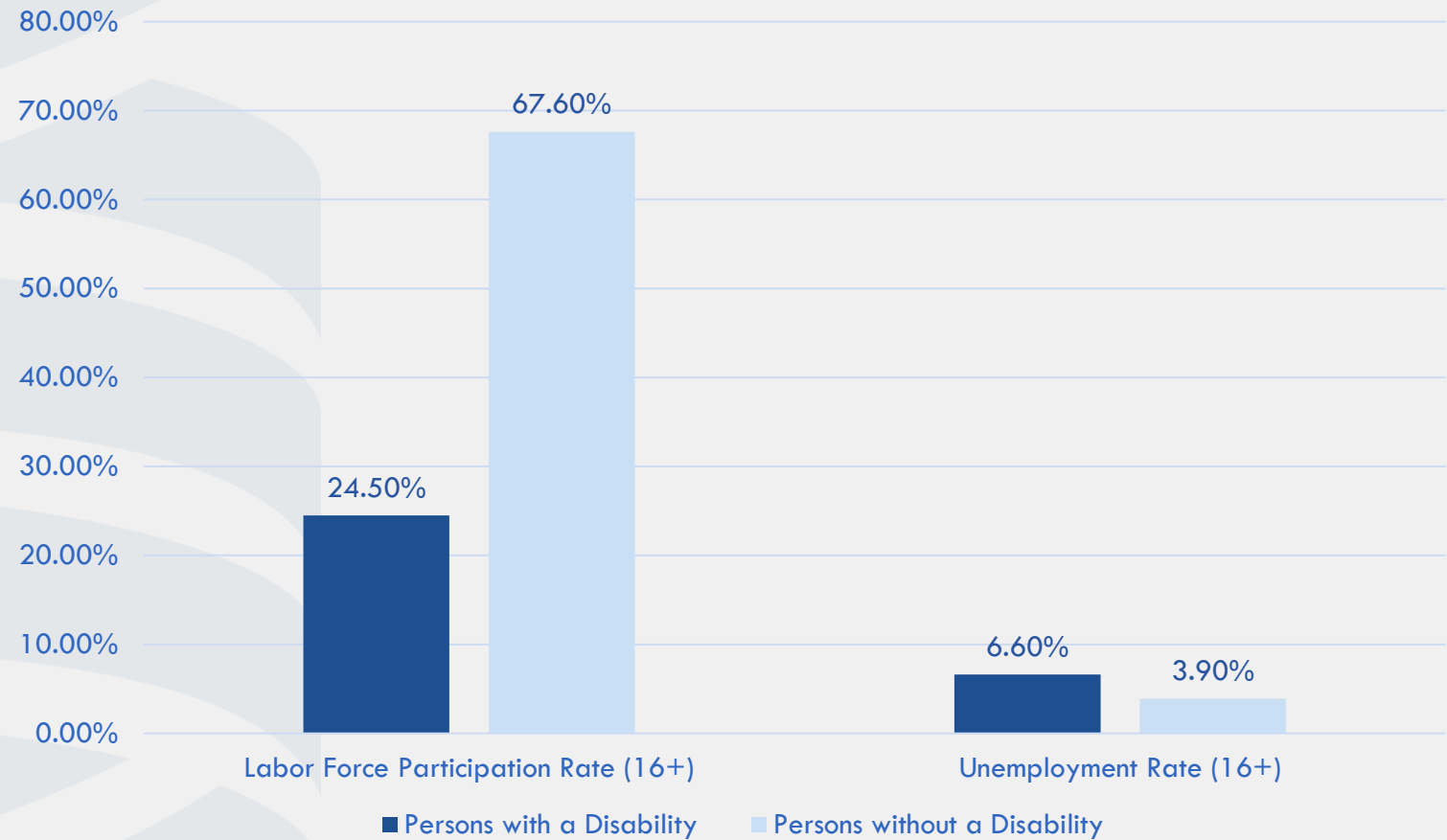
Myths Debunked

- Not everyone with a disability may need an accommodation(s)
- Accommodations vary, just as people's strengths, work environments, and job duties vary
- Accommodations can be little to no cost
- Retain valuable employees
- Reduced workers' compensation & training costs
- Increased productivity, morale, and company diversity
- Many employees with disabilities are skilled problem solvers by virtue

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility

- Evidence from Research

  - Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder possess higher than average abilities in many skilled areas

  - Individuals with developmental disabilities are more productive, have fewer absences, and are very loyal to their employers

  - Individuals with mental health conditions feel work gives them a sense of purpose and belonging

University of Wisconsin-Stout

U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Mental Health and Well-Being in the Workplace

Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy stated this new framework gives us *"an opportunity to rethink how we work"*

