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**m** WE'RE ALL IN

# Public Affairs Bootcamp

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[melwood.org](https://melwood.org)





Melwood is one of the nation's foremost **advocates, employers, and service providers** for people with disabilities and their caregivers. We advocate for and empower people with disabilities by **expanding opportunities** to work and thrive in the community.

**1,600+**

**Employees**

**900+**

**People with Disabilities  
employed by Melwood**

**3,000+**

**People with Disabilities  
supported in the  
Community annually**

# 1 in 4 Americans is living with a disability

- People with disabilities are consistently **unemployed** and **underemployed**
- The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is **2x** that of people without disabilities
- This creates barriers to **financial independence, economic empowerment** and broader **inclusion** of people with disabilities in our communities



# Melwood's Public Affairs Structure

- Vice President, Government and Public Affairs
  - Director, Government Relations
  - Director, Community Engagement
    - Special Events Manager
  - Director, Communications
    - Marketing and Communications Specialist
  - Director, Digital Strategy



# Melwood's Marketing and Communications



Develop consistent messaging and branding for Melwood family of organizations




Establish Melwood as a Thought Leader




Support various operational functions, including Business Development, Human Resources, Programs & More

# Delivering Value



## MELWOOD FY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Your Path Awaits



### Our Mission

Melwood empowers people by expanding opportunities and thriving in the future.

### Stories of Impact



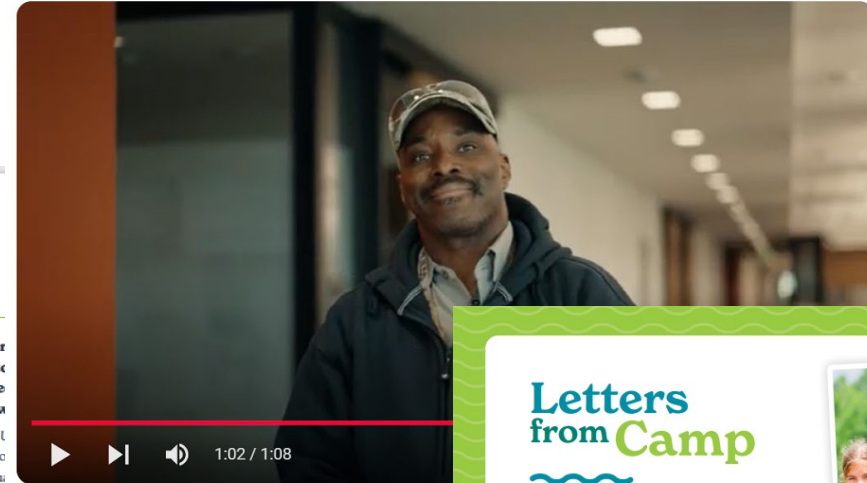
**Marc Lusby**  
AbilityOne

**Upon completion of a union apprentice program, Marc Lusby is on track to become the first stationary engine with a disability employed by Melwood.**

As a stationary engineer apprentice at the L. Carver Center, Marc and his team are responsible for the care and maintenance of a 400,000 square foot building and 73 acres federal property—a job that involves significant amounts of problem solving on one's feet, crawling in tight, confined spaces, or working from the top of a ladder. Get done and doing it right the first time is critically important to the mission of the organization to the safety of the people who work at the facility.

"You feel satisfied that you're providing a service that helps people get through their day,"

Marc said he also feels good knowing he is learning a skill that will allow him to create a bright future for himself and his family. He sees a bright future for himself—one that even involves taking over for his boss when his boss retires.



People of Melwood: Derek Point



Melwood  
168 subscribers

Subscribed

### Lead the conversation

Leading the national conversation about disability policy concerning work and economic empowerment.

### Deliver results

Securing the people, technology, and other support our organization needs to succeed.

If it was not for Melwood, I would not be here. There was no one else willing to help out—help me on my career path. Melwood has given me a second opportunity to make something of myself.

-Marc Lusby

## Letters from Camp



**Growing up with a chronic health condition isn't easy. When other kids your age are out having fun, you're stuck at the doctor's office or in the hospital. You get bullied a lot, too. You question your worth and your self-confidence takes a hit.**

I know this because I was that kid. I have a chronic health condition called sickle cell anemia. I also know the life-changing power of Camp Accomplish. Camp is where I learned to embrace my sickle cell anemia. It's where I developed leadership skills. And it's where I gained the confidence needed to pursue my dreams.

This fall, I'm starting as a freshman at Stevenson University where I'll be studying healthcare management. I'm going into this field because I want to continue what I started at Camp Accomplish. I want to help people with chronic health conditions and disabilities live their best lives.

Camp is where I learned that my sickle cell anemia doesn't define me. Because of Camp Accomplish, I know my future is bright.

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-Annelise Cosmos, Camp Accomplish Camp Counselor



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**A REINTRODUCTION TO MELWOOD**

# We're all in on inclusion.

For more than 60 years, Melwood has been building a bridge to a more inclusive world. Today, we are one of the nation's leading advocates, employers, and providers for people with disabilities and their caregivers. With an impact that extends far beyond our horticultural roots, our mission of inclusion continues to stretch across everything we do.

