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OPM's First-Ever Plan Increases Employment, Career Opportunities for People with Disabilities in the Federal Workforce

Washington, D.C. – To ensure that every American has the opportunity to work to their full potential, President Clinton directed federal agencies to implement the first-ever plan and companion guide to assist them in the recruitment and promotion of people with disabilities. The President released the plan and guide, developed by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, during his Saturday radio address.

“In spite of the good economic news, there are people in places still not touched by our prosperity,” said President Clinton. “Among them are almost three out of four Americans with severe disabilities who want to work, but aren't working. This is not just a missed opportunity for them, it's a missed opportunity for all the rest of us, too.”

“I am calling on our federal human resources agency, the Office of Personnel Management, to ensure that every agency gets the help it needs to fulfill these commitments,” continued the President. “We are the nation's largest employer. I want it to be a model for private industry, and this plan will help to do just that.”

Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government is OPM's response to recommendations from President Clinton's Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities. In December 1998, Vice President

Al Gore charged OPM with developing a comprehensive and workable plan to boost the economic prosperity of the disabled community by making federal employment a reality for greater numbers of people with disabilities.

“I am confident that the leadership of the Clinton/Gore Administration, where the focus is on ‘inclusion’, will result in real change and real opportunity for many, many more deserving Americans,” said OPM Director Janice R. Lachance. “A disability does not reduce the potential or drive of the individual.”

OPM's action plan directs federal agencies to:

- Recruit widely for positions at all levels of the federal workforce.
- Provide opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in internship and

student employment programs.

- Give full consideration to employees with disabilities for inclusion in developmental opportunities.
- Collect and maintain data to monitor success.
- Provide reasonable accommodations for qualified applicants and employees with disabilities, consistent with guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The President also released *People with Disabilities in the Federal Government: An Employment Guide* is a tool kit for human resource professionals to use as they recruit, hire, train and promote people with disabilities. Chapters feature information on hiring options agencies can use to employ people with disabilities, including disabled veterans; integrating people with disabilities into the workforce; and, accommodating the workplace to meet the needs of people with various disabilities.

In September 1998, people with disabilities comprised 7.1 percent of a downsized federal workforce that totaled 1.8 million employees. A decade earlier, employees with disabilities totaled 6.5 percent of the work force. In fiscal year 1998, the federal government hired approximately 13,000 men and women with disabilities.

“The federal government is committed to opening its doors wide -- to provide access into our buildings and into our national programs – so that each individual can use his or her talents in ways that make a positive difference to America,” said Lachance.

Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government and *People with Disabilities in the Federal Government: An Employment Guide* can be accessed on OPM’s web page at www.opm.gov/employ/disabilities/index.htm.

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U. S. Office of Personnel Management

Director Lachance in Action



Addressing employees at the Retirement Operations Center in Boyers, Pennsylvania.

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OPM DIRECTOR DONATES FEDERAL JOB INFORMATION COMPUTER KIOSK TO ALBUQUERQUE TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE



Lachance Speaks at the
Technical Vocational Institute



Kiosk Donated to the
Albuquerque Technical Vocational
Institute



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