"A healthy workforce is the foundation for thriving organizations and healthier communities"

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Career Pathways

- Upskilling Workers
  - Construction
  - Healthcare
  - Information/Digital Technology
  - Manufacturing
- Focus on competitive integrated employment
  - Company advancement
  - Learn additional skills
- Apprenticeship programs

Universal Design

- Universal Design (UD) is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used by all people regardless of age, size, ability, or disability

- Application of universal design principles minimizes the use of assistive technology, results in products compatible with AT, and makes products more usable by everyone, not just those with disabilities

- If well designed with accessibility and usability, everyone will benefit

Universal Design in IT

"Specifically, universal designs, job accommodations, and assistive technology can play a significant role in enhancing a person's ability to interact with his or her environment and to meaningfully participate in society" (Huang et al., 2016)

- Universal Design can guide the development, procurement, and use of technology that is accessible, usable, and inclusive of all

- Schools are required to provide equal access to web- based services, program, and activities

- Examples: Accessible documents, accessible websites, computer labs

University of
Wisconsin-Stout

What is an Accommodation

- Any change to the work environment or job that enables a person with a disability to be successful or enjoy equal employment opportunities including promotions, raises and recognition.

- The employee must meet the skill level required and must be able to perform the essential functions of the job.

- Through an interactive process between employer and employee, it is determined what is effective but ultimately, is the employer's choice.

University of Wisconsin-Stout

What accommodations have you seen in your workplace or out in the community?

University of Wisconsin-Stout

IT vs AT

- Information Technology (IT)
  - Includes computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware
- Assistive Technology (AT)
  - Includes computers, software, wheelchairs, alternative keyboards, hand splints

- Can be used interchangeably
- Differences
- Ergonomics
- To determine IT or AT, consider the function in a specific situation, not just the tool itself

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Assistive Technology

- Smart phone

- E- books

- Laptops

- Screen readers

- Speech to text software

- Standing desks

- Adapted keyboards & Mice

University of
Wisconsin-Stout
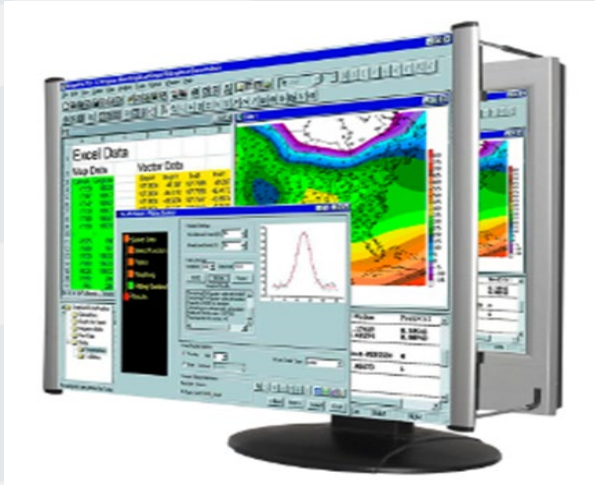
Monitor Magnifier

Headband Magnifier

Lighted Glasses
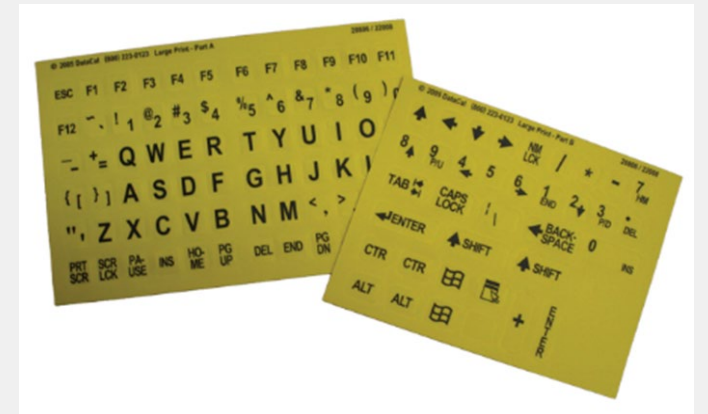
High Contrast Keyboard Stickers

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Information Technology Success Stories

"Fred"

- <u>Diagnosis</u>: chronic pain from a work injury that affected his mobility and work tolerance

- <u>DVR</u>: Goal was to get a job after years of unemployment due to not being able to stay in usual type of work

- <u>Solution</u>: DVR provided vocational counseling, training funds for his Associate's Degree as a Computer User Support Specialist, currently employed FT as an IT Infrastructure Service Analyst

"John"

- <u>Diagnosis</u>: autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit disorder and struggles to focus despite medications and simplified instructions

- <u>DVR</u>: Goal was to get a job

- <u>Solution</u>: DVR provided vocational counseling, authorized an assistive technology assessment and purchase, provided funds for Associate's Degree and then Bachelor's in Information Science & Technology; hired FT as a Service Desk Analyst

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Business Services Consultants at WI DVR

- The DVR Business Services Consultants (BSCs) are statewide and connect employers to a larger integrated business services team to assist in solving challenges in hiring and retaining qualified employees.

