

The 25 Best Places to Work

FEATURING

DEGREES OF SUCCESS

NETWORKING
101 

WHAT
EMPLOYEES
WANT

 DRESS
CODE

PERENNIAL WINNERS

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People, you need to face the ugly truth:

You haven't won the lottery yet and, silly you, didn't marry a Rockefeller, so you're doomed to, you know, *work* for a living. But now that we've grasped that painful reality, why not work someplace where you really *enjoy* what you're doing?

Our mission: Find out where those work places are. This year, though, we approached our task a little differently. In the past, we let the best companies in the region duke it out over what they thought were great comp plans, benefits, and perks. This time, however, we tried to determine first from top national and local recruiters what the employees want most from the boss—be it intellectual stimulation or social benefit, money, room to advance, or icing-on-the-cake benefits like free gym memberships or pet insurance.

The verdict? It isn't all about money—for the majority, it seems, it's work satisfaction and life/work balance that matter most. And our list this year reflects that. So, drum roll: Here they are, the Baltimore area's best places to work, version 2.013—and, as usual, they wouldn't be on the list if they weren't hiring.

ABILITIES NETWORK

Location: 8503 LaSalle Rd., Towson and seven other locations. **Employees:** 140. **What they do:** Abilities Network serves the disabled with six programs, all community-based, to help clients live and work independently in their homes and communities through job-search and training assistance. **Why we like them:** This \$10-million nonprofit takes particular pains to make sure workers are happy—there's an annual survey of employees to see what management could do better. **Best benefits:** 403(b) plan (the nonprofit version of a 401(k)), health benefits, comprehensive health, dental, vision, life, and disability policies, employee-assistance program, tuition reimbursement, and employee-referral bonus.

AMERICA'S REMOTE HELP DESK

Location: 6400 Ridge Rd., Ste 308, Eldersburg. **Employees:** 56 in the Baltimore/Washington area. **What they do:** They're a Maryland-based help-desk and infrastructure-management services outfit serving companies of all sizes. **Why we like them:** For one, they're not based in New Delhi. But ARHD also offers a lot of opportunity in the IT field to Marylanders who aren't necessarily the

HAIL THE PERENNIALS

What follows are companies and organizations in the region that have been on our Best Places to Work list repeatedly, still offer great jobs and superior benefits, and, yes, they're still hiring. (We checked.):

super-geeks being hired by the way-out-there tech firms on this list. **Best benefits:** 401(k) retirement plan, health-insurance options including medical, dental, and vision, and a flexible work schedule.

CHESAPEAKE UROLOGY ASSOCIATES

Location: 25 Crossroads Dr., No. 306, Owings Mills (corporate office), plus 16 medical offices and 15 surgical centers. **Employees:** 414. **What they do:** CUA is the largest urology practice in the Mid-Atlantic. **Why we like them:** They're leaders in the fast-growing health sector, their physicians routinely sweep the urology specialties in our own "Top Doctors" survey, as well as others, and they have a low turnover rate. **Best benefits:** Full medical and dental, basic life, 401(k) safe-harbor plan (CUA contributes 3 percent of every staffer's salary regardless of whether they contribute), profit-sharing averaging 1.4 percent of salary, tuition reimbursement offered on day one, and discounts on pet insurance, phone plans, and athletic clubs.

CIENA CORPORATION

Location: 7035 Ridge Rd., Hanover. **Employees:** 650 locally, 4,500 globally. **What they do:** A provider of telecommunications infrastructure technology, software, and services. **Why we like them:** They're aggressively recruiting for a number of divisions, have a culture of charitable work, and boast spanking new offices in a LEED-certified building adjacent to an Amtrak/MARC station. The new HQ has an on-site cafeteria and incentives for staffers to use bikes and energy-efficient autos. **Best benefits:** Full range of medical, dental, and

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

COMPANY: HUMANIM

Denise Richards

pictured on previous page

AFTER DENISE RICHARDS LOST HER JOB in the banking industry because of a series of mergers and layoffs, the East Baltimore mother of three (and grandmother of five) was feeling a little cornered. A short stint working for the Census Bureau ended, of course, after the head counts were done, and then she knew she was in trouble.

"I was feeling pretty down until I saw a flyer about Humanim's job-training programs," says Richards. "It was very nearby, so I decided to give it a try."

For six months, she attended Humanim's "hard skills" classes for four to eight hours a day, learning how to improve her resume, hone her interview skills, and bone up on all the technical skills she would need to excel in the workplace once more—and in a recession, to boot. After only a few weeks, Humanim's staff saw her potential, perhaps before she herself realized it.

Before she even finished the program, she was hired as a rehabilitation counselor, in August 2010. And the mission that she was now part of helped her personally, too: "It was such an eye-opening experience," she says. "I didn't know how much need there was out there, especially among the disabled and those with brain injuries. It helped me really put my own problems in perspective, and taught me to be appreciative of where you are in life."

From that point, there was nowhere but up for Richards: She was promoted to the receptionist position at the nonprofit's American Brewery offices. "I enjoyed that because I'm a people person," she says. While at that job, she discovered her neighborhood association, in which she had never been involved, was using Humanim's offices for their meetings. She got involved and is now an association VP.

And then she was promoted again to serve as one of the administrative coordinators at two of the Humanim offices.

Says Richards with a smile, "It's been a pretty good ride for me."