[Learn More](#)

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**FROM THE BLOG**

## What's next for inclusive education?

From summer camps to charter schools, we're exploring better paths to education on the road to inclusivity.

[melwood.org](https://melwood.org)

**Stellar business solutions.**

With a focus on better performance, industry leading customer value, and a history of being awarded contracts with federal agencies, Medicaid, and state governments, daily that inclusivity simply works.

**all-inclusive**

At Melwood, we seek to remove the societal barriers that block the path for people with disabilities—barriers that



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# The Future of Public Affairs



How we  
communicate our  
message is  
changing



Organizations and  
Leaders must lead  
with authenticity



Data must play a  
key role



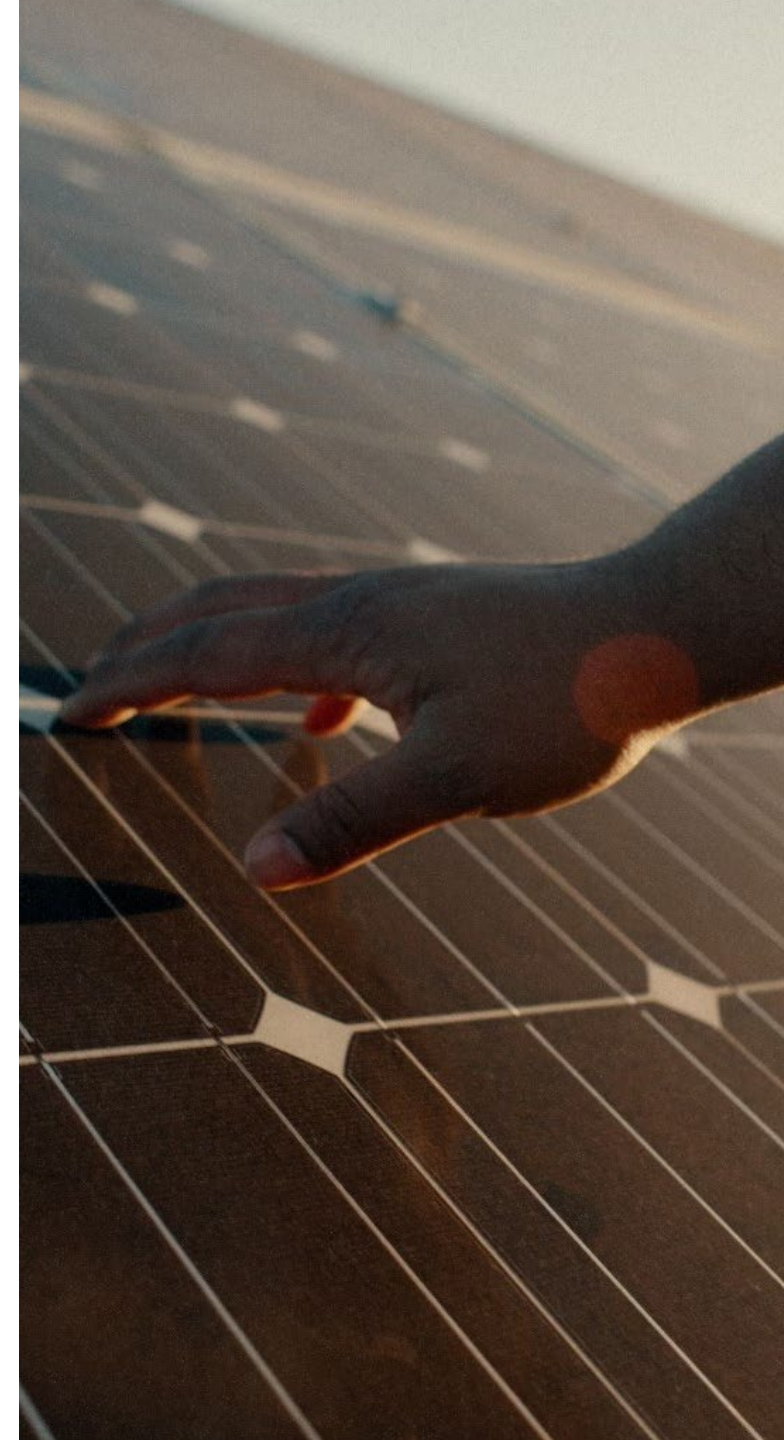
# Public Affairs: Support *and* Strategy

## SUPPORT

- Core support for the functions of the organization and a variety of deliverables.
- Responsive to internal and external needs.
- Media outreach and coordination
- Manage internal collateral, press releases, powerpoints
- Reputation management
- Coordinating with other departments

## STRATEGY

- Goal oriented with measurable data
- Defining the audience, identifying the market, testing and retesting
- Brand recognition to support business growth, membership, fund development, etc.
- Engagement with government officials, media, stakeholders
- Integrating public affairs into decision making at every level



# Effective Teams

- Build the team to the overall organizational strategy.
- What do I have → What do I need
- Assess the needs comprehensively, and seek to fill all needs with additional overlap for core competencies
- Look for complimentary skills and leverage strengths
- Seek tactical *and* big picture thinkers



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# Thank you

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