- At no cost to the employer, we provide:
  - Recruitment assistance
  - Match candidates to business needs
 - Connect you to workforce partners and more.

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Business Services Team at WI DVR

- Engage in outreach to employers and build relationships

- Learn about the company culture as a whole and understand its workforce needs

- Provide disability expertise

- Connect with partner agencies and services

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Have you connected with a Business Services Consultant from WI DVR?

University of
Wisconsin-Stout

DVR Business Services Consultant Contacts
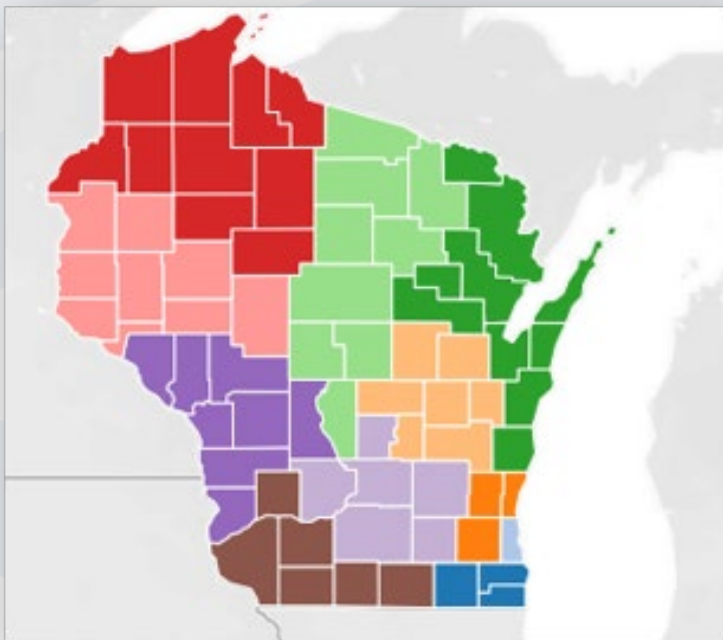
≡	BSC	Email	Phone	
1	Shaun Lukas	shaun.lukas@dwd.wisconsin.gov	262-270-8518	■
2	Markus Watts (MKE North)	Markus.Watts@dwd.wisconsin.gov	414-250-6568	■
	Sameer Bhaiji (MKE South)	Sameer.Bhaiji@dwd.wisconsin.gov	414-458-8072	■
3	Denise Puffer	Denise.Puffer@dwd.wisconsin.gov	262-888-0181	■
4	Nicole Greetan	Nicole.Greetan@dwd.wisconsin.gov	920-312-6037	■
5	Lynn Hardginski	Lynn.Hardginski@dwd.wisconsin.gov	262-977-1021	■
6	Mallory Bryan	mallory.bryan@dwd.wisconsin.gov	715-907-2580	■
7	Dawn Stocks	dawn.stocks@dwd.wisconsin.gov	715-415-2712	■
8	Tara Burns	Taram.burns@dwd.wisconsin.gov	715-931-7394	■
9	Amy Studden	Amy.Studden@dwd.wisconsin.gov	608-799-6308	■
10	Amy Studden	Amy.Studden@dwd.wisconsin.gov	608-799-6308	■
11	Ismael Luna	ismael.luna@dwd.wisconsin.gov	608-931-0765	■

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Resources

[Accommodation Training Library](#)

[Job Accommodation Network](#)

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Additional Resources

- U.S. Department of Labor – Accommodations
- U.S. Department of Labor – Disability Resources
- Office of Disability Rights
- Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN)
- What Can YOU Do – Campaign for Disability Employment

- National Alliance on Mental Illness – Wisconsin
- Disability: IN
- National Industry Liaison Group (NILG)
- Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology (PEAT)
- Strengths and abilities in autism - Altogether Autism
- Seven Reasons Why Hiring People With Disabilities Is Good For Business (forbes.com)

University of
Wisconsin-Stout

Thank You!

Beth Gaertner
gaertnere@uwstout.edu

Brianne Warner
warnerb@uwstout.edu

Lynn Hardginski
Lynn.Hardginski@dwd.
Wisconsin.gov

Krissy Neyrinck
Kristina.Neyrinck@dwd.
Wisconsin.gov

University of
Wisconsin-Stout