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Commentary/Op-Ed - April 2022

Make New York City a national leader in employment for people with disabilities

In this op-ed for City Limits, CUF Researcher and Multimedia Specialist Melissa Lent and Editorial and Policy Director Eli Dvorkin lay out the opportunity for the mayor and City Council to make New York City a national leader in employment for people with disabilities.

by Melissa Lent and Eli Dvorkin

There are nearly one million New York City residents today with a self-identified disability. The size and diversity of this population makes few generalizations possible. But one thing is clear: far more city support will be needed to ensure a full and equitable economic recovery from the pandemic for New Yorkers with disabilities.

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Despite economic turmoil caused by the pandemic, enormous shifts in the ways people live and work—remote work, advances in assistive technologies, and a surging number of unfilled job openings—are creating the conditions for a major expansion of economic opportunity. But Mayor Adams and city officials will have to take strong steps to realize this opportunity. Lent and Dvorkin lay out several recommendations, including launching the nation's first Accessibility Training Challenge; establishing a 7 percent hiring target for people with disabilities in city jobs and through city contracts; and directing the Department of Small Business Services to work with the Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities to create mobile small business accessibility teams, so business workplaces become fully accessible to employees with disabilities by 2025.

You can read the full op-ed here.

This op-ed builds on the Center's ongoing research on boosting economic opportunity for people with disabilities, including our latest study *Access Opportunity: Expanding Economic Opportunity for New Yorkers With Disabilities* and our previous study *First Out, Last Back: The Economic Impact of the COVID Crisis on New Yorkers With Disabilities*.

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