



USBLN® Awarded a Two-Year National Grant from the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation

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Contact: Anita Howard
Phone: 800-706-2710
anita@usbln.org

WASHINGTON, DC (January 22, 2013) - The US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®) announced today that it received a two-year national grant from the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation (MEAF). The foundation provides national grants focused on its vision of empowering youth with disabilities to lead productive lives through increased employment.

The MEAF grant will support the expansion of the Career Link Mentoring Program, a collaborative project between the USBLN® and the Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN). The Career Link Mentoring Program assists college students and recent graduates with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities, through connections to business professionals from the USBLN®'s member companies.

"We thank the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation for this grant to help us build upon the initial success of the 2012 Alliance Mentoring Pilot Program. The Career Link Mentoring Program aims to provide 40 to 50 mentees with a 6-month career mentoring opportunity in 2013," said **Jill Houghton**, USBLN® executive director. "The program will enable them to meet and interact with business professionals in their field of study or area of interest to whom they would not otherwise have access."

During the mentoring relationship, participants will engage in various activities that can positively impact their future employment prospects. A goal of the mentoring program is to support employers' increasing demands for science, technology, engineering and math professionals, as well as their focus on hiring veterans. To that end, the mentoring program places special emphasis on students and recent graduates meeting these criteria.

"We will primarily source the pool of mentees from the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP). This program connects federal and private sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities," said **Judy Young**, grant manager for the National Employer Technical Assistance Center (NETAC). "The 2013 WRP database includes more than 2,900 pre-screened candidates interviewed at more than 270 college campuses."

EARN is operated by the Employment and Disability Institute at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations of Cornell University. It is a service of NETAC and funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

About the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation (MEAF)

The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation (MEAF) was established in 1991 with a \$15 million endowment by the Mitsubishi Electric Corporation of Japan and the Mitsubishi Electric US group companies. The Foundation supports national grant programs and employee volunteer programs across the United States to make Changes for the Better for youth with disabilities. <http://www.meaf.org/>

About the Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN)

EARN is a free confidential service for employers of all sizes in the private and public sectors. Services include live phone technical assistance, individualized consultations, customized training and a comprehensive online searchable database at www.AskEARN.org and email support at EARN@AskEARN.org are also available.

About the US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®)

The US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®) is a national non-profit, non-partisan business to business network promoting workplaces, marketplaces, and supply chains where people with disabilities are included. The USBLN® serves as the collective voice of over 50 Business Leadership Network affiliates across the United States, representing over 5,000 businesses. Additionally, the USBLN® Disability Supplier Diversity Program® (DSDP) is the nation's leading third party certification program for disability-owned businesses, including service-disabled veterans. www.usbln.org