

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

With Friendship Circle

Friendship Circle Michigan

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Welcome

Friendship Circle's Vocational Training Program prepares adults with special needs for meaningful, sustainable employment through hands-on training, skill-building, and confidence development.

We are seeking partnerships with local businesses that believe in inclusive workplaces and want to make a real impact in the community by serving as a **Job Training Site, employing a program graduate, or doing both.**

Together, we can build pathways to independence, connection, and a stronger workforce for everyone.

Friendship Circle

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Why Partner With Us?

01 Create a More Inclusive Workforce

Employees with disabilities bring valuable strengths, perspectives, and problem-solving skills that can strengthen team culture, creativity, and innovation.

02 Strengthen Customer Connections

A diverse workforce better reflects the community you serve. It can help customers feel seen, welcomed, and more connected to your business.

03 Enhance Company Culture

Inclusive workplaces often see stronger teamwork, higher morale, and better employee retention. When people of all abilities work together, it builds respect and collaboration.

04 Show Meaningful Community Impact

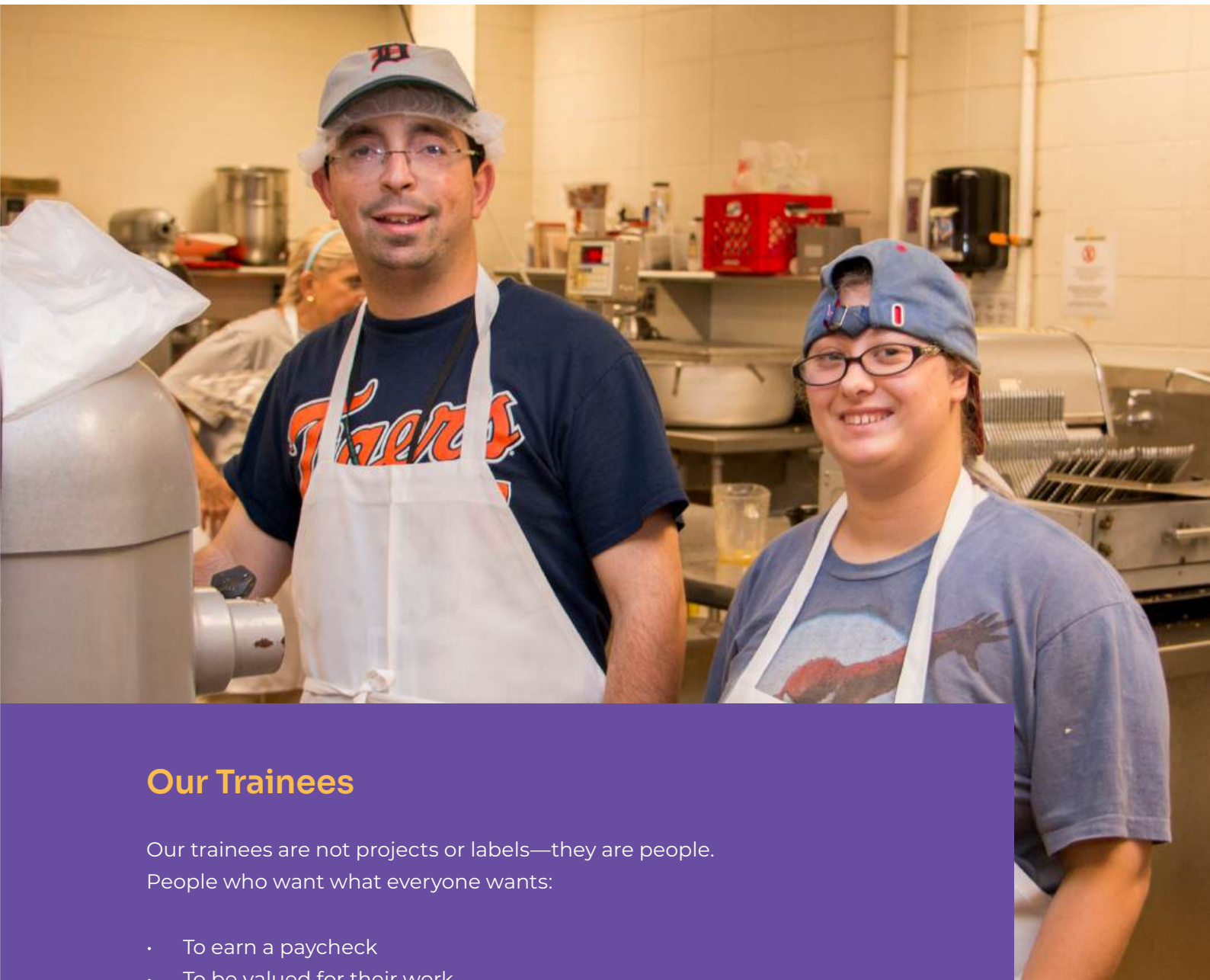
Partnering with Friendship Circle demonstrates your business's commitment to opportunity, inclusion, and community impact. It is a practical way to support individuals with special needs as they build skills and work toward greater independence.

05 Marketing & Community Visibility

Your business will be recognized as a partner in inclusion. These partnerships can lead to positive local visibility, community recognition, and stronger brand trust.

06 Financial Benefits

Businesses may be eligible for tax credits, grants, and other incentives for hiring individuals with disabilities or providing job placement opportunities.



