

SUCCESS STORY

## NATIONAL CREDIT UNION ADMINISTRATION Recruiting through EARN Yields Excellent Match for Federal Agency

*Here's someone with federal experience, did these tasks before and had the skills and attitude for it.*

- Patricia Kroboth, Director of Management Services  
National Credit Union Administration



From left to right, Denise Funderburk and Patricia Kroboth

### Meet the Employee



Denise Funderburk had a long career doing administrative work for the federal government when the unexpected happened. She fell down a flight of stairs and injured her hip, causing her tremendous pain and limited mobility. She suddenly went from being non-disabled to becoming a person with a disability.

After taking some time out to recuperate, Denise missed working and, as she says, "I was determined to get better and get back on my feet." She started looking for

jobs by searching employment Web sites and using her community resources. She came across EARN's Web site and was attracted to how it focused on connecting employers with jobseekers with disabilities.

EARN's job board included a posting that was a perfect match for her. The National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) was recruiting through EARN for an Office Assistant position, using a special hiring authority that allows employers to quickly bring on recruits. The [Schedule A hiring authority](#) simplifies the hiring process by allowing federal agencies to bypass competitive hiring practices. With Denise's office work background and desire to get back in the federal government, she decided to apply.

### The Employer

NCUA is an independent federal agency that insures and regulates credit unions nationwide. They employ 900 individuals across 5 regions. Patricia Kroboth is the Director of Management Services for Region 2. Her division provides administra-

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tive, human resources, staffing and benefits support to field workers and staff. "We are customer service...that's our job. The field workers rely on us," says Patricia.

Diversity is critical to NCUA's culture and, as a director, Patricia saw they needed to do more to recruit people with disabilities. She had heard from a leadership conference last year that using Schedule A was an "easier way to hire." When the office had an opening for an assistant, Patricia reached out to EEO Officer Ellen Eaton to assist her with recruiting. Ellen, in turn, contacted EARN to assist. No work was involved for Patricia to find qualified candidates as EARN searched for candidates on NCUA's behalf and quickly identified Denise as a potential match.

### *Working Together*

Patricia interviewed Denise and both agreed it was a good fit. Patricia liked the fact that Denise had worked at other federal agencies doing similar work. "Here's someone with federal experience, did these tasks before and had the skills and attitude for it." The job entailed phone work, payroll support, managing office supplies and other administrative tasks. Denise was convinced she was up to the challenge based on her previous work experience. As an additional bonus, the office was located near a subway stop and the staff was friendly.

This marked the first time Patricia has knowingly interviewed and hired an individual with a disability, and she initially had some concerns. She asked her EEO officer what she could and couldn't ask, but in the end found it was no different from any other interview. Focusing her questions on the job tasks and Denise's qualifications rather than disability led to a successful interview. It was apparent Denise could do the job.

Denise felt comfortable discussing her disability. After starting the job, she emailed Patricia letting her know that she needed to get up and walk around from time to time. In fact, this fit well with her job duties and Patricia was happy to comply. They agreed that if any other accommodation issues arose, they would discuss it, knowing that they have their EEO officer for support. Patricia points out that performance standards need to be consistent with all workers in order to meet an organization's objectives. Accommodations for people with disabilities are not lowering standards. The accommodations simply allow workers to meet performance standards using non-standard methods or tools.

When asked if she would use Schedule A for hiring again, Patricia agreed that she would. Patricia says Schedule A worked out well for their organization and she would use it again, adding that she would

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encourage other federal agencies to incorporate both Schedule A and EARN in their recruitment efforts. Denise also would encourage others to try EARN. Denise agreed searching for work as an individual with a disability presents particular challenges but advises others to be patient and focus on the outcome.

#### *Share Your Story*

**If you have a success story you would like to share, please email us at:**  
[earn@earnworks.com](mailto:earn@earnworks.com).

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