

*As part of the Kentucky Business Leadership Network, the Kentucky Employment Mentoring Project is dedicated to serving Kentucky students with disabilities through one-on-one mentoring relationships with community business leaders. Grounded in the knowledge that workplace diversity benefits all of society, KEMP offers its mentoring partners opportunities for visible community service and recruitment of valuable employees, while providing youth with marketable skills and enhanced self confidence.*



**DiversAbility Works.**

1517 Bull Lea Road, Suite 110  
Lexington, KY 40517

Phone: 859-977-4050 ext. 222  
Fax: 859-977-4054

E-mail: [karen.cinnamond@uky.edu](mailto:karen.cinnamond@uky.edu)  
[www.kybln.org](http://www.kybln.org)



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## **Kentucky Employer Mentoring Project**

**2007-2008**

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# Kentucky Employer Mentoring Project

## Program Overview

Seventeen years after the introduction of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), unemployment among individuals with disabilities remains steady at around 43% (Source: ODEP). Despite the progress made, barriers remain.



Mentoring can give young people with disabilities the extra edge they may need to enter and succeed in business while helping business leaders to develop new talent and recruit this under-utilized

segment of the workforce.

The Kentucky Employer Mentoring Project matches youth with disabilities to mentors in the business community, based on interests and goals. The pairs meet for a few hours each month to share experiences and work on goals they determine together.

In addition to the one-on-one mentoring, mentees benefit through attending KEMP's Leadership Academy, featuring a variety of business related topics. Online modules are also available as part of an optional certificate program.

KYBLN provides regular communication with mentor/mentee pairs, seeking feedback to enhance individual partnerships and strengthen the overall program.

## The Mentoring Relationship

A KEMP mentor serves as a guide and role model, helping the mentee to acquire new skills, make decisions, and set goals for a successful future in business. The mentor is also a confidant, offering encouragement and support.

Mentoring benefits the mentor as much as the mentee. Providing assistance and information to young people entering the field is an easy and enjoyable way to make sure the mentor stays informed and updated, too. A KEMP mentor also stands to gain a lifelong colleague, as well as a fresh perspective on workplace diversity and disability culture.

Mentees gain skills, self-confidence, and valuable insights into business culture as they work with supportive and experienced guides in the context of the mentoring relationship.

## Benefits of Participation

### For Mentors:

- Assist in the development of a competent future workforce
- Enhance company visibility
- Increase personal and company diversity awareness
- Improve interpersonal skills

### For Mentees:

- Obtain real-world advice to help define personal and career goals
- Network and build an "inside track" to the business community
- Gain valuable leadership and employment skills through KEMP Leadership Academy

**For Mentors and Mentees: Fun!**

## About the KYBLN

*The Kentucky Business Leadership Network (KYBLN) is a coalition of businesses who understand the business imperative to include people with disabilities in the workplace and marketplace. The KYBLN members use this network of like-minded employers to share best practices and work to change the negative attitudes persons with disabilities often face as employees and customers. The KYBLN conducts outreach, education, and training activities at state level community levels.*

## Why KEMP?

Increasing employment skills for persons with disabilities serves those individuals and their families and also the businesses who recognize the benefits of this untapped resource. All of society stands to gain from increased diversity in the workplace.

Through its careful matching of mentor and mentee, in depth trainings and ongoing support, the Kentucky Employer Mentoring Project provides the tools for successful employment and the development of a competent future workforce.