

IDENTIFY BARRIERS

ELEVATE KNOWLEDGE

INCREASE OPPORTUNITY

EMPOWER YOUTH

Youth with disabilities face a variety of barriers in obtaining inclusive, competitive, employment.



- EMPLOYERS CAN:**
- Change perceptions by focusing on abilities
 - Increase awareness through employee training
 - Gain exposure by mentoring youth w/disabilities
 - Ensure workplaces are physically accessible
 - Intentionally recruit & hire people w/disabilities
 - Ensure HR forms & onboarding are accessible
 - Match skills to essential job needs at all levels
 - Create a culture of inclusion—lead by example, welcome disclosure, budget for accommodations
 - Participate in the [Disability Equality Index](#)

- YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES CAN:**
- Get prepared for employment by increasing your knowledge & developing soft-skills
 - Increase self-confidence by seeking out leadership development training programs
 - Develop self-advocacy skills—express your needs
 - Demonstrate abilities with a youth-led project
 - Learn about all career opportunities—aim high!
 - Network, maintain connections & find mentors
 - Participate in a [Greater Washington Internship Coalition](#) or similar intern/mentoring program

- PARENTS/TEACHERS/VOLUNTEERS CAN:**
- Raise expectations, encourage youth to work!
 - Participate in training; peer-to-peer supports
 - Connect educators with employers; understand what employers need & match youth interests
 - Provide experiential learning opportunities
 - Abandon “charity” model, focus on abilities
 - Recruit & serve as mentors, identify internships
 - Create culture of inclusion; lead by example
 - Find role models with disabilities for youth
 - Use [Work Early, Work Often Videos](#) for training

- PROVIDE REAL-LIFE WORK EXPERIENCE!**
- Shadowing, mentoring, internships & on-the-job training help youth gain experience & employers gain exposure to the capabilities of people with disabilities. Ideas:
- Offer work-rotation internships like [Project SEARCH](#)
 - Prepare youth for science, technology, engineering, arts & math (STEAM) careers with job training, like [Specialisterne](#) or [Advanced Inclusive Manufacturing](#).
 - Collaborate with service learning organizations, like [GRID Alternatives](#), to provide practical experience



Hire youth for their unique problem-solving skills!

- BUILD LEADERSHIP SKILLS!**
- Participating in leadership development opportunities helps youth gain skills & change societal attitudes. Ideas:
- Participate in National Service, like [UCC’s Inclusive Crew Project](#), to gain leadership skills & experience
 - Gain self-advocacy skills by participating in projects like the [ASAN Autistic Campus Inclusion Summer Academy](#)
 - Develop & support youth-led projects to demonstrate abilities, such as the [I am Norm Campaign](#)
 - Gain leadership skills by interning with [AAPD](#) or [USICD](#)



Hold roundtables with executive leaders & opportunity fairs!

- BE A MENTOR!**
- Mentoring is an effective way to empower young people as they transition through school to the workforce. Ideas:
- Business professionals can mentor rising leaders through projects like [USBLN® Career Link Mentoring](#)
 - Hosting [AAPD Disability Mentoring Days](#) at company locations introduces youth to career options
 - Provide virtual mentoring to students in science, technology, engineering & math (STEM) careers through programs like [DO-IT Mentors](#)



Learn more at www.MEAF.org



MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC AMERICA FOUNDATION launched the **M>PWR Initiative** to empower youth with disabilities to lead productive lives. MEAF held a series of regional summits with stakeholders who recommend elevating knowledge & increasing opportunity to help youth transition from school to work.