

# Governors Promote Employment For People With Disabilities

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The National Governors Association (NGA) is targeting the issue (employment of people with disabilities) this year. The aim is to come up with plans that provide workers with disabilities not only a paycheck, but also a deeper sense of purpose and belonging.

According to the NGA, the U.S. **spends about \$300 billion annually** to support unemployed workers with disabilities, **while 67 percent** of working-age people with disabilities would rather have a job than be unemployed and unproductive.

Nationally, **more than 30 percent of the adult population** receiving income-based government assistance through programs such as Medicaid and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families **has a disability**, according to a recent report from the Census Bureau. **One in three** adults with disabilities, ages 18 to 64, **were employed** in 2011, compared with **three out of four adults without a disability**.

Delaware's Markell signed "Employment First" legislation in July requiring state agencies that provide services to people with disabilities to push jobs that are in an integrated setting as the first choice. A work group is also focusing on state hiring practices with the goal of advancing recruitment, retention and career advancement opportunities for people with disabilities. "States can be model employers themselves," he says.

*Stateline is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news service of the Pew Center on the States that provides daily reporting and analysis on trends in state policy.*