Accella: Mobile-app website creators. • ADG: Telling stories through advertising. • Ascend One: Helping free you from debt. • BTS Software Solutions:

dental, vision, and life insurance, a company financial adviser for employees at no cost, tuition reimbursement for annual certifications, year-round staff development and training, free access to fitness facilities including the new one at the Under Armour campus in Locust Point, discounts on personal trainers and products, as well as hair and spa services, a culture of year-round support of charitable causes by company and staff.

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF THE CHESAPEAKE

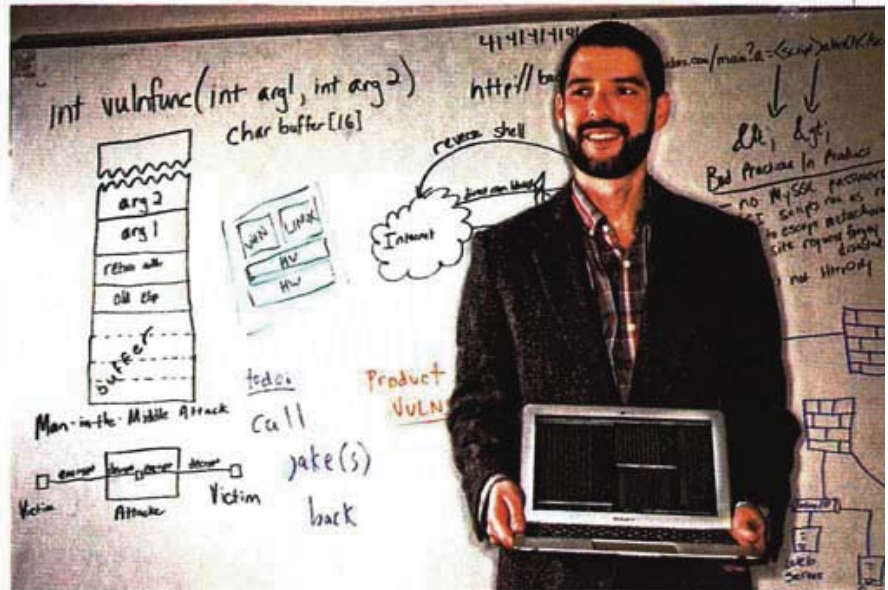
Location: 222 E. Redwood St. **Employees:** 580. **What they do:** A nonprofit providing job training and job-placement services. **Why we like them:** This fast-growing nonprofit combines a compassionate and critical mission with an appreciation of its employees not demonstrated by many for-profits. **Best benefits:** Paid leave for full- and part-time employees, health, dental, and vision insurance, paid long-term disability, life insurance, generous tuition reimbursement, financial counseling, wellness program, subsidized gym memberships, employee referral bonus, and store discounts.

HUMANIM

Location: 6355 Woodside Ct., Columbia, and other locations. **Employees:** 476. **What they do:** This nonprofit provides job training, placement services, and independent-living assistance for those with disabilities, mental-health issues, and criminal records. **Why we like them:** They're addressing a pressing social issue few other organizations will deal with, and have a solid comp plan for staffers, as well. **Best benefits:** Health, dental, vision, life, and disability insurance, employee-assistance program, tuition reimbursement, profit-sharing, 403(b) retirement plan, hiring-referral bonuses, credit union and free checking, discounted home/auto insurance, discounts to Columbia Association sports and recreation facilities, wellness program.

INDEPENDENT SECURITY EVALUATORS (ISE)

Location: 4901 Springarden Dr., Ste. 200, and other locations nationally. **Employees:** 16. **What they do:** ISE protects companies from hackers and network attacks. **Why we like them:** How about the unlimited vacation? (Just get your work done, boys and girls.) Or that they expect to double staff in the coming year? The digs are



EMPLOYEE PROFILE

COMPANY: INDEPENDENT SECURITY EVALUATORS (ISE)

Sam Small

SAM SMALL SENSED, even in high school, that protecting computers from hackers and other security boogymen was going to be big business.

So when he finished his undergraduate training at the College of William and Mary in computer sciences—and came to Baltimore to pursue first a master's, then a Ph.D. in the same field at The Johns Hopkins University—he felt lucky to land an internship at a little company called Independent Security Evaluators (ISE). Actually, though, it was ISE that was the lucky one.

"Even when I was a kid, you were seeing e-mail viruses more and more, while, at the same time, computers were taking on a much more prevalent role in our lives," says Small, now 31, who is single and lives in Remington. "Anyone who understood computer science could see the writing on the wall, that security issues would get worse before they got better."

"I found it fascinating that one person with ill intent could cause damage to so many people."

As an intern, he was thrown right into the fray, helping ISE's top engineers come up with security solutions for the consulting firm's clients. And one challenge he remembers best involved the then-new iPhone.

"When the iPhone first came out, the company had this idea to buy iPhones for the researchers and scientists. They asked us, 'So if we did that, do you think you could hack into them?'" They jumped at the dare: "Everyone was excited, and we said 'Oh yeah, of course,' and within two weeks our team had discovered a vulnerability that could be exploited remotely allowing someone to take over your iPhone and steal all the data off it," says Small.

Notes ISE marketing officer Ted Harrington, "We were the first to discover and exploit the vulnerability, and it was an accomplishment that garnered international press and further cemented ISE's status as stalwarts of security."

Such challenges—and the company itself—was a perfect fit for Small: ISE brought him back after the internship as a contractor for specific projects, then hired him in June as chief technology officer.

"I think throughout my experience with the company in different capacities, I've been given a lot of opportunities to work with incredibly talented people and incredible technology and products," Small says. And he especially likes the instant gratification of the work: "It's not only incredibly interesting, but you can see the impact of your work almost immediately—it's the best job I've ever had."

