

SUCCESS STORIES



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Visit our website at www.georgiamicroenterprise.org

"For too long, business ownership has been overlooked as a viable option for individuals with disabilities. It was assumed that the term 'entrepreneurship with disabilities' was an oxymoron.....today thousands of people with disabilities are dispelling these myths by starting wildly successful businesses of all kinds."

*-Disability & Entrepreneurship:
A Formula for Success
The Abilities Fund, Inc.
2002*

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GMEN Georgia Micro Enterprise Network

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES PROJECT

TARGET AUDIENCE

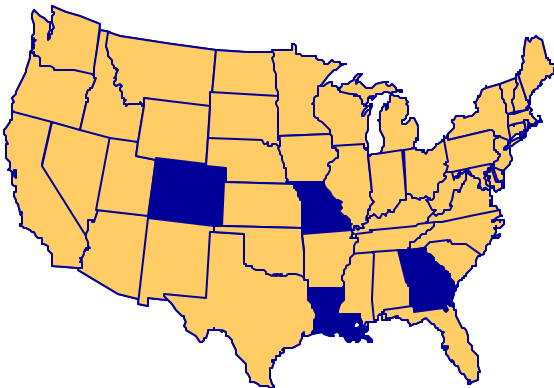
The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Women's Bureau has implemented a "Strengthening the Family Initiative." One aspect of this initiative focuses on worker shortage through the skill development of women with disabilities for self-employment.

Women with disabilities experience economic hardships out of proportion to their representation in the population. Their unemployment rate:

- exceeds that of men with work disabilities
- exceeds that of women with no disabilities

And their over representation in the poverty population is equally dismal.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, people with disabilities are almost twice as likely to start a business as non-disabled individuals. 14% of people with disabilities who are working are self employed, compared to 8% of non-disabled persons.



PARTNERSHIP

The USDOL - Women's Bureau has partnered with microenterprise organizations in 4 regions to develop 40 new entrepreneurs (10 per region) from the population of women with disabilities. The regional lead organizations and their partners are:

REGION IV GEORGIA MICRO ENTERPRISE NETWORK (GEORGIA)

- Cobb Microenterprise Center
- Goodwill Industries of North Georgia

REGION VI SOUTHWEST DISABILITY BUSINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER (LOUISIANA)

- Urban League of New Orleans
- Louisiana State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

REGION VII FIRST STEP FAST TRAC PROJECT (MISSOURI)

- Governor's Council on Disability
- Mayor's Council on Disability
- Workforce Investment Board

REGION VIII MICASA RESOURCE CENTER FOR WOMEN (COLORADO)

- Denver Goodwill
- Small Business Development Center
- Colorado Alliance for Micro Enterprise

The term of this partnership is August 2002-September 2004. A project evaluator will take lessons learned from all 4 regions to create a "How To" manual.

OUTCOMES

As partners, two GMEN member organizations will provide the following services for supporting the development of 10 new businesses created by women with disabilities:

- Multi-week microenterprise business development training
- Technical assistance for business mentoring
- Technical assistance to pursue business capital
- Feedback on each participant to GMEN for evaluation and success stories

GMEN will coordinate this process with:

- Promotional literature
- Consolidated project feedback
- Success stories
- Consolidated participant feedback

Other resources:

Georgia Micro Enterprise Network (GMEN)
www.georgiamicroenterprise.org

The Abilities Fund
www.abilitiesfund.org

US DOL/Women's Bureau
www.dol.gov/wb/

Unlikely Entrepreneurs: A Complete Guide to Business Start-ups for People With Disabilities and Chronic Health Conditions

For More Information:

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