During the 2018 National Conference, CSG will release the Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work (SAT/RTW) Toolkit. The U.S. Department of Labor and the Office of Disability Employment Policy’s State Exchange on Employment and Disability collaborated on the toolkit. It was designed to provide states with policy options, best practices and implementation strategies to aid efforts in increasing employment retention and labor force participation of employees who acquire, or are at risk of developing, work disabilities.

Millions of Americans exit the workforce each year because of a disability. Disability insurance benefits are an important protection for workers with serious long-term or permanent disabilities, but they are not the only option for those with disabilities. Many injured workers might be able to stay in their jobs if they received timely, effective help. Return-to-work programs aim to get workers with disabilities back to productivity as soon as possible during their recovery process. These workers can continue earning money and regain the confidence and stability that employment brings.

Employees exiting the workforce because of injury or illness can result in high costs for all stakeholders. In addition to losing a stable income, employees can face additional health concerns such as depression from the adjustment and a reduced quality of life. Employers lose productivity during an employee vacancy and acquire potential hiring and training costs. States lose tax revenue, personal spending in the economy, and gain the cost of state disability benefits. The SAT/RTW Toolkit offers states numerous strategies to mitigate these costs.

The toolkit provides strategies to help injured or ill workers receive timely and effective supports and services that allow them to remain in the workforce and avoid long-term unemployment. It addresses return-to-work and partial return-to-work programs, disability benefit programs, and employer subsidies, incentives and grants. The toolkit also covers a variety of issues that surround the baseline problem, including transportation, technology, training stakeholders, and communication with health care providers. States with innovative and effective policies and programs in the area are highlighted in the toolkit as examples.

Workforce inclusiveness has been a priority for state leaders nationwide. CSG has been working to provide states with technical assistance around disability employment and stay-at-work/return-to-work programs. CSG representatives have traveled to Oregon and New Jersey and have plans to visit Alaska, Hawaii and Maryland to continue this work. During these visits, CSG assists policymakers by sharing expertise, best practices and the work other states are doing in the area.

Providing opportunities for people with disabilities to return or remain in the workforce creates an inclusive workforce that advances state economies and the quality of life of individuals. State leaders have the ability to support SAW/RTW programs, which create positive employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities and result in numerous benefits for states.

“States need to realize that this is a return-on-investment,” said Tennessee state Sen. Becky Massey, who served on the CSG Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Leadership Team. “We are not simply accommodating people with
disabilities, but we are tapping into an underutilized resource.”

CSG 2018 National Conference attendees will have an opportunity to delve deeper into the toolkit during a session from 8 a.m. to noon Thursday, Dec. 6.

By:
Friday, November 9, 2018 at 09:31 AM

Tags:
Policy Area [Economics and Finance] [Labor and Employment] [Workforce Development]

Source URL: http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/csg-launch-workforce-development-toolkit

Links