

## **Individuals with Autism Can Get Work Experience at Ford Through New FordInclusiveWorks Pilot Program**

**Wednesday, May 25, 2016 04:01:00 AM (GMT)**

- Ford launches FordInclusiveWorks pilot program to provide individuals who have autism with an opportunity to gain work experience at Ford
- Program kicks off June 1, and will provide work roles in Ford's product development organization
- FordInclusiveWorks supports Ford's goal to contribute to a better world, making people's lives better and helping the communities in which the company operates

Ford Motor Company today announces it is collaborating with Autism Alliance of Michigan on a pilot program that aims to provide individuals who have autism with an opportunity to gain work experience with the company in an on-the-job training program funded by the alliance.

FordInclusiveWorks kicks off June 1. It will provide work roles in Ford's product development organization.

"We are committed to making people's lives better, and this pilot program has the potential to not only make the participants' lives better, but also help Ford be an even more diverse and inclusive workforce," says Raj Nair, Ford executive vice president, product development and chief technical officer. "Autism affects many people in our communities, and I'm proud we're taking on this important initiative."

Five new positions in product development were created to suit the skills and capabilities of people with autism. As part of this pilot, Ford will evaluate participants for future employment, as well as the program in general. If there is a potential fit, the individual will enter into Ford's standard recruiting process.

"Individuals with autism bring a unique set of talents to our business," says Felicia Fields, Ford group vice president, human resources and corporate services. "We recognize that having a diverse and inclusive workforce allows us to leverage a wider range of innovative ideas to make our customers' lives better."

Through FordInclusiveWorks, individuals with autism will not only gain work experience, but also contribute to business objectives and enhance diversity at Ford. The program supports the company's goal to contribute to a better world and support the communities in which it operates.

The pilot is beneficial for everyone involved – individuals with autism will gain work experience that uses their unique skill sets, while the work they complete will contribute to Ford's product development efforts.

"We are truly excited to be collaborating with Ford on this pilot program," says Colleen Allen, president and CEO, Autism Alliance of Michigan. "For so many individuals with autism spectrum disorder, getting and keeping a job is a challenge. Often, companies lack understanding of the unique characteristics associated with autism, which can be challenging, and unfortunately this can lead to perceptions of a poor fit for the individual and coworkers. I applaud Ford for taking these critical steps to understand autism, and for giving those who have struggled to find competitive employment real career opportunities that could be life changing for them."

For example, in the vehicle evaluation and verification test lab, a FordInclusiveWorks participant will log and prep tires for test vehicles used by engineers for product assessment. The work is highly structured, requires a great deal of focus, and calls for a high level of attention to detail and organization. Skills required to complete this task safely and with a high level of quality lend themselves to strengths typically associated with individuals with autism.

Ford is an equal opportunity employer, and anyone can apply for an open position at any time at <http://corporate.ford.com/careers.htm>.

Individuals with autism interested in being considered for future pilot program opportunities can reach out to Autism Alliance of Michigan for assistance in preparing for such experiences and workplace success.

***About Ford Motor Company***

*[Ford Motor Company](#) is a global automotive and mobility company based in Dearborn, Michigan. With about 201,000 employees and 67 plants worldwide, the company's core business includes designing, manufacturing, marketing, financing and servicing a full line of Ford cars, trucks, SUVs and electrified vehicles, as well as Lincoln luxury vehicles. At the same time, Ford is aggressively pursuing emerging opportunities through Ford Smart Mobility, the company's plan to be a leader in connectivity, mobility, autonomous vehicles, the customer experience, and data and analytics. The company provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. For more information regarding Ford and its products worldwide or Ford Motor Credit Company, visit [www.corporate.ford.com](http://www.corporate.ford.com).*

For news releases, related materials and high-resolution photos and video, visit [www.media.ford.com](http://www.media.ford.com).

View source version on businesswire.com: <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20160524006762/en/>

--30-- YM/CG

Contact:

Ford Motor Company  
Monique Brentley  
313.594.3744  
[mbrentle@ford.com](mailto:mbrentle@ford.com)

or

Amanda Park  
313.322.3132  
[apark5@ford.com](mailto:apark5@ford.com)

Copyright Business Wire 2016  
1.2

**Industries:** Men, Foundation, Consumer, General Automotive, Tires & Rubber, Performance & Special Interest, Off-Road Trucks & SUVs, Fleet Management, Aftermarket, Philanthropy, Automotive, Automotive Manufacturing, Manufacturing, Women

**Languages:** English

**Primary Identifiers:** F-US

**Related Identifiers:** F-US

**Source:** Ford Motor Company

**Subjects:** Product/Service, Corporate Social Responsibility