



USBLN and National Council on Independent Living Formalize Strategic Alliance

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Contact: Anita Howard
Phone: (800) 706-2710
anita@usbln.org

WASHINGTON, DC (July 15, 2014) – The US Business Leadership Network[®] (USBLN[®]) Executive Director Jill Houghton and National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Executive Director Kelly Buckland have signed a strategic alliance agreement to formalize their mutual collaboration to drive disability inclusion awareness and to advance, improve and expand employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

The USBLN is a national 501(c) (3) non-profit, non-partisan business-to-business network that helps business drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace. The USBLN serves as the collective voice of nearly 50 Business Leadership Network affiliates across the United States, representing over 5,000 businesses. It provides business members with opportunities to network with other businesses and to gain information and valuable resources on disability inclusion practices across the entire business, to enable them to:

- Recruit and retain the best talent regardless of disability;
- Broaden their supplier bases to include diverse supplier groups, such as Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBE[®]s), including service-disabled veteran-owned businesses, certified through the USBLN Disability Supplier Diversity Program[®] (DSDP), the nation's leading third party certification program for disability-owned businesses; and
- Increase their companies' share of diverse established and emerging markets.

“The USBLN alliance with NCIL strengthens our commitment to work together to support the employment and advancement of people with disabilities; the preparedness for work of youth and students with disabilities; marketing to consumers with disabilities; and contracting with suppliers with disabilities through the development and certification of disability-owned businesses. We are confident that our collaboration with NCIL will move the needle forward in working with employers to recognize the value and talent that people with disabilities bring to the workplace, supply chain and marketplace,” stated **Jill Houghton**, Executive Director, USBLN.

The National Council on Independent Living is the longest-running national cross-disability, grassroots organization run by and for people with disabilities. NCIL represents thousands of organizations and individuals from every state including: individuals with disabilities, Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs), and other organizations that advocate for the human and civil rights of people with disabilities throughout the United States. There are currently over 700 physical locations across America actively providing Independent Living services to people with disabilities.

“NCIL and USBLN have been discussing this Strategic Alliance for some time and I am very excited to see it become a reality. USBLN is such a strong force in increasing employment for people with disabilities and NCIL is proud to be working with them,” said **Kelly Buckland**, NCIL Executive Director. To learn more, visit: www.ncil.org.

About the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN)

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

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