Our Trainees

Our trainees are not projects or labels—they are people. People who want what everyone wants:

- To earn a paycheck
- To be valued for their work
- To build friendships
- To belong
- To contribute to a team

Vocational training is the start of building a pathway to employment, independence, confidence, and belonging.

You have the power to create opportunity.

Make your business more than a workplace—make it a place of belonging.

What We Teach in Our Vocational Program

Our vocational curriculum builds more than job skills. It builds confidence, independence, and readiness for the real world. Each trainee develops the aptitude needed to succeed in a professional workplace.

Reliability & Professionalism

Punctuality, preparedness, consistency, and appropriate workplace conduct.

Task Completion

Following directions, learning new tasks, and meeting expectations.

Attention to Quality

Accuracy, consistency, care, and pride in work.

Workplace Communication

Sharing needs, updates, questions, or concerns appropriately.

Team Collaboration

Working respectfully with peers and understanding workplace roles.

Problem-Solving & Adaptability

Adjusting to change, navigating challenges, and asking for help when needed.

Time Management & Organization

Prioritizing responsibilities, staying focused, and transitioning between tasks.

Independence & Initiative

Starting tasks independently and self-advocating for support.

Emotional Regulation & Conduct

Maintaining self-control and demonstrating safe, appropriate behavior.

Customer & Community Interaction

Engaging professionally with customers, visitors, and team members.



How Your Business Can Get Involved

There are several ways your business can partner with Friendship Circle's Vocational Training Program. Whether you host trainees, hire graduates, or do both, each option helps create a real pathway to employment, confidence, and belonging.

Option 1: Become a Job Training Site

Job Training Sites host a small group of trainees for hands-on learning in a real workplace.

What This Looks Like

- Vocational trainers work on-site with participants for **3 hours per day, 2+ days per week**
- Staff-to-trainee ratio: **1 trainer : 3 participants**
- Trainees are not employees; this is a training experience
- No cost to you

Your Role

- Provide daily tasks and a consistent routine
- Ensure a break area is available
- Offer natural workplace interactions and support
- Have at least **one staff member available on-site at all times** to coordinate
- Help create an inclusive, welcoming environment for trainees

What Trainees Gain

- Workplace-specific tasks
- Soft skills
- Professional expectations
- Independence and confidence



Option 2: Hire Our Graduates

Businesses are invited to hire individuals who have completed our vocational program and are ready for independent employment.

Why Hire a Graduate?

- Skilled in workplace fundamentals
- Familiar with routines and expectations
- Reliable, motivated, and eager to work
- Supported during the onboarding process

Support We Provide (One-Time)

To set your team up for success, we offer:

- **On-site training**
- **Practical handouts & guidelines** for employing individuals with special needs
- Suggestions for meaningful onboarding

This support is provided once at the beginning of the partnership.



Option 3: Do Both

Some businesses choose to serve as both a Training Site and an Employer, creating a full pathway from learning to long-term employment. This approach

- Familiarity between the trainee and workplace
- Smoother transition to employment
- Stronger foundation of comfort and trust for everyone involved



Together, We Create Opportunity

When your business becomes a partner, you are doing more than supporting a program. You are helping create real opportunities for people who deserve the chance to succeed.

Your workplace can be where someone discovers their strengths, builds confidence, finds a sense of belonging, and earns their first paycheck.

Together, we can build a more inclusive workforce.

FAQs

How much will this cost our company?

Answer: There is no cost for your company to become a job training site. Friendship Circle will cover all staffing, supervision, and program coordination costs. Participants are not employees of your company during the trainings. If you choose to hire a graduate, the initial training session to help them get started is provided at no cost to you.

What is the goal of a partnership between us and Friendship Circle?

Answer: The goal is to provide participants with professional work experience while supporting local businesses through meaningful, structured task assistance and fostering inclusive employment pathways.

How many participants will be on site at one time?

Answer: 1-3 participants at a time per Trainer

What level of involvement is expected from our staff?

Answer: Minimal involvement is required. We ask for a point of contact to help identify tasks and communicate with our team, while day-to-day supervision is handled by Friendship Circle staff.

What does it mean to be on your “Recommended Employers” list?

Answer: It means your company is shared with program graduates as a business open to inclusive hiring. There is no obligation to interview or hire.

What are the next steps if we are interested?

Answer: Next steps may include a site walkthrough, identifying appropriate tasks, and setting up an appropriate timeline.

About Friendship Circle

Friendship Circle is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating friendship, connection, and belonging for individuals with special needs, those facing isolation, and their families. We believe every person—regardless of ability—deserves to be seen, valued, and included in their community.

Through a wide range of programs for children, teens, and adults, Friendship Circle provides meaningful social experiences, skill-building opportunities, and supportive relationships that empower individuals to thrive. Our approach is rooted in dignity, respect, and the belief that each person has unique strengths to contribute to the world.

We serve thousands of individuals each year through:

- Vocational Training Programs
- Adult Life Skills
- Social and Community Inclusion Programs
- Soul Studio Art Program
- Soul Café Restaurant
- Dakota Bakery
- Summer Camps & Recreational Programs
- After School Programs



At Friendship Circle, we believe inclusion is not just a value. It is a practice. When community partners open their doors to our trainees and graduates, they help create a more compassionate, diverse, and connected community.

Together, we create opportunities. Together, we build belonging.

Ready to Partner With Us?

Whether you're interested in becoming a Job Training Site, hiring a graduate, or exploring both options, we'd love to connect.

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