



## US Business Leadership Network Announces 2013 Annual Leadership Award Winners

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WASHINGTON, DC (October 2, 2013) – The US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®) today announced the winners of its **2013 Annual Leadership Awards**, which were presented to the recipients on October 2 at the Leadership Awards Dinner during the 2013 USBLN® 16th Annual Conference & Expo held in Los Angeles, California.

The purpose of the 2013 USBLN® Annual Leadership Awards is to further the USBLN® mission of identifying leading disability workplace, supply chain and marketplace practices. Award recipients demonstrate outstanding commitment to promoting disability diversity across their enterprises and clearly embody the highest ethical standards and values in the community.

“Our 2013 Annual Leadership Award winners are individuals and organizations who are leading by example,” said **Jill Houghton**, USBLN® Executive Director. “These awards recognize their work and scope of influence that have significantly improved the quality of life for people with disabilities in the past and continue to be a positive driving force for change in the future.”

- **Advocate of the Year-Supply Chain Inclusion**

**Sheri Shafir**, Associate Director, Supplier Diversity, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, is the Advocate of the Year-Supply Chain Inclusion award recipient. This award recognizes Sheri as a procurement champion. She has provided exceptional support in the development of USBLN® certified disability-owned business enterprises - DOBE®s including service-disabled veteran owned businesses and the Disability Supplier Diversity Program® (DSDP) through her proactive outreach, mentorships and collaborative membership within the Novartis Employee Resource Group (ERG) CapABLE. Sheri has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to the utilization and growth of disability-owned businesses. <http://www.novartis.com/>

- **Affiliate of the Year**

The **Alabama Business Leadership and Employment (ABLE) Network is the Affiliate of the Year** award recipient. As a result of the Alabama Business Leadership and Employment (ABLE) Network’s efforts, employers and their communities understand, utilize, and benefit from the valuable resources that people with disabilities present in the workplace, supply chain and marketplace. The ABLE Network consistently provides education, information and resources to business members regarding disability and employment and has established a Talent Acquisition Pool and job posting board to help business members meet their hiring needs. <http://www.alabamabltn.org/>

- **Employer of the Year**

**Lowe's Companies, Inc.** is the Employer of the Year award recipient. Lowe's has demonstrated exemplary policies, strategies and initiatives that have resulted in measurable results in the areas of disability inclusiveness in the workplace, supply chain and marketplace. The Lowe's Companies have been very visible in the disability community at the national, state and local level. Lowe's inclusion commitment starts at the top with their Diversity and Inclusion statement posted on their website and their Chairman and CEO, Robert A. Niblock co-chairs the Diversity Advisory Council and Diversity Leadership Teams. The teams meet regularly to provide direction and review the progress of diversity and inclusion initiatives, including people with disabilities. [www.lowes.com](http://www.lowes.com)

- **Small Employer of the Year**

**New Editions Consulting, Inc.** is the **Small Employer of the Year** award recipient. New Editions Consulting, Inc. is a woman-owned, small business specializing in professional consulting services to the Federal government in health, disability and social policy. Diversity and inclusion is ingrained in New Editions' culture, from the top down. They are committed to enriching the lives of all people by providing premier program support services in the areas of health, disability, education and human services to the federal government, non-profit organizations and commercial customers. [www.neweditions.net](http://www.neweditions.net)

- **Top Corporation for Disability-Owned Businesses**

**Sodexo** is the Top Corporation for Disability-Owned Businesses award recipient. Sodexo demonstrates an outstanding commitment to disability business inclusion in their supply chain processes and corporate supplier diversity program. Sodexo's objective is to support their company and clients in exceeding their diversity targets. Recognizing and supporting diversity and inclusion is not only a strategic imperative of their company, but a key way of utilizing innovative suppliers to meet their needs and support the local community. Sodexo's supplier diversity program is about creating opportunity and awareness for diverse vendors, both inside and outside Sodexo. <http://www.sodexousa.com/>

The 2013 Annual Leadership Awards capped off yet another successful conference over 500 corporate, government, disability-owned businesses and BLN affiliates attending the conference.

**Save the Date for the 2014 USBLN<sup>®</sup> Annual Conference & Expo**

Mark your calendar now for the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual USBLN<sup>®</sup> Conference & Expo to be held in Orlando, Florida on **September 29– October 2, 2014** at the Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld hotel. This event will kick-off National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) and event details will be made available at: [www.usblnannualconference.org](http://www.usblnannualconference.org).

**About the US Business Leadership Network<sup>®</sup> (USBLN<sup>®</sup>)**

The US Business Leadership Network<sup>®</sup> (USBLN<sup>®</sup>) is a national non-profit that helps business drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace. The USBLN<sup>®</sup> serves as the collective voice of over 50 Business Leadership Network affiliates across the United States, representing over 5,000 businesses. Additionally, the USBLN<sup>®</sup> Disability Supplier Diversity Program<sup>®</sup> (DSDP) is the nation's leading third party certification program for disability-owned businesses, including businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. [www.usbln.org](http://www.usbln.org)

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