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.

### Youth with Disabilities

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

- **Not enough Opportunities**
- **Inaccessibility**
- **Low Expectations**

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### Employers Can:

- Change perceptions by focusing on abilities
- Increase awareness through employee training
- Gain exposure by mentoring youth with disabilities
- Ensure workplaces are physically accessible
- Intentionally recruit & hire people with 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

### 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

### 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

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Learn more at www.MEAF.org