



## Disability Equality Index celebrates inaugural reception on Capitol Hill

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (Aug. 3, 2015) – The US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®) and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) celebrated the inaugural Disability Equality Index<sup>SM</sup> (DEI<sup>SM</sup>) reception at the Longworth Office Building on Capitol Hill with its top scoring companies on July 30.

The reception was for companies that scored 80 points or higher on the index, and was well attended.

“The companies being honored at the reception are great examples for disability inclusion,” said Jill Houghton, executive director, USBLN. “Most of the companies felt this was just the beginning. They had identified areas for continued improvement and will strive to better their organizations in the future.”

“It was exciting to see all of the hard work by the advisory board, AAPD, USBLN, numerous partners and the companies that participated all come together,” said Helena Berger, acting president and CEO, AAPD. “With so many companies already embracing the DEI, we are confident that this initiative will change the landscape for disability inclusion and employment practices for years to come.”

“We have already heard from many companies that they are using their learnings from the inaugural DEI to improve their policies and procedures,” said Keith Wiedenkiller, chief DEI strategy officer and former chief people officer, AMC Theatres. “It’s exciting to see companies using the tool as it was designed and intended to be used. That is – to measure and recognize their progress, but also to work to achieve more and raise the bar over time.”

Created by the DEI Advisory Committee, a diverse group of business leaders, policy experts and disability advocates, the DEI is a national, transparent online benchmarking tool that offers businesses an opportunity to receive an objective score, on a scale of zero to 100, on their overall disability inclusion policies and practices. The inaugural DEI was successfully completed with 80 Fortune 1,000 scope companies earlier this year. The second annual DEI is scheduled to launch this December.

The DEI is a joint initiative of the USBLN and AAPD. It is an aspirational, educational, recognition tool that goes far beyond legal compliance helping companies identify opportunities for continued improvement, while building their reputations as organizations that value diversity and inclusion. Very similar in overall content to the inaugural DEI, companies that participate this year will self-report on a wide-range of criteria within four categories: Culture and Leadership, Enterprise-Wide Access, Employment Practices and Community Engagement and Support Services.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the DEI.

### **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](http://www.usbln.org)

### **About the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)**

The American Association of People with Disabilities is the nation's largest disability rights organization. AAPD promotes equal opportunity, economic power, independent living, and political participation for people with disabilities. AAPD's members, including people with disabilities and family, friends, and supporters, represent a powerful force for change. To learn more, visit the AAPD website: [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com).

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