

# Business Opportunities Weblog

## Disabled Adults Seek Their Own Businesses

July 15, 2010 by Angela Shupe | [3 Comments](#)



David Shunkey is autistic and around the same time the recession hit he lost two jobs. Now he's trying to launch his own business reports [The Wall Street Journal](#).

More mentally and physically challenged adults are looking to entrepreneurship as they get closed out of an exceptionally competitive job market, according to several organizations that help the disabled, including Community Options Inc., a nonprofit based in Princeton, N.J. of which Mr. Shunkey is a member. But in an economic climate that's been tough on entrepreneurs, the disabled are no exception, and many face extra challenges.

"It's more difficult for someone like David to obtain a normal job," says Heather Gooch, one of several Community Options workers helping Mr. Shunkey build a dog-treat business with an \$850 state grant from New Mexico, where his enterprise is based. "He needs close supervision."

Employment opportunities have historically been scarce for the disabled. Twenty years ago this month, Congress enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act, barring employers from discriminating against qualified job applicants with disabilities. Last year alone, more than 21,000 claims were filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission against employers accused of violating the law.

With the poor economy further restricting employment options for the disabled, some organizations are seeing increased interest in programs designed to assist this group in starting businesses.

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